



## EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE WEST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3020556

Address: 753 9<sup>th</sup> Ave N

Applicant: Jon O'Hare, on behalf of R.D. Olson Development

Date of Meeting: Wednesday, October 21, 2015

Board Members Present: Christine Harrington (Alt. Chair)  
Katherine Idziorek  
Homero Nishiwaki  
Janet Stephenson

Board Members Absent: Boyd Pickrell

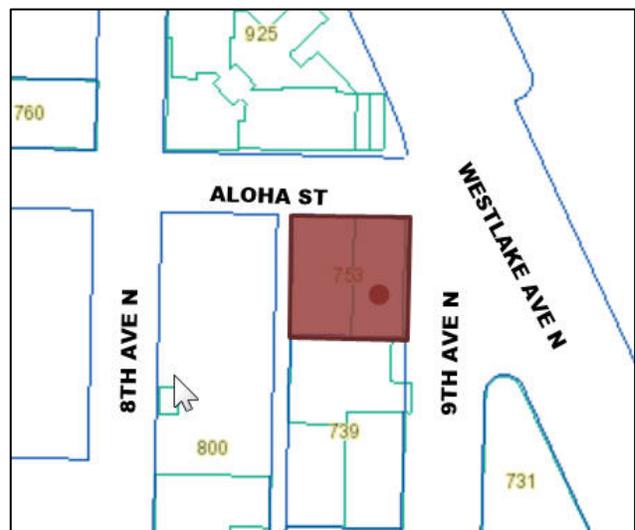
DPD Staff Present: BreAnne McConkie, Land Use Planner

### SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Seattle Mixed with an 85' height limit (SM-85)

Nearby Zones: (North) SM-85  
(South) SM-85  
(East) Commercial 2 with a 40' height limit (C2-40)  
(West) SM-85

Lot Area: 14,030 square feet (sq. ft.)



**Current Development:**

The site currently contains a two-story masonry office building.

**Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:**

The site is located southwest of the intersection of Aloha St, 9<sup>th</sup> Ave N, and Westlake Ave N, across the street from Lake Union Park. The surrounding development is a mix of low-rise masonry warehouse and office structures, some newer mid-rise structures built in the late 90s, and a number of newer office, residential, and mixed-use mid-rise structures recently constructed with several more planned in the near vicinity.

**Access:**

The site is located on the southwest corner of 9<sup>th</sup> Ave N and Aloha St and abuts an alley to the west. Vehicle access to the site is proposed via a one-way curb cut from Aloha St. exiting onto the adjacent alley.

**Environmentally Critical Areas:**

The entire site is mapped as an ECA Liquefaction Prone Area.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

Design Review Early Design Guidance application proposing a 8-story building with 113 hotel rooms and 3,000 sq. ft. of commercial space. Parking for 32 vehicles to be located in below grade garage. Existing structure to be demolished.

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The packet includes materials presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number at the following website:

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

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

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Members of the public present at the EDG meeting provided the following comments:

- Represented the SLU Policy and Planning Committee and expressed excitement and support for the project. Supported the Applicant's Preferred Option because of the mass setback and openness of the corner to take advantage of views. Noted upcoming changes to the bus stops and service in the area; buses will no longer go on 9th but to will continue on Westlake.
- Noted the flatness of the 9th Ave façade and questioned the possibility of modulation along that frontage. Would like to see softening of the streetscape with landscaping and vegetation along the sidewalk, café tables and recesses similar to Assembly Hall downtown.
- Supported the parklike feature on the north but expressed concerns with it being cold and dark because of the location on the north.
- Stated strong support for the requested access/curb-cut departure noting it as an elegant solution and preferred over the alley because the alley will likely become very congested with future development.
- Supported the loading berth departure request.
- Excited about the proposal and noted that the concepts were great; proposal would capture views; loved the sky lounge concept and stated it would be a great public amenity.
- Supportive of the elegant massing shapes.
- Excited about the prospect of a boutique hotel that was a high quality, lifestyle brand.
- Noted this was a very important corner and should be unique and differentiated.

A member of the public provided a folder of best and worst project examples for the Board's consideration.

## **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 October 21, 2015**

#### **1. Massing, Architectural Character, & Materials:**

- a. The Board unanimously supported the Applicant's preferred massing scheme, specifically the pulling back from the neighboring property to the south and dynamic angular shifted plane along the north because of its added architectural interest, noting it would provide and frame views to Lake Union. (CS2-I-i., DC2-A-1)
- b. The Board supported the vertical emphasis and directed the Applicant to continue to enhance this aspect of the design. (DC2-B-1., DC2-C-1., DC4-A-1.)
- c. The Board supported the possibility of contrasting materials and architectural character on the two different street-facing volumes in lieu of modulation and stated

that the dynamic character should be carried through to the materials. (DC2-B-1., DC4-A-1.)

- d. The Board expressed unanimous support for the boutique hotel character that was presented at EDG and emphasized that it was critical that the unique character, quality finishes and secondary architectural features be carried through to the final design to differentiate the project and maintain the concept that was presented at EDG. (DC2, DC2-B-1., DC4-A-1.)

## **2. Corner & Roof:**

- a. The Board directed the Applicant to explore more transparency at the corner, wrapping around to Aloha St. and stated that the corner could be more expressive. (CS2-C-1., CS2-I-iii.)
- b. The Applicant should explore extending the rooftop amenity space to wrap around to the 9<sup>th</sup> Ave N frontage and strongly encouraged the top floor amenity space to be publically accessible. (CS2-C-1., CS2-I-iii., CS2-I-i.)
- c. The screening of rooftop mechanical as presented at EDG should be maintained. (DC2-I-i., CS3-I-ii.)
- d. The Board supported landscaping on the podium rooftop since it would be highly visible. (DC2-I-i.)
- e. The Board supported the location of the fitness center away from the primary public frontage and would like to see that maintained. (DC1-A-1.)
- f. The Board noted that the loading dock should have a roof. (DC2-I-i., DC1-C-4.)

## **3. 9<sup>th</sup> Ave N:**

- a. The Board directed the Applicant to further develop the 9th Ave N façade and ground floor, noting the retail space should have an open and porous relationship to the street, including large operable windows/roll-up or fold up doors and inclusion of more entries. (PL1-I-iii., PL3-C-1., PL3-I-i.)
- b. Additionally, the applicant should explore a greater setback along 9<sup>th</sup> Ave N and/or additional modulation. (PL1-III-i., PL3-C-3.)
- c. The Board noted the 9<sup>th</sup> Ave N entry was not easily visible and should be emphasized in the design. (PL3-A-1., PL3-A-4.)
- d. The Board directed the applicant to explore having the retail be more porous and breaking the retail into smaller spaces, so that it would read more as a collection of smaller retail tenants from the exterior. The Board noted Assembly Hall downtown at 6<sup>th</sup> Ave and Lenora St. as a precedent example to emulate. (PL1-I-iii., PL3-C-1., PL3-I-i.)

## **4. Porte Cochere, Aloha St., & Access:** The Board expressed general support for the proposed porte cochere and access off of Aloha St. but stated that porte cochere area should be designed with the pedestrian as the priority and should share the same pedestrian character and quality as the rest of the Aloha frontage and corner plaza area.

- a. The porte cochere should remain open and highly visible with a large degree of transparency. (PL2-B-3, PL2-II-i., PL3-C-2)

- b. The porte cochere should be designed as a pedestrian plaza with high quality paving, landscaping, finishes, and materials for all surfaces including the soffit and rear walls. (DC1-C-3, DC1-B-1, CS2-B-2, DC2-B-2)
- c. The visibility of all entries should be enhanced. (PL3-A-1., PL3-A-2., PL3-A-4.)
- d. The Board directed the applicant to explore increased overhead weather protection along Aloha St. and explore overhead weather protection for the proposed outdoor seating area on Aloha St. (PL2-C-1., PL2-C-3.)
- e. The landscaping should be layered and relate to the materials, textures, and landscaping concepts across the street at South Lake Union Park. The Board also noted that the proposed plaza space on the corner could wrap around the 9<sup>th</sup> Ave N to further enhance the connection to the park across the street. (DC3-I-ii., DC3-III-i., DC4-D)
- f. The Board encouraged the inclusion of additional bicycle amenities. (PL4-B-1., PL4-B-2.)
- g. For the Recommendation meeting, the Board requested a lighting and signage plan, detailed landscape plan, and street level perspectives from all right-of-ways including the adjacent alley. (PL2-B-2., DC4-B, DC2-A, DC2-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>
<p><b>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.</b></p> <p><b>CS2-B Adjacent Sites, Streets, and Open Spaces</b></p> <p><b>CS2-B-3. Character of Open Space:</b> Contribute to the character and proportion of surrounding open spaces.</p> <p><b>CS2-C Relationship to the Block</b></p> <p><b>CS2-C-1. Corner Sites:</b> Corner sites can serve as gateways or focal points; both require careful detailing at the first three floors due to their high visibility from two or more streets and long distances.</p> <p><b>South Lake Union Supplemental Guidance:</b></p> <p><b>CS2-I Responding to Site Characteristics</b></p> <p><b>CS2-I-i. Views:</b> Encourage provision of “outlooks and overlooks” for the public to view the lake and cityscapes. Examples include provision of public plazas and/or other public open spaces and changing the form or facade setbacks of the building to enhance opportunities for views.</p>
<b>PUBLIC LIFE</b>

**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-2. Pedestrian Volumes:** Provide ample space for pedestrian flow and circulation, particularly in areas where there is already heavy pedestrian traffic or where the project is expected to add or attract pedestrians to the area.

**PL1-B-3. Pedestrian Amenities:** Opportunities for creating lively, pedestrian oriented open spaces to enliven the area and attract interest and interaction with the site and building should be considered.

**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-C-2. Design Integration:** Integrate weather protection, gutters and downspouts into the design of the structure as a whole, and ensure that it also relates well to neighboring buildings in design, coverage, or other features.

**PL2-C-3. People-Friendly Spaces:** Create an artful and people-friendly space beneath building.

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

**PL2-I Streetscape Compatibility**

**PL2-I-iii. Sidewalk Retail:** Where appropriate, configure retail space so that it can spill-out onto the sidewalk (retaining six feet for pedestrian movement, where the sidewalk is sufficiently wide).

**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-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.

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

**PL3-II Human Activity**

**PL3-II-i. Public/Private Transition:** Create graceful transitions at the streetscape level between the public and private uses.

**PL3-II-ii. Active Facades:** Design facades to encourage activity to spill out from business onto the sidewalk, and vice-versa.

**PL3-II-iii. Coordinate Retail/Pedestrian Activity:** Reinforce retail concentrations with compatible spaces that encourage pedestrian activity.

**PL3-II-iv. Activity Clusters:** Create businesses and community activity clusters through colocation of retail and pedestrian uses as well as other high pedestrian traffic opportunities.

**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-2. Gathering Places:** Maximize the use of any interior or exterior gathering spaces.

**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.

**DC1-C-3. Multiple Uses:** Design parking areas to serve multiple uses such as children’s play space, outdoor gathering areas, sports courts, woonerf, or common space in multifamily projects.

**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 Facade Composition**

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

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

**DC2-I Architectural Concept and Consistency**

**DC2-I-i. Roofscape Design:** Design the “fifth elevation” — the roofscape — in addition to the streetscape. As this area topographically is a valley, the roofs may be viewed from locations outside the neighborhood such as the freeway and Space Needle. Therefore, views from outside the area as well as from within the neighborhood should be considered, and roof-top elements should be organized to minimize view impacts from the freeway and elevated areas.

**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.

**DC4-C Lighting**

**DC4-C-1. Functions:** Use lighting both to increase site safety in all locations used by pedestrians and to highlight architectural or landscape details and features such as entries, signs, canopies, plantings, and art.

**DC4-C-2. Avoiding Glare:** Design project lighting based upon the uses on and off site, taking care to provide illumination to serve building needs while avoiding off-site night glare and light pollution.

**DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES**

The Board's recommendation on the requested departures 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 departures. The Board's recommendation will be reserved until the final Board meeting. The following potential departures identified at the Early Design Guidance meeting are Type 1 Decisions that will be reviewed by DPD prior to MUP issuance.

At the time of Early Design Guidance the following departures were requested:

1. **Reduction in Loading Berths (SMC 23.54.035 Table A):** The Code requires two loading berths for buildings 60,001 to 160,00 GSF. The applicant proposes one off street loading berth.

The Board indicated support for the request reduction in loading berths but stated that the loading berth should have a roof to be screened when viewed from above consistent with guidelines DC1-C-4. Service Uses and DC2-I-i. Roofscape Design.

2. **Alley Access (SMC 23.48.034.D):** The Code requires parking and loading to be from the alley with a lot abuts an improved alley unless certain conditions apply and the Director determines an exception to alley access is warranted. The applicant proposes a one way access curb cut on Aloha with egress onto the alley.

The Board indicated support for the proposed access configuration in the Applicant's preferred option with the condition that the porte cochere drop off area be designed as a

plaza-like, pedestrian oriented space with high quality materials and detailing as described in more detail above. The Board noted that the configuration could provide relief in massing at street level and greater transparency, consistent with guidelines DC1-C-3. Multiple Uses and PL2-B-3. Street-Level Transparency.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **BOARD DIRECTION**

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