



# City of Seattle

Department of Construction and Inspections  
Nathan Torgelson, Director



## RECOMMENDATION OF THE WEST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3020961

Address: 203 W Republican St

Applicant: Bryan Bellissimo, Encore Architects

Date of Meeting: Wednesday, July 06, 2016

Board Members Present: Boyd Pickrell, Chair  
Christine Harrington  
Katie Idziorek  
Homero Nishiwaki  
Janet Stephenson

Board Members Absent: None

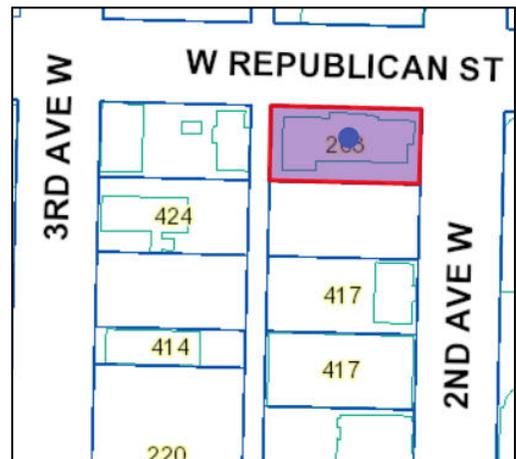
SDCI Staff Present: BreAnne McConkie

### SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Neighborhood Commercial with a 65' height limit (NC3-65')

Nearby Zones: Neighborhood Commercial with a 40' height limit (NC3-40)(North)  
NC3-65'(South)  
NC3-65' (East)  
NC3-65' (West)

Lot Area: 14,400 square feet (sq. ft.)



**Site & Current Development:**

The site is located on the southwest corner of the intersection of W Republic St and 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave W and contains a four story brick apartment building built in 1947 and a surface parking lot with parking for 28 vehicles.

The project site slopes from north/northeast down to the south/southwest with the high point at the NE corner near the W Republic St and 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave W intersection.

**Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:**

The project is located in the Uptown Urban Center and Uptown Park Character Area, as defined by the Uptown Design Guidelines. The area contains a mix of multi-family residential, primarily 1920s and 1930s era brick apartment structures, and more contemporary office buildings, with some new residential and office buildings.

**Access:**

Vehicular access to the site is proposed from the adjacent alley to the west. Pedestrian access is from W Republican St and 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave W.

**Environmentally Critical Areas:**

There are no Environmentally Critical Areas onsite.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

Council Land Use Action to contract rezone 14,400 sq. ft. of land from NC3-65' to NC3-85' and to allow a 7-story structure containing 128 residential units. Parking for 55 vehicles to be provided below grade. Existing structure to be demolished.

**Project Proposal**

The Design Review packets include materials presented at the EDG and Recommendation 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 September 30, 2015

### PUBLIC COMMENT

Several members of the public were in attendance and offered the following comment.

- Would like new development to be pedestrian friendly.
- Preferred the “H” massing scheme.
- Did not care for the proposed live/work units as they offer little to enhance the street.
- Disagreed that 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave W is the most residential character, rather it is Republican. The design of the Republican elevation is less appealing to the residential neighborhood character.
- The Uptown Alliance Land Use Review Committee appreciate the outreach by the developer and offered the following comments:
  - The Urban Design Framework effort that is underway for this neighborhood is considering a rezone to an 85 foot height limit; this proposal should be considering a more flexible design that seeks to increase the building density.
  - Urged more attention to enhancing the pedestrian environment and sidewalk experience as this site is in a location that is rapidly growing and seeing increased pedestrian traffic.
  - Encourage the project to include affordable units.
- Not supportive of the 85 foot height as it will block views.
- One letter was received stating objection to the proposed building height as out of scale with the surrounding context and not in keeping with the neighborhood design and will block views. Also opposed to the low number of parking stalls proposed and traffic problems in the area.

## RECOMMENDATION July 6, 2016

### PUBLIC COMMENT

At the Recommendation meeting, members of the public provided the following comments:

- Expressed concern with durability of the cedar material and concern for how the materials at grade, including brick, would stand up to graffiti and clean-up.

## 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 September 30, 2015

1. **Building Massing & Expression: The Board supported the preferred “H” shaped massing scheme, however they unanimously agreed that the proposed massing was too blocky and timid and that the recessed areas should be deeper and more expressive. Other guidance**

**provided by the Board regarding providing more relief to break up of inflated massing included:**

- a. Greater modulation is needed to break up the elevations. If decks are provided to achieve some of this needed modulation, they should not further diminish the massing recesses provided in response to the overarching concern described above. **(DC2.A.2, DC2.I.i, DC2.III.ii)**
- b. Varied rooflines to distinguish and reinforce the architectural concept, which also providing more visual interest. The Board noted that although a rezone for increased height is proposed, the proposed building height is far below that figure, so the design should take advantage of that height flexibility to create more dramatic architectural forms. **(DC2.B1, DC2.I.i)**
- c. The alley elevation, as shown, is overly severe and should provide some visual relief for the livability of the residents. In terms of architectural detailing, however, the Board noted that this elevation is less significant than the other three elevations. **(DC2.B1, DC2.I.i)**

**2. Relationship to the Context: The Board noted that the design needs to better respond to the context and the Uptown Design Guidelines that promote a clearly expressed concept plan, strong corners and delineated entries. (DC2.I.i)**

The Board pointed out that the reference imagery of courtyard buildings provided in the presentation materials bore little resemblance to the massing schemes shown; more meaningful reference to these character buildings is needed through the building proportions and materiality. The Board clarified that they do not expect to see a design that mimics a historical pastiche, rather the detailing and building proportions are the references to be considered in context to inform a contemporary design. **(DC2.I.i, DC4.A1, DC4.II)**

**3. Street Level Experience: While the Board recognized that the site presented topographical challenges, they were very concerned that the proposed street level design resulted in units and uses that are disconnected from the sidewalk would result in a lacking street level experience. The Board recommended several design modifications that would address these concerns. (CS2.B2, CS2I.i, PL2I.i,ii, PL2.II.i,ii,iii,iv, PL3.B3, DC2.I.i, DC2.E)**

- a. The Board strongly objected to the sunken and disengaged ground level entrances and lack of relationship to grade. The live work units should include ADA entrance from the street level. This would create direct relationship and circulation between these units and the street, while also expanding the prospects of future conversion of these live/work units to commercial uses. **(CS2.B2, CS2I.i, PL2I.i,ii, PL2.II.i,ii,iii,iv, PL3.B3, DC2.E)**
- b. The Board was primarily interested in the building meeting grade such that the ground floor uses can be design to be welcoming and support a vibrant pedestrian realm. **(CS2.B2, CS2I.i, PL2I.i,ii, PL2.II.i,ii,iii,iv, PL3.B3)**
- c. The Board was supportive of the main residential entry not being located at the corner as in keeping with the H-form and courtyard apartment entries. **(CS2.B2, CS2I.i, PL2I.i,ii, PL2.II.i,ii,iii,iv)**
- d. The Board suggested considering entering the ground level units up and not down to support the likelihood of interactive uses and future commercial possibility. Another

suggestion would be to step the slab to respond to the topographical change. **(CS2.B2, CS2I.i, PL2I.i,ii, PL2.II.i,ii,iii,iv, PL3.B3)**

- e. The Board expressed support for a departure to have more residential frontage at street level if associated with a strong, responsive design with a clear relationship between the ground floor and the pedestrian experience. **(CS2.B2, CS2I.i, PL2I.i,ii, PL2.II.i,ii,iii,iv, PL3.B3)**
- f. The Board was supportive of the early design concepts for specialty paving at the entryway, street trees, seating and light fixtures noted in the Uptown Design Guidelines. **(CS2.B2, CS2I.i, CS2II.ii, PL2I.i,ii, PL2.II.i,ii,iii,iv)**
- g. At the next meeting, the Board would like to review street level views for all elevations.

**4. Architectural Concept: The Board agreed that the Uptown Park design guidelines should be closely consulted to inform the material palette. (DC2.I.i)**

- a. The Board liked the angled entry, but felt that gesture is lost when tucked under the large block. Such gestures should be more dynamic and be supported by the overall design concept and parti. **(DC2.I.i)**
- b. The Board supported the proposed corner treatment and recessed base to differentiate the uses from the residential floors above. **(CS2.C1, CS2.III.i)**
- c. The material palette should be high quality and responsive to the neighborhood design guidelines. **(DC4.A1, DC4.II)**
- d. At the next meeting, the Board would like to review a detailed landscape design, exterior lighting plan and signage plan. **(PL1.II.i, PL1.II.ii, DC4.B, DC4.C, DC4.III, DC4.IV)**

**RECOMMENDATION July 6, 2016**

**1. Building Massing & Expression: The Board unanimously agreed that the design has responded well to the Board's guidance regarding massing and specifically noted the greater modulation and balcony expression, as well as the material and color choices helped to reinforce the modulation.**

- a. The Board discussed the roofline and corner parapet height at length and supported the amount of roofline variation presented. **(DC2.I.i.d, CS2-C-1, CS2-III-i)**

**2. Street Level Experience: The Board recognized that many of the ground plane issues had been resolved since EDG and the guidance related to the street level experience had been addressed.**

- a. The Board supported the screening element at the primary, multi-family entry but recommended a condition that it maintain a sense of transparency, with larger spaces between the slats, as represented in the packet and be scaled in a way that differentiate it from the individual screens of the live-work units. **(PL2.I, PL2.II, PL3.A)**
- b. The Board expressed concern with the lack of variation between the individual live/work units and recommended a condition that greater variation be provided, either through planting, color, texture, or other subtle means, with the intent of individualizing the units while maintaining the overall rhythmic façade composition. **(DC3.I, PL2.II)**

- c. The screens provided at the live/work entries help the units have a successful residential vocabulary. **(DC2.III.i, PL2.II, PL3.A.1.d)**
- d. The Board recommended a condition to add bike parking in the right of way to further enhance the public realm design. **(PL4.B.2)**
- e. The Board supported the seating area adjacent to the main residential entry, as designed, noting that it would encourage interaction. **(CS2.B.2, PL1.I&II, DC3.A.1)**

**3. Architectural Concept & Materials: The Board was pleased that the Applicant had responded well to the early guidance and was supportive of the material pallet presented, including brick and metal, as well as the general façade composition for all sides. The Board provided the following additional guidance: (DC2.I, DC2.II, DC4.A1, DC4.I&II)**

- a. The slanted wood wall near the primary multi-family entry was an interesting architectural feature that should remain. **(PL2.I, DC2.I, DC4.A1)**
- b. Supported the black horizontal banding wrapping around the building and banding detailing with projecting top and bottom flanges to provide depth and a quality appearance. **(DC2.I, DC2.II, DC4.A1, DC4.I&II)**
- c. The scale of the punched window openings was successful and appropriate and should remain. **(DC2.I, DC2.B,C,&D)**
- d. The Board supported the different balcony expressions at the different locations including the projecting balconies in the recessed areas and use of horizontal bar for the material. The Juliet balconies add texture to what otherwise might be a flat façade and help to connect the different façades and recessed areas by using a similar architectural vocabulary. **(DC2.I, DC2.B,C,&D)**
- e. The Board agreed with the public comment regarding potential for graffiti and recommended a condition that the Applicant work with Planner to mitigate and prevent potential long term damage from graffiti through the use of an anti-graffiti coating or similar strategy. **(DC4.A1)**

**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-B Adjacent Sites, Streets, and Open Spaces**

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

**CS2-C Relationship to the Block**

**CS2-C-1. Corner Sites:** 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.

***Uptown Supplemental Guidance:***

**CS2-I Responding to Site Characteristics**

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

**CS2-II Streetscape Compatibility**

**CS2-II-ii. Uptown Park:** Within the Uptown Park character area, streetscape improvements should include where feasible a consistent park-like landscaped strip in the planting strip, as consistent with the historic pattern in the area. New developments may elect to take inspiration from the Uptown Park District Landscaped Streets Element as endorsed by the Uptown Alliance, for the format of the streetscape. However, adherence to the landscaped streets element is voluntary.

**CS2-III Corner Lots**

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

**PUBLIC LIFE**

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

***Uptown Supplemental Guidance:***

**PL1-II Landscaping to Reinforce Design Continuity with Adjacent Sites**

**PL1-II-i. Uptown Park Area:** Within the Uptown Park character area, streetscape improvements should include a consistent landscaped planting strip between the sidewalk and the street as consistent with the historic pattern in the area. New developments may take guidance from the Uptown Park District Landscaped Streets Element as endorsed by the Uptown Alliance, for the format of streetscape improvements.

**PL1-II-ii. Streetscape Landscaping:** Throughout Uptown, streetscape landscaping as per the guidelines CS2.II, PL1, PL2 and PL4 is encouraged.

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

***Uptown Supplemental Guidance:***

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

**PL2-I-i. Prominent Entrances:** Throughout Uptown, major entrances to developments should be prominent. The use of distinctive designs with historical references is strongly

encouraged. Design, detailing, materials and landscaping may all be employed to this end. Building addresses and names (if applicable) should be located at entrances, tastefully crafted.

**PL2-I-ii. Street Life:** Streets throughout Uptown should be sociable places that offer a sense of security, and residential building projects should make a positive contribution to life on the street.

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

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

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

**PL2-II-iii. Pedestrian Experience:** Throughout Uptown special attention to the pedestrian experience and street right-of-way should be given along pedestrian corridors as identified on the map (pg. v).

**PL2-II-iv. Lighting:** Throughout Uptown the use of a pedestrian-scaled street lamp within all character areas is encouraged. In addition, streetscape features such as street clocks and benches are encouraged in Heart of Uptown and Uptown Urban character areas.

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

**PL3-B Residential Edges**

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

**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.**

***Uptown Supplemental Guidance:***

**DC2-I Architectural Context**

**DC2-I-i. Human-Scale Design:** The Uptown Park and Heart of Uptown character districts prefer an architecture that emphasizes human scale and quality, detailing and materials, and that remains compatible with the existing community.

**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-B-2. Coordination with Project Design:** Develop a signage plan within the context of architectural and open space concepts, and coordinate the details with façade design, lighting, and other project features to complement the project as a whole, in addition to the surrounding context.

**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.

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

1. **Street Level Development Standards (23.47A.008.E.1):** The Code requires the non-residential portion of live-work units to extend the width of the street-level street-facing façade with a minimum depth of 15 feet from the street-level street-facing facade, and this area cannot contain any of the primary features of the residential (live) portion of the live-work unit, such as kitchen, bathroom, sleeping, or laundry facilities.

For the live-work unit located on the northeast corner, the Applicant proposes the non-residential (work) portion of the unit to not extend the entire width of the street-facing street level façade and residential (live) portions of the unit to be within the required 15 foot setback.

The Board unanimously supported the requested departure related to residential uses at street level for this one unit noting that the requirements were met as applied to W. Republican St. and the corner and lobby design, with the slanted wood wall were successful, consistent with the intent of Design Guidelines CS2-III-i. Addressing the Corner and CS2-C-1. Corner Sites

2. **Street Level Uses (23.47A.005.C):** The Code restricts residential uses to occupy no more than 20% of the street-level, street-facing façade in all neighborhood commercial zones.

The Applicant proposes the lobby, a residential use, to occupy 25% of the street-level, street-facing façade.

The Board unanimously supported the requested departure because the improved design provided differentiation at the ground level, helped to announce the entry, and allowed for a greater level of transparency, consistent with the intent of Design Guidelines PL2-I-i. Prominent Entrances and PL2-I-ii. Street Life. The Board supported the departure with the following condition: Welcoming, gathering functions of the lobby should be located adjacent to the sidewalk and if leasing or office functions are located within or near the lobby, they should be deeper within the building and pulled away from the street.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **BOARD DIRECTION**

The recommendation summarized above was based on the Design Review packet dated Wednesday, July 06, 2016, and the materials shown and verbally described by the Applicant at the Wednesday, July 06, 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 with the following conditions:

1. The screening element at the primary, multi-family entry should maintain a sense of transparency, with larger spaces between the slats, and be scaled in a way that differentiates it from the individual screens of the live-work units.
2. Provide greater variation of the live/work units, either through planting, color, texture, or other subtle means, with the intent of individualizing the units while maintaining the overall rhythmic façade composition.
3. Add bicycle parking to the right-of-way to further enhance the public realm.
4. The lobby should be kept open and designed to be active with a strong connection to the adjacent outdoor space. If leasing or office functions are located within or near the lobby, they should be internal and pulled away from the street-facing façade.
5. Provide anti-graffiti coating or similar strategy to mitigate and prevent potential long term damage from graffiti at the ground level.