



## EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE WEST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3019621

Address: 200 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave W

Applicant: John Goebel of Studio Meng Strazzara

Date of Meeting: Wednesday, May 06, 2015

Board Members Present: Boyd Pickrell, Chair  
Mindy Black  
Katherine Idziorek  
Janet Stephenson

Board Members Absent: Christine Harrington

DPD Staff Present: Magda Hogness

### SITE & VICINITY

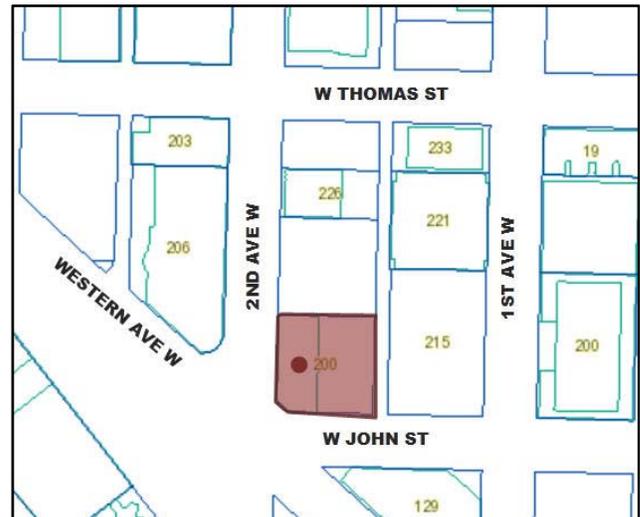
Site Zone: Neighborhood Commercial (NC3-65)

Nearby Zones: Neighborhood Commercial (NC3-65), Commercial (C2-40), Industrial Commercial (IC-45)

Lot Area: 14,314 square feet

Access: The subject property currently includes vehicular access from W John St.

Environmentally Critical Areas: The site is mapped as an Environmentally Critical Area (ECA) Steep Slope along the north and west property line.



### **Current Development:**

The existing site includes two-story office structure, originally built in 1945. Surface parking and vehicular access is located off W John St.

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

Bounded by Seattle Center to the east, Belltown to the south, the Puget Sound waterfront to the west, Queen Anne Hill to the north, the Uptown Neighborhood includes blocks with a rich variety of uses, institutions, and transportation connectivity. The project site is located within the Uptown Urban character area, as mapped in the Uptown Guidelines. This area includes a mix of early and mid-20th century masonry apartment buildings, pre-cast commercial office buildings, multi-family and recent mixed use developments. The guidelines encourage high quality urban infill and pedestrian focused design elements to response to this context.

The site is surrounded by a wide mix of structures. Directly to the south of the site is a three-story reinforced concrete commercial/warehouse building. Across the alley to the east, is a seven-story wood frame residential building which has parking access off the alley. To the north is a surface parking lot. A six-story hotel structure with below grade parking accessed off the alley and a surface parking lot is located to the west. Across Western Ave N, is a two-story loft structure, Northwest Lofts, originally built in 1927. Located on the west side of Elliott Ave W are two five-story office buildings, sited to allow for an unobstructed view corridor to Myrtle Edwards Park and the Puget Sounds beyond. A nearby pedestrian bridge overpass links the neighborhood to this park.

### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The proposal is for a seven-story, 75 unit building with three live/work units at street level. Parking for 76 vehicles will be located below grade. Existing structure to be demolished

|  |
|--|
| <b>EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE May 6, 2015</b> |
|--|

The packet includes materials presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number (3019621) at this website:

[http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Planning/Design\\_Review\\_Program/Project\\_Reviews/Reports/default.asp](http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Planning/Design_Review_Program/Project_Reviews/Reports/default.asp).

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

**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)

## DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

Drawing on the existing context, the architect presented three main massing options derived from a warehouse loft idea for the residential building. All of the massing options propose similar square footage and use; a seven story structure containing 75 residential units, three live/work spaces and 76-79 parking spaces below grade. Roof terraces and courtyards are in various locations to take advantage of views, in particular the unobstructed view corridor to Myrtle Edwards Park.

Massing Option 1 showed a code compliant version. Configured in a T-shape plan with a curved corner, two podium courtyards carve away the massing on the west, north and east. A residential lobby entry is located off John St. Vehicular access is provided off the alley. The applicant noted that the topography poses a challenge for this site; there is a 45' change of grade. Due to this condition, the middle portion of the alley is accessed only by pedestrians. As a result, parking alley access is a challenge and largely controlled by the location the adjacent building parking entries.

Option 2 showed the building organized in an L-shaped plan with an exterior courtyard space on northwest portion of the site. Similar to Option 1, the residential lobby entry is located off W John St. Vehicular access to parking is proposed off 2nd Ave W and off the alley. This request for both points of access requires a departure, in addition to a Type 1 Decision.

The L-shaped plan is further refined in Option 3. Presented as the preferred option, this scheme is characterized by a chamfered corner. For this option, the residential entry is located off 2nd Ave W and live/work units front both adjacent streets. Vehicle access is also proposed off 2nd Ave W and requires a Type 1 Decision. Planting and a green wall is planned along W John St to buffer the parking structure's blank walls.

## PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comments were offered at the meeting.

## 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.

## EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE May 6, 2015

1. **Massing:** The Board unanimously preferred massing Option 3 as it provides the best response to the context. (Guidelines CS2-B, DC2-C) The Board directed the applicant to proceed with the preferred option.
  - a. As part of moving the design forward, the Board would like to see a more dynamic façade expression for the building. Provide visual interest, more in line with warehouse loft idea presented. (Guidelines, CS2-B, DC2)
  - b. Cognizant of the high visibility of site, the Board directed the applicant to find ways to express the corner and provide less of a static expression. Consider locating the lobby entry off the corner. (Guidelines CS2-III, CS2-B, DC1-A)
  - c. The Board noted that they would like to see more depth to the façade and directed the applicant to design the façade with modulation and consideration of secondary architectural elements. (Guidelines DC2-I-iii, DC2-C, DC2-D, DC2-E)
  
2. **Uses at Street Level and Relationship to Grade:** The Board expressed that the relationship of all street facing uses to the street is very important to convey a clear expression of the program. (PL2-I-i, PL2-II-i, DC1-I-ii , DC2-C, DC2-E)
  - a. The Board deliberated the live/work unit grouping and ultimately decided that the broken up locations were fine. The Board directed the applicant to work on the design of the live work units to articulate the program. (Guidelines PL3-A, DC2-E)
  - b. Expressing interest in future proofing the live/work lofts, the Board encouraged allowing for the possibility of combining these units into larger retail spaces in the future. (Guideline PL3-B-3)
  - c. In refining the design, the Board noted if the setback live/work units continue to be tucked back, individual walkways should be explored. (Guidelines CS2-I-i, PL2-II-ii , PL3-A-3)
  
3. **Vehicular Access:** The Board discussed the Type 1 Decision administrative request for a curb cut to access parking from 2nd Ave W. The Board acknowledged the difficulty of the alley topography, however, they questioned why a blank wall for parking would be still shown along W John St, if access is provided on 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave W. The Board unanimously supported access taken from 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave W if the frontage along W John St, did not include a blank wall. (Guidelines DC1-V, DC2-A, DC2-B, DC2-C)
  - a. If vehicle access is shown off 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave W, the Board would like to see a different use along W John St, such as another live/work unit or a visible bike storage room. (Guidelines DC1-V, DC2-A, DC2-B, DC2-C)
  
4. **Courtyard and Relationship to Adjacent Context:** The Board supported the courtyard location and recommended that this area also enhance the alley pedestrian environment. (PL2-II-ii, PL3-B-I, DC1-VI)
  - a. The Board recommended the applicant to explore a pedestrian connection with the alley stair. When developing this connection, create defensible space; provide

lighting and design elements for these areas to be visible, safe, and welcoming for pedestrians. (Guidelines PL2-II-ii, PL3-B-I, DC1-VI,))

5. **Blank wall:** The Board was supportive of the design direction and façade treatment for the north blank wall. (CS2-D-5, DC1-II)
6. **Materials:** The Board strongly supported the quality of materials proposed, especially the brick, and urged the applicant to consider durability and detailing of the materials. (Guidelines DC2-I-iii, DC4-A-I)
  - a. Noting that the vertical expression of the brick seemed to elongate the massing, the Board directed the applicant to develop and explore a material cladding concept with a horizontal break, which would be more in line with the warehouse loft idea presented. (Guidelines DC2-I-iii, DC4-A-I)

## DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES

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

### CONTEXT & SITE

**CS1 Natural Systems and Site Features: Use natural systems/features of the site and its surroundings as a starting point for project design.**

#### CS1-C Topography

**CS1-C-1. Land Form:** Use natural topography and desirable landforms to inform project design.

**CS1-C-2. Elevation Changes:** Use the existing site topography when locating structures and open spaces on the site.

**CS2 Urban Pattern and Form: Strengthen the most desirable forms, characteristics, and patterns of the streets, block faces, and open spaces in the surrounding area.**

#### CS2-B Adjacent Sites, Streets, and Open Spaces

**CS2-B-1. Site Characteristics:** Allow characteristics of sites to inform the design, especially where the street grid and topography create unusually shaped lots that can add distinction to the building massing.

**CS2-B-2. Connection to the Street:** Identify opportunities for the project to make a strong connection to the street and public realm.

#### *Uptown Supplemental Guidance:*

#### CS2-I Responding to Site Characteristics

**CS2-I-i. Pedestrian Character:** Throughout Uptown new developments should, to the extent possible, be sited to further contribute to the neighborhood’s pedestrian character.

**CS2-III Corner Lots**

**CS2-III-i. Addressing the Corner:** Generally, buildings within Uptown should meet the corner and not be set back. Building designs and treatments as well as any open space areas should address the corner and promote activity. Corner entrances are strongly encouraged, where feasible.

**CS2-III-ii. Corner Features:** Corner lots are often desirable locations for small publicly-accessible plazas, turrets, clock towers, art, and other special features. Design corner retail entries to not disrupt access to residential uses above.

**CS2-IV Height, Bulk and Scale Compatibility**

**CS2-IV-i. Reducing Visual Bulk:** Throughout Uptown, a departure would be supported for 3’ of additional height for projects that step back the top floor of the structure a minimum of 6’ from the street. This has the effect of reducing the impact of the structure height on the sidewalk below as well as reducing the length of shadows over the street. Where the Code regulates podium height, the additional 3’ applies to the podium.

**CS2-IV-iii. Massing in the Uptown Urban Character Area:** larger massing units and less modulation are appropriate, provided they are carefully designed, with quality materials.

**PUBLIC LIFE**

**PL1 Connectivity: Complement and contribute to the network of open spaces around the site and the connections among them.**

**PL1-B Walkways and Connections**

**PL1-B-1. Pedestrian Infrastructure:** Connect on-site pedestrian walkways with existing public and private pedestrian infrastructure, thereby supporting pedestrian connections within and outside the project.

**PL2 Walkability: Create a safe and comfortable walking environment that is easy to navigate and well-connected to existing pedestrian walkways and features.**

**PL2-C Weather Protection**

**PL2-C-1. Locations and Coverage:** Overhead weather protection is encouraged and should be located at or near uses that generate pedestrian activity such as entries, retail uses, and transit stops.

**PL2-D Wayfinding**

**PL2-D-1. Design as Wayfinding:** Use design features as a means of wayfinding wherever possible.

***Uptown Supplemental Guidance:***

**PL2-I Entrances Visible from the Street**

**PL2-I-i. Prominent Entrances:** Throughout Uptown, major entrances to developments should be prominent. The use of distinctive designs with historical references is strongly encouraged. Design, detailing, materials and landscaping may all be employed to this

end. Building addresses and names (if applicable) should be located at entrances, tastefully crafted.

## **PL2-II Pedestrian Open Spaces and Entrances**

**PL2-II-i. Pedestrian-Friendly Entrances:** Throughout Uptown entries should be designed to be pedestrian friendly (via position, scale, architectural detailing, and materials) and should be clearly discernible to the pedestrian.

**PL2-II-ii. Defensible Space:** Individual or unit entrances in buildings that are accessed from the sidewalk or other public spaces should consider appropriate designs for defensible space as well as safety features (e.g., decorative fencing and gating). Landscaping should be consistent with these features.

## **PL3 Street-Level Interaction: Encourage human interaction and activity at the street-level with clear connections to building entries and edges.**

### **PL3-A Entries**

**PL3-A-1. Design Objectives:** Design primary entries to be obvious, identifiable, and distinctive with clear lines of sight and lobbies visually connected to the street.

**PL3-A-2. Common Entries:** Multi-story residential buildings need to provide privacy and security for residents but also be welcoming and identifiable to visitors.

**PL3-A-3. Individual Entries:** Ground-related housing should be scaled and detailed appropriately to provide for a more intimate type of entry.

**PL3-A-4. Ensemble of Elements:** Design the entry as a collection of coordinated elements including the door(s), overhead features, ground surface, landscaping, lighting, and other features.

### **PL3-B Residential Edges**

**PL3-B-1. Security and Privacy:** Provide security and privacy for residential buildings through the use of a buffer or semi-private space between the development and the street or neighboring buildings.

**PL3-B-3. Buildings with Live/Work Uses:** Maintain active and transparent facades in the design of live/work residences. Design the first floor so it can be adapted to other commercial use as needed in the future.

## **PL4 Active Transportation: Incorporate design features that facilitate active forms of transportation such as walking, bicycling, and use of transit.**

### **PL4-B Planning Ahead for Bicyclists**

**PL4-B-1. Early Planning:** Consider existing and future bicycle traffic to and through the site early in the process so that access and connections are integrated into the project along with other modes of travel.

**PL4-B-2. Bike Facilities:** Facilities such as bike racks and storage, bike share stations, shower facilities and lockers for bicyclists should be located to maximize convenience, security, and safety.

**PL4-B-3. Bike Connections:** Facilitate connections to bicycle trails and infrastructure around and beyond the project.

## DESIGN CONCEPT

### **DC1 Project Uses and Activities: Optimize the arrangement of uses and activities on site.**

#### **DC1-A Arrangement of Interior Uses**

**DC1-A-1. Visibility:** Locate uses and services frequently used by the public in visible or prominent areas, such as at entries or along the street front.

#### **DC1-B Vehicular Access and Circulation**

**DC1-B-1. Access Location and Design:** Choose locations for vehicular access, service uses, and delivery areas that minimize conflict between vehicles and non-motorists wherever possible. Emphasize use of the sidewalk for pedestrians, and create safe and attractive conditions for pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers.

#### **DC1-C Parking and Service Uses**

**DC1-C-2. Visual Impacts:** Reduce the visual impacts of parking lots, parking structures, entrances, and related signs and equipment as much as possible.

### ***Uptown Supplemental Guidance:***

#### **DC1-II Blank Walls**

**DC1-II-ii. Artistic/Decorative Surfacing:** In the Uptown Urban and Heart of Uptown character areas artwork and decorative surfacing may provide an alternative wall treatment to landscaping in some locations. However, painted murals are the least preferred solution to larger wall areas in Uptown.

#### **DC1-V Visual Impacts of Parking Structures**

**DC1-V-i. Reduce Visual Impact:** Throughout Uptown designs that lessen the visibility of parking structures are preferred. Garages and parking structures should, where feasible, incorporate landscaping to reduce their visual impact. Landscaping may include climbing plantings and other landscape means to reduce the impact of larger blankwalls. Large, open paved driveways and carports are strongly discouraged. Alley access is preferred, if feasible.

#### **DC1-VI Treatment of Alleys**

**DC1-VI-ii. Activation:** In Heart of Uptown and Uptown Urban character areas encourage alleys to be activated with subordinate retail spaces at the mouth of the alley. Encourage retail to “turn the corner” at alley entrances.

### **DC2 Architectural Concept: Develop an architectural concept that will result in a unified and functional design that fits well on the site and within its surroundings.**

#### **DC2-C Secondary Architectural Features**

**DC2-C-1. Visual Depth and Interest:** Add depth to facades where appropriate by incorporating balconies, canopies, awnings, decks, or other secondary elements into the façade design. Add detailing at the street level in order to create interest for the pedestrian and encourage active street life and window shopping (in retail areas).

#### **DC2-D Scale and Texture**

**DC2-D-2. Texture:** Design the character of the building, as expressed in the form, scale, and materials, to strive for a fine-grained scale, or “texture,” particularly at the street level and other areas where pedestrians predominate.

## **DC2-E Form and Function**

**DC2-E-1. Legibility and Flexibility:** Strive for a balance between building use legibility and flexibility. Design buildings such that their primary functions and uses can be readily determined from the exterior, making the building easy to access and understand. At the same time, design flexibility into the building so that it may remain useful over time even as specific programmatic needs evolve.

### ***Uptown Supplemental Guidance:***

## **DC2-I Architectural Context**

**DC2-I-iii. Uptown Urban Character Area:** Embrace high quality urban infill, and responds to special relationships with nearby civic institutions. The following features are encouraged:

- a. Consistent street wall;
- b. Engaging the sidewalk / storefront transparency;
- c. Building siting that responds to Seattle Center entry points;
- d. Defined cornices;
- e. High quality, durable materials;
- f. Distinct residential and commercial components; and
- g. Throughout Uptown, upper level balconies are discouraged on the street side of residential buildings. Bay windows are a preferred architectural element on the street side. This guideline is intended to avoid open displays of storage, which are sometimes an unintended consequence of street side balconies.

**DC3 Open Space Concept: Integrate open space design with the building design so that they complement each other.**

### ***Uptown Supplemental Guidance:***

## **DC3-I Landscaping to Enhance the Building and/or site**

**DC3-I-i. Varied, Integrated Landscaping:** Throughout Uptown, but especially within the Uptown Park character area, landscaping should be substantial and include a variety of textures and colors, to the extent possible. Landscaping should be used to enhance each site, including buildings, setbacks, entrances, open space areas, and to screen parking and other less visually attractive areas. Encourage planted containers at building entries.

**DC4 Exterior Elements and Finishes: Use appropriate and high quality elements and finishes for the building and its open spaces.**

## **DC4-A Exterior Elements and Finishes**

**DC4-A-1. Exterior Finish Materials:** Building exteriors should be constructed of durable and maintainable materials that are attractive even when viewed up close. Materials that have texture, pattern, or lend themselves to a high quality of detailing are encouraged.

### ***Uptown Supplemental Guidance:***

## **DC4-III Commercial Signage**

**DC4-III-i. Preferred Signage:** Throughout Uptown tasteful signs designed for pedestrians (as opposed to passing vehicles) are preferred. Backlit signs, animated reader Boards and similar signs are discouraged. Blade signs, wall-mounted signs, signs below awnings, and similar signs are preferred.

#### **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. **Parking Location and Access (SMC 23.47A.032):** The Code allows one point of access to off street parking. For massing Option 2, the applicant proposes two points of access.

Since the Board directed the applicant to proceed with the preferred option, massing Option 3, the Board did not indicate support for the departure.

#### **BOARD DIRECTION**

At the conclusion of the EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE meeting, the Board recommended moving forward to MUP application.