City of Seattle

Department of Planning & Development
D. M. Sugimura, Director

DESIGN REVIEW

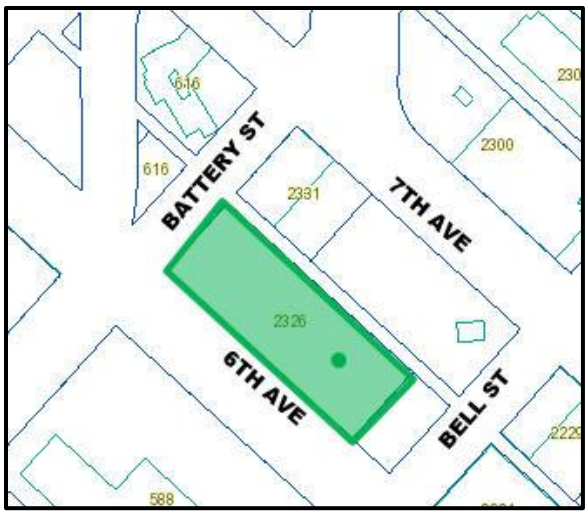
EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE DOWNTOWN DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number:	3020315
Address:	2326 6th Ave
Applicant:	Matt Rowe, VIA Architects
Date of Meeting:	Tuesday, June 23, 2015
Board Members Present:	Matthew Albores Anjali Grant Alan McWain
Board Members Absent:	Murphy McCullough Gundula Proksch
DPD Staff Present:	Beth Hartwick, Senior Land Use Planner

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: DMC 240/290-400

Nearby Zones: (North) SM 240/125-400
(South) DMC 340/290-400.
(East) DMC 340/290-400
(West) DMR/C 240/125



Lot Area: 32,400 Sq. Ft.

Current Development: A two-story commercial building constructed in 1950.

Access: The site has access from 6th Ave, Battery St, and an improved alley.

Environmentally Critical Areas: None

Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character: The nearby blocks and neighborhood are experiencing rapid transition from a low density under-used area of surface parking and smaller scale retail structures and former hotels. Across 6th Ave to the west, a large residential condo development is under construction. New high rise office development is under construction a few blocks to the south, with another block of office use planned for the block between Blanchard St. and Lenora Street between 7th and 8th Avenues. The block between Bell and Blanchard Streets and 7th and 8th Ave is currently under MUP review for office development. Other nearby project in MUP review are a data center on the corner of 6th Ave and Bell St and a mixed use project at Denny Way and Wall St.

Across the alley from the site is a single-story structure housing an auto service use and surface parking. Across 6th Ave a mixed use development with two 40-story residential towers is under construction. Across Battery St is a surface parking lot that is part of the Pink Elephant car wash. Abutting the site at the south is a 6,480 sq. ft. surface parking lot. Directly east of the 6th Ave and Battery St. intersection is a three story office building constructed in 1947.

The site is served by multiple bus lines along Battery and Bell Streets, 7th Ave, Dexter Ave and Denny Way. Nearby 7th Avenue is a primary bike corridor, with a planned cycle track connecting to Dexter Ave N. Bike traffic crisscrosses the neighborhood on multiple streets, including Bell and Blanchard Streets.

Recreational opportunities and green space are available with Denny Park to the north, Bell Street Park toward the waterfront and the proposed park at Westlake and 8th Ave.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposal is for a mixed use development in the Denny Triangle Urban Center Village, with an 11 story podium and two 40-story residential towers with 812 units, 170 lodging units, and approx. 7,100 sq. ft. of retail space at the ground level. Parking will be provided below grade for approx. 600 parking spaces.

INITIAL EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE June 23, 2015

The packet includes materials presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number (3020315) at this website:
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 Address: **Public Resource Center**
700 Fifth Ave., Suite 2000
P.O. Box 34019
Seattle, WA 98124-4019

Email: PRC@seattle.gov

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

This project is on the same block as project #3019371 at 2301 7th Ave, which held its EDG meeting back on April 7, 2015 and has submitted MUP plans for review. Both sites are proposing to build two towers. This creates a unique situation given the Land Use Code requirement that towers be spaced at least 60' from each other in this zone.

Six options were presented. The three Options of Scenario A assumed the property across the alley as it is currently developed with a single story commercial building and surface parking. The three Options of Scenario B assumed that the property across the alley is developed under MUP #3019371 with option A from the EDG packet and presentation shown on April 7, 2015.

In Scenario B, Options B2 and B3 would be requesting a Directors Special Exception to allow two towers on the block to be closer than 60, under code section SMC23.49.058.F.6. This would require a waiver or modification by DPD, however the code makes it clear that this can happen only after the issues raised in the Design Review process have been addressed.

Scenario A

Option 1, called 'Stacked Blocks', proposed a design of two identically sized towers over a podium. At the podium above the ground level, and at the south tower, there was a 15' setback from the abutting property to the south. The north tower and podium were partially setback along Battery St. The towers would be setback approx. 6' from the alley property line.

The residential and lodging entries would be located close to midblock along 6th Ave. Retail space would flank the lobby along 6th Ave and wrap around to Battery Street. Parking and loading functions would be accessed from the alley.

Option 2, called 'Contrast', proposed a design of two different sized towers over a podium. The south tower showed multiple vertical bays in contrast to the smooth facades of the north tower. At the podium above the ground level, and at the south tower, there was an 11' setback from the abutting property to the south. The south tower also setback 16' from the alley. The north tower was shown with an approx. 6' setback from the alley property line.

The residential and lodging entries would be located close to midblock along 6th Ave. Retail space would flank the lobby along 6th Ave and wrap around to Battery Street. Parking and loading functions would be accessed from the alley.

Option 3, called 'Floating Volumes', proposed a design of two different sized towers over a podium. Both towers showed vertical bays and a ribbon element. At the podium above the ground level, and at the south tower, there was an 11' setback from the abutting property to the south. The north tower also setback 16' from the alley. The south tower was shown with an approx. 6' setback from the alley property line.

The residential and lodging entries would be located close to midblock along 6th Ave. Retail space would flank the lobby along 6th Ave and wrap around to Battery Street. Parking and loading functions would be accessed from the alley.

Scenario B

Option 1, called 'Stacked Blocks', proposed a design of two identically sized towers over a podium. At the podium above the ground level, and at the south tower, there was a 10' setback from the abutting property to the south. Both towers would be setback 44' from the alley property line and 60' from the two proposed towers across the alley.

The residential and lodging entries would be located close to midblock along 6th Ave. Retail space would flank the lobby along 6th Ave and wrap around to Battery Street. Parking and loading functions would be accessed from the alley.

Option 2, called 'Contrast', proposed a design of two different sized towers over a podium. The south tower showed multiple vertical bays in contrast to the smooth facades of the north tower. At the podium above the ground level, and at the south tower, there was a 10' setback from the abutting property to the south. The south tower was setback 60' from the proposed south tower across the alley. The north tower was shown with a setback 22' from the proposed north tower across the alley.

The residential and lodging entries would be located close to midblock along 6th Ave. Retail space would flank the lobby along 6th Ave and wrap around to Battery Street. Parking and loading functions would be accessed from the alley.

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The residential and lodging entries would be located close to midblock along 6th Ave. Retail space would flank the lobby along 6th Ave and wrap around to Battery Street. Parking and loading functions would be accessed from the alley.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The following public comment was read at the meeting:

- Noted that the massing options on the property across the alley being developed under #3019371 were not represented correctly in the EDG packet.

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: June 23, 2015

SCENERIO A Guidance – Options assumed the property across the alley as it is currently developed with a single story commercial building and surface parking.

1. **Tower Massing: The Board questioned how the towers were responding to the Insignia towers across 6th Ave. The Board noted that Option A1 was too massive and blocky**. (A1, A2, B1, B3)
    a. Noted that option A2 would be stronger if the 'bay' tower was more expressive and the other tower simpler. The Board questioned how the 'bay' tower intersected with the podium. Consider floating the tower over the podium. (B4)
    b. Consider the towers as two separate buildings; use the programed uses to distinguish between the two. (B4)
    c. Provide a shifting or angling of the towers so they are not always at 90 degrees to each other. (B3.2)
    d. Consider shifting the towers along the street frontage. (B3.2)
    e. Shift the towers within the property to allow for visual relief. (B3.2)
    f. Pull back the massing on Battery St. as a balance to the shift at Bell. (B3)
    g. Scenario A should respond to Insignia towers. (A1, A2, B1, B3)

2. **Podium Massing: The Board expressed that the podium was uninteresting and gave the following guidance: (B4)**
    a. Express the different uses in the massing as a design guide. (B4.2)
    b. Show a different typology at the podium and tower. (B4.2)

3. **Street Level Treatment: The Board questioned the large size of the lobby and provided the following guidance:**
    a. Consider the retail entry as a dominate influence on the massing. (B4.2)
    b. Design the retail space to activate the street. (C1)

SCENERIO B Guidance – Options B assumed that the property across the alley was developed under MUP #3018578 with option A from the projects EDG packet and presentation on April 7, 2015.

4. **Tower Massing and Tower Separation: The Board was not supportive of the proposed 22' separation between a tower on the site and a proposed tower across the alley. They expressed that the 22' separation was too tight and noted that the Design Guidelines encourage setbacks and solar access. The Board was concerned that having 6 residential towers within 2 blocks will not benefit the public and encouraged the property owners to coordinate with each other.** (A1, A2, B1, B3)
    a. The Board supported the two towers be designed as distinct from each other and not be identical. (B4.1)
    b. The bay elements on the towers are interesting. (B4)
    c. As the site is not sloped the Board did not encourage the stepping of the massing as shown in Option 3. (A1.1, B4)

d. Pull back the massing on Battery St. as a balance to the shift at Bell. (B4.1)
e. Consider the Insignia development. (A1, A2, B1, B3)

5. **Podium: The Board remarked that the podium read as one large mass and that it lacked a relationship to the tower. The programming of the building should help dictate the design of the podium. (B4)**
    a. Express the lodging use in the massing. (B4.2)
    b. Shift the massing at the extended stay areas. (B4.2)

6. **Street Level: The Board questioned the large size of the lobby and gave the following guidance:**
    a. Study the size and placement of the lobby as part of the podium massing. (B4.2)
    b. Consider the retail entry as an influence on the massing. (B4.2)
    c. Design the retail spaces to activate the street. (C1)
    d. The Board supported the continuous canopies, and encouraged a gracious welcoming street-facing frontage.(C5)
    e. Treat Battery St. as the quieter street and consider shifting back the massing at Battery St. as a balance to the shifting at the south property line. (B4.1)
    f. Consider a slight shifting of the facades. (B4.1)

For the 2nd EDG

- Present graphics that clearly show the design concepts of the towers, podium and ground level.
- Study the relationship of the two towers on the site and to other towers in the neighboring context.
- Provide a detailed ground floor plan and how it works, including the lobby functions.
- Provide further developed plans.
- Show the proposed canopies.

DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES

The priority Downtown 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.

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.

A1.2. 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

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.

B3 Reinforce the Positive Urban Form & Architectural Attributes of the Immediate Area.: Consider the predominant attributes of the immediate neighborhood and reinforce desirable siting patterns, massing arrangements, and streetscape characteristics of nearby development.

B3.1. Building Orientation: In general, orient the building entries and open space toward street intersections and toward street fronts with the highest pedestrian activity. Locate parking and vehicle access away from entries, open space, and street intersections considerations.

B3.2. Features to Complement: Reinforce the desirable patterns of massing and facade composition found in the surrounding area. Pay particular attention to designated landmarks and other noteworthy buildings. Consider complementing the existing:

a. massing and setbacks,
b. scale and proportions,
c. expressed structural bays and modulations,
d. fenestration patterns and detailing,
e. exterior finish materials and detailing,

f. architectural styles, and
g. roof forms.

B3.3. Pedestrian Amenities at the Ground Level: Consider setting the building back slightly to create space adjacent to the sidewalk conducive to pedestrian-oriented activities such as vending, sitting, or dining. Reinforce the desirable streetscape elements found on adjacent blocks. Consider complementing existing:

h. public art installations,
i. street furniture and signage systems,
j. lighting and landscaping, and
k. overhead weather protection.

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.

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.

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 Initial Early Design Guidance no departures were requested.

RECOMMENDATIONS

BOARD DIRECTION

At the conclusion of the Early Design Guidance meeting, the Board directed the applicant to return for another EDG meeting.