# City of Seattle

**Department of Construction and Inspections**
Nathan Torgelson, Director

DESIGN REVIEW

**EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE WEST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD**

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| Project Number: | 3022702 |
| Address: | 1115 Dexter Ave N |
| Applicant: | John Chau of LMN Architects |
| Date of Meeting: | Wednesday, June 15, 2016 |
| Board Members Present: | Katherine Idziorek, Acting Chair<br>Jill Kurfirst, Substitute<br>Homero Nishiwaki |
| Board Members Absent: | Boyd Pickrell<br>Christine Harrington<br>Janet Stephenson |
| SDCI Staff Present: | Magda Hogness |

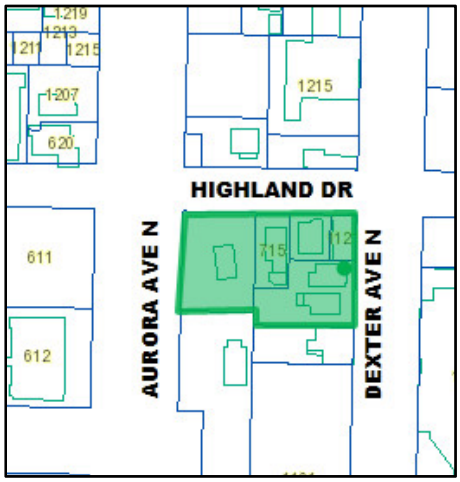
**SITE & VICINITY**

Site Zone: Seattle Mixed (SM 85)

Nearby Zones: North: SM 85
South: SM 85
East: SM 85
West: Lowrise (LR3 RC)

Lot Area: 26,895 sf

Access: The subject properties currently have vehicular access off Highland Dr and Dexter Ave N.




Environmentally Critical Areas: The site is a mapped Environmentally Critical Areas (ECA), due to steep slope and potential slide area.

**Current Development:**
The site is currently occupied by four single family homes and one small commercial structure.

**Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:**
The project site is located in the Dexter neighborhood, which is characterized by the close proximity to Lake Union and a mixture of housing and commercial office uses with a scattering of earlier maritime support businesses.

The site has street frontage on Dexter Ave N, Aurora Ave N, and Highland Drive. The vehicular access for Highland Drive dead-ends at Aurora, due to steep topography; a pedestrian hillclimb is provided at this location.

Substantial new development for this area includes a mixture of residential, commercial and mixed-use buildings that have been recently constructed or are under review. The project itself is an expansion of a recently completed 10 story office building with 10,000 sf of retail, under project number 3006945. Across Dexter Ave N to the east, a proposal for a two 6-story buildings containing 387 residential units is currently being constructed under project 3016543. To the north, across Highland Drive, is a 7 story multifamily building.

Dexter Avenue N. is an established major bike route from the northern part of the city to downtown and also functions as a busy north south vehicular and transit corridor. Aurora Ave N., also known as State Route 99, is a heavily traveled road that cuts off the neighborhood from the Queen Anne Neighborhood to the west. The closest pedestrian crossing is located at Galer St, three blocks to the north.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**
The applicant is proposing a 10 story, 160,000 sf expansion/continuation of adjacent office building at 1101 Dexter Ave N, (3006945). The proposal includes below grade parking for 150 vehicles. The existing structures are proposed to be demolished.

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The packet includes materials presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number at 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 Address:** **Public Resource Center**
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:

- Concerned with existing glare and light pollution, existing structure has very bright vertical lighting at the northwest corner. Would like to see existing/proposed lights turned off at night.
- Concerned with additional noise impacts.

**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.

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1) **Massing and Architectural Concept:** The Board discussed the strengths of the different massing options and strongly supported the angled corner massing of Option 2 and the three distinct masses with vertical and horizontal divisions shown in Option 3. The Board preferred a combined massing option which incorporates the angled corner massing of Option 2 with Option 3, as the modified form has the best potential to create architectural presence, address the corner and respond to the streetscape. The Board directed the applicant to proceed with this modified preferred option. (CS2-C-1, DC2)
    a. Related to the corner and the frontage along Dexter, the Board recommended a 2 story base expression to provide a well-proportioned street wall. (PL1-B-1, PL1-B-3 DC2-B)
    a. The Board agreed additional modulation at the gasket along Dexter would help differentiate the existing structure and proposed addition. In order to have the two masses read as powerful corners, the Board recommended either providing an additional setback of 5' to 10', angling or stair-stepping down the upper glass walk. (CS2-C-1, DC2-A, DC2-B)
    b. Along Aurora, the Board agreed more differentiation between the top and the base is needed and recommended further contrasting these sections of the facade as the building design and materiality develops. (DC2-B)
    c. The Board supported the use of color in a way that is differentiated from the existing building, in particular the vertical columns expressed in yellow. When further developing the design, the Board recommended expanding the use of yellow to assimilate the columns and recessed zipped elements. (DC2-B)

2) **Streetscape:** The Board supported the conceptual response to each streetscape condition and gave guidance for the design development.
    a. To reflect the uniqueness of the angled corner massing, the Board supported the development of a small corner plaza at this location and recommended retail

porosity, differentiated ground level treatment and pedestrian amenities to engage and interact with the streetscape. (Guidelines PL1-B, PL3-C)

b. For the frontage adjacent to the hillclimb, the Board noted that this condition presented a wayfinding opportunity and recommended developing the landscape and ground plan with the potential for visual connection. The Board requested a pedestrian level view of the hillclimb at the next meeting. The Board also noted the hillclimb stair can be slippery and encouraged adding a railing next to the building to address pedestrian safety. (PL1-B-1, PL1-B-3, PL2-D-1)

a. The Board acknowledged that Aurora is a difficult street to walk along and supported the proposed landscape as it helps buffer the pedestrian environment. (PL1-B-1, PL2-B, PL3)

3) **Service entry:** The Board discussed the existing and proposed vehicular and loading entries and recommended pedestrian cues, such as scoring or paving change to indicate the entries. (DC1-C-1, DC1-C-2, DC1-C-4)

4) **Landscape and Open Spaces:** The Board encouraged developing the open space in conjunction with the architectural concept to ensure that interior and exterior spaces relate well to each other and requested more information about this relationship at the next meeting. (DC3-A-1)

5) **Lighting and Signage:** Acknowledging the public concern regarding lighting, the Board recommended developing a lighting plan, mindful of night light pollution and glare impacts. The Board requested a lighting plan and proposed signage for the next meeting. (DC4-B-1, DC4-B-2, DC4-C-2)

**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.

**CONTEXT & SITE**

**CS1 Natural Systems and Site Features: Use natural systems/features of the site and its surroundings as a starting point for project design.**

**CS1-C Topography**

**CS1-C-1. Land Form:** Use natural topography and desirable landforms to inform project design.

**CS1-C-2. Elevation Changes:** Use the existing site topography when locating structures and open spaces on the site.

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

**CS1-I Responding To Site Characteristics**

**CS1-I-i. Sustainable Design:** New development is encouraged to take advantage of site configuration to accomplish sustainability goals. The Board is generally willing to recommend departures from development standards if they are needed to achieve sustainable design. Refer to the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design* (LEED) manual which provides additional information

**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-C Relationship to the Block**

**CS2-C-1. Corner Sites:** Corner sites can serve as gateways or focal points; both require careful detailing at the first three floors due to their high visibility from two or more streets and long distances.

## PUBLIC LIFE

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

**PL1-B Walkways and Connections**

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

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

**PL2-C Weather Protection**

**PL2-C-1. Locations and Coverage:** Overhead weather protection is encouraged and should be located at or near uses that generate pedestrian activity such as entries, retail uses, and transit stops.

**PL2-D Wayfinding**

**PL2-D-1. Design as Wayfinding:** Use design features as a means of wayfinding wherever possible.

**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.

## DESIGN CONCEPT

**DC1 Project Uses and Activities: Optimize the arrangement of uses and activities on site.**

**DC1-C Parking and Service Uses**

**DC1-C-1. Below-Grade Parking:** Locate parking below grade wherever possible. Where a surface parking lot is the only alternative, locate the parking in rear or side yards, or on lower or less visible portions of the site.

**DC1-C-4. Service Uses:** Locate and design service entries, loading docks, and trash receptacles away from pedestrian areas or to a less visible portion of the site to reduce possible impacts of these facilities on building aesthetics and pedestrian circulation.

**DC2 Architectural Concept: Develop an architectural concept that will result in a unified and functional design that fits well on the site and within its surroundings.**

**DC2-B Architectural and Facade Composition**

**DC2-B-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.

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

**DC3-A Building-Open Space Relationship**

**DC3-A-1. Interior/Exterior Fit:** Develop an open space concept in conjunction with the architectural concept to ensure that interior and exterior spaces relate well to each other and support the functions of the development.

**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-C Lighting**

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

**DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES**

The Board's recommendation on the requested 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 no departures were requested.

**BOARD DIRECTION**

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