



SECOND EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE DOWNTOWN DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3026541
Address: 2218 1st Avenue
Applicant: Heliotrope Architects
Date of Meeting: Tuesday, October 17, 2017
Board Members Present: Anjali Grant (Chair), Bradley Calvert, Grace Leong, Aaron Argyle
Board Members Absent: Belinda Bail, Recused; JP Emery, Absent
SDCI Staff Present: Carly Guillory, Senior Land Use Planner

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Downtown Mixed Residential/Residential 95/65 (DMR/R 95/65)

Nearby Zones: (North) DMR/R 95/65, (South) DMR/R 95/65, (East) DMR/R 95/65, (West) DMR/R 95/65

Lot Area: 6,570-square feet

Current Development:

The subject site is currently occupied by two masonry buildings.

Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:

Surrounding development consists of a variety of restaurant, retail, office, and residential uses. Abutting to the northwest and southeast, facing 1st Avenue at the



ground level, are two restaurants, both with sidewalk seating. Abutting directly to the northeast, across the alley, is a six-story residential structure with roof deck.

Access:

Pedestrian access to the commercial and residential uses is provided via a shared entry and vestibule on 1st Avenue. Secondary access for pedestrians is provided at the rear of the structure, at the alley.

Environmentally Critical Areas:

None.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Design Review Early Design Guidance application proposing an eight-story building containing 2,500 sq. ft. of commercial space and 66 residential units. Existing structures 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

FIRST EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE August 15, 2017

PUBLIC COMMENT

The following public comments were offered at this meeting:

- Recommended a survey of the existing alley and window locations on adjacent buildings to assess privacy impacts.
- Recommended a setback at the alley to allow additional space between the structure and existing residential development across the alley.
- Recommended saving the façade of the existing structures on site to honor Belltown’s historic character.
- Recommended the use of mortar.
- Noted that 35 units in the neighboring building face the subject site.
- Recommended preserving the character of existing Belltown.
- Noted the historic quality of nearby structures on the block.
- Recommended preserving the existing structures on site to preserve the character of the neighborhood.

- Concerned about impacts to the availability of light and air to existing residential development cross the alley.
- Concerned about impacts to quality of life.
- Value the historic character of the neighborhood, views, and availability of sunlight.
- Noted that the bulk and scale guidelines are the most important.
- Concerned this structure will cast shadows on the existing rooftop terrace on the structure across the alley.
- Referenced nearby Mama’s Kitchen on 2nd Ave and Bell St as an example of maintaining the existing facades of a structure to preserve the historic character of the neighborhood.
- Noted that privacy is a major concern – large windows on the alley façade were not supported.
- Noted that the 16-story structure on 1st Ave is a Seattle Housing Authority structure.
- Concerned about impacts to the functionality of the alley.
- Noted that the garage access to the building across the alley is across from this site.
- Recommended a four to six-foot setback at the alley to ensure ease of entry into the adjacent exiting garage.
- Recommended the developer meet with the neighbors to discuss design solutions – a charrette was suggested.
- Recommended that historic resources be considered.
- Recommended that shadow impacts be considered.
- Noted the project would be more palatable if the structure were ten stories higher and skinnier.

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

- Concerned the structure will not sensitively fit into the current neighborhood.
- Concerned the height of the structure will block sunlight to the abutting residential structure to the northeast (directly across the alley).
- Concerned about privacy impacts due to residential units facing the alley;
- Recommended reducing the height of the structure to four stories to ensure consistency with the existing structures on that block.
- Concerned the proposal will reduce quality of life for residents in the building abutting to the northeast, directly across the alley.
- Notes that the proposal should reinforce existing character and protect the qualities that the neighborhood values most in the face of change.

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 siting and design guidance.

1. Streetscape:

- a. The Board supported the deep entry court and ground level setback from 1st Ave (p. 15, EDG #1 Packet, July 18, 2017). The variation of streetscape and outdoor room concept successfully achieved visual interest within the neighborhood context.
- b. Safety and security were expressed as a possible concern and should be mitigated using lighting. Transparency at ground level will facilitate eyes on the street and further mitigate safety and security concerns. If a gate is anticipated, details describing this condition will be expected at the next meeting. The Board encouraged design interventions other than a gate. (B.3.3, D2.1)
- c. The site lies on 1st Ave between Bell St and Blanchard St, both Green Streets. In response to this condition, the proposal includes an overhead planted canopy, plantings at ground level, street trees, and opportunities for seating and gathering (p. 15, EDG #1 Packet, July 18, 2017). This concept of connecting the Green Streets was supported by the Board. (D2.1)

2. Alley: The site is separated from adjacent residential development by an existing 16-foot alley. Floor plans illustrate ground level pedestrian access to the building from this alley, with residential units on floors two through eight facing the alley (p. 19, EDG #1 Packet, July 18, 2017).

- a. Public comment expressed concerns related to privacy and access to light and air. In response, the Board recommended the applicant further explore the massing and its relationship to the alley and adjacent development. A window wall setback with balconies was suggested as a possible mitigation strategy for privacy. Furthermore, to address concerns about the availability of light and air, the Board recommended further exploration of the massing as it relates to the departure request; as removing bulk at the alley would better meet the intent of the code (see further discussion of departure request below). For these reasons, the Board asked the applicant to return for a second EDG meeting. (C6.1, C6.I, C6.II)
- b. While privacy is a concern, the Board also agreed that alleys are places where people meet and access buildings, and as such, there is opportunity to activate the alley at ground level. As proposed, pedestrian access from the alley provides access to a residential lounge and trash/recycle room (p. 19, EDG #1 Packet, July 18, 2017). To better activate the alley, the Board suggested exploration of one continuous retail space at ground level. (C6.1, C6.I, C6.II)

3. Architectural Concept: Option 3, the preferred option, showcased fenestration reminiscent of a historic warehouse character. The Board agreed with public comment and supported this gesture as responsive to the historic context of the neighborhood, and noted that detailing, such as at the cornice and base, will be important as the design evolves. The proportions were described as handsome. It was also noted that the floor plans contain bedrooms without windows: this condition was not supported by the Board. (A1.1, B4.3)

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 **First** Early Design Guidance meeting, the following departures were requested:

1. **Maximum Depth Limits (SMC 23.49.164):** The Code allows for a maximum structure depth of 90-feet for those portions of a structure greater than 65-feet up to 125-feet in height. This portion of the structure shall be separated horizontally from any other portion of a structure on the lot by at least 20-feet at all points. The applicant proposes to meet this depth requirement for approximately 15-feet of the building's width, by proposing a courtyard at the center of the building on level 8 (p. 28, EDG #1 Packet, July 18, 2017).

The Board indicated a lack of support for this departure, finding it did not meet the intent of the code, which is to create gaps for light and air and reduce the overall bulk of the building. The Board agreed that the overwhelming neighborhood concern of impacts to the availability of light and air warrants further study of reducing mass at the alley. As a comparison, the Board did not support the setback proposed in Option 1, referred to as the wedding cake response. To better meet the intent of the code, the Board suggested exploration of individual exterior spaces, massing eroded at the alley, and a frame feature, at the 1st Ave elevation, with the mass eroded at the street.

SECOND EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE October 17, 2017

PUBLIC COMMENT

The following public comments were offered at this meeting:

- Noted that building community through space is important.
- Concerned with height impacts to the availability of views from the adjacent Concept One building across the alley.
- Referenced the draft 2030 Comprehensive Plan – deducing that impacts to private views are analyzed via the Design Review process.
- Provided photographs of views from the adjacent Concept One building (across the alley), nothing that impacts to these views is an important consideration.
- Recommended a reduction of one floor for a seven-story building.
- Appreciated the effort of the applicant to meet with the neighbors and address some of their concerns.
- Noted that materiality is an important element of the design, and recommended a design that mitigates privacy impacts – suggested the use of a reflective glazing, setback of windows, or angled windows.
- Concerned about impacts to the availability of sunlight to the Concept One building across the alley.
- Referenced the draft 2030 Comprehensive Plan language regarding protection of scenic views.
- Noted the importance of keeping Belltown livable.
- Felt the proposal compromises the quality of life of adjacent residential development.
- Noted that the entire block may be eligible for designation as a historic district.
- Referenced examples of development that used materiality to node to the historic context of the neighborhood (through the use of red brick).
- Recommended sizable setbacks along the alley for privacy of residents.
- Recommended shifting the building mass away from the alley, toward 1st Ave.

- Recommended a design that ensures eyes on the alley for safety and security.
- Appreciated the evolution of the proposal with the addition of the three-foot setback at the alley.

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 siting and design guidance.

1. Height and Views.

- a. The Board acknowledged public comment expressing concern that the height of the proposal may impact current views from the *Concept One* building across the alley. Despite feeling sympathetic to their circumstances and concerns, the Board noted that adopted Land Use Codes attempt to mitigate impacts through height and bulk controls and other zoning regulations but design review cannot protect private views through project-specific review¹. (A1.1 *Response to Context*, B4.1 *Massing*)
- b. Related to the concerns about view impacts, the Board agreed that the treatment of the roof and alley façade is important to provide an aesthetically pleasing facade that also respects privacy. The Board recommended thoughtful selection of materials and possible use of landscaping along the alley. Include details in the Recommendation packet. (D2.1 *Landscape Enhancements*, C6.1 *Alley Activation*, C-6.1 *Address Alley Functions*)
- c. The screening of the mechanical equipment at the roof has the possibility of negatively contributing to the perception of height, bulk, and scale, or present a poorly designed façade to nearby buildings, particularly as viewed from adjacent development across the alley. The Board recommended a thoughtful design of this screening, and further exploration of placing this equipment at the center of the roof. Include details of the equipment and screening in the Recommendation packet. (B4.1 *Massing*)

2. Ground Level: Primary Entry and Alley:

- a. The Board continued to support the concept of an outdoor room at the main entry with ground level setback, overhead weather protection, lighting, and operable windows at the ground level, allowing for the interior use to spill out onto the sidewalk and activate the public realm. The Board recommended this space be designed to promote safety for residents and visitors by providing adequate lighting, encouraging eyes on the street, and

¹ Staff Note: Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) 23.41 (including the Design Review process and the adopted Design Guidelines) and SMC 25.05 (environmental review policies) do not provide authority to modify proposed development to preserve views from private properties. See Seattle Municipal Code 23.41 and 25.05.675.P.1.f.

avoiding architectural features that provide hiding places for criminal activities. (B-4.2 *Coherent Interior/Exterior Design*, C-1.D *Pedestrian Attraction*, C-5 *Overhead Weather Protection Design Elements*, D-1.A *Provide Inviting and Usable Open Space*, D6.1 *Safety in Design Features*)

- b. In response to the EDG 1 guidance to mitigate privacy impacts to adjacent residential development across the alley, the proposal was modified to include a three-foot setback at the alley façade (floors one through eight) and a nearly 50% reduction of glazing. The Board supported the three-foot setback at ground level, but felt the setback at levels two through eight did not provide a successful response to the alley and concerns about privacy. Instead, the Board recommend exploration of recessed balconies at the alley façade. (A1.1 *Response to Context*, B4.1 *Massing*)
- c. The Board again noted the importance of the treatment of the alley, as bicyclists and pedestrians will be utilizing the alley for access. The Board supported the ground level setback, agreeing the additional area provided for safety and security within the alley. The Board requested a study of surface treatment and landscaping in this area. Include this information in the Recommendation packet. (C6.1 *Alley Activation*, C-6.I *Address Alley Functions*)

3. Façade Composition:

- a. The Board discussed the visibility of the lot line facades and recommended they be thoughtfully treated as they will be visible until such time the adjacent properties re-develop. The Board recommended further exploration of material application – to consider introducing out of plane materials or an exterior wrap element. Include details in the Recommendation packet. (B4.3 *Architectural Details*)
- b. The Board supported the architectural concept with horizontal regulating lines of the overhead weather protection and floor plates aligned with major lines on adjacent buildings, and the gesture to the historic quality of mullioned windows referencing the warehouse style, but adapted to the residential context. (B-1.A *Compatible Design*)
- c. The Board supported the façade composition facing 1st Ave with its gridded and regular structural bays and fenestration pattern and detailing to further reinforce proportions of nearby buildings. (B-3.B *Features to Complement*)

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 **Second** Early Design Guidance meeting, the following departure was requested:

1. **Maximum Depth Limits (SMC 23.49.164):** The Code allows a maximum structure width and/or depth of 90-feet for those portions of a structure greater than 65-feet up to 125-feet in height, as measured parallel the street. This portion of the structure shall be separated horizontally from any other portion of a structure on the lot by at least 20-feet at all points. The applicant proposes

to meet this depth requirement for approximately 15-feet of the building’s width, by proposing a courtyard at the center of the building on level 8 (p. 28, EDG #1 Packet, July 18, 2017).

At the second EDG meeting, the Board was hesitant to support the departure request, agreeing additional erosion at the upper levels was expected at the alley in response to neighbor concerns about impacts to privacy. The Board requested additional evidence to demonstrate how the proposal better meets the intent of the Design Guidelines. While the Board recommended the project move forward to MUP submittal, additional information was requested to be presented at the Recommendation meeting. The packet should include a code compliant option, the proposal, and a clear demonstration of how the proposal better meets the intent of the Design Guidelines and responds to concerns about privacy impacts. Consider recessed balconies at the alley façade.*

***After the Second Recommendation meeting, SDCI confirmed that a departure to SMC 23.49.164 is not necessary. SMC 23.49.164 allows for a maximum structure width and depth of 90-feet along avenues for those portions of a structure parallel the avenue. In this case, the project fronts 1st Avenue only; therefore, the 90-foot width requirement is applicable, while a maximum depth requirement is not. All proposed options comply with this requirement as the width of the lot (and structure) is approximately 60-feet.**

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.

A1.1. Response to Context: Each building site lies within a larger physical context having various and distinct features and characteristics to which the building design should respond. Develop an architectural concept and arrange the building mass in response to one or more of the following, if present:

- a. a change in street grid alignment that yields a site having nonstandard shape;
- b. a site having dramatic topography or contrasting edge conditions;
- c. patterns of urban form, such as nearby buildings that have employed distinctive and effective massing compositions;
- d. access to direct sunlight—seasonally or at particular times of day;
- e. views from the site of noteworthy structures or natural features, (i.e.: the Space Needle, Smith Tower, port facilities, Puget Sound, Mount Rainier, the Olympic Mountains);
- f. views of the site from other parts of the city or region; and
- g. proximity to a regional transportation corridor (the monorail, light rail, freight rail, major arterial, state highway, ferry routes, bicycle trail, etc.).

ARCHITECTURAL EXPRESSION

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.

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

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.

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 with nearby, older buildings lacking such facilities; and
- c. adding effective lighting to enhance visibility and safety.

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.II. Pedestrian Environment:

- e. Pedestrian circulation is an integral part of the site layout. Where possible and feasible, provide elements, such as landscaping and special paving, that help define a pedestrian-friendly environment in the alley.
- f. Create a comfortably scaled and thoughtfully detailed urban environment in the alley through the use of well-designed architectural forms and details, particularly at street level.

PUBLIC AMENITIES

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.

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.

BOARD DIRECTION

At the conclusion of the Second Early Design Guidance meeting, the Board recommended moving forward to MUP application with the caveat that the Recommendation packet contain additional study of the departure request including a comparison of a code compliant option (with erosion of the upper levels) and the proposal with adequate demonstration that the proposal better meets the intent of the Design Guidelines.**

****As noted above, after the second Recommendation meeting, SDCI determined that a departure request to SMC 23.49.164 (*Structure Width and Depth*) is not required: all three options meet the required width standard while the depth standard is not applicable.**