



RECOMMENDATION OF THE WEST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3022779

Address: 400 Westlake Ave

Applicant: Eric Mott from Perkins and Will

Date of Meeting: Wednesday, April 18, 2018

Board Members Present: Stephen Porter, Chair
Patreese Martin
John Morefield
Brian Walters

Board Members Absent: Homero Nishiwaki, recused

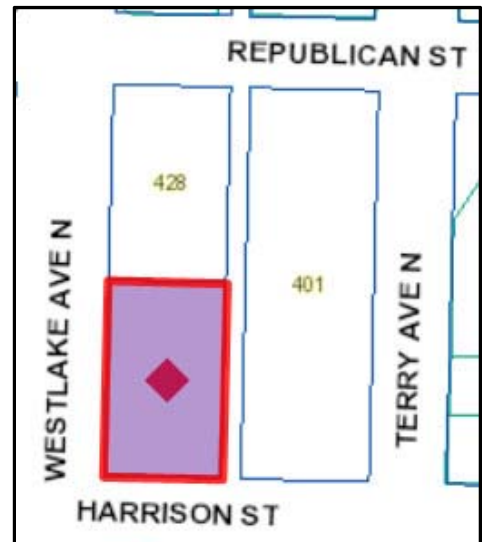
SDCI Staff Present: Magda Hogness

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Seattle Mixed (SM-SLU 160/85-240)

Nearby Zones: (North) SM-SLU 160/85-240
(South) SM-SLU 160/85-240
(East) SM-SLU 160/85-240
(West) SM-SLU 160/85-240

Lot Area: 19,407 sf



Current Development:

The site is currently occupied by a two story commercial building originally constructed in 1929. The reinforced concrete structure has terra cotta ornament on the exterior, characteristic of the Art Deco style. The building is in the process of being designated as a historic landmark by the Seattle Landmarks Preservation Board.

Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:

The project site is located in the South Lake Union neighborhood, characterized by the close proximity to Lake Union and downtown and a mix of predominately office, commercial, and institutional uses.

Nearby development is largely comprised of reinforced concrete structures containing office uses. Adjacent to the north is a six-story office building. To the east, is a four-story office building. Across Harrison St. to the south, is a six-story office building. A five-story building containing office/laboratories uses is located across Westlake to the west.

The SLU streetcar runs along the north edge of both blocks, with a stop located along Westlake to the northwest. Lake Union, two blocks to the north, offers nearby public green space.

Access:

The subject property currently has vehicular access from Westlake Ave and the alley

Environmentally Critical Areas:

None

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposal is for a 13-story addition to an existing two story landmark building (Firestone Auto Supply and Service Building) resulting in a 15-story office building and includes ground floor retail and parking for 67 vehicles. Project considers an option resulting in a 16 story building relating to the pending 2030/Living Building Pilot Program (LBPP) Ordinance.

The design packet includes information 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 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 public comments were offered at this meeting

- Strongly supported the proposal, in particular the beautiful ground level façade, set back from the landmark building.
- Acknowledged the ongoing efforts for the Market to MOHAI pedestrian corridor project.
- Would like to see well-lit streets that are comfortable and safe for pedestrians; also stated a preference for a minimum 8 ft wide sidewalk zone.
- Supported the departure.
- Stated a preference for a skinny and taller massing proportion.
- Concerned with the banality of a glass facade; would like more to see variation in the façade materials.
- Lack of support for a skinny, cube on top architectural concept.

All 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. Massing and Relationship Landmark and to Context:** The Board discussed the strengths of the different massing options and unanimously supported the notches and balconies shown in the massing Option 3 alternatives as the voids and projections form a playful counterpoint to the rational landmark building. The Board specified their preference for the taller height shown in Alternate 3.B, which incorporates the Living Building Pilot code provisions and anticipated HALA height and FAR bonuses, as the slender proportion has the best potential to create a vertical architectural presence. The Board directed the applicant to proceed with one of the Option 3 alternatives. (CS2-A-2, CS2-C-1, DC2)
- 2. Architectural Concept and Materiality:** The Board was supportive of an architectural concept that is complimentary to the landmark, but can also stand on its own and gave guidance for further design development.
 - a. The Board found the depth of the proposed insets and balconies critical to the dynamism of the façade. The Board unanimously agreed these insets should remain open to the sky as shown. (CS2-A-2, DC2-A-2, DC2-B, DC2-C-1)
 - b. Echoing public comment, the Board supported integrating texture into the façade composition to avoid a glass box appearance, similar to the vertical textural elements shown in the rendering on page 69. When further developing the materiality for the upper volume, the Board encouraged studying light, transparency, color and potentially using materials which reference the landmark below. (DC2-B-1, DC2-D, DC4-A-1)

- c. The Board noted the proposal will be very visible on all four elevations and agreed that all facades should be clad with the same quality of materials. The Board also suggested exploring a light and air easement in order to be able to continue glazing over to the north façade. (DC2-A, DC2-B, DC4-A-1)
 - d. The Board expressed interest in seeing how the Living Building Petals will be integrated into the project and notated their support for integral sustainability rather than gratuitous sustainable strategies. (CS1-I-i.)
- 3. Streetscape and Entries:** The Board was supportive of the design intent to preserve the character of the building with large, recessed glazing and ensuring the visibility the terra cotta detailing.
 - a. The Board strongly supported the scale of the recessed bay glazing as it reinforces the original architecture. While the Board supported the idea of operable glazing, they acknowledged this feature will be dependent on future tenants. In either case, the Board encouraged the glazing to be as open and porous as possible. (PL3-C-1, DC2-B)
 - b. Related to the proposed departure for overhead weather protection, the Board recommended exploring other ways to provide pedestrian amenities along the streetscape, such as seating, public art, selection of tree species, etc. in a way that is celebratory of the South Lake Union neighborhood. (PL1-B, PL1-III-i)
 - c. In order to identify the entries and improve wayfinding, the Board recommended studying limited overhead protection at entries, setting back the glazing further into a recessed type of arcade, differentiating paving, and/or other pedestrian cues. (CS2-B-2, PL1-B, PL1-III-I, PL3-A)
 - d. For the streetscape design, the Board recommended referring to the Market to MOHAI Pedestrian Corridor Plan for desirable sidewalk width and anticipated pedestrian volumes. (CS2-B-2, PL1-B, PL1-III-i)
- 4. Signage and Lighting:** The Board viewed signage as a unique opportunity for an artistic expression to reflect and acknowledge the automotive historical character and requested a developed signage plan for the next meeting. Agreeing with public comment, the Board supported well-lit streets and recommended adding pedestrian lighting or incorporating the existing pedestrian lighting to increase visibility. (CS3-B, DC4-B, DC4-C-1)

RECOMMENDATION April 18, 2018

PUBLIC COMMENT

The following public comments were offered at this meeting:

- Concerned that the operable glazing shown at the EDG meeting had been removed from the design.
- Stressed the importance of the public realm and offering opportunities to contribute to the larger community.
- Appreciated the outreach efforts to SLU Community Council and coordination with the Market to Mohai pedestrian corridor project.

- Supported the use of materials, the framed treatment of the entries and the setback provided at ground level and at the tower volume.
- Would like to see pedestrian scaled lighting that is comfortable and safe; encouraged matching fixtures from the Market to Mohai pedestrian corridor project.
- Would like to see the corner mini plaza further develop into a great corner space with space for gathering and liveliness; noted Terry as a precedent for corner spaces.

One purpose of the design review process is for the Board and City to receive comments from the public that help to identify feedback and concerns about the site and design concept, identify applicable citywide and neighborhood design guidelines of highest priority to the site and explore conceptual design, siting alternatives and eventual architectural design.

All 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 recommendations.

- 1. Massing response to EDG, Architectural Expression, Materiality and Composition:** The Board discussed the design development and the massing option with a potential height increase related to the pending 2030/Living Building Pilot Program (LBPP) Ordinance. The Board unanimously preferred the proportions of the taller massing alternate, in particular the horizontal banding grouped into 3, 5, and 4 floor volumes. While the Board also supported the code compliant design overall, the Board struggled with the location of banding as shown. The Board encouraged studying where the banding occurs and/or the placement of the upper balcony along Westlake to avoid a top-heavy appearance, but declined to recommend this change as a condition of approval. The Board also provided direction on the façade composition, transparency and materials. (CS2-C-1, PL1, PL3, DC2)
 - a. The Board approved of the appearance, materiality and depth of the façade secondary elements. The Board noted that the renderings in the packet do not capture the projecting fins and appreciated the full scale mockup brought to the meeting. The Board agreed the perforated metal fins as shown in the physical model are critical to the façade articulation and supported the reference to the terracotta fins on the landmark. (CS2-C-1, DC2, DC4)
 - b. The Board strongly supported of the depth of the notches and the edge cladding and detailing to reinforce the simple geometry. (DC2, DC4)
 - c. Related to the curtain wall composition, the Board strongly supported the intent to have the shadow box glazing read uniformly and avoid a horizontal expression. (DC2, DC4)
 - d. For the tower top, the Board unanimously supported the departure for rooftop features setback as the design completes the massing form, is consistent with the Living Building Petal Certification Goals and is setback as much as possible from the landmark building. (CS2, DC2-l)

2. **Ground Plane:** The Board acknowledged the public comment related to the operable glazing, and recommended conditions to strengthen the transparency and create a very porous street frontage.
 - a. Related to the storefront, the Board was concerned that the framed entries, referred to as shrouds, obscure the transparency into the ground floor retail as viewed by a pedestrian, from an oblique angle. To improve transparency and visibility, the Board recommended a condition to refine the depth, height, width, proportion and/or materiality of the shrouds. (PL3-A, PL3-C-1, DC2-C)
 - b. The Board approved of the general location of entries and the proposed arrangement of interior uses. (PL3-A, PL3-C-1, DC1-A)
 - c. Related to the alley ground level frontage, the Board supported the departures related to loading requirements and parking space standards. The Board acknowledged that the constraints of the structural system needed to preserve the landmark building, limit possible locations for loading and large size parking spaces. The Board unanimously supported the proposed design as it would preserve a larger amount of the landmarked façade and provide a larger amount of retail space when compared to a code compliant alternative. The Board also agreed that the smaller vehicle parking spaces supports the project’s mission of promoting sustainable transportation methods. (CS3-A-1, PL3, PL4)
3. **Landscape:** The Board generally supported the landscape design and the intent to continue to work with community groups to develop the exterior spaces. The Board echoed public comment and agreed the corner open space could be strengthened and suggested arranging seating elements to encourage gathering, recreation and pause. The Board recommended a condition to work with community groups to further develop these outdoor spaces for gathering and reinforce a sense of place. (PL1, PL3, DC4-D)
4. **Lighting and Signage:** The Board discussed the signage and lighting design and recommended conditions.
 - a. The Board supported the overall proposed lighting along the historic facade including the wall washing and spot lighting to reinforce the façade detailing. The Board also recommended studying and potentially reducing nighttime light pollution impacts as a condition of approval. (DC4-C-1)
 - b. The Board acknowledged public comment related to lighting and recommended a condition to provide adequate lighting for pedestrians and work with the community to be consistent with the Market to MOHAI pedestrian corridor. (DC4-C)
 - c. The Board supported the proposed pedestrian scaled signage and found the design in keeping with the rest of architecture. (DC4-B)

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

The Board’s recommendation on the requested departure(s) were 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 meeting the following departures were requested:

1. **Rooftop Features (SMC 23.48.025.C.7):** The Code requires all rooftop features to be located no closer than 10' to the roof edge. The applicant proposes positioning the core against the east façade for a 93' portion of the frontage.

The Board unanimously supported the departure as the design completes the massing form, is consistent with the Living Building Petal Certification Goals and is setback as much as possible from the landmark building. The Board agreed the departure strengthens the composition and better meet design guidelines CS2 Urban Pattern & Form and DC2.I Architectural Concept and Consistency.

2. **Parking Space Standards (SMC 23.54.030.B.2.c):** The Code requires a minimum 35% of large parking spaces. The applicant proposed 13 large parking spaces, which amounts to 20%.

The Board acknowledged that the constraints of the structural system are needed to preserve the landmark building, which limit possible locations for large size stalls and unanimously supported the departure request. The Board agreed smaller vehicle parking spaces support the project's mission of promoting sustainable transportation methods and the design better meets Design Guideline PL4 Active Transportation.

3. **Pedestrian Street Façade Setback (SMC 23.47.240.B.1.a):** The Code requires street-facing facades abutting Class 1 Pedestrian Streets to be built to the street lot line for a minimum of 70% of the facade length. The applicant proposes setting back the façade 4'-1" from the street lot line along Westlake and Harrison to emphasize the bays of the landmark building structure.

The Board unanimously supported the departure request as the additional width provide more sidewalk space and the setback better differentiates the landmark bays than a scheme that has glazing located at the property line. The Board agreed the resulting design has the potential to improve the pedestrian realm and better meet Design Guidelines CS3.A.1 Fitting Old and New Together, CS3.B Local History and Culture, and PL1.B Walkways and Connections.

4. Staff Note: The request to depart from Overhead Weather Protection (referred to as Departure 4 in the Recommendation Packet) was determined to be not required.
5. **Loading Requirements (SMC 23.48.025.C.2.ii):** The Code requires loading berths to be a minimum of 25'ft long and 14' tall. The applicant proposes four loading berth, two of which are van sized loading berths with a proposed length of 19' and width of 11'.

The Board unanimously supported the departure request as the design preserves more of the landmarked façade and provides a larger amount of retail space when compared to a code compliant alternative. The Board agreed the resulting design better meets Design CS3.A.1 Fitting Old and New Together and PL3 Street-Level Interaction.

DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES

The priority Citywide and Neighborhood guidelines identified 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.

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-A Location in the City and Neighborhood

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

CS2-C Relationship to the Block

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

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

CS3-A Emphasizing Positive Neighborhood Attributes

CS3-A-2. Contemporary Design: Explore how contemporary designs can contribute to the development of attractive new forms and architectural styles; as expressed through use of new materials or other means.

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.

CS3-B-2. Historical/Cultural References: Reuse existing structures on the site where feasible as a means of incorporating historical or cultural elements into the new project.

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-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.

South Lake Union Supplemental Guidance:

PL1-III Pedestrian Open Spaces and Entrances

PL1-III-i. Public Realm Amenity: New developments are encouraged to work with the Design Review Board and interested citizens to provide features that enhance the public realm, i.e. the transition zone between private property and the public right of way. The Board is generally willing to consider a departure in open space requirements if the project proponent provides an acceptable plan for features such as:

- a. curb bulbs adjacent to active retail spaces where they are not interfering with primary corridors that are designated for high levels of traffic flow;
- b. pedestrian-oriented street lighting;
- c. street furniture.

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

PL3-A Entries

PL3-A-1. Design Objectives: Design primary entries to be obvious, identifiable, and distinctive with clear lines of sight and lobbies visually connected to the street.

PL3-A-4. Ensemble of Elements: Design the entry as a collection of coordinated elements including the door(s), overhead features, ground surface, landscaping, lighting, and other features.

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.

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

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 façades—including alleys and visible roofs— considering the composition and architectural expression of the building as a whole. Ensure that all façades are attractive and well-proportioned.

DC2-B-2. Blank Walls: Avoid large blank walls along visible façades wherever possible. Where expanses of blank walls, retaining walls, or garage façades are unavoidable, include uses or design treatments at the street level that have human scale and are designed for pedestrians.

DC2-C Secondary Architectural Features

DC2-C-1. Visual Depth and Interest: Add depth to façades 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).

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.

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

DC4-A Exterior Elements and Finishes

DC4-A-1. Exterior Finish Materials: Building exteriors should be constructed of durable and maintainable materials that are attractive even when viewed up close. Materials that have texture, pattern, or lend themselves to a high quality of detailing are encouraged.

DC4-B Signage

DC4-B-1. Scale and Character: Add interest to the streetscape with exterior signs and attachments that are appropriate in scale and character to the project and its environs.

DC4-B-2. Coordination with Project Design: Develop a signage plan within the context of architectural and open space concepts, and coordinate the details with façade design, lighting, and other project features to complement the project as a whole, in addition to the surrounding context.

DC4-C Lighting

DC4-C-1. Functions: Use lighting both to increase site safety in all locations used by pedestrians and to highlight architectural or landscape details and features such as entries, signs, canopies, plantings, and art.

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

DC4-D Trees, Landscape, and Hardscape Materials

DC4-D-1. Choice of Plant Materials: Reinforce the overall architectural and open space design concepts through the selection of landscape materials.

RECOMMENDATION

The recommendation summarized above was based on the design review packet dated Wednesday, April 18, 2018, and the materials shown and verbally described by the applicant at the Wednesday, April 18, 2018 Design Recommendation meeting. After considering the site and context, hearing public comment, reconsidering the previously identified design priorities and reviewing the materials, the four Design Review Board members recommended APPROVAL of the subject design and departures with the following conditions:

1. Refine the depth, height, width, proportion and/or materiality of the shrouds to improve transparency and visibility. (PL3-A, PL3-C-1, DC2-C)
2. Work with community groups to develop the outdoor spaces to reinforce a sense of place and include space for gathering. (PL1, PL3, DC4-D)
3. For the lighting design, study and reduce the potential for night light pollution. (DC4-C-1)
4. Work with community groups to provide adequate lighting for pedestrians consistent with the Market to MOHAI pedestrian corridor plans. (DC4-C)