



## RECOMMENDATION OF THE WEST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3022087

Address: 625 Boren Avenue N

Applicant: Graphite Design Group, for Vulcan

Date of Meeting: Wednesday, September 21, 2016

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

Board Members Absent: None

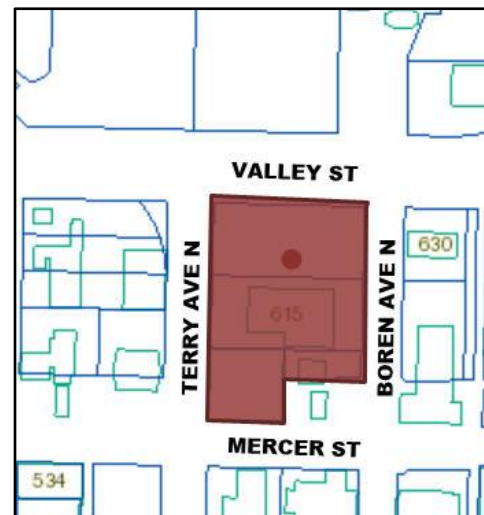
DPD Staff Present: Garry Papers, RA, MArch, Senior Land Use Planner

### SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: SM 85/65-160  
Seattle Mixed; office uses, 85 ft maximum height;  
residential uses, 160 ft maximum height

Nearby Zones: (North) C2 40  
(South) SM 160/85-240  
(East) SM 85/65-160  
(West) SM 85/65-160

Lot Area: 72,390 sq ft



**Current Development:**

The site is currently vacant, used for parking.

**Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:**

This full-block site is the central one of three undeveloped lakefront blocks in the South Lake Union (SLU) neighborhood, which provide a gateway and transition to the water from the densifying mixed use neighborhood to the south. The SLU Park is across Valley Street to the north, plus MOHAI and the Center for Wooden Boats. The vacant full block to the west is slated for a mixed use project with 16 story residential tower (MUP #3017484). The vacant half block to the east has a current EDG application for a 6 story office with 7 story residential tower (# 3022086). The remainder of that block facing Fairview Avenue N has a current EDG for a 6 story office building (#3020512).

The blocks to the south along Mercer Street are newer office/commercial structures with a consistent 65 ft high street wall. The neighborhood has a wide mix of residential, office, commercial, research and technology uses. The SLU streetcar runs along the north edge of both blocks, with a stop located directly north of the east block 31, and the northbound tracks run up Terry Avenue N.

**Access:**

The block has no alley; vehicular and pedestrian access is from the four surrounding streets of Mercer and Valley Streets, Terry Avenue and Boren Avenue N.

**Environmentally Critical Areas:**

The approximate north half of the site is classified Liquefaction Prone ECA.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The proposed development includes a 6 story office podium of approximately 310,000 sq ft over the entire block, with an 8 story residential cube of about 81 units above the southwest corner. Also included is about 10,000 sf of retail at grade, and 370 parking spaces below grade. A code required through-block connection runs east-west, at grade between the avenues, with 3-story 'bridges' linking the floor plates above.

**FIRST EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE (EDG) December 2, 2015**

The EDG booklet includes materials presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number at this website: <http://web6.seattle.gov/dpd/edms/>

The booklet 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**

- Concerned the street level pedestrian experience along Valley Street appeared monotonous and corporate, and suggested an arcade or meandering places.
- Stated that pedestrian movement in the through-block connector would be stymied by the large and tall overhead bridges, which block too much sun and sky.
- Stated the retail spaces were all similar and small, so not compatible for a major commercial destination or draw, which this isolated location might need.
- Stated the entire block was expressed as one uniform architecture, and when viewed with the flanking blocks, created a 3-block campus, rather than 4-6 distinct buildings.
- Supported the integration of maritime, industrial and/or northwest materials, themes and forms, in the landscape and the architecture; the boardwalk is the only one shown.
- Criticized the three residential towers (on the three waterfront blocks) for being too similar in appearance and form.
- Supported the variety of architecture and landscape from the three firms involved.
- Stressed the importance of the Terry Avenue corridor as a link from downtown to the lake, and the public plaza at Terry and Valley as a gateway to Lake Union park.
- Supported the 'sugar-cube' concept for breaking up long street facades into quarter block forms, with different podium heights and fenestration patterns.
- Stated the bridges should be as transparent and light as possible; they currently appear very imposing.
- Concerned the 'festival streets' function and 'heart' location at Terry and Valley is compromised.
- Suggested more break-up of the Mercer Street podium wall, since the existing south side of Mercer is already monotonous in form.
- Stated all three residential towers have the same 'pagoda' roof top, and they should be simpler and different from each other, and any other existing SLU tower tops.

## **SECOND EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE (EDG) February 17, 2016**

The EDG #2 booklet includes materials presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number at this website: <http://web6.seattle.gov/dpd/edms/>

The booklet is also available to view in the file, by contacting the Public Resource Center at DPD:

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## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

- Supported the overall design as meeting the intent for this strategic site as set forth by the community and city policy.
- Reiterated that Terry Avenue at Valley Street is the terminus of the Lake-to Bay path, and should function as a public gateway to the park and Lake Union.
- Suggested that the exterior street lighting match the quality of the Terry Avenue corridor existing to the south, and encouraged pedestrian scale lighting be added to building walls around the block and along the through-block connection.
- Encouraged the residential units and amenities be designed with family-friendly features and considerations, such as: tot lots and play areas on amenity decks; co-located 2 and 3 bedroom units for communal activities; additional storage at bike rooms; wider corridors.

## **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 (The Board) provided the following siting and design guidance. [Design Guideline citations]

All page references below are to the respective EDG#1 booklet dated 12/02/2015, or the EDG#2 booklet dated 2/17/2016. See EDG#2 booklet pages 13-42 for the applicant's explicit response to EDG#1 guidance, usually including side-by-side comparison graphics.

## **EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE**

### **1. Three - Block Concept & Massing:**

- a. **Distinctive and Strong Concept:** The Board agreed this key, central block should exhibit its own strong design concept that energizes the 3-block waterfront district. The Board concurred the "linear tubes" concept should remain for just the adjacent Block 25, and a 3 block 'campus appearance' should be avoided. The Board agreed the massing of all three options was monotonous, especially the Mercer Street and crucial Valley Street frontages, and resembled a more generic, inland SLU office block than one at this exceptionally visible location (see especially lower left images on pg 40 and 46). [CS2-A; CS2-I; CS3-B]

At the EDG#2 meeting, the Board strongly supported the 3-form concept as diagrammed on pg 11, and especially endorsed the elevated, horizontal “Pier” spanning the north side of the block as viewed from the park and lake; see 4a for further refinements on that element.

- b. **Ensemble of Distinctive Half-block Forms:** The Board agreed the subject block should read as 2-3 different forms, with dramatically different modulations and materiality between the north and south half blocks, and the residential box (see comments 5b below). The Board appreciated the clarity of the ‘sugarcubes’ concept (pg 28), and certain aspects such as staggered parapets, legible gaskets and quarter block articulation may prove useful. [CS2-A; CS2-C-3]

At the EDG#2 meeting, the Board endorsed the elevated north half-block form, with more staggered “containers” beneath. The Board agreed the proposed massing and smaller “containers” are distinct from the adjacent blocks 25 and 37. The south half block is broken into 2 distinct quarters as viewed from Mercer Street (pg 19) and the Board supported that massing with the refinements under 2d.

- c. **Residential Tower Differentiation:** The Board agreed the two residential towers on the Valley frontage of adjacent Blocks 25 and 31 frame the central block, and their towers can be similar in form but different in architectural character, as suggested on pg 56. But the central residential box should be unique, as it fronts on Mercer, is the only mass that breaks the 85 ft Mercer datum (see pg 50/lower), and marks the Terry Avenue axis to the lake. See more comments under 5a below. [CS2-I]

At the EDG#2 meeting, the Board supported the evolution of the residential form, especially the curved sides, 2-floor lapping over the podium along Mercer St and part of Terry Ave (pg 32), and the recessed balconies that preserve a smooth form. The Board agreed the “hull” curves should be increased to be more dramatically legible, possibly including a vertical taper in plan, and that the reveals on Terry and Mercer should be more legible, in depth and possibly height. The Board agreed all the reveals between massing forms on the block should be enhanced in similar fashion.

## 2. Ground Floor & Landscape:

- a. **Terry Avenue:** The Board agreed the ground floor along Terry should be the most transparent, tall in scale, and porous with frequent public access doors. The scale should lap up into levels 2 and 3 to fully support the ‘neighborhood Heart’ of Terry, as suggested on pg 50/upper. The streetscape design should create a cohesive, full-street design with the eventual Block 37 opposite. The landscape plan along this street (pg 65), with increased hardscape on the north half was endorsed, but the northwest corner should be revised per comments under departure #1. [PL3]

At the EDG#2 meeting, the Board supported the taller scaled “containers”, retail entries and landscape design shown along Terry Ave (pg 20,26 and 32) but agreed the southwest retail corner at the through-block gap (pg 27) deserved more presence and possibly a 2-story scale, to reinforce Terry Ave and the through-block experience.

- b. **Valley Street:** The Board supported the boardwalk concept for a generous and flexible mixing space at a slight elevation (1-2 ft) above the adjacent sidewalk, but agreed the adjacent storefronts should have more depth, layering and pedestrian scale, similar to the image on pg 66/upper right. The Board supported a usable transition zone between the two levels, with seating and few/no guardrails, and integrated ADA ramps. These important street level transitions should be shown in detailed plans, large-scale sections, elevations and perspectives at subsequent meetings, and should coincide with the podium massing variations described under 4a below. Increase the boardwalk width on the west half of pg 47. [PL1; PL3-II]

At the EDG#2 meeting, the Board supported the 1-story arcade/ 2-story form of the west “containers” and the lower “containers” turning the corner at Boren (pg 22) as long as the number and comparative depth of entries is maintained as shown on pg 23 and 25. The Board endorsed the north-south lobby/corridor being open to the public, as the applicant stated, however this entrance needs better identity and visibility from the Valley Street sidewalk.

The Board endorsed the three story scale of the indented “public room” at the northwest corner, supporting the Terry and Valley festival intersection, and agreed the canted column and cantilever established the identity of this room more convincingly than the proposed ground plane moves; the Board suggested exploration of a second canted column on Terry.

The Board supported a continuous, 3-block flow of a generous (minimum 11 ft clear width), distinctive-material boardwalk, and the 2-dimensional boardwalk and landscape design as shown on pg 20, but with the following conditions:

- a) shift and reduce the height of the seating blocks at the northwest corner to enable and widen smooth pedestrian movements from the boardwalk to the street curb corner; possibly swap the flanking steps and blocking seating;
  - b) better integrate the steps and ramps along Valley to be “universal design”;
  - c) study all possible materials (fiberglass, pavers and others were mentioned) for the boardwalk (besides stamped concrete), to enhance its unique, nautical and ‘hollow’ character in this special lakefront location.
- c. **Boren Avenue:** The Board agreed this street is quieter than the other three, but the north half should have more than 1 doorset (pg 47), and more hardscape patios or ‘rooms’ to complement those opposite on Block 25, and anticipate future retail access. The Board agreed the currently designated “lease spaces” should have reasonably frequent porosity and be designed for future conversion to true, public access retail. [PL3-II]

At the EDG#2 meeting, the Board supported the northeast façade, doors and landscape design along Boren shown on pg 20, however the pedestrian scale and transparency of the mid block were not completely shown; this elevation is required

to be fully rendered and described in subsequent submittals, especially the shuttle elevator and all “lease space” facades along Boren.

- d. **Mercer Avenue:** The Board supported the mid-block office lobby as a modulating feature on the long Mercer street level, and it should extend its presence vertically into the podium. The Board supported the additional street trees shown on pg 65, and the dense landscape buffer along Mercer. The ground plane should recess on the east and middle portions (similar to option 2) to provide additional green relief, and a doorset should occur in the west ‘lease spaces’ along this 250 ft frontage, for future conversion to true, public access retail. Explore a true retail space at the critical corner of Terry and Mercer, to activate a corner on the designated neighborhood Heart and attract pedestrians crossing Mercer. [PL3-A; PL3-C]

At the EDG#2 meeting, the Board agreed both lower podium facades of the southeast “lease space”(pg 19) needed more pedestrian scale and visual interest, even if the landscape buffer shown on pg 20 exists. The storefront mullions and bulkhead should be designed to facilitate easy conversion to sidewalk access doors in the future. The reveal between the southeast and southwest halves should be deep and consistent up through the podium, and the mid-block office entrance should be more legible and identifiable to Mercer, compared to the adjacent ground level bays.

### 3. Through Block Connection (abbreviated here to “TBC”):

- a. **Plan, Configuration and Width:** The Board supported the 30-37 ft width and staggered configuration of the connection as shown on pg 68, but requested more details about all paving and wall surface materials, including all overhead loading and flex doors, blank walls etc. [PL1-B]

At the EDG#2 meeting, the Board supported the plan, uses and landscape design for the TBC shown on pg 28, and the high degree of transparency and pedestrian visual interest implied by the perspectives on pg 27/28. Complete elevations and material descriptions for walls, overhead doors and ground plane are needed in subsequent submittals, as these elevations have several vehicle doors, utility vents, and blank wall conditions that are critical concerns. Abundant lighting, and reliefs, public art and/or materials with high pedestrian-scale interest should be employed on any blank walls.

- b. **Active Corners:** The Board supported the distributed ‘flex spaces’ and their proposed roll-up doors, but agreed truly active uses should be located on all four corners at the mid-block. The retail shuttle elevator is acceptable if transparent to the corner as shown on pg 69, but the lease space on Boren, and leasing/amenity space on terry should have more porosity and less landscape wrapping at the strategic corner locations. [DC1-A]

At the EDG#2 meeting, the Board supported the TBC corner uses as shown on pg 20 plan, and the basic elevation treatments suggested on pg 25 and 27, with the refinements under 2a and 2c above.

- c. **Mid-block 'Bridges':** The Board agreed the 2 'bridges' over the connection are tall, wide and leave a narrow light shaft at the middle crosswalk (pg 47/48); they should be designed to be fully transparent and light in appearance, to maximize light penetration. At subsequent meetings, show the important soffit materials and lighting, and all the renderings on pg 69 with the bridges and their materiality shown full-height, with accurate shadows; delete obscuring entourage. [CS1-B-2]

At the EDG#2 meeting, the Board was concerned about the bridge widths and daylight and scale impacts of the two bridges between the half-blocks, as no drawings showed their complete vertical elevations and materiality. The Board agreed all bridge materials should be as transparent and light colored as possible. The Board suggested that reducing the floor thickness should be studied to reduce spandrels and/or create interesting structural soffits. The width of the central light well should be increased, either by reducing the proposed width of both bridges, or shifting the west bridge 10-15 ft west; this preserves the deep notch (about 40 ft) off the two street frontages, necessary for the half-blocks to stay legible.

#### 4. Podium Massing & Modulation:

- a. **Valley St Façade:** The Board supported the staggered massing shown on Terry in options 2 and 3, but agreed this strategic podium façade facing the park (a designated 'Heart') and lake was too monolithic and flat. The stepped parapet and taller ground level proportions of option 2 (pg 40/upper) are promising, but the slightly deflected wall planes and recessed bays are too timid and subtle to legibly break up this very large wall. The Board supported a ground level with more texture, pedestrian scale and depth; this can be accomplished by emphasizing the central entrance, adding an arcade or strong layering, and/or amplifying the northwest corner at the Terry/Valley plaza. [CS2-I-iv; DC2-A]

At the EDG#2 meeting, the Board endorsed the revised massing along Valley Street, as described under 1b and 2b above, and had the following recommendations to ensure that "pier" massing is legible and strong for this critical façade: a) recess the floors 2 and 3 glass line significantly (5-10 ft), along all three sides, so the "pier" clearly floats and the supporting columns are expressed in the round (rather than the engaged ones shown on pg 23, 25 and 26) b) continue the vertical fins and façade treatment across the full length of the "pier, even if variable spacings.

- b. **Mercer St Façade:** The Board agreed the massing along Mercer should be legibly broken down to animate a multi-block corridor that is overly uniform and flat. The strategy should be distinct from the massing techniques employed on the flanking blocks (pg 51). The Board supported the strongly deflected plane on the east half of the block and mid-block vertical shown on option 2 (pg 41/45), but supported the



massing for the west half shown on option 3 (pg 46/51), especially the large, recessed gasket between the residential box above and the 3 level corner element (pg 53) which amplifies the retail corner noted under 2d. [ DC2-A-2; DC2-B]

At the EDG#2 meeting, the Board endorsed the two part massing along Mercer St as shown on page 19, with the refinements noted under 2d above.

- c. **Terry & Boren Avenues Facades:** The Board supported the more recessed and stepped massing at the northwest corner of option 3, as shown on pg 46/upper, but agreed the four level box at the mid-block competed with the residential box nearby and was over-scaled along Terry; the Board suggested stepping the floors similar to pg 41/upper. The option #2 massing along Boren (pg 40/lower left) was supported more than the bulkier forms shown in options 1 or 3. Eye-level perspectives of both streets looking north from the approximate median on Mercer are required at subsequent meetings. [DC2-A-2]

At the EDG#2 meeting, the Board supported the Terry massing as shown on pg 39, but with enhanced reveal depths as described under 1c, and a more recessed north half of levels 3 and 4 as described under 4a. The Board endorsed the Boren massing as shown on pg 22/upper, but with the more recessed north half of levels 3 and 4 described under 4a.

## 5. Residential Box & Character:

- a. **Box Relationship to Podium:** The Board supported the concept of the residential box 'floating above' a well-articulated podium, as suggested on pg 46/lower right. This creates a valuable marker at the Mercer/Terry intersection, and distinguishes it from the 'full height' residential towers on flanking blocks. A very legible offset/non-alignment is crucial, and the transition to recessed gasket below, and soffit materials are all critical to the success of this concept, so these aspects should be shown at subsequent meetings. [ CS2-I; DC2-B-1]

At the EDG#2 meeting, the Board supported the residential box lapping over levels 5/6 of the southwest corner, and the smooth, curved sides. As described under 1c, the curved character should be enhanced, and the reveal between levels 3 and 4 should be deeper and enhanced. The contrasting (yellow) soffit color helps with the legibility of this important reveal, but possibly the adjacent level 4 glass color should be similar to reinforce the entire 'gasket'.

- b. **Box Character & Role in Ensemble:** The Board agreed the residential box has bulky, squat proportions and encouraged exploration of forms other than the blunt-cornered, rectilinear ones shown on all three options. That form is also too similar to the flanking block towers. The Board suggested slipped, twisted or curvilinear forms that are boldly contrasting from the base and adjacent towers (see left precedent image on pg 40). The Board agreed the tower top should not have overhangs or any

similarities to the flanking towers, but rather a simple approach that reinforces the bold form below (this should obviate the need for departure #2). [DC2-B]

At the EDG#2 meeting, the Board agreed the curve-sided box shown is minimally supportable as a contrasting form; the curved form should be accentuated with methods described under 1c, and the materiality of this form is critical. The recessed-only balconies and smooth materiality implied in the drawings (pg 39, 41, etc) assist in creating a distinctive form, but colors, opacity and reflectivity must be tested and verified in subsequent drawings and Board meetings.

## 6. Preliminary Materiality:

- a. The Board commented that the preliminary materials shown on page 57 may be appropriate, but only for one of the three primary forms: north half, south half, residential box. The approach should extend well-beyond 2-dimensional 'patterns' & staggers, to include measurable, substantive depth, shadows, projections, human scale and visual interest. [DC2-C-1; DC2-D]

At the EDG#2 meeting, the Board supported the three distinct massing elements, the preliminary materials shown on pg 42 (metal, glass, stone), and the strategic use of bold colors to distinguish the "containers", but reiterated that the first priority is form shaping to ensure clearly legible layering and depth of elements. Additional and atypical materials that can be identified with this waterfront site are encouraged, such as wood, grates and weathered steel. Other than the "containers" and potentially the boardwalk (see 2b-c), the proposed materials resemble an office building that could be elsewhere in SLU, which is contrary to EDG #1 guidance 1a . [CS2-A-1; CS3-II-iv (historic elements) & v (industrial character)]

- b. LIGHTING, SIGNAGE & ROOF PLAN DESIGN: At the EDG#2 meeting, the Board agreed pedestrian scale lighting will be essential around all sides of this project, including the TBC and especially along the Valley Street Boardwalk; specific fixtures, night perspectives and a ground level 'glow plan' are required at subsequent meetings. A conceptual signage plan is also important for this highly visible location, and required at subsequent meetings. Complete designs of the level 7 and 13 amenity decks are also required in the MUP drawings and at subsequent meetings. [DC2-I; DC4-B & C]

### RECOMMENDATION September 21, 2016

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## PUBLIC COMMENT

- Staff summarized a comment letter received since the 2/17/16 EDG#2, which strongly supported the overall design and development of this key block.
- There were no public comments at this meeting.

## 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 (The Board) provided the following siting and design guidance. (Design Guideline citations)

All [page references] below are to the Recommendation booklet dated 12/21/2016.

- 7. Ground Plane & Landscape:** The Board unanimously recommended the paving Option #3 as shown on pg 20, and the overall landscape design and materials shown on pages 11-17 and 21, 22. The Board agreed that Option #3 provides continuity with Block 25 to the east, and expects similar continuity of the Valley Street treatment for Block 37 to the west when it is presented for Recommendation. (PL1-B)
- 8. Through-Block-Connection (TBC):** The Board supported the ground plane paving and planter design shown on pg 44, and the elevations along the TBC as shown on 42-47, especially the addition of more transparency and activation along the northeast wall. The Board supported the coloration and pixilated soffits on the loading doors and two bridges shown on pg 45-47, and encouraged the integration of diverse lighting – projected, backlit, soffit strips - in these deep, shadowed spaces [64-67].

The Board supported the glassy 3-level bridges as shown on pg 42, 45, 98 and 100, and the plank floors which afford minimal spandrels [50]. The Board encouraged the addition of pedestrian scale ‘storefront signage’, particularly blades at the inboard flex spaces, and along the TBC to activate and provide destination interest. (PL1-A)

- 9. Podium Massing and refinements:** The Board supported the overall podium massing and composition, including the deep central recess on Mercer, the stepped and deep reveal on Terry, and the three story scale at the southeast corner. The Board strongly endorsed the yellow color and textural vitality shown at the southeast corner, and at the underside of projecting forms on the south half block. The Board encouraged more color/textural additions at two locations: the underside of the balcony slabs at the vertical slot [37], and

the solid panels (currently shown textured but gray) within the level 2 and 3 window bands wrapping the southwest corner [34]. (DC2)

- 10. Tower and Rooftop:** The Board discussed the tower design at length, and then agreed the form was sufficiently vertical in proportion (the 4 recessed slots and their associated parapet breaks are essential), and the curvature legible although very subtle. The Board agreed the two mis-aligned balcony indentations on floor 14 (visible on pg 29 and 37) were acceptable, but there should be no further mis-alignments. The Board supported the curved and glowing rooftop forms and materials as shown on 26, 53 and 62; the raised mechanical screen should be backlit as described, and consider that lighting treatment on all 4 sides for a consistent night image, even if the forms are not symmetrical. (DC2)

## 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. (Design Guideline Citations)

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

- 1. Upper Level Setback (SMC 23.48.012.B.1):** The Code requires a 15 ft minimum setback above 45 ft height along Terry Ave and Valley St. The applicant proposes **A)** the apex of a curved wall above 45 ft height on Terry Avenue to setback 13 ft, and the two ends to be set back 20 ft. **B)** the face of podium along Valley Street between 45 and 70 ft height, to be set back 10ft.

The Board supported these encroachments because: **A)** the overall curved building form is consistent with Board guidance, appears less bulky than a flat wall, and results in more building volume setback beyond the 15 ft line than encroaches into this setback; and for **B)** the projecting horizontal form of the "pier" is crucial to support the design concept and the forms above 70 ft are set back 18ft, or there is no form above 87ft. (DC2-B.1)

**The Board unanimously recommended that SDCI grant both A) and B) departures.**

- 2. Maximum Façade Width (SMC 23.48.013.E.3):** The Code requires a maximum façade width (measured at the widest part) above the podium of 105 ft perpendicular to the Avenues. The applicant proposes a form with curved walls on east and west sides, resulting in a maximum dimension of 110 ft at the widest point, and 97 ft at the narrowest façade at the street.

The Board supported this increase at the apex of the curved walls, as the overall form will appear narrower from most viewpoints, and the curved form is less bulky and consistent with Board guidance. (DC2-B-1)

**The Board unanimously recommended that SDCI grant this departure.**

- 3. Minimum Façade Height (SMC 23.48.014.A.2.b):** The Code requires a minimum façade height of 25ft on Valley street. The applicant proposes a building mass that is taller than 25 ft on the majority of Valley street, but a 9 ft wide portion at the northeast corner is only 18 ft tall.

The Board agreed the majority of the building mass clearly reads taller than 25ft, and the 18 ft tall corner portion is a strong design gesture to ensure the ‘container forms’ are legible at the corner. (DC2-B)

**The Board unanimously recommended that SDCI grant this departure.**

- 4. Plaza Setback (SMC 23.48.014.C):** The Code requires an average façade setback of 50 ft on that portion of Valley Street within 50 ft of Terry, to generate a corner plaza. The applicant proposes an almost square corner setback that is the same 2,500 sq ft area, but not 50 ft deep from Valley (55x 47 from Valley), with a slightly angled building wall as the south edge of the corner.

The Board supported the proposed shape and area of the corner plaza, as it reinforces the public plaza at the intersection and nets the same area, but with a slight bias to Valley Street which is supportable. To ensure the plaza interacts well with the sidewalk, the Board stipulated the ‘log jam’ seating elements at the corner should be as shown on pg 30 & 32, and recommended a Condition to maintain a maximum 12” height above the adjacent raised plaza level for all seating elements and plantings. (CS2-I-iv; CS3-B-1)

**With this Condition, the Board unanimously recommended that SDCI grant this departure.**

- 5. Access Location & Curbscuts (SMC 23.48.034.E.1):** The Code requires a maximum of one 2-way curb cut to the block. The applicant proposes one 2-way curb cut (24 ft wide) off Boren, plus two 1-way (12 ft wide) curb cuts that align with the code-required through block connection (TBC).

The Board supported the three curb cuts, based on the site plan [16,44] that clearly demarcates pedestrian zones and minimizes vehicle zones, and recognizing the majority of daily vehicles would use the Boren 2-way ramp and stay off the TBC with its pedestrian priority. This was predicated on building management operations that will minimize vehicle traffic on the TBC, and ensure any service vehicles that must use the through-block for access, will be infrequent and time-managed by on-site staff to avoid peak pedestrian times, as described by the applicants. (DC1-B.1: “...minimize conflict between vehicles and non-motorists”; DC1-C.4: “...reduce possible impacts of [service] facilities on...pedestrian circulation”)

**The Board unanimously recommended that SDCI grant this departure.**

- 6. Height of Loading Berth (SMC 23.54.035.C.1):** The Code requires each loading berth to be 10 ft minimum width and 14 ft minimum vertical clearance. The applicant proposes 3 of the 5 loading berths to be less than 14 ft clear: one at 12'-1" clear, one at 11'- 10" clear, and the third at 11'-3" clear.

The Board supported some decreases in clear height, but recommended a Condition to redesign the loading zone so at least one berth has the required 14ft vertical clearance and all other code requirements, even if it modifies the façade opening at the TBC. (DC1-C)

**With this Condition, the Board unanimously recommended that SDCI grant this departure.**

- 7. Retail Depth (SMC 23.48.014):** The Code requires any required street level uses to be 30ft minimum depth for the 75% minimum length of frontage. The applicant proposes 65% of the required street level use along Terry to be greater than 30 ft deep, but a 12 ft wide portion to be 21-29ft deep.

The Board supported the portion less than 30 ft deep, considering the ground level scale is maintained and results in a viable commercial space along the street, and the remaining 65% portion is 35ft or deeper as shown. (CS2-B.2)

**The Board unanimously recommended that SDCI grant this departure.**

- 8. Required Open Area (SMC 23.48.014.F.1.b):** The Code requires 60% of the required open area (in this case 8,690 sq ft) to meet 4 criteria, including c: to have a minimum horizontal dimension of 15ft. The applicants propose the 60% area meeting 3 criteria, but 1,707 of the 8,690 sq ft is only 13 ft deep along Valley (but still open to the sky).

The Board supported this portion not being 2 feet deeper as the form offset strongly expresses the cantilevered containers and provides rain protection for the café zone below. (DC2-B)

**The Board unanimously recommended that SDCI grant this departure.**

## **DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES**

The priority Citywide and South Lake Union 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](#).

## CONTEXT & SITE

### **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-A Location in the City and Neighborhood**

**CS2-A-1. Sense of Place:** Emphasize attributes that give a distinctive sense of place. Design the building and open spaces to enhance areas where a strong identity already exists, and create a sense of place where the physical context is less established.

**CS2-A-2. Architectural Presence:** Evaluate the degree of visibility or architectural presence that is appropriate or desired given the context, and design accordingly.

#### **CS2-B Adjacent Sites, Streets, and Open Spaces**

**CS2-B-1. Site Characteristics:** Allow characteristics of sites to inform the design, especially where the street grid and topography create unusually shaped lots that can add distinction to the building massing.

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

**CS2-B-3. Character of Open Space:** Contribute to the character and proportion of surrounding open spaces.

#### **CS2-C Relationship to the Block**

**CS2-C-3. Full Block Sites:** Break up long facades of full-block buildings to avoid a monolithic presence. Provide detail and human scale at street-level, and include repeating elements to add variety and rhythm to the façade and overall building design.

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

#### **CS2-I Responding to Site Characteristics**

**CS2-I-i. Views:** 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.

**CS2-I-iv. Heart Locations:** Several areas have been identified as “heart locations.” Heart locations serve as the perceived center of commercial and social activity within the neighborhood. These locations provide anchors for the community as they have identity and give form to the neighborhood. Development at heart locations should enhance their central character through appropriate site planning and architecture. These sites have a high priority for improvements to the public realm. A new building’s primary entry and facade should respond to the heart location. Special street treatments are likely to occur and buildings will need to respond to these centers of commercial and social activity. Amenities to consider are: pedestrian lighting, public art, special paving, landscaping, additional public open space provided by curb bulbs and entry plazas. See full guidelines for Heart Locations

### **CS3 Architectural Context and Character: Contribute to the architectural character of the neighborhood.**

**CS3-A Emphasizing Positive Neighborhood Attributes**

**CS3-A-4. Evolving Neighborhoods:** In neighborhoods where architectural character is evolving or otherwise in transition, explore ways for new development to establish a positive and desirable context for others to build upon in the future.

**CS3-B Local History and Culture**

**CS3-B-1. Placemaking:** Explore the history of the site and neighborhood as a potential placemaking opportunity. Look for historical and cultural significance, using neighborhood groups and archives as resources.

**PUBLIC LIFE**

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

**PL1-A Network of Open Spaces**

**PL1-A-1. Enhancing Open Space:** Design the building and open spaces to positively contribute to a broader network of open spaces throughout the neighborhood.

**PL1-A-2. Adding to Public Life:** Seek opportunities to foster human interaction through an increase in the size and quality of project-related open space available for public life.

**PL1-B Walkways and Connections**

**PL1-B-1. Pedestrian Infrastructure:** Connect on-site pedestrian walkways with existing public and private pedestrian infrastructure, thereby supporting pedestrian connections within and outside the project.

**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.

**PL1-C Outdoor Uses and Activities**

**PL1-C-1. Selecting Activity Areas:** Concentrate activity areas in places with sunny exposure, views across spaces, and in direct line with pedestrian routes.

**PL1-C-2. Informal Community Uses:** In addition to places for walking and sitting, consider including space for informal community use such as performances, farmer’s markets, kiosks and community bulletin boards, cafes, or street vending.

**PL1-C-3. Year-Round Activity:** Where possible, include features in open spaces for activities beyond daylight hours and throughout the seasons of the year, especially in neighborhood centers where active open space will contribute vibrancy, economic health, and public safety.

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

**PL2-A Accessibility**



**PL2-A-1. Access for All:** Provide access for people of all abilities in a manner that is fully integrated into the project design. Design entries and other primary access points such that all visitors can be greeted and welcomed through the front door.

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

**PL2-I Streetscape Compatibility**

**PL2-I-i. Street Level Uses:** Encourage provision of spaces for street level uses that vary in size, width, and depth. Encourage the use of awnings and weather protection along street fronts to enhance the pedestrian environment.

**PL2-I-ii. Streetscape Amenities:** Provide pedestrian-friendly streetscape amenities

- a. tree grates;
- b. benches;
- c. lighting.

**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).

**PL2-II Personal Safety and Security**

**PL2-II-i. All-Day Activity:** Enhance public safety throughout the neighborhood to foster 18-hour public activity. Methods to consider are:

- a. enhanced pedestrian and street lighting;
- b. well-designed public spaces that are defensively designed with clear sight lines and opportunities for eyes on the street.

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

**PL3-C Retail Edges**

**PL3-C-1. Porous Edge:** Engage passersby with opportunities to interact visually with the building interior using glazing and transparency. Create multiple entries where possible and make a physical and visual connection between people on the sidewalk and retail activities in the building.

**PL3-C-2. Visibility:** Maximize visibility into the building interior and merchandise displays. Consider fully operational glazed wall-sized doors that can be completely opened to the street, increased height in lobbies, and/or special lighting for displays.

**PL3-C-3. Ancillary Activities:** Allow space for activities such as sidewalk vending, seating, and restaurant dining to occur. Consider setting structures back from the street or incorporating space in the project design into which retail uses can extend.

***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.

**PL3-III Transition Between Residence and Street**

**PL3-III-i. Residential Entries:** Consider designing the entries of residential buildings to enhance the character of the streetscape through the use of small gardens, stoops and other elements to create a transition between the public and private areas. Consider design options to accommodate various residential uses, i.e., townhouse, live-work, apartment and senior-assisted housing.

**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-1. Visibility:** Locate uses and services frequently used by the public in visible or prominent areas, such as at entries or along the street front.

**DC1-A-2. Gathering Places:** Maximize the use of any interior or exterior gathering spaces.

**DC1-A-3. Flexibility:** Build in flexibility so the building can adapt over time to evolving needs, such as the ability to change residential space to commercial space as needed.

**DC1-A-4. Views and Connections:** Locate interior uses and activities to take advantage of views and physical connections to exterior spaces and uses.

**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-A Massing**

**DC2-A-1. Site Characteristics and Uses:** Arrange the mass of the building taking into consideration the characteristics of the site and the proposed uses of the building and its open space.

**DC2-A-2. Reducing Perceived Mass:** Use secondary architectural elements to reduce the perceived mass of larger projects.

**DC2-B Architectural and Facade Composition**

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

**DC2-C Secondary Architectural Features**

**DC2-C-1. Visual Depth and Interest:** Add depth to facades where appropriate by incorporating balconies, canopies, awnings, decks, or other secondary elements into the façade design. Add detailing at the street level in order to create interest for the pedestrian and encourage active street life and window shopping (in retail areas).

**DC2-D Scale and Texture**

**DC2-D-1. Human Scale:** Incorporate architectural features, elements, and details that are of human scale into the building facades, entries, retaining walls, courtyards, and exterior spaces in a manner that is consistent with the overall architectural concept

**DC2-D-2. Texture:** Design the character of the building, as expressed in the form, scale, and materials, to strive for a fine-grained scale, or “texture,” particularly at the street level and other areas where pedestrians predominate.

***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.

**DC3 Open Space Concept: Integrate open space design with the building design so that they complement each other.**

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

**DC3-II Landscaping To Enhance The Building and/or Site**

**DC3-II-i. Integrated Artwork:** Consider integrating artwork into publicly accessible areas of a building and landscape that evokes a sense of place related to the previous uses of the area. Neighborhood themes may include service industries such as laundries, auto row, floral businesses, photography district, arts district, maritime, etc.

**DC3-III Landscape Design To Address Special Site Conditions**

**DC3-III-i. View Orientation:** Landscaping should be designed to take advantage of views to waterfront and downtown Seattle.

**DC4 Exterior Elements and Finishes: Use appropriate and high quality elements and finishes for the building and its open spaces.**

#### **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-D Trees, Landscape, and Hardscape Materials**

**DC4-D-4. Place Making:** Create a landscape design that helps define spaces with significant elements such as trees.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

The recommendation summarized above was based on the design review packet dated Wednesday, September 21, 2016, and the materials shown and verbally described by the applicant at the Wednesday, September 21, 2016 Design Recommendation meeting. After considering the site and context, hearing public comment, reconsidering the previously identified design priorities and reviewing the materials, the five Design Review Board members recommended APPROVAL of the subject design and departures with the following conditions:

- 1)** Maintain a maximum 12" height above the adjacent raised plaza level for all seating elements and plantings.
- 2)** Redesign the loading zone so at least one berth has the required 14ft vertical clearance and all other code requirements, even if it modifies the façade opening at the Through Block Connection.