



# City of Seattle

Department of Construction & Inspections  
Nathan Torgelson, Director



## EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE DOWNTOWN DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3022614

Address: 2121 5th Avenue

Applicant: Charles Wallace, Caron Architecture, for 2121 LLC

Date of Meeting: Tuesday, January 03, 2017

Board Members Present: Anjali Grant (Chair)  
Bradley Calvert  
J P Emery  
Grace Leong

Board Member Absent: Murphy McCullough

SDCI Staff Present: Michael Dorcy

### SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: DMC 240/290-400

Nearby Zones: (North) DMC 240/290-400  
(South) DMC 240/290-400  
(East) DMC 240/290-400  
(West) DMC 240/290-400

Lot Area: 12,972 Sq. ft.



### Current Development:

The site consists of two platted lots on the west side of 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, located midblock within the 2100 block, which is bounded on the north by Blanchard Street and the south by Lenora Street. The development site is currently occupied by two two-story office buildings and bounded on the south by The Martin, a 24-story mixed use building of recent construction, located at the corner of 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Lenora Street. Immediately to the north is a single-story retail building set tight to a 6-story mixed-use building that occupies the corner at 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Blanchard Street. The development site, measuring 120 feet in the north-south direction and 108 feet in

the east-west direction, rises approximately 5 ½ feet westward to the alley, and loses about 6 inches in elevation between the northwest and south-west corners at the alley.

### **Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:**

Four London Plane trees and the Monorail, a historic landmark, front the site on 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Although much of the Belltown Neighborhood has seen significant high-rise development, including several thirty and forty story residential buildings which have expedited the transition of Belltown into one of Seattle's densest neighborhoods, except for the 24-story Martin apartment building directly to the south, this area of Belltown is characterized by more modest recent development and lower building stock. The three block area on either side of this proposed development site, along the east side of 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, consists of older buildings of two, three, and four stories. Directly across 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue is a surface parking lot nestled between a two-story retail building and a three-story motel with surface parking. The tallest existing structures along the eastside of 5th Avenue in the stretch between Bell Street and Virginia Street are two 7-story parking garages.

### **Access:**

Vehicle access to the two existing buildings on the proposal site is from the north-south alley located west of the buildings. The proposed building will also take vehicular access from the alley. A two-foot in width property dedication for alley purposes will be required from the proposed project.

### **Environmentally Critical Areas:**

There are no environmentally critical areas on the proposal site or within the general area. This area of Belltown boasts one of the flattest terrains of all Seattle neighborhoods.

### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The proposal is a mid-block development on the west side of 5th Avenue in the 2100 block, which is bounded on the north by Blanchard Street and the south by Lenora Street. The proposed high-rise building will be built to a height of 160 feet and will contain approximately 248,000 square feet. It will contain 136 residential units and 168 hotel rooms to be located above some 3,900 square feet of retail/commercial and lobby space. Below-grade parking spaces for approximately 120 vehicles will be accessed from the abutting alley.

The design packet includes information presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number (3022614) 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 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)

## SECOND EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE January 3, 2017

**Note:** An earlier Early Design Guidance meeting was held on March 1, 2016, for a proposal of approximately half this size on the northern half of the current development site. Almost immediately following that meeting, the project applicants announced their acquisition of the additional site and their intention to pursue an expanded development. That development would consist of a building of similar scope and uses but of twice the size. It was determined by SDCI that the new proposal would retain the original project number but, following design development, would be re-noticed and, because of significant changes in bulk and scale, be returned for a *de novo* Early Design Guidance, the January 3, 2017 meeting which provided the basis for these notes.

### PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments offered at this meeting:

There were no design related comments received in writing prior to the meeting:

Additional public comments submitted in writing for this project can be viewed using the following link and entering the project number: <http://web6.seattle.gov/dpd/edms/>

### 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.

#### 1. The Streetscape

- a. See B-3, C-1, C-2 and D4 Priority Guidelines.
- b. Reconsider the location and articulation of the restaurant entrance.
- c. Consider inseting the walls of the proposed restaurant to provide for sidewalk seating; the proposed valet station and complicated structural elements would seem to interfere with any indoor/outdoor restaurant flexibility.
- d. Explore a folding wall at sidewalk edge for restaurant.
- e. Provide canopies of staggering heights across front of building.
- f. Provide for the next meeting vignettes and sections that illustrate more clearly the functioning of the interior stair located between entries at the middle of the ground-level 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue façade.

- g. Provide east/west sections to help explain ground and lower level relations to sidewalk, streetscape, monorail and , the monorail structure.

## 2. Massing Details

- a. See B-3, B-4, C-2 Guidelines. The Board preferred the third massing option which set the basically unmodulated south third of the front façade slightly proud of the rest of the building’s front which was modulated with inset ribbons of balconies from above the base to the top. The overall effect was to impart a strong vertical cast to the 115 foot wide by 160 foot tall box.
- b. It is unclear how the 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue façade is intended to interact with the monorail or monorail structure.
- c. Provide east/west sections that show the monorail as a determinative factor for articulation of the lower floors and setbacks;
- d. At the top of the building, provide greater articulation of the elevator/stair overrun.
- e. Provide more thorough views and explanations of proposed rooftop amenity areas.

### DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

The Board’s recommendation on any requested departure(s) will be based on the departure’s potential to help the project better meet these design guidelines priorities and achieve a better overall project design than could be achieved without the departure(s). The Board’s recommendation will be reserved until the final Board meeting.

At the time of the Early Design Guidance meeting, the applicants identified the following departure(s) for preferred Option 3:

- 1. **Parking Stall Sizes (SMT 23.54.30):** The Code requires a minimum of 35% of large parking stalls. The applicant (p.63) proposes 1%.

The Board requested a clarification of both the requirement and especially the design-based rationale for the departure at the next meeting.

### DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES

The priority Downtown design guidelines identified as Priority Guidelines are summarized below, while all guidelines remain applicable. For the full text please visit the [Design Review website](#).

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

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

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

- a. massing and setbacks,
- b. scale and proportions,
- c. expressed structural bays and modulations,
- d. fenestration patterns and detailing,
- e. exterior finish materials and detailing,
- f. architectural styles, and
- g. roof forms.

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

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

#### ***Belltown Supplemental Guidance:***

**B3.1. Respond to Nearby Design Features:** The principal objective of this guideline is to promote scale and character compatibility through reinforcement of the desirable patterns of massing and facade composition found in the surrounding area. Pay particular attention to designated landmarks and other noteworthy buildings.

- a. Respond to the regulating lines and rhythms of adjacent buildings that also support a street-level environment; regulating lines and rhythms include vertical and horizontal patterns as expressed by cornice lines, belt lines, doors, windows, structural bays and modulation.
- b. Use regulating lines to promote contextual harmony, solidify the relationship between new and old buildings, and lead the eye down the street.
- c. Pay attention to excellent fenestration patterns and detailing in the vicinity. The use of recessed windows that create shadow lines, and suggest solidity, is encouraged.

**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.I. Retail Concentration:** Reinforce existing retail concentrations;

**C1.II. Commercial Space Size:** Vary in size, width, and depth of commercial spaces, accommodating for smaller businesses, where feasible;

**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).

### **C2 Design Facades of Many Scales: Design architectural features, fenestration patterns, and material compositions that refer to the scale of human activities contained within. Building facades should be composed of elements scaled to promote pedestrian comfort, safety, and orientation.**

**C2.1. Modulation of Facades:** Consider modulating the building facades and reinforcing this modulation with the composition of:

- a. the fenestration pattern;
- b. exterior finish materials;
- c. other architectural elements;
- d. light fixtures and landscaping elements; and
- e. the roofline.

**D4 Provide Appropriate Signage: Design signage appropriate for the scale and character of the project and immediate neighborhood. All signs should be oriented to pedestrians and/or persons in vehicles on streets within the immediate neighborhood.**

**D4.1. Desired Signage Elements:** Signage should be designed to:

- a. facilitate rapid orientation
- b. add interest to the street level environment
- c. reduce visual clutter
- d. unify the project as a whole
- e. enhance the appearance and safety of the downtown area.

**D4.2. Unified Signage System:** If the project is large, consider designing a comprehensive building and tenant signage system using one of the following or similar methods:

- a. signs clustered on kiosks near other street furniture or within sidewalk zone closest to building face;
- b. signs on blades attached to building facade;
- c. signs hanging underneath overhead weather protection.

**D4.3. Signage Types:** Also consider providing:

- d. building identification signage at two scales: small scale at the sidewalk level for pedestrians, and large scale at the street sign level for drivers;
- e. sculptural features or unique street furniture to complement (or in lieu of) building and tenant signage;
- f. interpretive information about building and construction activities on the fence surrounding the construction site.

**D4.4. Discourage Upper-Level Signage:** Signs on roofs and the upper floors of buildings intended primarily to be seen by motorists and others from a distance are generally discouraged.

## **BOARD DIRECTION**

At the conclusion of the Early Design Guidance meeting the four members of the Board present at the meeting recommended (4-0) moving forward to MUP application.