



# 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: 3024611

Address: 408 Aurora Ave North

Applicant: ARC Architects

Date of Meeting: Wednesday, September 07, 2016

Board Members Present: Boyd Pickrell, Chair  
Homero Nishiwaki  
Janet Stephenson

Board Members Absent: Christine Harrington  
Katherine Idziorek

SDCI Staff Present: Crystal Torres, Land Use Planner

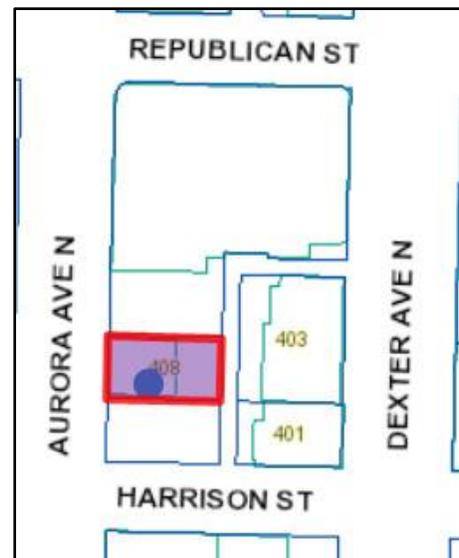
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### SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Seattle Mixed-South Lake Union 160/85-240

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

Lot Area: 17, 146 sq. ft.



### **Current Development:**

There is currently a two-story office building and associated parking lot on the project site.

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

The project site is located at 408 Aurora Ave North, on the eastern edge of the future north portal of the Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement, between Republican street and Harrison Street. Surrounding development includes a 6-story apartment building to the north, a surface parking lot to the south of the south and a pending 8-story apartment building across the alley to the east.

The neighborhood is characterized by an infusion of urban redevelopment surrounding the Lake Union area. The South Lake Union neighborhood consists of a mixture of building types and uses. The diversity ranges from residential, industrial, maritime, artisan, bio-tech, social service and much more. The neighborhood has served as a commercial and light industrial support area to the city of Seattle since the late 1880's. Over the last decade, South Lake Union has become an opportunity for consideration of development issues ranging from open space, technical business and residential and social service opportunities.

### **Access:**

Existing vehicular access is located at the rear of the building via the alley. Pedestrian access is proposed from both Aurora Ave and the Alley. No parking is required or proposed with this project.

### **Environmentally Critical Areas:**

There are no mapped environmentally critical areas.

### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The applicant is proposing a seven-story building containing 75-81 apartment units. Existing two story structure to be demolished.

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](mailto:PRC@seattle.gov)

## EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE September 7, 2016

### PUBLIC COMMENT

At the time of the EDG meeting there were no public comments made and no written comments were received prior to the meeting

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/Design Concept:** The Board supported massing Options A and B (Final EDG packet received via mail and uploaded to project portal) offering the following guidance:
  - a. **Form**
    - i. The Board supported the asymmetrical massing along Aurora Ave, the double height open entry, and the interior courtyard presented in Options A and B. **CS2-A-2**
    - ii. The Board supported the overall proportions and scale of the massing as this form was appropriate for the mid-block site and maximized light/air access for units with inclusion of a large interior courtyard space. **CS1-B, CS2-A-2, CS2-C-2**
  - b. **Aurora Ave**
    - i. **Entry.** The Board supported the SW entry location and creation of a large entry portal and view into the courtyard space, as this offered a charming transition from the public realm into private residential space. **PL1-III-i, CS2-B-2, PL3-A**
    - ii. **Option A.** The Board discussed the merits of Option A, noting that the folded plane offered several benefits Option B lacked:
      1. The folded plane provided a more long-term design solution, which would be legible both before and after development on the adjacent vacant lot. **CS2-C-2**
      2. The folded plane offered greater buffering along the south edge from future development. In addition, Option A created visual interest at the street; marked the entry, regardless of adjacent future development; and created an interesting façade composition. **CS2-A-2**
      3. The folded plane provided an integrated first floor edge condition which supported greater security for the site. However, a fence would

still need to be intentionally designed for the open portions of this edge. **PL2-B, PL3-B-1**

iii. **Option B-** The Board discussed the merits of Option B, noting the angled balconies and setback massing volume at the entry were successful, however, Option B needed to be further softened with landscaping along Aurora Ave. **CS2-C-2**

iv. **Basement units.** The Board was concerned with the basement level units along the street facing façade and encouraged setting back to provide a buffer from the sidewalk as shown in option A. **PL3-B-2**

v. **Landscaped buffer.** The Board supported the landscaping provided in Option A, which provided greater buffer for the basement units and lower level units, as well as, adding to the public realm, and creating a smoother transition from building to pedestrian environment, while providing more privacy for the lower level residents. **CS2-B-2, PL3-B-2**

**c. Respect for adjacent sites**

i. At the next meeting provide a window study and further resolve the relationship with the residential building to the north, as well as, further documenting the relationship of the proposed building with the building across the alley. **CS2-D-5**

**2. Courtyard/Landscaping:**

a. The Board supported the overall concept of the interior courtyard as this increased access to light/air and encouraged resident interaction. **DC3-B-4**

b. The Board discussed the impacts of future development on the proposed landscaping within the courtyard. The Board was concerned with the viability of plants within the courtyard space and would like to confirm that whatever species are selected are appropriate for this space. **DC4-D-3**

c. At the next meeting, provide additional information related to how the fence will be detailed (pattern, material etc.). **DC2-B-1**

d. The Board suggest a highly transparent bicycle storage room to allow light from alley to flow into courtyard area. **CS1-B**

**3. Materiality:**

a. The Board discussed the massing along Aurora Ave, stating that the simplified, relatively flat façade would be supported dependent upon further resolution of the façade composition. **CS3-A-2, DC2-B-1, DC4-A-1**

b. At the next meeting, demonstrate thoughtful integration of sophisticated material, layering of balconies, finishes, and possible integration of the angled balconies/fins in order to increase the depth and texture of the façade. The façade should appear layered, with legible texture and depth, as the massing form is rather simple. **CS3-A-2, DC2-B-1, DC4-A-1**

c. The Board discussed the south blank walls, noting that this building edge will be highly visible from both a vehicular and pedestrian perspectives. As such, this façade needs to be addressed with a thoughtful treatment. The Board encouraged artful detailing of the blank wall as shown in the packet, such as a mural or other artful treatment of this façade. **CS3-A-2, DC2-B, DC3-II-i**

4. **Security:** The Board discussed the need to further resolve the safety and security of the south edge with fencing etc. **PL2-B, PL3-B-1**
5. **Signage/Lighting:** At the next meeting, the Board would like to review details regarding the proposed signage and lighting plans, as this will be a highly visible frontage from Aurora for both pedestrians and vehicular traffic. **DC4-B**
6. **Bicycle:** The Board encourage the the provision of bicycle entries at both the front and rear of the building and to create a strong connection to bike paths. **PL4-B**

**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 no Departures were requested.

**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.**

**CS1-B Sunlight and Natural Ventilation**

**CS1-B-1. Sun and Wind:** Take advantage of solar exposure and natural ventilation. Use local wind patterns and solar gain to reduce the need for mechanical ventilation and heating where possible.

**CS1-B-2. Daylight and Shading:** Maximize daylight for interior and exterior spaces and minimize shading on adjacent sites through the placement and/or design of structures on site.

**CS1-B-3. Managing Solar Gain:** Manage direct sunlight falling on south and west facing facades through shading devices and existing or newly planted trees.

**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-2. Mid-Block Sites:** Look to the uses and scales of adjacent buildings for clues about how to design a mid-block building. Continue a strong street-edge and respond to datum lines of adjacent buildings at the first three floors.

**CS2-D Height, Bulk, and Scale**

**CS2-D-5. Respect for Adjacent Sites:** Respect adjacent properties with design and site planning to minimize disrupting the privacy of residents in adjacent buildings.

**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.

**PUBLIC LIFE**

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

***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.

**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.

**PL2-A-2. Access Challenges:** Add features to assist pedestrians in navigating sloped sites, long blocks, or other challenges.

## **PL2-B Safety and Security**

**PL2-B-1. Eyes on the Street:** Create a safe environment by providing lines of sight and encouraging natural surveillance.

**PL2-B-2. Lighting for Safety:** Provide lighting at sufficient lumen intensities and scales, including pathway illumination, pedestrian and entry lighting, and/or security lights.

**PL2-B-3. Street-Level Transparency:** Ensure transparency of street-level uses (for uses such as nonresidential uses or residential lobbies), where appropriate, by keeping views open into spaces behind walls or plantings, at corners, or along narrow passageways.

## **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-2. Common Entries:** Multi-story residential buildings need to provide privacy and security for residents but also be welcoming and identifiable to visitors.

**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-B Residential Edges**

**PL3-B-1. Security and Privacy:** Provide security and privacy for residential buildings through the use of a buffer or semi-private space between the development and the street or neighboring buildings.

**PL3-B-2. Ground-level Residential:** Privacy and security issues are particularly important in buildings with ground-level housing, both at entries and where windows are located overlooking the street.

**PL3-B-3. Buildings with Live/Work Uses:** Maintain active and transparent facades in the

## **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-B Architectural and Façade 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.

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

### **DC3-B Open Space Uses and Activities**

**DC3-B-4. Multifamily Open Space:** Design common and private open spaces in multifamily projects for use by all residents to encourage physical activity and social interaction.

### ***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.

**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-3. Long Range Planning:** Select plants that upon maturity will be of appropriate size, scale, and shape to contribute to the site as intended.

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

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **BOARD DIRECTION**

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