



RECOMMENDATION OF THE DOWNTOWN DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3021375

Address: 2401 3rd Avenue

Applicant: Joel Riehl of DSA Development Services LLC and
Yoshi Mugishima of GWest Architecture LLC

Date of Meeting: Tuesday, June 14, 2016

Board Members Present: Murphy McCullough, Chair
Mark Brands, Substitute
Anjali Grant
Grace Leong

SDCI Staff Present: Magda Hogness

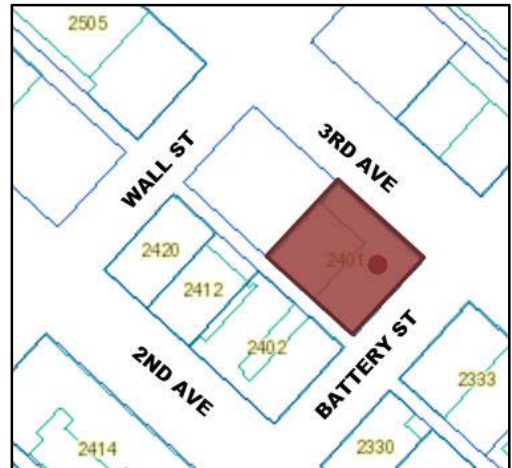
SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Downtown Mixed Residential (DMR/R 125/65)

Nearby Zones: Downtown Mixed Residential (DMR/R 240/65, DMR/C 240/125, DMR/R 85/65)

Lot Area: 12,960 sf

Access: The subject property currently includes vehicular access off 3rd Ave, Battery St and the alley.



Current Development:

The site is currently occupied by a two-story building originally built in 1954 to house a drive through bank. The northwest portion of the site is surface parking.

Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:

The project site is located in the Belltown neighborhood. The area includes a mix of vibrant and eclectic uses, a rich variety of building types and good access to transit. Early 20th century buildings tend to range from approximately 4-9 stories and include regular symmetrical patterns with masonry or stone facades and punched windows. Mid-20th century buildings tend to be lower in height, with larger windows and more irregular facade treatments. Newer glass modern high rises, from the late 60s onward, tend to be much taller (up to 250' tall) towers, some built on a podium of garage levels above the street level retail.

Belltown contains many historical buildings, many of which are landmarks. The Belltown Design Guidelines also identify "icon buildings" which are not landmarked. One of these icon buildings is located across the alley, the Lexington and Concord Building. Originally constructed in 1923, this building is built in the Federal style and is clad in brick masonry.

Current development under construction includes a three-story commercial structure located across 3rd Ave, under project number 3006356. Adjacent to the site, to the northwest, is a surface parking lot. Along southeastern property line runs the underground Battery St Tunnel, which is planned to be decommissioned in the future. Further southeast, across Battery St, is one story masonry office building.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposal is for a 12 story mixed use building containing 116 residential units, 5,000 sq. ft. of retail space at ground level and 124 below grade parking spaces. The existing 2 story structure is proposed to be removed.

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE October 20, 2015

The packet includes materials presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number (3021375) at this 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 SDCl:

Mailing Public Resource Center
Address: 700 Fifth Ave., Suite 2000
P.O. Box 34019
Seattle, WA 98124-4019

Email: PRC@seattle.gov

PUBLIC COMMENT

The following comments were offered at the EDG meeting:

- Supported the design concept of the landscaped roof garden.
- Would like to see the heaviness of the south façade broken up.
- Suggested pushing the west portion of the south facade massing back, to break up the bulk and provide more internal views.
- Supported the proposed brick.
- Noted that this area is the geographical center of Belltown and is excited about this part of Belltown being developed.
- Supported the quality of residential and commercial space proposed.
- Preferred massing Option 3 and podium Option B.
- Appreciated the sensitivity to the neighborhood context.
- Supported the mix of architectural materials and the relationship to the bay windows.
- Liked the design, especially the third massing option.
- Supported the articulated façade.
- Supported the vertical break in the massing and the material detailing.

RECOMMENDATION June 14, 2016

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comments were offered at the Recommendation meeting.

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 20, 2015

- 1) **Massing & Context Response:** The Board discussed the merits of the different massing and podium options. The Board unanimously preferred the massing of Option Three and the podium of Option B, as the hybrid form has the best potential to create architectural presence and respond to the streetscape. The Board directed the applicant to proceed with this preferred option. (A1, B1, C1)
 - a. The Board deliberated over the south façade massing and discussed whether a portion of the massing should recede or if the massing should be flipped to break up the bulk. Ultimately the Board supported the proposed massing as it anticipates and provides daylight access for future development provided that the south façade and green notch concept is further refined. (A1.1, A1.2, B1, B2.3)
 - b. The Board unanimously supported the green notch as a concept. The Board was concerned that the stacked sky gardens will not be visible to the pedestrian and that the planted metal cabling system, proposed at the ground level, is the least

successful. In order to provide interest visible from the street level, the Board recommended increasing the depth of the notch and terracing the sky gardens down. (B1.III, B2.3, B3.3, B4.1)

- c. The Board was unanimously supportive of the modern bay window interpretation as an architectural design concept. (B4, C2.1)
 - d. The Board discussed the parapet/guardrail roofline expression and recommended integrating the element with the rest of the façade. The Board directed the applicant to provide a fully transparent option and an integrated skin expression option at the next meeting. (A2, B4)
- 2) **Streetscape:** The Board gave direction on the architectural expression related to the streetscape.
- a. Discussing the podium options for the tower, the Board unanimously supported Option B as the transparent base expression promotes pedestrian interaction (C1, C3.1)
 - b. Acknowledging that brick material is characteristic of Belltown, the Board questioned if the proposed strip of brick on the street level façade is consistent with the overall concept. The Board recommended further developing the street level façade and directed the applicant to provide a brick option and an alternate cladding option at the next meeting. (B4)
 - c. For the alley frontage, the Board supported the retail turning the corner and appreciated the privacy study. (G C6.1, C6.II, C6.III)
 - d. Recognizing that continuous canopies are encouraged, the Board discussed if the canopy should wrap the green notch. Ultimately, the Board directed the applicant to develop a continuous canopy or provide compelling reasoning for a lack of continuous coverage. (C5.1)
- 3) **Landscape and Open Space:** The Board gave direction regarding the landscape design.
- a. The Board recognized the proposed roof landscape as a great amenity and directed the applicant to provide more details about the design at the next meeting. (A2, D1.3, D2.1)
 - b. The Board was concerned with the undulating landscape treatment along 3rd Ave. To provide a continuous experience for the pedestrian, the Board recommended revising the design to be consistent with the 3rd Ave Street Concept Plan and relocating unique landscape and gathering spaces along the property line. (D1.1, D1.2, D2.2)
 - c. Recognizing that Battery St has unique design challenges due to the existing tunnel, the Board recommended the applicant study Bell St for temporary material treatment and pedestrian amenities. (D1.2, D2.1, D2.2)
- 4) **Architectural Concept and Materials:** The Board strongly supported the quality of materials shown in the packet and the general direction of the material treatment.

- a. The Board acknowledged that the north façade will be very visible for the time being, before the adjacent surface parking site is redeveloped, and recommended thoughtfully developing the facade treatment. (B1, B4.3, C3.1)

RECOMMENDATION (JUNE 14, 2016)

The Board commended the applicant for the responsive development and design studies.

- 1) **Massing and Architectural Design Concept:** The Board discussed the green notch concept and the developed design.
 - a. The Board agreed the street facing green notch is a priority as it creates interest and design logic for the whole building and unanimously supported the departure request to exceed the maximum width for the northwest portion of the structure above 65'. Related to the departure request, the Board indicated they would support stacking more units at the northwest corner in order to extend the notch down one floor, but did not make this a condition of the project. (A2, B2, B4)
 - b. As the design concept is centered on the green notch, the Board stressed the importance of successful planting. The Board unanimously supported the cascading planters at every floor shown in Option 2 and recommended a condition to accommodate additional planting layering and growth in both upward and downward directions. The Board also recommended substituting the glazing behind the cascading planting with an honest material such as concrete or brick in order to address maintenance concerns with window washing. (A2, B1.III, B2.3, B3.3, B4.1)
 - c. Acknowledging the maintenance challenges with multi-story green wall installations, the Board recommended a condition to revise the green wall to one story similar to the framed green wall proposed adjacent to the residential entry. (B1.III, B2.3, B3.3, B4.1, D2)
 - b. The Board recognized that the volume of soil is critical for growth and recommended a condition to provide adequate size for the rooftop tree planters to enable significant growth. If structural concerns are an issue, trees can be placed directly under a column. (B4, D2)
 - c. Related to the green wall detailing, the Board supported the removal of the layered planting at the sidewalk to avoid a location where trash might collect. The Board also supported cutoff led light fixtures to light the green wall feature, provided that light pollution was avoided. (D2,D5)
 - d. The Board discussed the parapet/guardrail options for the roofline expression and recommended a condition to either provide a glass railing or prefabricated black flat stop guardrail with vertical rails. (A2, B4)
- 2) **Streetscape.** The Board discussed the cladding options for the podium and gave guidance related to the streetscape.

- a. The Board supported the stacked bond brick shown in option 1 as it provides the best architectural expression and agreed the podium base helps the proportion of the tower avoid a bulky appearance. (B4)
 - b. The Board noted that the storefront proportion was more successful as shown during the EDG meeting, and recommended a condition to extend the storefront glazing down to the sidewalk. (B4, C1)
 - c. The Board supported the proposed secondary elements; the overhead continuous canopy, lighting, signage and weather steel manifold door. (C5, D4, D5)
 - d. The Board agreed that site benches should face each other to encourage interaction recommended a condition to reorient the site benches and provide a bench at the building entry. (C4, D1, D1.2, D2.1, D2.2, D3)
- 3) **Materials and Detailing.** The Board supported the proposed material palette along with several recommendations.
- a. During the presentation the applicant explained they were in the midst of value engineering and requested Board feedback on materials they were considering. The Board indicated that integral color fiber cement was acceptable, but painted fiber cement panel should be avoided. The Board also stated that factory painted VPI windows were fine as long as the proportion and thickness remained as shown. (B4)
 - b. For the podium, the Board supported a standard brick size or a larger module, 4" by 4" by 12". With either brick size, the Board agreed the brick should not be cut and recommended a condition to detail the brick to fit the module. (B4)
 - c. For the blank wall, the Board discussed if there should be a material change or change in depth provided along this frontage. The Board acknowledged since the wall faces north, the sun would not rake the façade very often and agreed that a simple uniform paint treatment to minimize the façade would be the best strategy. The Board recommended a condition to revise the blank wall treatment to a uniform dark painted surface and supported the proposed medium gray color. (B1, B4.3, C3.1)

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](#).

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.

Belltown Supplemental Guidance:

B1.III. Visual Interest: Design visually attractive buildings that add richness and variety to Belltown, including creative contemporary architectural solutions.

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.

Belltown Supplemental Guidance:

C1.III. Desired Public Realm Elements: Incorporate the following elements in the adjacent public realm and in open spaces around the building:

- a. unique hardscape treatments
- b. pedestrian-scale sidewalk lighting
- c. accent paving (especially at corners, entries and passageways)
- d. creative landscape treatments (planting, planters, trellises, arbors)
- e. seating, gathering spaces
- f. water features, inclusion of art elements

C1.IV. Building/Site Corners: Building corners are places of convergence. The following considerations help reinforce site and building corners:

- a. provide meaningful setbacks/open space, if feasible
- b. provide seating as gathering spaces
- c. incorporate street/pedestrian amenities in these spaces
- d. make these spaces safe (good visibility)
- e. iconic corner identifiers to create wayfinders that draw people to the site.

C1.V. Pedestrian Attraction: 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. 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).

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.

C6 Develop the Alley Façade: To increase pedestrian safety, comfort, and interest, develop portions of the alley facade in response to the unique conditions of the site or project.

C6.1. Alley Activation: Consider enlivening and enhancing the alley entrance by:

- a. extending retail space fenestration into the alley one bay;
- b. providing a niche for recycling and waste receptacles to be shared with nearby, older buildings lacking such facilities; and
- c. adding effective lighting to enhance visibility and safety.

C6.2. Alley Parking Access: Enhance the facades and surfaces in and adjacent to the alley to create parking access that is visible, safe, and welcoming for drivers and pedestrians. Consider

- d. locating the alley parking garage entry and/ or exit near the entrance to the alley;
- e. installing highly visible signage indicating parking rates and availability on the building facade adjacent to the alley; and
- f. chamfering the building corners to enhance pedestrian visibility and safety where alley is regularly used by vehicles accessing parking and loading.

Belltown Supplemental Guidance:

C6.I. Address Alley Functions:

- a. Services and utilities, while essential to urban development, should be screened or otherwise hidden from the view of the pedestrian.
- b. Exterior trash receptacles should be screened on three sides, with a gate on the fourth side that also screens the receptacles from view. Provide a niche to recess the receptacle.
- c. Screen loading docks and truck parking from public view using building massing, architectural elements and/or landscaping.
- d. Ensure that all utility equipment is located, sized, and designed to be as inconspicuous as possible. Consider ways to reduce the noise impacts of HVAC equipment on the alley environment.

C6.II. Pedestrian Environment:

- e. Pedestrian circulation is an integral part of the site layout. Where possible and feasible, provide elements, such as landscaping and special paving, that help define a pedestrian-friendly environment in the alley.

f. Create a comfortably scaled and thoughtfully detailed urban environment in the alley through the use of well-designed architectural forms and details, particularly at street level.

C6.III. Architectural Concept:

g. In designing a well-proportioned and unified building, the alley facade should not be ignored. An alley facade should be treated with form, scale and materials similar to rest of the building to create a coherent architectural concept.

PUBLIC AMENITIES

D2 Enhance the Building with Landscaping: Enhance the building and site with generous landscaping— which includes special pavements, trellises, screen walls, planters, and site furniture, as well as living plant material.

D2.1. Landscape Enhancements: Landscape enhancement of the site may include some of the approaches or features listed below:

- a. emphasize entries with special planting in conjunction with decorative paving and/or lighting;
- b. include a special feature such as a courtyard, fountain, or pool;
- c. incorporate a planter guard or low planter wall as part of the architecture;
- d. distinctively landscape open areas created by building modulation;
- e. soften the building by screening blank walls, terracing retaining walls, etc.;
- f. increase privacy and security through screening and/or shading;
- g. provide a framework such as a trellis or arbor for plants to grow on;
- h. incorporate upper story planter boxes or roof planters;
- i. provide identity and reinforce a desired feeling of intimacy and quiet;
- j. provide brackets for hanging planters;
- k. consider how the space will be viewed from the upper floors of nearby buildings as well as from the sidewalk; and
- l. if on a designated Green Street, coordinate improvements with the local Green Street plan.

D2.2. Consider Nearby Landscaping: Reinforce the desirable pattern of landscaping found on adjacent block faces.

- m. plant street trees that match the existing planting pattern or species;
- n. use similar landscape materials; and
- o. extend a low wall, use paving similar to that found nearby, or employ similar stairway construction methods.

Belltown Supplemental Guidance:

D2.1. Belltown-Specific Landscape Character: Landscape enhancement of the site may include some of the approaches or features listed below, where appropriate:

- a. emphasize entries with special planting in conjunction with decorative paving and/or lighting;
- b. use landscaping to make plazas and courtyards comfortable for human activity and social interaction;

- c. distinctively landscape open areas created by building modulation, such as entry courtyards;
- d. provide year-round greenery — drought tolerant species are encouraged to promote water conservation and reduce maintenance concerns; and
- e. provide opportunities for installation of civic art in the landscape; designer/ artist collaborations are encouraged (e.g., Growing Vine Street).

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).

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

1. **Loading Berth (SMC 23.54.035):** The Code requires two loading berths 35' in length. The applicant proposes two loading berths measuring 10' in width and 25' in length.

The Board unanimously supported the departure request as consolidating the loading berth size allows for additional retail/commercial space and better meets Design Guideline C6.I. Address Alley Functions.

2. **Maximum Width, Depth and Separation (SMC 23.49.164.A):** The Code specifies a 90' maximum width for the portion of a structure above 65' along and parallel to Avenues. The applicant proposes 105' for the west façade for levels 7 and 8.

The Board unanimously supported the departure request since the volume added to the upper floors is less than the volume removed for the notches, which creates interest and design logic for the whole building. The resulting design better meets Design Guidelines A2 Enhance the skyline, B2 Create a transition in bulk & scale and B4 Design a well-proportioned & unified building.

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 Tuesday, June 14, 2016, and the materials shown and verbally described by the applicant at the Tuesday, June 14, 2016 Design Recommendation meeting. After considering the site and context and 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. Refine the cascading green notch to accommodate additional plant layering and growth in both upward and downward directions and revise the glazing beyond to a material such as concrete or brick. (A-2, B-4, D-2)
2. Revise the multi-story green wall to one story. (D-2)
3. Provide adequate size for the rooftop tree planters to enable healthy tree growth. (B-4, D-2)
4. For the parapet/guardrail detailing, either provide a glass railing or prefabricated black flat stop guardrail with vertical rails. (A-2, B-4)
5. For the podium, refine the brick size to fit the module. (B-4)
6. Extend the storefront glazing down to the sidewalk. (B-4, C-1)
7. Reorient site benches to face each other and provide a bench at the building entry. (C-4, D-1, D-2, D-3)
8. Revise the blank walk treatment to a uniform dark painted surface. (C-3)