



City of Seattle

Department of Construction & Inspections

Nathan Torgelson, Director

DESIGN
REVIEW

FIRST RECOMMENDATION OF THE DOWNTOWN DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3026266

Address: 2025 5th Avenue

Applicant: Ankrom Moisan Architects

Date of Meeting: Tuesday, April 03, 2018

Board Members Present: Grace Leong (Chair)
Bradley Calvert
Anjali Grant
Belinda Bail
Aaron Argyle

Board Members Absent: JP Emery (recused)
Ed Palushock

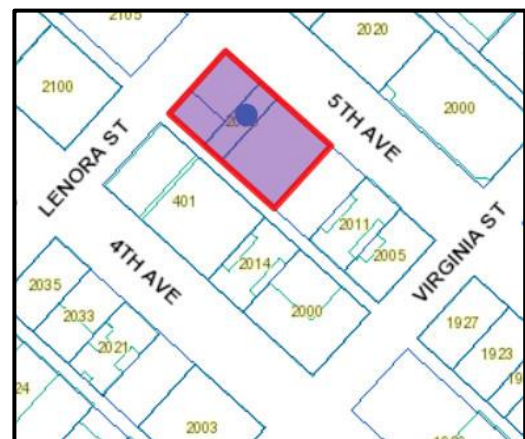
SDCI Staff Present: Holly Godard, Senior Land Use Planner

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Downtown Mixed Commercial; DMC 240/290-400

Nearby Zones: (North) DMC 240/290-400
(South) DMC 240/290-400
(East) DOC2 500/300-500
(West) DMC 240/290-400

Lot Area: 19,434 square feet



Current Development:

The site is currently occupied by a one-story commercial structure and surface parking lots.

Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:

A parking lot occupies the site immediately adjacent to the south. An older 18 story hotel and its four-level parking structure is located to the west across the alley. A 7-story data center building and seven level parking structure are across 5th Avenue to the east. A 24-story residential building occupies the opposite side of Lenora Street from the site. The surrounding mixed-use district has buildings of diverse scales, styles and vintage, with recent additions that add higher densities, consistent with adopted downtown zoning and policies.

Access:

Pedestrian access is from the two adjacent sidewalks of Lenora Street and 5th Avenue. Vehicular access is from the adjacent through-block alley. The Seattle Monorail runs above grade along the 5th Avenue frontage, in the middle of the street right-of-way.

Environmentally Critical Areas:

None

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed development is a 40-story tower containing 470 residential units, 5,000 square feet of commercial use at grade. Parking to be provided for 330 vehicles in 6 stories below grade. Project considers options relating to a pending HALA (Housing, Affordability, Livability Agenda) upzone.

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 SDCI:

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 the EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE meeting:

- Stated general support for the Option 3, applicant preferred massing.
- Concerned that the tower placement should be further north to improve tower spacing from a hypothetical future tower on the parcel to the south.
- Suggested generous bike storage and locker facilities be provided.

SDCI staff also summarized design related comments received in writing prior to the meeting:

- SDOT noted that the minimum sidewalk widths on 5th should be 15 ft, and 12 ft on Lenora; more pedestrian width via setbacks is welcome. [The applicant stated they comply and have additional voluntary setbacks on Option 3.]
- SDOT noted the adjacent curb lanes have plans for: a protected bicycle lane along 5th, and a “business access and transit lane” along Lenora, so curb-lane parking should not be contemplated by the applicants.

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 (the Board) provided the following siting and design guidance. (Downtown Design Guidelines citations)

The following EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE meeting guidance was offered by the Board. Page references are for the 2/21/17 EDG booklet.

1. Massing & Tower Placement:

- a. The Board understood the analysis and rationale for placing the tower toward the south of the site [36-39] and supported that tower location and the goal of maximizing daylight to the street and intersection of 5th & Lenora. (A1-1)
- b. Since the south tower placement will expose the adjacent blank east wall of the existing Warwick Hotel [pg 27/upper left; 71], the Board encouraged all parties to consider an artful wall treatment for that location, but it is explicitly not a requirement of this project. (B1-1)
- c. The Board endorsed the applicant-preferred Option 3 massing, especially the stepped and rotating 2-floor trays on levels 2-15, as shown on pg 60,62, and 71. The Board agreed these trays are bold and innovative, and provide multiple roof terraces and successfully modulate the podium and lowest tower facades. (B1.III)

2. Tower Modulation and Cohesiveness: Early Design Guidance included the following:

- a. While the Board strongly supported the form of the lower 15 floors of Option 3, they unanimously agreed the tower abruptly changes to a cubic extrusion at level 16 [60] and it therefore compromises a unified design. The Board agreed a uniform vertical shaft of tower was not related to the design energy of the podium, and recommended integration strategies such as: rotating 2-floor groups in select other locations on the upper tower, and/or rotating a sizable amount of the tower top, to reiterate the rotating form at the skyline scale. The Board was also concerned about the long, unmodulated east wall of the tower, which reinforces the abrupt tower form (see departure # 1). (A2, B1, B4-2)
- b. The Board tentatively supported the tower mass being broken into 2 offset volumes [67; typical tower plan] but agreed the north and east massing refinements described above are a priority and the key design test. Pending resolution of the tower-to-podium cohesiveness cited above, the rotating tray strategies might need to carry around to the entire tower, especially on the visible west and south elevations. (B4-2)
- c. The Board agreed the vertical slot, double height corner cut-out and rooftop treatment were all promising refinements on the west and south tower elevations [61], but those elevations might also need the rotating tray treatment pending resolution of item 2b above. The Board supported the scale and modulation of a two story amenity deck at approximately levels 24/25, regardless of which tower design emerges. (A1-1.e, B4)
- d. Assuming the tower is integrated with the dynamic podium as described above, the Board was supportive of the massing and additional height for a potential upzone [60], however the added 40 feet might require the re-configuration or re-proportioning of the strategies described under 2b above, to achieve a harmonious tower. (B4)

3. Podium & Ground Floor: The Board gave the following EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE:

- a. The Board supported the podium along 5th being expressed as 2 distinct forms, with the primary entrance at the crease [77], but agreed the south form should not be so traditional as shown [69, 71] or appear grafted onto the progressive forms of the majority of the podium. While not employing the rotated theme, or 'glass box' language of the corner, this 5-story element should display transparency, pedestrian scale and a tall proportion along the mid-block. (C1; C2)
- b. The Board strongly supported the deep, angled voluntary setbacks at the corner [76], providing pedestrian amenity and café zones. The Board also supported the straight wall (setback to achieve the required 15ft sidewalk width) at the 5th Avenue midblock, as it relates to the two forms cited in 3a above. (D1-l)
- c. The ground floor plan was minimally labeled [76], and the Board had to verbally clarify several key items, but they supported retail and activating uses along all street

fronts, accepting the leasing/amenity shown on 64 as the maximum extent of non-retail street frontage. The Board supported shifting the parking ramp as far south as possible [76] to maximize retail depth along Lenora, and would be receptive to a ramp slope departure if required to further this goal. (D3;

- d. The Board supported a stepped, planter/rainwater element at the alley corner as shown on pg 63 and 70 (but ensuring good pedestrian sight lines) but agreed the planter along the Lenora storefront and the deep café moat [76/77] created a privatized zone and too many vertical pedestrian barriers between the sidewalk and the Lenora storefront. (D1-1.d, D1-1.b)

The Board recommended reducing or eliminating these elements to maintain a gently sloped sidewalk/setback near the corner (without guardrails or recesses) and sloping the sidewalk along a raised sill of storefront along Lenora. The Board supported shortening the planter portion adjacent to the street wall. Even if retail doors are near the corner, a 5 ft slope over the 106ft length of Lenora should not mandate a continuous privatized, buffer zone at this important storefront location. (A1-III; C1)

FIRST RECOMMENDATION April 3, 2018

PUBLIC COMMENT

The following public comments were offered at the RECOMMENDATION meeting:

- Comments on behalf of Escala owners focus on traffic flow, deliveries, safety and alley use with a request to ensure that all area users will be able to function at their respective locations in a neighborhood context that is becoming more dense.
- Comments were shared which focused on the landmarked building to the south and the future project at that site. The Commenter shared that the Seattle Architectural Review (ARC) Committee encouraged this tower to move further to the north to give more tower spacing. The commenter suggested that the Design Review Board and the ARC work together to formulate a full block plan. Comments include noting that two towers on one block face need to be designed in tandem for best results.
- Another commenter suggested that all parties on the block and half-block face work together to design comprehensive solutions.

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. Concerns with off-street parking, traffic and construction impacts are reviewed as part of the environmental review conducted by SDCI and are not part of this review.

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/>

- 1. Massing & Tower Placement:** The Board heard public comment and reiterated its hope that the applicant would work with the neighboring building owners to address proximity to blank walls (The Warwick Hotel) and tower spacing for best block design (application to the south). In response to public input the Board offered flexibility to move the tower north acknowledging that the tower massing had been approved at EDG and also acknowledging that their authority to give direction on this issue is limited.
 - a. The Board specified that if the tower moves further north, the first tray at Levels 4-5 should not move north or compress and solar access to the corner of 5th and Lenora should be preserved. (A1-1, B1-1, B1.III)

- 2. Tower Modulation and Cohesiveness:** The Board was split on the resolution of the two-tower concept.
 - a. The majority of the members thought the concept needed more integration between the two tower forms as noted in the early design guidance, while two members were satisfied with the design as shown. The design question on the table was the integration of the dark, straight tower and the sliding trays tower forms. The Board noted that the concept is logical and interesting with moving elements and static elements yet, the two-building concept is not resolved at its intersecting edges and areas for a pleasing combined tower composition. (A2, B1, B4-2)
 - b. The Board supported elements of the towers including the following: the shifting trays massing at the lower levels, that all window wall details at soffits, parapets, and outside corners be part of the next design packet to show a clean edge, public space is well-sited and successful. The Board looks forward to another version of the proposal and is open to a variety of solutions to solve the two-tower intersections. (A1-1.e, B4)
 - c. Members unanimously supported Roof Option One which is the mechanical screen profile that steps back from the primary façade and they requested a scrim or screen material with some transparency be used for the mechanical screen cladding rather than the proposed louver material. (B1.III)
 - d. The Board supported the roof coverage departure request and recommended it to the Director. (B1.III)

3. Podium & Ground Floor: The Board discussed the design team’s responses to ground level and podium elements.

- a. The Board directed the applicant to provide overhead weather protection on 5th avenue to provide comfort for pedestrians, residents, and visitors. They mentioned the distracting nature of the undersized entry canopy and added that the overhead weather protection could help solve the issue.(B3.3)
- b. The Board supported the update to the Lenora Street outdoor retail seating configuration and directed the applicant to make the sidewalk facing walls of the bioretention planters appropriate width and height for seating. (B3.3)
- c. The board directed the applicant to develop the south plinth to incorporate either seating, texture and/or art. (B3.3, B4.3)
- d. The board directed the applicant to add a joint pattern in the painted concrete alley wall that corresponds to the joint patterning in levels above for increased melding of the façade elements. The Board also recommended that a detail be provided to assure that no flashing is used at the edges of the trays so there is a crisp, clean edge that appears as an extension of the glazed tray elements. (B4.3)
- e. The board directed the applicant to add loading area dimensions and truck turning radius/sweep diagrams to the plan sets to show compliance. (C6.1)

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 to the Director will be reserved until the final Board meeting.

At the time of the First Recommendation meeting, the following departures were requested:

- 1. **Rooftop Coverage (SMC 23.49.008.D):** Combined rooftop features are limited to 55% rooftop coverage. The applicant requests 61.9% coverage.

The full Board approved the additional coverage to help support guidelines A-2 Enhancing the skyline and B-4 supporting a well-proportioned and unified building.(B4.1 and 2)

Previous departure requests have been resolved to meet code requirements.

DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES

The priority Downtown and Belltown Neighborhood design guidelines identified as Priority Guidelines are summarized below, while all guidelines remain applicable. 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.

Belltown Supplemental Guidance:

A1.III. Topography: The topography of the neighborhood lends to its unique character. Design buildings to take advantage of this condition as an opportunity, rather than a constraint. Along the streets, single entry, blank facades are discouraged. Consider providing multiple entries and windows at street level on sloping streets.

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.

Belltown Supplemental Guidance:

B1.I. Compatible Design: Establish a harmonious transition between newer and older buildings. Compatible design should respect the scale, massing and materials of adjacent buildings and landscape.

B1.II. Historic Style: Complement the architectural character of an adjacent historic building or area; however, imitation of historical styles is discouraged. References to period architecture should be interpreted in a contemporary manner.

B1.III. Visual Interest: Design visually attractive buildings that add richness and variety to Belltown, including creative contemporary architectural solutions.

B1.IV. Reinforce Neighborhood Qualities: Employ design strategies and incorporate architectural elements that reinforce Belltown's unique qualities. In particular, the neighborhood's best buildings tend to support an active street life.

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.

B3.3. 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.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).

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

Belltown Supplemental Guidance:

C6.I. Address Alley Functions:

- a. Services and utilities, while essential to urban development, should be screened or otherwise hidden from the view of the pedestrian.
- b. Exterior trash receptacles should be screened on three sides, with a gate on the fourth side that also screens the receptacles from view. Provide a niche to recess the receptacle.
- c. Screen loading docks and truck parking from public view using building massing, architectural elements and/or landscaping.
- d. Ensure that all utility equipment is located, sized, and designed to be as inconspicuous as possible. Consider ways to reduce the noise impacts of HVAC equipment on the alley environment.

C6.III. Architectural Concept:

- g. In designing a well-proportioned and unified building, the alley facade should not be ignored. An alley facade should be treated with form, scale and materials similar to rest of the building to create a coherent architectural concept.

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.

Belltown Supplemental Guidance:

D1.I. Active Open Space: As a dense, urban neighborhood, Belltown views its streets as its front porches, and its parks and private plazas and spaces as its yards and gardens. The design and location of urban open spaces on a site or adjoining sidewalk is an important determinant in a successful environment, and the type and character of the open space should be influenced by the building's uses.

- a. Mixed-use developments are encouraged to provide usable open space adjacent to retail space, such as an outdoor cafe or restaurant seating, or a plaza with seating.
- b. Locate plazas intended for public use at/or near street grade to promote physical and visual connection to the street; on-site plazas may serve as a well-defined transition from the street. Take views and sun exposure into account as well.
- c. Define and contain outdoor spaces through a combination of building and landscape, and discourage oversized spaces that lack containment.
- d. The space should be well-buffered from moving cars so that users can best enjoy the space.

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.

Belltown Supplemental Guidance:

D3.III: Street Furniture/Furnishings along Specific Streets: The function and character of Belltown's streetscapes are defined street by street. In defining the streetscape for various streets, the hierarchy of streets is determined by street function, adjacent land uses, and the nature of existing streetscape improvements.

- f. **5th Avenue:** Installations on 5th Avenue are encouraged to have a futuristic or “googie” architectural theme to reflect the presence of the monorail as part of the streetscape.

D3.IV. Street Edge/Furnishings: Concentrate pedestrian improvements at intersections with Green Streets (Bell, Blanchard, Vine, Cedar between 1st and Elliott, Clay, Eagle, and Bay Streets). Pedestrian crossings should be “exaggerated,” that is they should be marked and illuminated in a manner where they will be quickly and clearly seen by motorists.

RECOMMENDATIONS

BOARD DIRECTION

At the conclusion of the First Recommendation meeting, the Board voted to recommend the project to the director with a split Board: two (2) approved the design as shown, three (3) wanting more resolution to the two-tower relationship as described above. The project team will return to the Board for another review.