



EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE MEETING OF THE DOWNTOWN DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3026858

Address: 2205 7th Ave

Applicant: Peter Krech, Graphite Architecture

Date of Meeting: Tuesday, April 4, 2017

Board Members Present: Bradley Calvert
JP Emery
Anjali Grant
Grace Leong
Murphy McCullough (Chair)

DPD Staff Present: Beth Hartwick, Senior Land Use Planner

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: DMC 340/290-400

Nearby Zones: (North) DMC 240/290-400
(South) DMC 500/300-500
(East) DMC 240/290-400
(West) DMC 340/290-400

Lot Area: 38,880 Sq. Ft.

Environmentally Critical Areas: None

Current Development: The site is occupied by a 4-story lodging structure constructed in 1958 and a single story commercial structure built in 1940.

Access: The half block site has access from 7th Ave, Bell St, Blanchard St. and an improved alley.



Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character: The nearby blocks and neighborhood have experienced in recent years a rapid transition from low density, under used area of surface parking and smaller scale retail structures and hotels. New high rise office development has opened to the south, with other blocks of office use under construction or planned for development across 7th Ave and to the west. The block to the northwest of the site is under permit review to allow up to 4 residential towers. Further to the west a full block two-tower residential development recently opened. Directly across the alley is a 11-story office building and a 5-story parking garage. Both these structures were built in the 1968.

The site is served by multiple bus lines and is within easy walking distance of Westlake Center and the Westlake Station of the downtown tunnel with metro bus and light rail service. The South Lake Union streetcar runs down Westlake Ave a few blocks to the east. 7th Avenue is a primary bike corridor, with a planned cycle track. Bike traffic crisscrosses the neighborhood on multiple streets, including Bell and Blanchard St.

Recreational opportunities and green space are available with Denny Park to the north and the proposed park at Westlake and 8th Ave.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Early Design Guidance application for a 17-story structure in the Denny Triangle Urban Center Village, with approx. 405,000 sq. ft. of office space and approx. 7,500 sq. ft. of retail space at the ground level. Approx. 405 parking spaces will be provided below grade.

The packet includes materials presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number (3026858) at this website:

http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Planning/Design_Review_Program/Project_Reviews/Reports/default.asp.

The packet is also available to view in the file, by contacting the Public Resource Center at DPD:

Mailing Public Resource Center
Address: 700 Fifth Ave., Suite 2000
P.O. Box 34019
Seattle, WA 98124-4019

Email: PRC@seattle.gov

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PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comments were offered at this meeting.

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. Tower Placement:** The Board agreed that the design team provided a compelling argument for the tower to be located away from Bell St. The proposed location of the taller portion of the development will better respect the proposed residential uses across Bell St and provide a better relationship to the open spaces along Bell St and solar access to those spaces. (A1.1.c, B1.1.d)
- 2. Massing:** The Board noted that only one true massing option was presented but accepted this, given the rationale for the tower location and that all three options were viable. The Board debated the merits of Options 1 and 3 as the two options both presented recessed bays along 7th Ave that will expose a diagonal brace frame and an open circulation stair, located behind the glass façade, that will run between the office floors. The Board supported the concept of the open stair, that will provide visibility as people move up and down and “disappear”, as an interesting and unique concept that is driving the design of the tower. The Board was concerned that the design of the shifting recess of Option 3 was too narrow at certain floors, weakening the design concept. They debated whether the wider recess of Option 1 or the tension of the staggered recess in Option 3 was more successful. (B4) The following guidance was given;
 - a. Study and resolve the design of recessed portion of the 7th Ave tower façade. Provide alternatives of the relationship of the width and shifting of the recessed façade to the open circulation stairs and the structural frame behind. (B4.1 & 2)
 - b. Further explore the treehouse metaphor that was presented to create an urban tree house, possibly with the stair. Resolve how the design terminates at the top. (B4.2.i)
 - c. Design a usable roof and well -programmed roof experience. (A2.1.c)
 - d. Provide information on what the relationship of the recess and the stair will be to the proposed landscaped areas created by the shifting of the floors. (B4.2)
 - e. Study if and how the tower open circulation stair can connect to the street level and roof. (B4.2.i)
- 3.** The Board encouraged the “banding” of the tower office floors with some floors pulled back approx. 30” from the outermost exterior façade, on all sides of the tower. They noted the banding is needed to give depth but cautioned about overdoing the concept. (B4.1.b, B4.2.d)
 - a. Study the horizontal “banding” around the tower to be support of the overall design of the tower. Consider a design with an intermittent flow in and out of the setbacks. (B4.1.b, B4.2.d)
- 4. Podium:** The Board questioned if the lower portion of the structure will be designed as a separate element from the tower, with decks on the various roofs. The design team

responded that the intent is to be separate but not foreign to the tower and that the decks and landscaping will be located to support the internal uses. (B4.1.b, B4.2)

- 5. Ground Floor and Landscaping:** The Board noted that the blank wall abutting 7th Ave at the garage elevators was not an appropriate front door, and expressed that the elevators from the garage to the 1st and 2nd levels needs to be pushed back from the street. They noted that the intersection of the open circulation stair of the tower and the ground level stairs and garage elevator appears unresolved. The Board questioned what would replace the area of the garage elevators when they move back from the street property line. The Board agreed that continuation of landscaping in the setback along 7th Ave, instead of a small retail use would be appropriate. (B4.2.h, C3.1.b & c, D1.2.f) The following related guidance was given:
- a. Move the garage elevators back from the street property line and orient the elevator doors to face the street. (B4.2.h, C4.1)
 - b. Resolve the expansive length of the street level façade and landscaping at the lobby functions. (C3.1, C4.1, D1.2.f)
 - c. Activate the lobby to provide interest along the street frontage. (C1, D1.1.d)
 - d. Study if and how the tower open circulation stair can connect to the street level and roof. Consider bringing the stair down to the parking levels. (B4.2.i)

For the Recommendation meeting provide the following:

- Provide alternatives of the relationship of the width and shifting of the recessed façade to the circulation stairs and the structural frame behind.
- Provide material samples, especially glass sample show the proposed transparency.
- Provide building elevations for all the facades.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES
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The Board’s recommendation on the requested departure(s) will be based upon the departure’s potential to help the project better meet these design guideline priorities and achieve a better overall 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 EDG Meeting five departures were requested for the preferred Option #3.

1. **Facade Setback Limits (SMC23.049.056.B.2.b):** The Code requires on streets not requiring property line facades, that the maximum area of all setbacks between the street lot line and facade along each street frontage of a lot shall not exceed the area derived by multiplying the averaging factor by the width of the street frontage of the structure along that street. The averaging factor is ten on designated Green Streets. Along Bell St. the applicant is proposing a setback that varies from 10’ to 13’ near the corner of Bell St. and 7th Ave. The maximum allowed setback area is 1,000 sq. ft.; the applicant is proposing an area that is 1,045 sq. ft.

The Board indicated that they may be inclined to grant this departure if well designed open space is provided.

- 2. Facade Setback Limits (SMC23.049.056.B.2.b):** The Code requires on streets not requiring property line facades, that the maximum area of all setbacks between the street lot line and facade along each street frontage of a lot shall not exceed the area derived by multiplying the averaging factor by the width of the street frontage of the structure along that street. The averaging factor is ten on designated green streets. Along Blanchard St. the applicant is proposing a setback that varies from 10' to 20' near the corner of Blanchard and 7th Ave. The maximum allowed setback area is 1,040 sq. ft.; the applicant is proposing an area that is 1,246 sq. ft.

The Board indicated that they may be inclined to grant this departure if well designed open space is provided.

- 3. Facade Setback Limits (SMC23.49.056.B.2.d):** The Code requires, on streets not requiring property line facades, that the maximum setback of the facade from the street lot lines at intersections is 10 feet. The minimum distance the facade must conform to this limit is 20 feet along each street. The applicant proposes a greater setback at the corner of 7th Ave and Blanchard St. with a greater setback from Blanchard St. for a length of 10' and 7th Ave for an approx. length of 8'.

The Board indicated they may be inclined to recommend this departure.

- 4. Facade Setback Limits (SMC23.49.056.B.2.d):** The Code requires, on streets not requiring property line facades, that the maximum setback of the facade from the street lot lines at intersections is 10 feet. The minimum distance the facade must conform to this limit is 20 feet along each street. The applicant proposes a greater setback at the corner of 7th Ave and Bell St. with a greater setback from Bell St for a length of 10' and 7th Ave for a length of 3'.

The Board indicated they may be inclined to recommend this departure.

- 5. Upper Level Development Standards (SMC23.49.058):** The Code requires, in DMC zones, except the DMC 160 zone, that facade modulation is required above a height of 85 feet above the sidewalk for any portion of a structure located within 15 feet of a street lot line. The maximum length of a facade without modulation is prescribed in Table A for [23.49.058](#) with various maximum unmodulated facade lengths allowed depending on the height of the facade above 85'. The applicant proposes a greater length of unmodulated facade than allowed along 7th Ave for two stories, above a height of 161'.

The Board indicated they may be inclined to recommend this departure depending on the design resolution of the structure in response to the Board guidance.

DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES

The priority Downtown guidelines identified by the Board 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.).

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.

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.

C3 Provide Active — Not Blank — Facades: Buildings should not have large blank walls facing the street, especially near sidewalks.

C3.1. Desirable Facade Elements: Facades which for unavoidable programmatic reasons may have few entries or windows should receive special design treatment to increase pedestrian safety, comfort, and interest. Enliven these facades by providing:

- a. small retail spaces (as small as 50 square feet) for food bars, newstands, and other specialized retail tenants;
- b. visibility into building interiors;
- c. limited lengths of blank walls;
- d. a landscaped or raised bed planted with vegetation that will grow up a vertical trellis or frame installed to obscure or screen the wall’s blank surface;
- e. high quality public art in the form of a mosaic, mural, decorative masonry pattern, sculpture, relief, etc., installed over a substantial portion of the blank wall surface;
- f. small setbacks, indentations, or other architectural means of breaking up the wall surface;
- g. different textures, colors, or materials that break up the wall’s surface.

- h. special lighting, a canopy, awning, horizontal trellis, or other pedestrian-oriented feature to reduce the expanse of the blank surface and add visual interest;
- i. seating ledges or perches (especially on sunny facades and near bus stops);
- j. merchandising display windows or regularly changing public information display cases.

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.

C5 Encourage Overhead Weather Protection: Project applicants are encouraged to provide continuous, well-lit, overhead weather protection to improve pedestrian comfort and safety along major pedestrian routes.

C5.1. Overhead Weather Protection Design Elements: Overhead weather protection should be designed with consideration given to:

- a. the overall architectural concept of the building
- b. uses occurring within the building (such as entries and retail spaces) or in the adjacent streetscape environment (such as bus stops and intersections);
- c. minimizing gaps in coverage;
- d. a drainage strategy that keeps rain water off the street-level facade and sidewalk;
- e. continuity with weather protection provided on nearby buildings;
- f. relationship to architectural features and elements on adjacent development, especially if abutting a building of historic or noteworthy character;
- g. the scale of the space defined by the height and depth of the weather protection;
- h. use of translucent or transparent covering material to maintain a pleasant sidewalk environment with plenty of natural light; and
- i. when opaque material is used, the illumination of light-colored undersides to increase security after dark.

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.

C6.2. Alley Parking Access: Enhance the facades and surfaces in and adjacent to the alley to create parking access that is visible, safe, and welcoming for drivers and pedestrians. Consider

- d. locating the alley parking garage entry and/ or exit near the entrance to the alley;
- e. installing highly visible signage indicating parking rates and availability on the building facade adjacent to the alley; and
- f. chamfering the building corners to enhance pedestrian visibility and safety where alley is regularly used by vehicles accessing parking and loading.

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.

D1.2. Open Space Features: Open spaces can feature art work, street furniture, and landscaping that invite customers or enhance the building’s setting. Examples of desirable features to include are:

- a. visual and pedestrian access (including barrier- free access) into the site from the public sidewalk;
- b. walking surfaces of attractive pavers;
- c. pedestrian-scaled site lighting;
- d. retail spaces designed for uses that will comfortably “spill out” and enliven the open space;
- e. areas for vendors in commercial areas;
- f. landscaping that enhances the space and architecture;
- g. pedestrian-scaled signage that identifies uses and shops; and

h. site furniture, art work, or amenities such as fountains, seating, and kiosks. residential open space

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.

D4.2. Unified Signage System: If the project is large, consider designing a comprehensive building and tenant signage system using one of the following or similar methods:

- a. signs clustered on kiosks near other street furniture or within sidewalk zone closest to building face;
- b. signs on blades attached to building facade;
- c. signs hanging underneath overhead weather protection.

D4.3. Signage Types: Also consider providing:

- d. building identification signage at two scales: small scale at the sidewalk level for pedestrians, and large scale at the street sign level for drivers;
- e. sculptural features or unique street furniture to complement (or in lieu of) building and tenant signage;
- f. interpretive information about building and construction activities on the fence surrounding the construction site.

D4.4. Discourage Upper-Level Signage: Signs on roofs and the upper floors of buildings intended primarily to be seen by motorists and others from a distance are generally discouraged.

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.

RECOMMENDATIONS

BOARD DIRECTION

At the conclusion of the **Early Design Guidance** meeting, the Board directed the applicant to move forward with MUP application.