



# City of Seattle

Department of Construction & Inspections  
Nathan Torgelson, Director

DESIGN  
REVIEW

## RECOMMENDATION OF THE DOWNTOWN DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3019625

Address: 1901 Minor Ave

Applicant: Case Creal of Gensler, for Crescent Heights

Date of Meeting: Tuesday, August 30, 2016

Board Members Present: Murphy McCullough (Chair)  
Bradley Calvert  
Anjali Grant  
Grace Leong

Board Members Absent: JP Emery

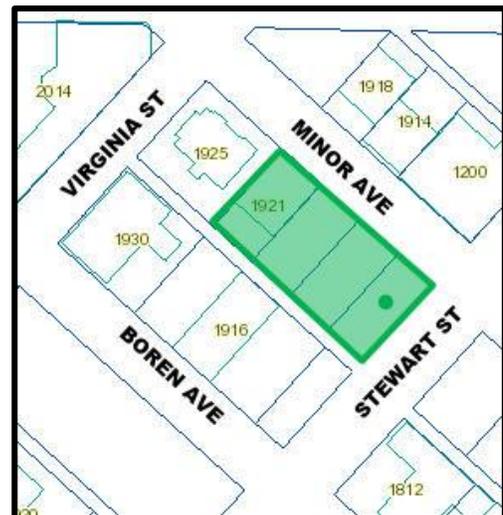
SDCI Staff Present: Garry Papers, RA, MArch, Senior Land Use Planner

### SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: DMC 240/290-400

Nearby Zones: (North) DMC 240/290-400  
(South) DMC 240/290-400  
(East) DMC 240/290-400  
(West) DMC 240/290-400

Lot Area: 26,160 sq ft, flat



**Current Development:**

Surface parking lot with one small, 1-story commercial building.

**Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:**

The rest of the half block to the west has a one story City of Seattle facility wrapped by surface parking. The half block to the south contains two 3 story commercial buildings and surface parking. The surrounding Denny Triangle neighborhood consists of mixed commercial structures and parking lots, rapidly transitioning to tall, dense mixed use structures, consistent with zoning and planning policies.

**Access:**

Pedestrian access from the three surrounding streets of Minor Avenue, Virginia and Stewart Streets. Vehicle access from the existing through-block alley.

**Environmentally Critical Areas:**

None

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The proposed development is a two tower residential structure, totaling 39 stories including an 8 story podium, comprised of 737 units and 9,123 sq ft of ground level retail. Parking for 424 cars is below grade, with all loading and parking access off the alley.

The design booklet includes information presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number at this website: <http://web6.seattle.gov/dpd/edms/>

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)

**EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE May 12, 2015**

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were no public comments at this meeting.

SDCI staff also stated there were no comments received in writing prior to the meeting.

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 (the Board) provided the following siting and design guidance.

All [page references] below are to the EDG booklet dated 5/12/2015. (Downtown Design Guidelines referenced)

### **1. Massing & Program:**

- a) **Massing Options:** The Board agreed the preferred option 3 is the most dynamic and responds to the grid shift in the site context, with the west tower affording multiple amenity notches facing north and SLU. The Board also supported all parking below grade, and maximizing the retail area and depths, as shown in option 3. (A-1, A-2, B-2)
- b) **Tower Cores & Amenities:** The Board supported the option 3 offset cores shown on page 46, including the windows at the elevator lobbies. The Board agreed the mid-tower amenity levels provide dispersed and plentiful shared space relief to residents. When exterior notches occur, they should be double height (pg 44), to create a legible scale of 'notch' on the tall towers, and to afford those spaces sun and a usable tall proportion. (B-4, D-1)
- c) **Massing Modulation:** The Board strongly supported the asymmetrical composition of the preferred option 3, as expressed on the right diagram on page 24. This diagram should guide all development, as it portrays the requisite depth (15-20 ft) and scale of the amenity notches, and the relative disposition of them on the towers, in order to modulate the cubic volumes (also see 3a below). The Board strongly agreed that diagram also expressed the best approach to the strategic northeast corner: it should be recessed and double height, reading as a ground level version of the upper notches. ( B-4, C-2)

### **2. Ground Level Uses & Street Activation:**

- a) **Ground Level Retail:** The Board strongly supported retail along the majority of the two street frontages (pg 46), and about 14 ft clear height at the storefronts. The Board supported the concept of flexible/craft food and beverage, but not at the northeast corner.(A-1, C-1)
- b) **Corner and Lobby Entrance:** The Board agreed the northeast corner and some length of Minor should be recessed to modulate the base massing (see 1c above) and the primary

lobby entrance should occur at the corner (preferably with a double height volume), extending over to the central elevators. (C-2, C-4, D-3)

- c) Consistent Street Wall: The Board agreed the ground floor retail, (and possibly some floors above) should extend to the west property line, not leaving a street wall gap as shown on pg 46, lower left. (C-1, C-3)
- d) Alley: The Board applauded the intent to upgrade the alley, and supported treatments such as artful garage doors, special lighting and premium wall materials. (C-6, E-2, E-3)
- e) Canopies: The Board supported continuous overhead canopies, as indicated on page 41, but not the particular expression shown, which is too low and is a planer design concept at odds with the 'volumes and notches' endorsed under 1c above. (C-5)

### **3. Tower Form & Architectural Expression:**

- a) Tower Materiality: The Board supported the deep and shifting cladding language shown on page 42 left as promising for the majority of the towers and base, but only if the large notches are tall, deep and legible per the diagram on page 24 right. The Board agreed that preferred language did not equate to the perspective renderings immediately adjacent on that page, which were a series of folding planes; thus this planer language was not supported. (B-4, C-2)
- b) Notches and Columns: The Board noted the perimeter columns shown on plans would obviate the essential legibility of the notches, and recommended those columns be substantially recessed and shaped to maximize legibility of the notches.(B-4, C-2)
- c) Balconies and Lighting: The Board did not support the attached balconies as shown on page 46, but endorsed balconies recessed within the cladding depth, such as shown on pg 42 lower left. The Board also agreed the nighttime legibility of the notches should be reinforced with a robust lighting scheme that ensures all the notch elements 'glow'. (B-4, C-2, D-5)
- d) Rooftop: The Board requested more details about the function, amenity and forms of the rooftops at the next meeting. (A-2, D-1)

NOTE: This Board guidance is more detailed about architectural treatment and materials than a typical EDG; that is because the fundamental massing scheme supported by the Board, is dependent upon the successful modulation provided by the large, legible and distributed notches. As such, if the design presented at the subsequent Board meeting does not respond to or earnestly reflect this guidance, the Board may have substantially different guidance about all these elements at that time.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

The following public comments were offered at this meeting:

- Requested the Board consider and require bird-friendly strategies.
- Stated the massing was large and the podium should be broken to allow a pedestrian passage through the mid-block.
- Stated the project did not include enough public amenity or green space at grade, to accommodate the increased pedestrian activity it generates (several concurred).
- Stated the project has abundant private amenity, but little added pedestrian accommodation at the street level, especially at the street corners.
- Criticized the two tower forms as being rectilinear and un-interesting, and nothing other than the maximum possible zoning envelopes.
- Requested the additional density the project represents should also add value to the neighborhood.

SDCI staff also stated there were no comments received in writing prior to the meeting.

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 (the Board) provided the following siting and design guidance.

All [page references] below are to the Recommendation booklet dated 8/30/2016. (Downtown Design Guidelines referenced)

**1. Ground Floor:**

- a. The Board supported the generous amount of ground floor retail, but consistent with public comments, recommended condition #1: Increase the storefront setback along the lobby and south portion of Minor Avenue an additional 1-2 ft more than the 4ft 11" shown on REC booklet page 16.1. (D1; D3)
- b. The Board agreed the solid ground floor on the west portion of Stewart Street [pg 28/left] was too long and slot windows implied on plan 16.1 were insufficiently transparent, and recommended condition #2: Continue the full transparency along the west portion of Stewart ground level to occur as close to the alley corner as possible. (C3)
- c. The Board agreed the solid party wall along the north elevation will be visible [pg 28/right], and recommended condition #3: Add texture and/or a graphically contrasting design treatment to the length of the ground floor, north party wall. (B4)

- d. The Board supported the high transparency, absence of curb (allowing for future retail door placements), and high quantity of folding storefront shown on pg 26 and 31. The Board supported the stated goal to include multiple folding door sections especially along Stewart and Minor, and the distinct wood treatment for 3 retail entries on the north portion of Minor, as shown on pg 16.1, 26 and 29. (C1; C4)

## **2. Podium:**

- a. The Board supported the deep vertical notch above the lobby entrance, as shown in renderings [ 11,12,13] and stated to be 10 ft (but shown less in some drawings) and recommended a condition #4: Show the depth of the vertical notch on Minor Avenue to be 10 ft minimum for all podium floors. (C2)
- b. The Board supported the open balconies at the northeast corner along Minor Avenue [pg 11] but they should be visually lightened, and recommended a condition #5: Change the columns from concrete to metal; include mesh guardrails that have larger free-air percentage than the sample provided at the meeting; and consider lighter colored balcony soffits (while maintaining the dark floor slabs). (B4)
- c. The Board agreed the balcony proportions shown on the southern bay of the Minor elevation are more successful than the shorter one, and encouraged the implementation of both balcony stacks with that proportion. (B4)

## **3. Podium & Tower:**

- a. The Board did not agree the podium massing should be broken up, as mentioned by public comment, but did agree the visual interest of the podium and towers is dependent on the layering of the following façade elements, as shown on pg 25 and stated by the applicants: center-set glass; added approximate 2" to mullion faces; added approximate 2" offset to face of metal panel; added approximate 2" offset to adjacent accent panel; added approximate 2" offset to floor slabs expressed as consistent horizontals every 2 floors. (C2)
- b. The Board agreed the exterior palette is uniformly cool and neutral [34-37], and recommended the applicants consider changing the white/silver "MT-2" accent panels to be less silver, possibly a champagne hue to add some warmth to the facades. (C2)

## **4. Tower & Roof:**

- a. The Board agreed the 3 amenity notches on floors 9, 21 and 26 provide essential form and color relief to the project [10,15], and strongly supported the contrasting and legible rose-gold color on all walls and ceilings of the notches [11]. The consistent lighting of those notch materials is also crucial, including the linear accent strips at the creases, as stated and shown on pg 21. To ensure the legibility of these critical notches, the Board recommended condition #6: No concrete walls occur at the perimeter of podium or any notches [13,14,21]; only deeply recessed and glass guardrails per 21/right, or at back of perimeter columns at minimum; planters

acceptable on sloped floor planes of podium and notches, with modest amounts of rose gold cladding; ensure a continuous and consistently thin slab edge above and below the notches, as shown on pg 21. (C2)

- b. The Board discussed at length the proposed faceted and rose gold cladding of the two vertical core walls [14, 15, 22], and agreed they were odd and distracting from the notches. The Board recommended condition #7: Replace the proposed faceted cladding of the two vertical core walls, with a continuation of the layered metal panels and composition wrapping the rest of the towers; the large windows at the elevator lobbies should be retained. (B4)
- c. The Board discussed the proposed rooftop forms and materials at length. The Board supported the unified rose gold materiality from deck to top of screen [22], the inset box volume, and the angled portals, provided they stay 1 story tall and do not extend to the slab edge. (B4)
- d. The Board agreed the following attributes of the rose gold cladding material “MT-4” shown to the Board at the meeting, are critical: the warm, red/gold hue; the metallic reflective quality; the creases and linear lighting strips. The dimpled texture of the sample shown is welcome, and variations of the texture are acceptable, as long as they do not diminish the color and metallic quality shown. The Board strongly agreed that in no case, would a cementitious panel be an acceptable substitute. (C2)

#### **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 Recommendation Meeting, no departures were requested.

#### **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](#).

<b>SITE PLANNING AND MASSING</b>
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**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.

**A2 Enhance the Skyline: Design the upper portion of the building to promote visual interest and variety in the downtown skyline. Respect existing landmarks while responding to the skyline’s present and planned profile.**

**A2.1. Desired Architectural Treatments:** Use one or more of the following architectural treatments to accomplish this goal:

- a. sculpt or profile the facades;
- b. specify and compose a palette of materials with distinctive texture, pattern, or color;
- c. provide or enhance a specific architectural rooftop element.

**A2.2. Rooftop Mechanical Equipment:** In doing so, enclose and integrate any rooftop mechanical equipment into the design of the building as a whole.

## ARCHITECTURAL EXPRESSION

**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

**C1 Promote Pedestrian Interaction: Spaces for street level uses should be designed to engage pedestrians with the activities occurring within them. Sidewalk-related spaces should appear safe, welcoming, and open to the general public.**

**C1.1. Street Level Uses:** Provide spaces for street level uses that:

- a. reinforce existing retail concentrations;
- b. vary in size, width, and depth;
- c. enhance main pedestrian links between areas; and
- d. establish new pedestrian activity where appropriate to meet area objectives. Design for uses that are accessible to the general public, open during established shopping hours, generate walk-in pedestrian clientele, and contribute to a high level of pedestrian activity.

**C1.2. Retail Orientation:** Where appropriate, consider configuring retail space to attract tenants with products or services that will “spill-out” onto the sidewalk (up to six feet where sidewalk is sufficiently wide).

**C1.3. Street-Level Articulation for Pedestrian Activity:** Consider setting portions of the building back slightly to create spaces conducive to pedestrian-oriented activities such as vending, resting, sitting, or dining. Further articulate the street level facade to provide an engaging pedestrian experience via:

- e. open facades (i.e., arcades and shop fronts);
- f. multiple building entries;
- g. windows that encourage pedestrians to look into the building interior;
- h. merchandising display windows;
- i. street front open space that features art work, street furniture, and landscaping;

j. exterior finish materials having texture, pattern, lending themselves to high quality detailing.

**C2 Design Facades of Many Scales: Design architectural features, fenestration patterns, and material compositions that refer to the scale of human activities contained within. Building facades should be composed of elements scaled to promote pedestrian comfort, safety, and orientation.**

**C2.1. Modulation of Facades:** Consider modulating the building facades and reinforcing this modulation with the composition of:

- a. the fenestration pattern;
- b. exterior finish materials;
- c. other architectural elements;
- d. light fixtures and landscaping elements; and
- e. the roofline.

**C3 Provide Active — Not Blank — Facades: Buildings should not have large blank walls facing the street, especially near sidewalks.**

**C3.1. Desirable Facade Elements:** Facades which for unavoidable programmatic reasons may have few entries or windows should receive special design treatment to increase pedestrian safety, comfort, and interest. Enliven these facades by providing:

- a. small retail spaces (as small as 50 square feet) for food bars, newstands, and other specialized retail tenants;
- b. visibility into building interiors;
- c. limited lengths of blank walls;
- d. a landscaped or raised bed planted with vegetation that will grow up a vertical trellis or frame installed to obscure or screen the wall's blank surface;
- e. high quality public art in the form of a mosaic, mural, decorative masonry pattern, sculpture, relief, etc., installed over a substantial portion of the blank wall surface;
- f. small setbacks, indentations, or other architectural means of breaking up the wall surface;
- g. different textures, colors, or materials that break up the wall's surface.
- h. special lighting, a canopy, awning, horizontal trellis, or other pedestrian-oriented feature to reduce the expanse of the blank surface and add visual interest;
- i. seating ledges or perches (especially on sunny facades and near bus stops);
- j. merchandising display windows or regularly changing public information display cases.

**C5 Encourage Overhead Weather Protection: Project applicants are encouraged to provide continuous, well-lit, overhead weather protection to improve pedestrian comfort and safety along major pedestrian routes.**

**C5.1. Overhead Weather Protection Design Elements:** Overhead weather protection should be designed with consideration given to:

- a. the overall architectural concept of the building
- b. uses occurring within the building (such as entries and retail spaces) or in the adjacent streetscape environment (such as bus stops and intersections);
- c. minimizing gaps in coverage;
- d. a drainage strategy that keeps rain water off the street-level facade and sidewalk;
- e. continuity with weather protection provided on nearby buildings;
- f. relationship to architectural features and elements on adjacent development, especially if abutting a building of historic or noteworthy character;
- g. the scale of the space defined by the height and depth of the weather protection;
- h. use of translucent or transparent covering material to maintain a pleasant sidewalk environment with plenty of natural light; and
- i. when opaque material is used, the illumination of light-colored undersides to increase security after dark.

## PUBLIC AMENITIES

**D1 Provide Inviting & Usable Open Space: Design public open spaces to promote a visually pleasing, safe, and active environment for workers, residents, and visitors. Views and solar access from the principal area of the open space should be especially emphasized.**

**D1.1. Pedestrian Enhancements:** Where a commercial or mixed-use building is set back from the sidewalk, pedestrian enhancements should be considered in the resulting street frontage. Downtown the primary function of any open space between commercial buildings and the sidewalk is to provide access into the building and opportunities for outdoor activities such as vending, resting, sitting, or dining.

- a. All open space elements should enhance a pedestrian oriented, urban environment that has the appearance of stability, quality, and safety.
- b. Preferable open space locations are to the south and west of tower development, or where the siting of the open space would improve solar access to the sidewalk.
- c. Orient public open space to receive the maximum direct sunlight possible, using trees, overhangs, and umbrellas to provide shade in the warmest months. Design such spaces to take advantage of views and solar access when available from the site.
- d. The design of planters, landscaping, walls, and other street elements should allow visibility into and out of the open space.

**D1.2. Open Space Features:** Open spaces can feature art work, street furniture, and landscaping that invite customers or enhance the building’s setting. Examples of desirable features to include are:

- a. visual and pedestrian access (including barrier- free access) into the site from the public sidewalk;
- b. walking surfaces of attractive pavers;
- c. pedestrian-scaled site lighting;
- d. retail spaces designed for uses that will comfortably “spill out” and enliven the open space;

- e. areas for vendors in commercial areas;
- f. landscaping that enhances the space and architecture;
- g. pedestrian-scaled signage that identifies uses and shops; and
- h. site furniture, art work, or amenities such as fountains, seating, and kiosks. residential open space

**D1.3. Residential Open Space:** Residential buildings should be sited to maximize opportunities for creating usable, attractive, well-integrated open space. In addition, the following should be considered:

- i. courtyards that organize architectural elements while providing a common garden;
- j. entry enhancements such as landscaping along a common pathway;
- k. decks, balconies and upper level terraces;
- l. play areas for children;
- m. individual gardens; and
- n. location of outdoor spaces to take advantage of sunlight.

**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.**

**D3.1. Public Space Features and Amenities:** Incorporate one or more of the following a appropriate:

- a. public art;
- b. street furniture, such as seating, newspaper boxes, and information kiosks;
- c. distinctive landscaping, such as specimen trees and water features;
- d. retail kiosks;
- e. public restroom facilities with directional signs in a location easily accessible to all; and
- f. public seating areas in the form of ledges, broad stairs, planters and the like, especially near public open spaces, bus stops, vending areas, on sunny facades, and other places where people are likely to want to pause or wait.

**D3.2. Intersection Focus:** Enliven intersections by treating the corner of the building or sidewalk with public art and other elements that promote interaction (entry, tree, seating, etc.) and reinforce the distinctive character of the surrounding area.

**D5 Provide Adequate Lighting: To promote a sense of security for people downtown during nighttime hours, provide appropriate levels of lighting on the building facade, on the underside of overhead weather protection, on and around street furniture, in merchandising display windows, in landscaped areas, and on signage.**

**D5.1. Lighting Strategies:** Consider employing one or more of the following lighting strategies as appropriate.

- a. Illuminate distinctive features of the building, including entries, signage, canopies, and areas of architectural detail and interest.
- b. Install lighting in display windows that spills onto and illuminates the sidewalk.

- c. Orient outside lighting to minimize glare within the public right-of-way.

## VEHICULAR ACCESS AND PARKING

None were identified as priority guidelines, but all remain applicable.

### RECOMMENDATION

The recommendation summarized above was based on the design review booklet dated Tuesday, August 30, 2016, and the materials shown and verbally described by the applicant at the Tuesday, August 30, 2016 Design Recommendation meeting. After considering the site and context, hearing public comment, reconsidering the previously identified design priorities and reviewing the materials, the four Design Review Board members recommended APPROVAL of the subject design and departures with the following conditions:

- 1) Increase the storefront setback along the lobby and south portion of Minor Avenue an additional 1-2 ft more than the 4ft 11" shown on REC booklet page 16.1. (D1; D3)
- 2) Continue the full transparency along the west portion of Stewart ground level to occur as close to the alley corner as possible. (C3)
- 3) Add texture and/or a graphically contrasting design treatment to the length of the ground floor, north party wall. (B4)
- 4) Show the depth of the vertical notch on Minor Avenue to be 10 ft minimum for all podium floors. (C2)
- 5) Change the northeast balcony stack columns from concrete to metal; include mesh guardrails that have larger free-air percentage than the sample provided at the meeting; and consider lighter colored balcony soffits (while maintaining the dark floor slabs). (B4)
- 6) No concrete walls occur at perimeter of podium or any notches [13,14,21]; only deeply recessed and glass guardrails per 21/right, or at back of perimeter columns at minimum; planters acceptable on sloped floor planes of podium and notches, with modest amounts of rose gold cladding; ensure a continuous and consistently thin slab edge above and below the notches, as shown on pg 21. (C2)
- 7) Replace the proposed faceted cladding of the two vertical core walls, with a continuation of the layered metal panels and composition wrapping the rest of the towers; the large windows at the elevator lobbies should be retained. (B4)