



# City of Seattle

Department of Construction & Inspections  
Nathan Torgelson, Director



## FIRST EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE DOWNTOWN DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3018968

Address: 2302 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue

Applicant: Jeff Walls, Studio 19 Architects

Date of Meeting: Tuesday, October 25, 2016

Board Members Present: Anjali Grant (Chair)  
Bradley Calvert  
JP Emery  
Grace Leong

Board Members Absent: Murphy McCullough

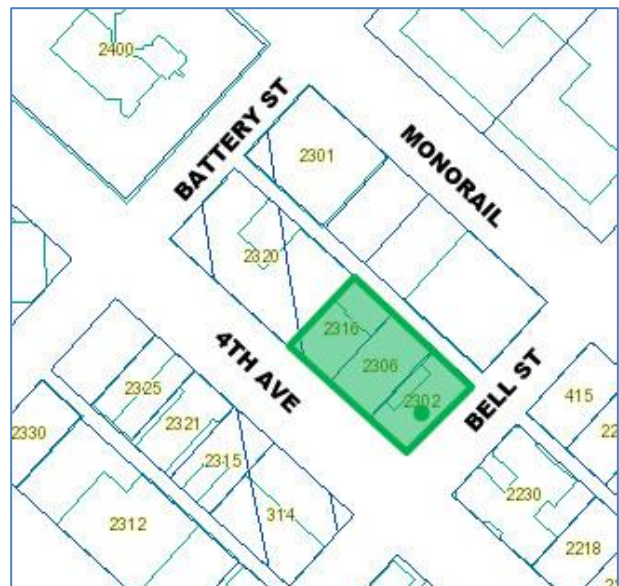
SDCI Staff Present: Lindsay King

### SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Downtown Mixed Residential Commercial (DMR/C 240/125)

Nearby Zones: (North) DMR/C 240/125  
(South) DMR/C 240/125  
(East) DMR/C 240/125  
(West) DMR/C 240/125

Lot Area: 19,440 square feet



### **Current Development:**

The subject site is located on the northwest corner of 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Bell Street. The subject lot and lots to the north, south, east and west are zoned Downtown Mixed Residential Commercial (DMR/C 240/125). The site contains three parcels with two existing commercial buildings, and one existing City of Seattle Landmark residential structure, the Franklin Apartments. To the northwest is another City of Seattle Landmark, Fire Station #2. To the northeast, across an improved alley, is an existing office building. To the southwest, across 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, is a surface parking lot, to the south and southeast are existing residential structures.

The subject lot and lots to the north, south, east and west are all located in the Belltown neighborhood. The immediate context includes a variety of commercial and residential uses. 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue is a Class I pedestrian street and a principal arterial street connecting central downtown to Denny Street. Bell Street is a Green Street and has been developed as Bell Street Park between 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue and 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue. 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Bell Street both contain a mix of older 1-6 story residential and commercial uses. Turn of the century buildings are generally brick while new structures range from wood construction to concrete, steel and glass construction. Belltown also has a number newer residential and commercial towers including the 2116 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue apartments and the Insignia Towers. Sites in the immediate vicinity range in size from a single parcel development, to half block and full block construction. The site is general flat and does not include any existing mature vegetation.

### **Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:**

The neighborhood includes commercial and residential structure ranging from one to six stories along with newer residential towers. The immediate context includes two landmark structures, one that will be incorporated into the subject development, the Franklin Apartments, and one directly adjacent, Fire Station #2. The predominant material is brick, concrete, masonry and wood.

### **Access:**

Access is available from 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Bell Street and an improved alley along the north property line.

### **Environmentally Critical Areas:**

No environmentally critical areas have been identified on site.

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

Early design guidance for a 24-story tower addition and interior renovations to an existing Landmark building (Franklin Apartments). The addition includes 291 residential units and 11,200

sq. ft. of retail space located at ground level. Project also includes parking for 176 vehicles to be located below grade. The existing building at 2306 4th Ave is proposed to be demolished.

The design packet includes materials presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number (3018968) at this website:

<http://www.seattle.gov/DPD/aboutus/news/events/DesignReview/SearchPastReviews/default.aspx>

The packet is also available to view in the file, by contacting the Public Resource Center at SDCl:

**Mailing Public Resource Center**  
**Address:** 700 Fifth Ave., Suite 2000  
P.O. Box 34019  
Seattle, WA 98124-4019

**Email:** [PRC@seattle.gov](mailto:PRC@seattle.gov)

## FIRST EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE October 25, 2016

### PUBLIC COMMENT

The following comments, issues and concerns were raised during the public comment portion of the Early Design Guidance meeting:

- Expressed concern that a modern tower located between two landmark buildings would destroy the lowrise neighborhood character.
- Felt the site should be developed with a lowrise structure to provide continuity between the adjacent historic structures.
- Felt the proposed departure should not be granted. Noted that a code compliant building would better meet the intent of the Design Guidelines.
- Would like to see Bell Street maintained as a park.
- Expressed concern regarding light pollution from rooftop decks.
- Expressed concern regarding the alley treatment. Noted that this neighborhood may not be appropriate for an activated alley.
- Felt the Franklin Apartment building should incorporate amenity space at ground level on Bell Street. Noted that units at grand along the street are wired off for safety.
- Expressed concern that proposed building will exceed allowed zoning heights.

All public comments submitted in writing for this project can be viewed using the following link and entering the project number: <http://web6.seattle.gov/dpd/edms/>

## PRIORITIES & BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

After visiting the site, considering the analysis of the site and context provided by the proponents, and hearing public comment, the Design Review Board members provided the following siting and design guidance.

### **FIRST EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE October 25, 2016**

- 1. Massing.** The Board discussed the massing alternatives at length. The Board noted that the code compliant massing Option 1 would not be supported by Landmark Preservation Board Architectural Review Committee, based on the applicant's admission that any proposed structure over the landmark structure would not be supported. The Board was split on the merits of both Option 2 and Option 4. Ultimately, the Board agreed that a minimum of two additional massing options should be provided: 1) a code compliant option that could be supported by the ARC committee and, 2) a massing alternative that incorporates the positive elements of Option 2 and 4.
  - a) The Board expressed support for the following Option 2 concepts:
    - i. A strong street wall, with pedestrian scale, that relates both adjacent landmark structures. The Board noted the podium could align with the datum line from the adjacent Fire Station and still be successful (A1.1, B1.1).
    - ii. A recess or gasket between the landmark structures and the tower. The recess allows the cornice of the landmark building to be visible (A1.1, B1.1).
    - iii. The glass atrium and the gasket showcase the proposed paseo (B4).
  - b) The Board expressed support for the following Option 4 concepts:
    - i. A design parti that gives character to the structure, enhances the skyline. The vertical tower pieces provide a perceived slenderness to the tower. The Board agreed that the design concept could be strengthened with more visible separation between the three tower pieces and lighter material choices (B4).
    - ii. The base of the tower relates to the Fire Station datum line while also attempting to respond to the Franklin with the multistory glass entry expression (A1.1 and B1).
    - iii. Two Board members felt the tower massing at the street level destroys the street wall provided by the landmark structures (A1.1 and B1).
  - c) At the second Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board would like to see massing alternatives which articulate a clear design parti and include the following elements:
    - i. A lightened tower form that incorporates vertical elements to reduce the perceived mass (B4).
    - ii. A podium that respects both the Fire Station and Franklin Apartment buildings, while continuing a street wall consistent with the neighborhood context (B1).
    - iii. A recessed gasket to differentiate the tower from the landmarks. The Board noted that the recess did not need to be glass to be effective (B1).
    - iv. An atrium with ground floor retail uses at the base of the tower spilling into the interior of the Franklin Apartments (B1.1, B4).
    - v. Continued activation of the alley (C6).
    - vi. Modern brick material application at the base of the structure (B1).

- 2. Landmark Structures.** At the second Early Design Guidance Meeting the Board requested imagery showing the proposed development in relationship to the landmark structures.
- a) Demonstrate how the rooftop deck above the Franklin Apartments would be viewed from the street (B1).
  - b) Renderings that demonstrate each massing proposal with the adjacent landmarks structures (B1).

**DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES**

The Board’s recommendation on the requested departure(s) will be based on the departure’s potential to help the project better meet these design guidelines priorities and achieve a better overall project design than could be achieved without the departure(s). The Board’s recommendation will be reserved until the final Board meeting.

At the time of the Early Design Guidance the following departure was requested:

- 1. **Floor Area Limit (SMC 23.49.158 B):** The Code requires that for structures in the DMR zone portions of structures above 125 feet shall have a maximum gross floor area of 8,000 sq. ft. The applicant proposes floor area of 10,375 sq. ft.

The Board agreed that the EDG presentation and packet lacked sufficient information to consider the merits of the proposed departure. The Board agreed that a viable, ARC supported, code-complying massing alternative should be provided at the second EDG meeting in order for them for them to consider the merits of a departure without seeing a viable code allowed alternative for the site. The project proposal also lacks sufficient narrative to demonstrate how the preferred massing better meets the intent of adopted City of Seattle Design Guidelines. The Board noted that the presence of the landmark structure was a unique situation for the site but that maintaining the historic structure alone was not a sufficient argument for the proposed departure.

**DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES**

The priority Downtown and Belltown Neighborhood design guidelines identified as Priority Guidelines are summarized below, while all guidelines remain applicable. For the full text please visit the [Design Review website](#).

**SITE PLANNING AND MASSING**

**A1 Respond to the Physical Environment: Develop an architectural concept and compose the building’s massing in response to geographic conditions and patterns of urban form found nearby or beyond the immediate context of the building site.**

**A1.1. Response to Context:** Each building site lies within a larger physical context having various and distinct features and characteristics to which the building design should respond. Develop an architectural concept and arrange the building mass in response to one or more of the following, if present:

- a. a change in street grid alignment that yields a site having nonstandard shape;
- b. a site having dramatic topography or contrasting edge conditions;
- c. patterns of urban form, such as nearby buildings that have employed distinctive and effective massing compositions;
- d. access to direct sunlight—seasonally or at particular times of day;
- e. views from the site of noteworthy structures or natural features, (i.e.: the Space Needle, Smith Tower, port facilities, Puget Sound, Mount Rainier, the Olympic Mountains);
- f. views of the site from other parts of the city or region; and
- g. proximity to a regional transportation corridor (the monorail, light rail, freight rail, major arterial, state highway, ferry routes, bicycle trail, etc.).

**A1.2. Response to Planning Efforts:** Some areas downtown are transitional environments, where existing development patterns are likely to change. In these areas, respond to the urban form goals of current planning efforts, being cognizant that new development will establish the context to which future development will respond.

***Belltown Supplemental Guidance:***

**A1.I. Views:** Develop the architectural concept and arrange the building mass to enhance views. This includes views of the water and mountains, and noteworthy structures such as the Space Needle.

**A1.II. Street Grid:** The architecture and building mass should respond to sites having nonstandard shapes. There are several changes in the street grid alignment in Belltown, resulting in triangular sites and chamfered corners. Examples of this include: 1st, Western and Elliott between Battery and Lenora, and along Denny;

**A1.III. Topography:** The topography of the neighborhood lends to its unique character. Design buildings to take advantage of this condition as an opportunity, rather than a constraint. Along the streets, single entry, blank facades are discouraged. Consider providing multiple entries and windows at street level on sloping streets.

**ARCHITECTURAL EXPRESSION**

**B1 Respond to the neighborhood context: Develop an architectural concept and compose the major building elements to reinforce desirable urban features existing in the surrounding neighborhood.**

**B1.1. Adjacent Features and Networks:** Each building site lies within an urban neighborhood context having distinct features and characteristics to which the building design should respond. Arrange the building mass in response to one or more of the following, if present:

- a. a surrounding district of distinct and noteworthy character;
- b. an adjacent landmark or noteworthy building;
- c. a major public amenity or institution nearby;
- d. neighboring buildings that have employed distinctive and effective massing compositions;
- e. elements of the pedestrian network nearby, (i.e.: green street, hillclimb, mid-block crossing, through-block passageway); and

f. direct access to one or more components of the regional transportation system.

**B1.2. Land Uses:** Also, consider the design implications of the predominant land uses in the area surrounding the site.

***Belltown Supplemental Guidance:***

**B1.I. Compatible Design:** Establish a harmonious transition between newer and older buildings. Compatible design should respect the scale, massing and materials of adjacent buildings and landscape.

**B1.II. Historic Style:** Complement the architectural character of an adjacent historic building or area; however, imitation of historical styles is discouraged. References to period architecture should be interpreted in a contemporary manner.

**B1.III. Visual Interest:** Design visually attractive buildings that add richness and variety to Belltown, including creative contemporary architectural solutions.

**B1.IV. Reinforce Neighborhood Qualities:** Employ design strategies and incorporate architectural elements that reinforce Belltown's unique qualities. In particular, the neighborhood's best buildings tend to support an active street life.

**B4 Design a Well-Proportioned & Unified Building: Compose the massing and organize the interior and exterior spaces to create a well-proportioned building that exhibits a coherent architectural concept. Design the architectural elements and finish details to create a unified building, so that all components appear integral to the whole.**

**B4.1. Massing:** When composing the massing, consider how the following can contribute to create a building that exhibits a coherent architectural concept:

- a. setbacks, projections, and open space;
- b. relative sizes and shapes of distinct building volumes; and
- c. roof heights and forms.

**B4.2. Coherent Interior/Exterior Design:** When organizing the interior and exterior spaces and developing the architectural elements, consider how the following can contribute to create a building that exhibits a coherent architectural concept:

- d. facade modulation and articulation;
- e. windows and fenestration patterns;
- f. corner features;
- g. streetscape and open space fixtures;
- h. building and garage entries; and
- i. building base and top.

**B4.3. Architectural Details:** When designing the architectural details, consider how the following can contribute to create a building that exhibits a coherent architectural concept:

- j. exterior finish materials;
- k. architectural lighting and signage;
- l. grilles, railings, and downspouts;
- m. window and entry trim and moldings;
- n. shadow patterns; and
- o. exterior lighting.

## THE STREETScape

### **C6 Develop the Alley Façade: To increase pedestrian safety, comfort, and interest, develop portions of the alley facade in response to the unique conditions of the site or project.**

**C6.1. Alley Activation:** Consider enlivening and enhancing the alley entrance by:

- a. extending retail space fenestration into the alley one bay;
- b. providing a niche for recycling and waste receptacles to be shared with nearby, older buildings lacking such facilities; and
- c. adding effective lighting to enhance visibility and safety.

**C6.2. Alley Parking Access:** Enhance the facades and surfaces in and adjacent to the alley to create parking access that is visible, safe, and welcoming for drivers and pedestrians. Consider

- d. locating the alley parking garage entry and/ or exit near the entrance to the alley;
- e. installing highly visible signage indicating parking rates and availability on the building facade adjacent to the alley; and
- f. chamfering the building corners to enhance pedestrian visibility and safety where alley is regularly used by vehicles accessing parking and loading.

### ***Belltown Supplemental Guidance:***

#### **C6.I. Address Alley Functions:**

- a. Services and utilities, while essential to urban development, should be screened or otherwise hidden from the view of the pedestrian.
- b. Exterior trash receptacles should be screened on three sides, with a gate on the fourth side that also screens the receptacles from view. Provide a niche to recess the receptacle.
- c. Screen loading docks and truck parking from public view using building massing, architectural elements and/or landscaping.
- d. Ensure that all utility equipment is located, sized, and designed to be as inconspicuous as possible. Consider ways to reduce the noise impacts of HVAC equipment on the alley environment.

#### **C6.II. Pedestrian Environment:**

- e. Pedestrian circulation is an integral part of the site layout. Where possible and feasible, provide elements, such as landscaping and special paving, that help define a pedestrian-friendly environment in the alley.
- f. Create a comfortably scaled and thoughtfully detailed urban environment in the alley through the use of well-designed architectural forms and details, particularly at street level.

#### **C6.III. Architectural Concept:**

- g. In designing a well-proportioned and unified building, the alley facade should not be ignored. An alley facade should be treated with form, scale and materials similar to rest of the building to create a coherent architectural concept.

## PUBLIC AMENITIES



**D3 Provide Elements That Define the Place: Provide special elements on the facades, within public open spaces, or on the sidewalk to create a distinct, attractive, and memorable “sense of place” associated with the building.**

***Belltown Supplemental Guidance:***

**D3.II. Green Streets:** Green Streets are street rights-of-way that are enhanced for pedestrian circulation and activity with a variety of pedestrian-oriented features, such as sidewalk widening, landscaping, artwork, and traffic calming. Interesting street level uses and pedestrian amenities enliven the Green Street and lend special identity to the surrounding area.

**D3.III: Street Furniture/Furnishings along Specific Streets:** The function and character of Belltown’s streetscapes are defined street by street. In defining the streetscape for various streets, the hierarchy of streets is determined by street function, adjacent land uses, and the nature of existing streetscape improvements.

d. 4th Avenue: Street furnishings on 4th Avenue should be “off-the-shelf”/ catalogue modern to reflect the high-rise land uses existing or permitted along that corridor.

**D4 Provide Appropriate Signage: Design signage appropriate for the scale and character of the project and immediate neighborhood. All signs should be oriented to pedestrians and/or persons in vehicles on streets within the immediate neighborhood.**

**D4.4. Discourage Upper-Level Signage:** Signs on roofs and the upper floors of buildings intended primarily to be seen by motorists and others from a distance are generally discouraged.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

**BOARD DIRECTION**

At the conclusion of the First Early Design Guidance meeting, the Board recommended the project return for another meeting in response to the guidance provided.