



# City of Seattle

Department of Construction and Inspections  
Nathan Torgelson, Director



## RECOMMENDATION OF THE WEST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3019904

Address: 1208 Republican St

Applicant: Joshua Scott, kōz Development

Date of Meeting: Wednesday, March 16, 2016

Board Members Present: Boyd Pickrell (Chair)  
Christine Harrington  
Kate Idziorek  
Homero Nishiwaki  
Janet Stephenson

Board Members Absent: None

SDCI Staff Present: BreAnne McConkie, Land Use Planner

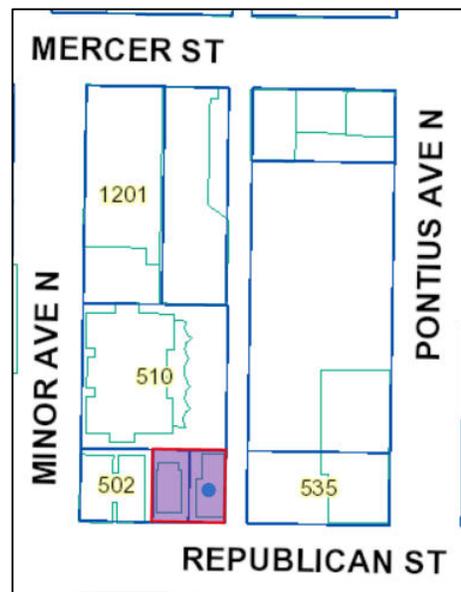
### SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Seattle Mixed Residential 55' height limit for commercial uses, 85' height limit for residential uses (SM/R 55'/85')

Nearby Zones: (North) SM/R 55'/85'  
(South) SM/R 55'/85'  
(East) SM/R 55'/85'  
(West) SM/R 55'/85'

Lot Area: 3,600 square feet (sq. ft.)

**Current Development and Site Characteristics:** The site consists of two parcels both of which are currently vacant. Pedestrian access to the site is proposed from Republican St. and the adjacent alley to the east. The site



has a notable slope from east down to west with the high point adjacent to the alley.

**Neighborhood Context:** The proposal is located in the South Lake Union Urban Center specifically in the Cascade Sub-area. The site is located on Republican St. between Minor Ave N and Pontius Ave N and is approximately one block south of the I-5 Mercer St. on/off ramp.

The South Lake Union neighborhood has undergone significant redevelopment in recent years. The immediate context surrounding the site includes a mix of large-scale contemporary mixed-use, residential, and commercial structures as well as traditional mixed-use masonry structures and a small number of early 20<sup>th</sup> century single-family wood structures that have been converted to commercial uses.

**Environmentally Critical Areas:** There are no Environmentally Critical Areas onsite.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposal is a 7-story apartment building containing 44 Small Efficiency Dwelling Units. No parking is proposed.

### Project Proposal

The Design Review EDG and Recommendation packets include materials presented at the meetings, and are available online by entering the project number at the following website: <http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/aboutus/news/events/DesignReview/SearchPastReviews/default.aspx>

The packets are also available to view in the file, by contacting the Public Resource Center at SDCI:

**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 August 12, 2015

### PUBLIC COMMENT

There were a few members of the public present at the Early Design Guidance meeting. Members of the public provided comments and identified the following issues:

- Owned the adjacent building and has no intention of redeveloping it.

- Noted that 5 of the 10 units in the adjacent building to the west have windows facing east (towards the proposed development) and favored a design that would maximize light and airflow to the existing neighboring building.
- Expressed concern with the blank wall along the west façade adjacent to the existing building and stated support for the west facing façade to be more interesting and pleasant to view for the neighboring units.

## RECOMMENDATION March 16, 2016

### PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no members of the public present at the Recommendation meeting. An adjacent property owner submitted written comments in advance of the Recommendation meeting noting a desire for a setback along the west, adjacent to their building to maximize light and air.

## 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 August 12, 2015

1. **Massing & Siting:** At EDG, the Board discussed the massing alternatives at length and directed the applicant to move forward with a hybrid of Option 2 and 3. **(CS2-C-2, CS2-D-5)**
  - a. In general, the Board supported the siting, orientation, and configuration of the upper floors (above floor 3) in Option 3. The tower placement should be shifted to the east, as shown in Option 3, allowing for more openings and fenestration along the western façade, maximizing daylight to western units and creating a more interesting western façade. **(CS2-C-2, CS2-D-5, DC2-B-1, DC2-B-2)**
  - b. As shown in Option 2, the design should locate the lobby and primary entrance on the first level at the southwest corner of the site. The entry at this location should create a sense of activity, provide better access to the bicycle facilities, and result in a better relationship between the basement/ground floor units and the street. **(CS2-C-2, PL3-A-1, PL3-A-2, PL3-B-2)**
  - c. As presented in Option 2, the building should include a greater setback along the west property edge at the lower three levels with a setback of no less than 3'6", although a larger setback was encouraged. **(PL3-B-1, DC2-B-2, CS2-D-5)**
2. **Arrangement of Uses & Ground Floor Resolution:** At EDG, the Board expressed concern with the units below and partially below ground in Option 3. Specifically, the Board noted that the units and associated window wells along Republican St. created an undesirable relationship between the building and the right-of-way and directed the applicant to resolve how the ground floor units could better relate to the street. **(PL3-B-1, PL3-B-2, PL1-III-I, CS2-C-2)**

- a. The Board directed the applicant to consider shifting the bike storage area and/or orientation to improve accessibility to the bike area and further reduce window wells and negative impacts associated with the basement units. **(PL3-B-1, PL3-B-2)**
- b. The Board noted that the ground floor units along the north portion of the building would have direct access to adjacent outdoor space and directed the applicant to further develop these outdoor spaces. **(PL3-B-2, DC2-B-1)**
- c. For the next meeting, the applicant should provide a detailed resolution of the ground floor for all sides of the building and a site plan that includes neighboring properties. **(CS2-D-5, PL3-B-1, PL3-B-2)**
- d. The applicant should provide street level perspectives and street elevations to demonstrate how the proposal relates to the existing neighboring properties to the east and west. **(CS2-C-2, CS2-D-5, PL3-B-1, PL3-B-2)**

### **3. Architectural Expression & Blank Facades**

- a. At EDG, the Board expressed general support for the architectural concept shown in the applicant's preferred Option (Option 3) including the exaggerated projecting frames with recessed areas creating relief within the frames. The Board noted that the architectural concept could be more cohesive and further simplified because of the relatively small size of the building. **(DC2-B-1, DC2-B-2, DC4-A-1)**
- b. Clarity in architectural composition was identified as a priority. The massing should inform the exterior design with material expression and architectural features better relating to the massing, emphasizing the larger gestures and massing moves. **(DC2-B-1, DC4-A-1)**
- c. The Board noted the bays did not feel compatible with the architectural concept presented and directed the applicant to explore usable balconies as an alternative and/or in addition to. **(DC2-B-1)**
- d. For the blank facades, the Board directed the applicant to incorporate artful treatments and/or landscaping, specifically along the western façade at the lower levels. **(DC2-B-2, DC4-A-1)**
- e. The use of light colors should be incorporated at strategic locations to reflect and maximize light into adjacent units. **(DC4-A-1)**
- f. For the next meeting, the applicant should provide a landscape plan, conceptual lighting, and signage plan. **(PL1-III-i, DC4-A-1, DC4-B-1)**

## **RECOMMENDATION March 16, 2016**

### **1. Massing & Façade Composition:**

- a. The Board supported the massing as presented and noted that the applicant had responded well. **(DC2-A)**
- b. The Board discussed the façade composition at length, specifically the south, street facing façade and came to a consensus with a majority of the Board in support that the façade composition as presented was adequate. The materials and balcony depth were supported and should be maintained. **(DC2-A, DC4-A)**

### **2. Landscaping & Setbacks:**

- a. There was support for the depth of the west, at grade setback as well as the intent of the landscaping at that location including variety, color, texture, and sensory qualities. The applicant should work with a landscape architect and the planner to ensure the plants selected for that location will thrive in a shady environment and meet the intent of the landscaping presented (as described above and in the Recommendation packet). The Board supported the intent of the wire trellis, but was open to other material choices/trellis design that will support the chosen plants at that location. **(CS1-B, DC2-B, DC4-D)**
- b. The Board recommended a condition that the planter and landscape design along the southern (street) frontage be modified to start flush with grade at the high side and emerge out of the ground, creating a cascading effect moving down the hill. Seating opportunities should be incorporated into the design of the planter wall and should include wood elements for the seat itself, rather than including standalone benches. **(DC4-D, DC3-A, CS2-B)**
- c. There was support for the height, texture, and color of landscape concept along the south façade and taller plants should be included to provide a more robust buffer but should not obscure the visual connection into the adjacent windows or block signage. **(DC4-D)**

**3. Entry:**

- a. There was support for the entry as designed including ample lighting, transparency, and backlit signage, as proposed at Recommendation. These elements should be carried through to the final design. The Board recommended a condition that the backlit sign be included. **(PL3-A, DC2-C, DC4-B&C)**
- b. Special paving should be included onsite at the entry to help differentiate and announce the entry. **(PL3-A, DC4-D)**
- c. The Board discussed the entry height, and noted a desire for the height to be maintained and the soffit to be pulled away from the edge of the entry ceiling, but came to a general consensus that the height as presented was adequate. **(PL3-A)**
- d. The Board discussed the entry sequence, arrangement of uses near the entry, and safety of the bike room and encouraged the applicant consider how the function and safety of this space. **(PL3-A, DC1-A)**
- e. The Board recommended a condition that a bike rack be included in the right-of-way or onsite in a publically accessible area. **(PL4-B)**

**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>CONTEXT &amp; SITE</b>
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**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-C Relationship to the Block**

**CS2-C-2. Mid-Block Sites:** Look to the uses and scales of adjacent buildings for clues about how to design a mid-block building. Continue a strong street-edge and respond to datum lines of adjacent buildings at the first three floors.

**CS2-D Height, Bulk, and Scale**

**CS2-D-5. Respect for Adjacent Sites:** Respect adjacent properties with design and site planning to minimize disrupting the privacy of residents in adjacent buildings.

**PUBLIC LIFE**

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

***South Lake Union Supplemental Guidance:***

**PL1-III Pedestrian Open Spaces and Entrances**

**PL1-III-i. Public Realm Amenity:** New developments are encouraged to work with the Design Review Board and interested citizens to provide features that enhance the public realm, i.e. the transition zone between private property and the public right of way. The Board is generally willing to consider a departure in open space requirements if the project proponent provides an acceptable plan for features such as:

- a. curb bulbs adjacent to active retail spaces where they are not interfering with primary corridors that are designated for high levels of traffic flow;
- b. pedestrian-oriented street lighting;
- c. street furniture.

**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-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-2. Ground-level Residential:** Privacy and security issues are particularly important in buildings with ground-level housing, both at entries and where windows are located overlooking the street.

**DESIGN CONCEPT**

**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-B Architectural and Façade Composition**

**DC2-B-1. Façade Composition:** Design all building façades—including alleys and visible roofs— considering the composition and architectural expression of the building as a whole. Ensure that all façades are attractive and well-proportioned.

**DC2-B-2. Blank Walls:** Avoid large blank walls along visible façades wherever possible. Where expanses of blank walls, retaining walls, or garage façades are unavoidable, include uses or design treatments at the street level that have human scale and are designed for pedestrians.

**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.

**DC4-B Signage**

**DC4-B-1. Scale and Character:** Add interest to the streetscape with exterior signs and attachments that are appropriate in scale and character to the project and its environs.

**DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES**

The Board’s recommendation on the requested departure 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. The Board’s recommendation will be reserved until the final Board meeting.

At the time of the Recommendation meeting the following departures were requested:

1. **Upper Level Setback (SMC 23.48.012.C):** For lots abutting an alley in the SM/R 55/85 zone, the code requires portions of a structure greater than 25’ in height to be set back a minimum of 1’ from the alley lot line for every 2’ of additional height above 25’, up to a maximum setback of 15’ measured from the alley lot line. The applicant proposes no upper level setback along the alley with a voluntary 5’4” setback along the western property line.

The Board unanimously supported the requested departure because it resulted in a clear, rectangular composition and provided daylight and air to the existing neighboring building to the west, better meeting Design Guidelines CS1-B: Sunlight and Natural Ventilation and PL3- B: Residential Edges.

2. **Minimum Façade Height (SMC 23.48.014.A.2.b):** The code requires a minimum façade height of 25 feet for the street-facing façade. The applicant is proposing and recessed

alcove entry that comprises 83 square feet or 5% of the total façade that is less than 25 feet.

The Board unanimously supported the requested departure because it resulted in a better entry design and façade composition, better meeting Design Guidelines PL3-A: Entries and PL3-II: Human Activity.

Following the Recommendation meeting, SDCI staff confirmed that a departure for Minimum Façade Height is not required and street-facing façade is compliant as designed.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **BOARD DIRECTION**

At the conclusion of the RECOMMENDATION meeting, the Board recommended approval of the project with conditions.

The recommendation summarized above was based on the design review packet dated Wednesday, March 16, 2016, and the materials provide, shown and verbally described by the applicant at the Wednesday, March 16, 2016 Design Recommendation meeting. After considering the site and context, hearing public comment, reconsidering the previously identified design priorities and reviewing the materials, the five Design Review Board members recommended **APPROVAL** of the subject design and departures with the following conditions:

#### **Board Recommended Conditions:**

1. The planter and landscape design along the southern (street) frontage should be modified to start flush with grade at the high side and step down with the sidewalk grade. Seating with wood elements should be incorporated into the design of the planter wall, rather than inclusion of standalone benches.
2. A backlit sign, as presented at the Recommendation meeting, should be included.
3. A bike rack should be included in the right-of-way or onsite in a publically accessible area near the entry.