



# City of Seattle

Department of Construction & Inspections

Nathan Torgelson, Director

DESIGN  
REVIEW

## EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE DOWNTOWN DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3023025

Address: 1915 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue

Applicant: Poppi Handy, third place design co-operative, for Ariel Development

Date of Meeting: Tuesday, February 16, 2016

Board Members Present: Anjali Grant (Chair)  
Grace Leong  
Gundula Proksch

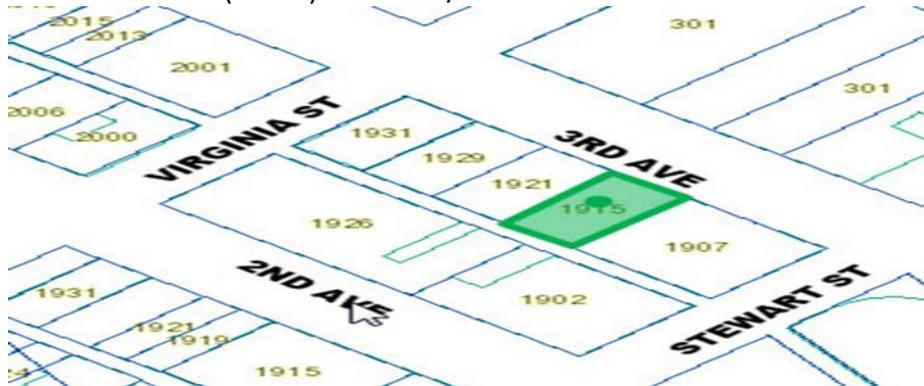
Board Members Absent: Murphy McCullough  
Alan McWain

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: 6,480 sq.ft.

**Current Development:**

The site is occupied by a six-story commercial building built in the 1920s, located mid-block between Virginia and Stewart Streets at 1915 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue in the Belltown Urban Center Village in downtown Seattle. The structure was originally designed and used as a parking structure. In more recent years it has been converted to a storage facility. It is one of many buildings that are identified as character buildings within the Belltown neighborhood.

**Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:**

The surrounding buildings are of a variety of sizes, with some as small as two stories in height. There are several buildings in the area with historic significance and character, a number of which enjoy Landmark status (see the packet, pages 6 and 7).

A considerable amount of new development, including residential apartments, is underway or in the planning stages for enhancing the area, including the Viktoria at 1915 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and the Escala, located at 1920 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

**Access:**

Pedestrian access is possible from the adjacent street and the alley at the rear of the structure. No vehicular access onto the site is proposed. The existing sidewalk on 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue is 12 feet wide.

**Environmentally Critical Areas:**

None.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The applicant is proposing an adaptive reuse of the existing 6-story structure with a mixed-use development that would consist of ground floor commercial space (restaurant) and residential and hotel lobbies, with the addition of 8 stories of additional hotel and residential floors added above the existing structure. The existing floor below grade will be remodeled to contain primarily the hotel back-of-house functions.

The zoning of the site is DMC 240/290-400. The preferred scheme has a building height of 185 feet. 104 hotel rooms are proposed, with 44 residential units.

The design packet includes materials presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number (3023025) 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](mailto:PRC@seattle.gov)

<b>EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE Meeting: February 16, 2016</b>
---

## **DESIGN DEVELOPMENT**

The design teams proposes to preserve and expand a unique Belltown building, designed as a parking facility designed and built at a time the automobile was starting to transform the shape and culture of the City. The onetime parking garage and more recent mini storage facility will be transformed into an active 24/7 residential and hotel building. Lobbies for residents and hotel guests will intermix with restaurant/retail commercial uses on the ground floor.

The first concept presented was identified as Code-compliant with 104 hotel units and 48 residential units. Shaped like a fat “**I**,” the structure had narrow light wells behind the front portion of the building, one unit deep, which filled out the entire 60-foot width of the lot. The upper stories (above the initial 6) followed the contours of the rectangle that fit within the recessed sides of the lower light wells. Option two provided two light wells on the middle section of the building on the lower floors, creating an “**I**” shape. On the upper floors the row of units along the alley filled out the entire 60 feet of the lot width and then narrowed to the dimension set by the light wells then narrowed further for a 30-foot width at the building’s front. This option provided for 109 lodging units and 54 residential units.

The third, “preferred,” option positioned additional mass along both the street and alley side, recessing the middle portion of each side for a light well. This scheme, also a modified “**I**” scheme, offered the fewer number of floors, but provided 112 lodging units and 50 residential units. Co-planer with the alley façade of the existing structure, the front façade was set back from the existing front façade and provided greater articulation of the existing cornice line and cornice.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

No written comments were received prior to the meeting. One member of the public offered comments at the EDG meeting. Identifying himself as a resident of the Josephinum apartments, located at 1902 Second Avenue, he stated a preference for the third option and expressed some concern regarding the subject building's negative effect of the sunshine his building would receive.

Public comments at the meeting echoed some of these same concerns with the following additional comments:

- Preserve the existing loading dock as proposed, as a terrace in front of retail uses;

Any 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.

### DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES

The priority Citywide and Neighborhood guidelines identified by the Board as Priority Guidelines are summarized below. While all guidelines remain applicable, Guidelines B1, B4, C1, C2, C6 and E3 among the Downtown Guidelines and A2, A3, B1 and C1 among the Belltown Guidelines were mentioned as particularly applicable to the project. For the full text please visit the [Design Review website](#).

## SITE PLANNING AND MASSING

**A1 Respond to the Physical Environment: Develop an architectural concept and compose the building's massing in response to geographic conditions and patterns of urban form found nearby or beyond the immediate context of the building site.**

**A1.2. Response to Planning Efforts:** Some areas downtown are transitional environments, where existing development patterns are likely to change. In these areas, respond to the urban form goals of current planning efforts, being cognizant that new development will establish the context to which future development will respond.

**A2 Enhance the Skyline: Design the upper portion of the building to promote visual interest and variety in the downtown skyline. Respect existing landmarks while responding to the skyline's present and planned profile.**

**A2.1. Desired Architectural Treatments:** Use one or more of the following architectural treatments to accomplish this goal:

- a. sculpt or profile the facades;
- b. specify and compose a palette of materials with distinctive texture, pattern, or color;
- c. provide or enhance a specific architectural rooftop element.

**A2.2. Rooftop Mechanical Equipment:** In doing so, enclose and integrate any rooftop mechanical equipment into the design of the building as a whole.

## ARCHITECTURAL EXPRESSION

**B1 Respond to the neighborhood context: Develop an architectural concept and compose the major building elements to reinforce desirable urban features existing in the surrounding neighborhood.**

**B1.1. Adjacent Features and Networks:** Each building site lies within an urban neighborhood context having distinct features and characteristics to which the building design should respond.

Arrange the building mass in response to one or more of the following, if present:

- a. a surrounding district of distinct and noteworthy character;
- b. an adjacent landmark or noteworthy building;
- c. a major public amenity or institution nearby;
- d. neighboring buildings that have employed distinctive and effective massing compositions;
- e. elements of the pedestrian network nearby, (i.e.: green street, hillclimb, mid-block crossing, through-block passageway); and
- f. direct access to one or more components of the regional transportation system.

**B1.2. Land Uses:** Also, consider the design implications of the predominant land uses in the area surrounding the site.

**B2 Create a Transition in Bulk and Scale: Compose the massing of the building to create a transition to the height, bulk, and scale of development in nearby less-intensive zones.**

**B2.1. Analyzing Height, Bulk, and Scale:** Factors to consider in analyzing potential height, bulk, and scale impacts include:

- a. topographic relationships;
- b. distance from a less intensive zone edge;
- c. differences in development standards between abutting zones (allowable building height, width, lot coverage, etc.);
- d. effect of site size and shape;
- e. height, bulk, and scale relationships resulting from lot orientation (e.g., back lot line to back lot line vs back lot line to side lot line); and
- f. type and amount of separation between lots in the different zones (e.g., separation by only a property line, by an alley or street, or by other physical features such as grade changes);
- g. street grid or platting orientations.

**B2.2. Compatibility with Nearby Buildings:** In some cases, careful siting and design treatment may be sufficient to achieve reasonable transition and mitigation of height, bulk, and scale impacts. Some techniques for achieving compatibility are as follows:

- h. use of architectural style, details (such as roof lines, beltcourses, cornices, or fenestration), color, or materials that derive from the less intensive zone.
- i. architectural massing of building components; and
- j. responding to topographic conditions in ways that minimize impacts on neighboring development, such as by stepping a project down the hillside.

**B2.3. Reduction of Bulk:** In some cases, reductions in the actual bulk and scale of the proposed structure may be necessary in order to mitigate adverse impacts and achieve an acceptable level of compatibility. Some techniques which can be used in these cases include:

- k. articulating the building's facades vertically or horizontally in intervals that reflect to existing structures or platting pattern;
- l. increasing building setbacks from the zone edge at ground level;
- m. reducing the bulk of the building's upper floors; and
- n. limiting the length of, or otherwise modifying, facades.

**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.**

**B3.2. 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.

**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.

**C4 Reinforce Building Entries: To promote pedestrian comfort, safety, and orientation, reinforce building entries.**

**C4.1. Entry Treatments:** Reinforce the building's entry with one or more of the following architectural treatments:

- a. extra-height lobby space;
- b. distinctive doorways;
- c. decorative lighting;
- d. distinctive entry canopy;
- e. projected or recessed entry bay;
- f. building name and address integrated into the facade or sidewalk;
- g. artwork integrated into the facade or sidewalk;
- h. a change in paving material, texture, or color;
- i. distinctive landscaping, including plants, water features and seating
- j. ornamental glazing, railings, and balustrades.

**C4.2. Residential Entries:** To make a residential building more approachable and to create a sense of association among neighbors, entries should be clearly identifiable and visible from the street and easily accessible and inviting to pedestrians. The space between the building and the sidewalk should provide security and privacy for residents and encourage social interaction among residents and neighbors. Provide convenient and attractive access to the building's entry. To ensure comfort and security, entry areas and adjacent open space should be sufficiently lighted and protected from the weather. Opportunities for creating lively, pedestrian-oriented open space should be considered.

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

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

- a. Extending retail space fenestration into the alley one bay;
- b. Providing a niche for recycling and waste receptacles to be shared by nearby older buildings lacking such facilities;;
- c. Adding effective lighting to enhance visibility and safety.

**PUBLIC AMENITIES**

**D1 Provide Inviting & Usable Open Space: Design public open spaces to promote a visually pleasing, safe, and active environment for workers, residents, and visitors. Views and solar access from the principal area of the open space should be especially emphasized.**

**D1.1. Pedestrian Enhancements:** Where a commercial or mixed-use building is set back from the sidewalk, pedestrian enhancements should be considered in the resulting street frontage. Downtown the primary function of any open space between commercial buildings and the sidewalk is to provide access into the building and opportunities for outdoor activities such as vending, resting, sitting, or dining.

- a. All open space elements should enhance a pedestrian oriented, urban environment that has the appearance of stability, quality, and safety.

- b. Preferable open space locations are to the south and west of tower development, or where the siting of the open space would improve solar access to the sidewalk.
- c. Orient public open space to receive the maximum direct sunlight possible, using trees, overhangs, and umbrellas to provide shade in the warmest months. Design such spaces to take advantage of views and solar access when available from the site.
- d. The design of planters, landscaping, walls, and other street elements should allow visibility into and out of the open space.

**D1.3. Residential Open Space:** Residential buildings should be sited to maximize opportunities for creating usable, attractive, well-integrated open space. In addition, the following should be considered:

- i. courtyards that organize architectural elements while providing a common garden;
- j. entry enhancements such as landscaping along a common pathway;
- k. decks, balconies and upper level terraces;
- l. play areas for children;
- m. individual gardens; and
- n. location of outdoor spaces to take advantage of sunlight.

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

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

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

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

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

**D3 Provide Elements That Define the Place: Provide special elements on the facades, within public open spaces, or on the sidewalk to create a distinct, attractive, and memorable “sense of place” associated with the building.**

**D3.1. Public Space Features and Amenities:** Incorporate one or more of the following a appropriate:

- a. public art;
- b. street furniture, such as seating, newspaper boxes, and information kiosks;
- c. distinctive landscaping, such as specimen trees and water features;
- d. retail kiosks;
- e. public restroom facilities with directional signs in a location easily accessible to all; and
- f. public seating areas in the form of ledges, broad stairs, planters and the like, especially near public open spaces, bus stops, vending areas, on sunny facades, and other places where people are likely to want to pause or wait.

**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.

**D5 Provide Adequate Lighting: To promote a sense of security for people downtown during nighttime hours, provide appropriate levels of lighting on the building facade, on the underside of overhead weather protection, on and around street furniture, in merchandising display windows, in landscaped areas, and on signage.**

**D5.1. Lighting Strategies:** Consider employing one or more of the following lighting strategies as appropriate.

- a. Illuminate distinctive features of the building, including entries, signage, canopies, and areas of architectural detail and interest.
- b. Install lighting in display windows that spills onto and illuminates the sidewalk.
- c. Orient outside lighting to minimize glare within the public right-of-way.

**D6 Design for Personal Safety & Security: Design the building and site to promote the feeling of personal safety and security in the immediate area.**

**D6.1. Safety in Design Features:** To help promote safety for the residents, workers, shoppers, and visitors who enter the area:

- a. provide adequate lighting;

- b. retain clear lines of sight into and out of entries and open spaces;
- c. use semi-transparent security screening, rather than opaque walls, where appropriate;
- d. avoid blank and windowless walls that attract graffiti and that do not permit residents or workers to observe the street;
- e. use landscaping that maintains visibility, such as short shrubs and/or trees pruned so that all branches are above head height;
- f. use ornamental grille as fencing or over ground-floor windows in some locations;
- g. avoid architectural features that provide hiding places for criminal activity;
- h. design parking areas to allow natural surveillance by maintaining clear lines of sight for those who park there, for pedestrians passing by, and for occupants of nearby buildings;
- i. install clear directional signage;
- j. encourage “eyes on the street” through the placement of windows, balconies, and street-level uses; and
- k. ensure natural surveillance of children’s play areas.

## **DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES**

At the time of the Early Design Guidance meeting the following departures were requested:

1. **Upper-level development standards (SMC 23.49.058.E.2):** For the preferred concept, the departure would allow the creation of a better link between the existing structure’s historic proportions and character by allowing a uniform width to carry up the height of the building.

The Board reacted favorably to the departure request. 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.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

All three of the Board members attending the meeting agreed on the following guidance:

### **Building Volume**

- The Board cautioned that adjacent highrise structures could impact or obstruct views from the units on the north and south facades.
- The windows that wrapped around the corners in Option 1 helped to distinguish between old and new, but felt that the option 1 façade was too dissimilar to the existing façade.
- The Board suggested further investigation between a “T” and an “H” shaped building for Option 3; review the advantages and disadvantages of each scheme.

- Re-examine the location and the co-planer attributes of the stair towers, potentially making them distinct entities; Pay particular attention to the roof level and the setback or lack of setback of the stair location.

#### Ground Floor

- Show more development of the ground floor, in particular the active uses of the spaces within the hotel lobby and relationship to bar/cade area;
- Show the ground floor plan with greater relationship to the site context.

#### East Elevation

- Investigate further the original design of the garage entry and explore the possibility of recessing the entire center bay back.
- Explore additional options to achieve a more modern (subdued/contrastive) façade at the upper floors.
- Investigate materials, colors, and modulation of the new upper façade to indicate the optimal contrast/embrace of old and new.

### **BOARD DIRECTION**

At the conclusion of the Early Design Guidance meeting, the Board recommended moving forward to MUP application.

At the time the project returns to the Board for further approvals, in addition to addressing the concerns stated above, the Board members would like to see explorations of the following:

- Review floor plan design to rotate the rooms within the 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue elevation in order to have more of the units oriented to the street.
- Consider alternative options (“T” and “H”) for the overall shape of the building.
- Explore inseting the stair tower at the southwest corner of the existing structure.
- Show the relationships to buildings across the alley.
- Provide zoning analysis diagrams of the proposed tower with potential allowable adjacent towers.
- Provide elevations of the alley façade.
- Further develop, explain and show the back-of-house spaces along the alley.
- Further develop the entry sequence(s) and better define the uses and functions along the street frontage.
- Provide plans at a larger scale showing ground level spaces and activities and extending into the surrounding street context.
- Provide and discuss any requirements for a dock area at the alley and show how that would be incorporated into the design.

- Explore and refine materials and color palette for the upper floors and present and explain an integration strategy at the next meeting.