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**SECOND RECOMMENDATION  
OF THE  
EAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD**

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Project Number: 3028872-LU

Address: 2301 East Union Street

Applicant: Ed Weinstein, Weinstein AU for Lake Union Partners

Date of Meeting: Wednesday, July 18, 2018

Board Members Present: Melissa Alexander (chair)  
AJ Taaca  
Alastair Townsend  
Sharon Khosla, Guest  
Jeffrey Floor, Guest  
Dennis Comer, Guest

Board Members Absent: Andrew Haas  
Betsy Anderson  
Azzurra Cox. recused  
Kenny Pleasant, recused

SDCI Staff Present: Carly Guillory, Senior Land Use Planner  
Joseph Hurley, Senior Land Use Planner  
Lisa Rutzick, Design Review Program Manager

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**SITE & VICINITY**

Site Zone: Neighborhood Commercial 2 – with the Pedestrian overlay, a 65-foot height limit, and M1 suffix NC2P-75(M1) and NC2-75(M1)

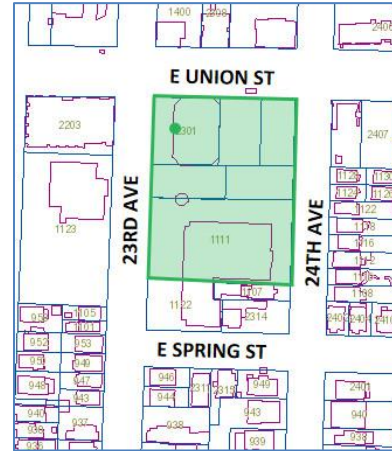
Nearby Zones: (North) NC2P-75(M1) and NC2P-65  
(South) NC2P-75(M1) and NC2-76(M1)  
(East) NC2-55(M), Lowrise 2 (LR2), and Single Family – 5,000-square foot minimum lot size (SF5000)

(West) NC2P-65 and NC2P-55(M)

Site Area: 82,860-square feet

**Current Development:**

The subject site is nearly one city block, bounded by E Union St to the north, 23<sup>rd</sup> Ave to the west, and 24<sup>th</sup> Ave to the east. Abutting to the south is an approximately 95-foot by 240-foot site, the site of the future Africatown project (a Master Use Permit (MUP) application has not yet been submitted for this site). The subject site is currently identified as *Midtown Center* and is occupied by one-story structures containing uses such as a post office, barber shop, and coffee stand. A majority of the site is occupied by surface parking.



**Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:**

The site lies within what has been historically known as Seattle’s Central Area or Central District, and occupies the geographical core of the northernmost node of the 23rd & Union-Jackson Residential Urban Village. It is identified as such in the 23rd Avenue Action Plan Urban Design Framework. Surrounding development includes commercial uses to north, east, and west and residential uses to the north, east, and south. There is a variety of residential and commercial uses in immediate vicinity of the project along the East Union/Union Street and 23rd Avenue corridors. The neighborhood character is evolving with blocks of significant development of residential and commercial development and proposed development interspersed along the main east-west/north-south arterials. Varied architectural styles and building exteriors are present in this area which is moderately pedestrian and transit oriented due to its proximity to bus transit along East Union/Union Street and 23rd Avenue.

**Access:**

Existing vehicular access to the site is provided via a total of eight curb cuts provided on the following streets: E Union, 23<sup>rd</sup> Ave, and 24<sup>th</sup> Ave. Proposed vehicular access is proposed via one curb cut on 24<sup>th</sup> Ave.

**Environmentally Critical Areas:**

None.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

Design Review Early Design Guidance application proposing a seven-story apartment building containing 435 units, with retail and restaurant spaces at ground level. Parking for 286 vehicles to be provided below grade. 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 SDCI:

**Mailing Public Resource Center**  
**Address:** 700 Fifth Ave., Suite 2000

P.O. Box 34019  
Seattle, WA 98124-4019

Email: PRC@seattle.gov

## EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE January 24, 2018

### PUBLIC COMMENT

The following public comments were offered at this meeting:

- Excited about the project, particularly the small retail spaces.
- Street life was identified as a priority.
- The relationship of the building to the street is important.
- Recommended designing the building to activate the street, rather than relying on the programming of the space to activate the street.
- Recommended a design that signals the portals and central courtyard are a safe, shared space.
- Noted that community is important and recommended designing a space that can be used by all generations.
- Supported the project and recommended a permeable design to activate the street.
- Recommended the ground floor residential meet the street with genuine stoops.
- Recommended a future pedestrian cross walk at the corner of E Union St and 24<sup>th</sup> Ave, north to the Liberty Bank site.
- Appreciated the massing moves; however, expressed concern about the height along 24<sup>th</sup> Ave. Concerned this height is too tall at this zone transition.
- Recommended a curb cut on 23<sup>rd</sup> Ave rather than 24<sup>th</sup> Ave as 24<sup>th</sup> Ave has a residential character.
- Supported the courtyard concept.
- Recommended a design that is consistent with the future Africatown project (abutting to the south).
- Recommended including African references in the design of the project.
- Described 23<sup>rd</sup> and E Union as an important entrance to the block and recommended a plaza at this intersection.
- Noted that not many people walk along 23<sup>rd</sup> Ave currently.
- Recommended a space that could accommodate makers space – a space that offers opportunities to inspire business growth, intentional interaction, and community identity.
- Applauded the project's vision of providing shared spaces to cultivate entrepreneurs.
- Supported Massing Option 3, the preferred option, and encouraged the Board to also support this option.
- Concerned about locating the fountain at the corner of E Union and 24<sup>th</sup> Ave. The proximity to the street and curb cut pose potential vehicle-pedestrian conflicts. Recommended this fountain be moved further south along 24<sup>th</sup> Ave to the place between this project and Africatown to the south, or within the courtyard.
- Described 24<sup>th</sup> Ave as full of on-street parking.
- Street life was reiterated as very important.
- Concerned the portals are too narrow.
- Concerned the courtyard space will not generate activity on its own, without proper programming.
- Described the corner of E Union and 23<sup>rd</sup> Ave as an important community location.

- Did not support the ground level setback at the corner of E Union and 23<sup>rd</sup> Ave as it resulted in a large, looming mass above. Suggested columns to provide visual support.
- Noted the existing bus stop on the site (on E Union St) is busy.
- Recommended a design that will ensure the courtyard remains activated and vibrant.
- Recommended a design that creates a designation for this important corner site.
- Recommended a public open space design that embraces the African American culture.
- Noted that much community input has been contributed to this site and project thus far.
- Noted that a vibrant public space that is connected to the street is of utmost of importance.
- Noted the importance of the affordability element of the project.
- Recommended providing direct access from the southern courtyard (to be shared with the future Africatown project to the south) to the central courtyard.
- Described the current proposal as utilizing rectilinear moves and recommended more Afrocentric shapes and designs.
- Recommended a design that creates identity and serve as a catalyst to inform future development.
- Recommended a porous design to activate the street and to make it clear the courtyard is a shared, public space.
- Noted the draft Neighborhood Design Guidelines and appreciated that the proposal responded to and incorporated this work.
- Noted that this project offers opportunity for community empowerment.
- Noted that the community voice is an important element in shaping the development of this project.
- Recommended a design that incorporates historical references.

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

- Supported the increase in density while still accommodating the single-family character of the surrounding neighborhood.
- Supported Option 3, the preferred alternative because it appeared to provide the best access to the courtyard.
- Recommended a classic design that incorporates brick as it would age well over time.
- Recommended murals on the outside or inside of the courtyard that reflect the community.

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/>.

## **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 & Context.**

- a. The Board noted that it is imperative that the design be respectful of adjacent properties – especially to single-family development east, across 24th Ave. In response to this context, the proposed massing included ground level setbacks of five-feet with upper-level massing setting back an additional 10-feet from the west property line (page 19 of the EDG Packet). The Board appreciated these setbacks and residential stoops for the townhouses fronting 24th Ave. The Board agreed that the use of appropriately scaled residential elements were encouraged to better relate to the human scale. (CS2-D)
- b. The massing at the corner of 23rd Ave and E Union St responded with a setback at ground level only, resulting in a second through sixth floor mass cantilevering above. The Board expressed concern that this created a somewhat ominous form to the corner. The Board requested further development of this corner response, with additional details and study presented at the next meeting. (CS2-D)

**2. Neighborhood Character.**

- a. The Board agreed with public comment that the proposed development ought to respond to the unique Central Area historical character and identify by retaining, respecting, and encouraging the extension of existing positive attributes of the surrounding neighborhood character. (CS3-A, CS3-B)
- b. Public comment described the site as a cultural anchor for the surrounding area. In response, the Board agreed the project should enhance the Central Area’s identity and sense of arrival by providing street furniture, public art, landscape elements, pedestrian lighting, varied paving materials, and open space at grade to expand the width of the right-of-way. The design, siting and selection of these elements should be informed by 1d above. (CS3-A, CS3-B)

**3. Relationship to Abutting Neighbor.** The project proposed an internal courtyard, accessible via a portal from 23rd Ave, E Union St, and 24th Ave. This publicly accessible courtyard provides connections through the site, supporting pedestrian connections within and outside the project. In further consideration of connecting the site with its context, the Board discussed the possibility of a pedestrian connection from this courtyard to the future project to the south, Africatown. The applicant described the future Africatown courtyard as intended to be for private use by the residents. While some Board members felt this strong connection is important, other members acknowledged the benefits of maintaining a private courtyard for residents. In conclusion, the Board requested further exploration of providing a connection between the site and the future Africatown development to the south. (PL1-B)

**4. Access.** The Board agreed the proposed location of the driveway on 24th Ave near E Union St offered the best response to the context and was supported. The Board recommended the driveway width be as narrow as possible. (PL1-B)

**5. Active Uses.** The Board agreed with public comment that the site is an important destination for the community, and ought to include pedestrian-focused neighborhood commercial with a mix of commercial and residential uses, grounded by locally-owned businesses and institutions. The applicant described incubator focuses commercial spaces at grade, including a possible shared commercial kitchen opportunity for use by a number of independent restaurant users. The Board and public supported incubator type spaces described at this location. (PL3-C)

## **6. Courtyard.**

- a. Public comment noted the importance of sunlight within the central courtyard and recommended upper level setbacks along the south mass to allow for greater availability of sunlight. The Board supported this concept and recommended further exploration of massing moves to allow for a greater availability of sunlight in the central courtyard. Provide exploration studies at the next meeting, including sun studies. (CS2-D)
- b. The activation of the courtyard was identified by public comment and the Board as a priority. The applicant described a possible fitness room facing the courtyard. The Board discussed this use within the courtyard and agreed it ought not be only a residential amenity space/fitness room for residents only and should rather be a use available for the community that will help to activate the courtyard. (PL3-C)
- c. The programming of the courtyard was identified as a priority. Agreeing with public comment, the Board recommended uses at grade that will activate the courtyard during all times of the day. Further, the programming of the courtyard itself ought to provide amenities appropriate to the community, such as multi-generational and family-oriented activities. (DC3-B)
- d. Public comment described the courtyard as exhibiting a more Western rectilinear response and recommended further study of alternative solutions. The Board was curious about this observation and agreed that further exploration was necessary. The Board recommended further development of the courtyard space, with careful attention paid to how non-rectilinear solutions might influence the space. (DC3-B)

## **7. Corners.**

- a. In addition to activating the courtyard, the encouragement of human interaction and activity along the streets was also identified as a priority. Specifically, the Board expressed concern that the proposed drug store use at the northwest corner was not porous enough, and risks turning its back on the corner and community. Opportunity for operable, roll-up doors at this corner were described by the applicant. The Board supported such a response and recommended the corner design include greater porosity to avoid an insular retail space. Benches, lean rails, and/or other seating at this corner and at the TR on E Union St were also recommended. The Board recommended additional details be presented at the next meeting that describe the 23rd Ave and E Union corner response. The wider sidewalks proposed were supported. (PL3-C)
- b. Public comment expressed concern about the re-location of the James Washington Memorial Fountain, proposed at the corner of E Union St and 24th Ave, and recommended locating the fountain within the courtyard instead, well away from the proposed curb cut on 24th Ave. The Board acknowledged public concern about the possible pedestrian/vehicle traffic conflicts in this area, and recommended the applicant explore locating the fountain elsewhere, such as in the courtyard as was suggested by the public. The location should encourage pedestrian interaction with the fountain. (DC3-B)

## **8. Breezeways and Portals.**

- a. The use of breezeways, portals, and through-block connections help to lessen the mass of the overall building and add to the existing network of pedestrian pathways. The Board discussed the three portals proposed, each offering pedestrian connection from the public right-of-way to the internal courtyard. The Board expressed concern that the width of the portals was not sufficient to clearly communicate to pedestrians that these are a public entry into a shared courtyard. The Board agreed that the success of the courtyard rested on the success of the

portal spaces, and that making these spaces feel public is important. The Board requested additional details be presented at the next meeting. See additional guidance provided under DC4 below.

- b. Page 52 of the EDG packet described the east elevation of the northwest corner commercial spaces as a feature wall, for possible use as a movie wall or display for community artwork. The Board supported this concept, and recommended it be designed as an integral part of the design concept. The Board agreed with public comment and recommended using resulting blank walls and surfaces for public expression of art that references the history, heritage, and culture of the community. (DC2-B)
- c. As noted in guidance for CS2-D above, the Board expressed concern that the width of the portals was not sufficient to clearly communicate to pedestrians that these are a public entry into a shared courtyard: the success of the courtyard rested on the success of the portals. The applicant described that a high level of transparency is being considered for the pedestrian bridges within the portals (providing for internal circulation). The Board supported this material response, and requested additional details be presented at the next meeting. Details should include precedent photos of examples that are closer in scale to the proposal – the Board was not satisfied that the examples shown on page 17 of the EDG packet were of a comparable scale. (DC4-B)

9. **Materials.** The Board encouraged a common palette of materials expressed differently across the project. Materials of a high-quality are expected. In support of public comment, the Board agreed the design concept should embody the history of the site as well as the future history of the site. Include in the Recommendation packet material details. Provide a detailed materials and colors board at the Recommendation phase. (DC4-A)

## RECOMMENDATION July 18, 2018

### PUBLIC COMMENT

The following public comments were offered at this meeting:

- Concerned the portals are not wide enough.
- Supported the project.
- Supported the project, finding it complies with the Central District Neighborhood Design Guidelines and other previous planning processes.
- Supported the open space and courtyard.
- Encouraged the developer to work with local artists on creation of the mural.
- Described experience attending previous Africatown design cyphers and expressed concern that the current design did not respond to feedback provided at those meetings.
- Described the portals as narrow and felt this would make the courtyard feel private and discourage people from entering.
- Felt the design did not resonate with the community.
- Expressed concern and disappointment that the context analysis presented overlooked much of the African-American character and history of the neighborhood and context.
- Recommended that the history of the community be imprinted on the building, written in stone to last forever.
- Questioned how the neighborhood culture is translated in the design.
- Questioned why the newly appointed Central District Design Review Board is not reviewing this project.

- Recommended adequate weather protection along the streets.
- Recommended additional community outreach to inform the neighborhood of the design and progress.
- Recommended use of a racial equity toolkit in review of the project.
- Recommended a design that makes all people feel safe.
- Recommended further response to previous guidance provided.
- Described the site as the gateway to the Central District neighborhood.
- Described James Washington as a great leader in the community.
- Recommended use of the entire James Washington fountain, not simply the top.
- Recommended the fountain be located in the central courtyard.
- Described the design of reminiscent of something found in the South Lake Union neighborhood.
- Recommended the design be something new that can be a model for other cities.
- Described the outreach up until now as lacking, recommending that design progress be shared with the community to ensure an accurate interpretation and response.
- Supported the ground plane design and the ground level setback at the corner of 23<sup>rd</sup> Ave and E Union St.
- Supported the use of color, finding the design has responded to community input.
- Supported the video wall provided it is locally curated.
- Recommended the ground level activate the street – the inside should be open to the street.
- Described bringing the community to the table and now feeling ignored.

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## **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. **Corner of 23rd and E Union.** The Board reiterated their support for design strategies that would encourage street-level human interaction and activity on this very important corner.
  - a. At the EDG meeting the ground level setbacks at the corner of 23rd and E Union were treated with unique paving, flexible seating, planters and other street furniture, with the adjacent street-level façades fully- glazed with aluminum storefront windows possibly incorporating roll-up doors at key locations (EDG packet, p. 59). In the Recommendation drawings the amount of glazing had been significantly reduced and a ‘digital art wall’ replaced the glazing at the north elevation facing E Union St. This digital installation was described by the applicant as intended to provide an opportunity to express



neighborhood character and history through the illustration of a variety of images and videos.

- b. The Board was intrigued by this idea and asked many questions about the technology involved, the curation of images that would be shown, the tactile nature of the wall, and the way pedestrians might interact with it. The applicant explained that they were in the early stages of exploring this idea and many of these questions were still being resolved. A Board member noted a comparable street-edge condition (of which all were familiar) and agreed that the creation of a similar ‘dead zone’ or unusable space on the street should be avoided. The Board concluded they would need complete details to support it over a glazing system and its potential to encourage human interaction. (PL3-C-1. Porous Edge, PL3-C-2. Visibility)
- c. The Board had similar concerns regarding the 23rd Ave frontage. At EDG this was shown as a highly-transparent façade with full-height windows and logical locations for entries to accommodate a variety of business uses and sizes (EDG Packet, p. 59). In the Recommendation packet the percentage of glazing on this façade had been significantly reduced and replaced with brick panels. (PL3-C-1. Porous Edge, PL3-C-2. Visibility)
- d. The Board did not support this change as it decreased the porosity and visibility they had encouraged at EDG. Furthermore, it was unclear how the retail space at this northwest corner might be further divided in conjunction with the façade treatment. The Board requested that composite floor plans be presented at the next meeting demonstrating how this space might be further divided in consideration of the 23rd Avenue façade. (PL3-C-1. Porous Edge, PL3-C-2. Visibility)

## **2. Portal Entrances to the Central Public Courtyard.**

- a. At the EDG meeting, the Board expressed concern about the design and width of the portals and asked the applicant to revisit and revise their design. The applicant’s response included: moving the southwest/southeast portion of the building to increase the size of the portals on 23rd and 24th Avenues; shifting the walls at the northwest portal to decrease its depth; and using transparency at corner retail spaces along the portals. The applicant also noted the high level of transparency at the pedestrian bridges above each portal as mitigating their impact.
- b. The Board appreciated these changes but agreed the portals did not yet feel welcoming, make the ‘open to the public’ nature of the courtyard clear, or yet have an effective design strategy to draw the public in. The activation of this space was identified by the applicant, the public, and the Board as critical to the success of the courtyard area, which has been the central organizing principal for this project from the beginning. The Board echoed public comment in their support for the applicant’s intent to accomplish this and asked for continued development of the design. (PL1-B Walkways and Connections, DC3-B Open Space Uses and Activities)
- c. The width of the portals (approximately 18-feet) was a specific concern of the Board at EDG. The Board appreciated the increase in width of the portals on 23rd and 24th Avenues but was disappointed that what they saw as the most important portal (at E Union St) had changed so little. They agreed that the ‘shift’ making the passage less deep was positive but would like to see more significant change in response to their guidance. (PL1-B Walkways and Connections, DC3-B Open Space Uses and Activities)
- d. The applicant compared the 18-foot portal width to that of an alley (Recommendation packet, p. 13). The Board agreed that a comparison of the width of the portals to an alley was not particularly helpful, as alleys do not have multiple stories of pedestrian bridges

above, nor are they designed to specifically invite pedestrians to enter. The Board also found the precedents provided in the Recommendation packet (p. 27) less helpful than they could have been, as they lacked dimensions and did not include an example with walkways or pedestrian bridges above. A Board member suggested the elimination of the lowest walkway at the northeast portal at E Union St to mitigate its effect, but also questioned the need for the skybridges at all, noting that the introduction of an entrance and elevator in each building would make them redundant. The Board encouraged the applicant to explore these ideas. (PL1-B Walkways and Connections, DC3-B Open Space Uses and Activities)

- e. If the bridges remain in the design, the Board asked for a careful examination of their character, materiality, and dimensions, and specifically directed the applicant to show how they fit with the larger design intent of the portals. To demonstrate this the Board asked for complete and fully dimensioned architectural drawings, perspective renderings from eye-level, material and composition details, and comparable precedent images that include dimensions. (PL1-B Walkways and Connections, DC3-B Open Space Uses and Activities)

### 3. Central Public Courtyard:

- a. At the EDG meeting the Board and applicant heard public comment that recommended looking outside western and euro-centric norms of rectilinearity in the design of the courtyard and the incorporation of more diverse and Afrocentric design sensibilities and principles. At that meeting, the Board agreed that the courtyard design needed refinement and identified the community's suggestions as a possible solution.
- b. In the response to this EDG guidance, the applicant refined the courtyard design to include elements of wood decking at grade, raised concrete planters, a stage, and a variety of landscaping and hardscaping materials. The patterns and textures were described as reflecting the 'global grid' concept from the Recommendation packet (p. 42-43) and the existing neighborhood cultural context by using balanced asymmetry, abstract form and symbolism, and modern pattern organization. The Board agreed that the forms generated from these concepts could be successful but were not clear on the connection to community input, echoing public comment that a 'loop back' with the community would be a positive process step. (DC3-B Open Space Uses and Activities)
- c. A pattern overlay of wood decking at grade was proposed at the perimeter of the courtyard, close to the buildings and then elevated at the west for a proposed 'stage' area. The Board expressed concern regarding the durability of this material, and its tendency to become slippery when not protected from the weather, and questioned the location of the stage area, suggesting an exploration of a central location, which would provide sitting places on all sides. (DC4-A Exterior Elements and Finishes)
- d. There was significant public comment at the Recommendation meeting expressing disappointment that this design did not respond to feedback offered at previous outreach meetings and at the Africatown Design Ciphers. Two alternate site plans were offered during the comment period by a Cipher attendant and found in the Recommendation packet (p. 70) labelled "Africatown's Preferred Options" that showed more generous setbacks at the portal entries, creating larger shared open spaces. Acknowledging these public comments in their deliberation, the Board agreed that enlarging these spaces could be a positive move, particularly as it would have the potential to indicate the courtyard beyond and draw people through to this space. (DC3-B Open Space Uses and Activities)

#### **4. Private Courtyard**

- a. At EDG, the Board asked for an exploration of connecting the ‘private’ courtyard formed by this project and the forthcoming Africatown project to the south. No connection was proposed in the current design, with the applicant suggesting that future residents of the family-oriented Africatown building would prefer not to be connected. The Board recognized that concern but asked for an exploration of a ‘secure’ connection between the two projects, as it could benefit residents of both projects. (DC3-B Open Space Uses and Activities)
- b. During clarifying questions, a Board member asked about the composition of the elevations facing the proposed Africatown project, as they seemed to be less-well composed and of lower quality than the others. The applicant told the Board that this was not the case and that these elevations were similar in composition to the others. The Board asked for this to be clear in the drawings for the next meeting. (DC4-A Exterior Elements and Finishes)

#### **5. Fountain:**

- a. The applicant presented a letter from the George Washington Fountain Foundation expressing support for the proposed location of the fountain at the corner of 24th Avenue and E Union St. The Board appreciated this endorsement but asked questions about the sufficiency of space around the proposed location at this corner and were concerned about its proximity to the trash, loading, and garage entrance, and potential conflicts between users (particularly children) and vehicles. (PL1-B Walkways and Connections)
- b. Having heard in the public comment period the importance of this statue and the significant dimension of the water feature it was originally installed with, the Board requested complete details describing the fountain and an exploration of the positive and negative impacts of other potential locations. (PL1-B Walkways and Connections, DC3-B Open Space Uses and Activities)

#### **6. Curb Cut:**

- a. At the EDG meeting a departure was requested for a single 35-foot curb cut (the land use code maximum is 22-feet) on 24th Avenue to access the parking garage, a load/unload space, and solid waste pickup. The Board supported this location and was inclined to consider the proposed departure. In the proposal presented at the Recommendation meeting, the departure request was for a larger 55-foot wide curb cut which would allow for waste pickup within the portal.
- b. The Board continued to support this location but expressed concern regarding the scale of the request and potential use conflicts (PL1-B Walkways and Connections).
- c. Board members asked if moving the trash and recycling to the below-grade parking garage was explored, noting a preference for this location as it could reduce the need for additional curb cut width and mitigate possible vehicular and pedestrian conflicts.
- d. The Board also noted that if not well-designed a narrower curb cut could result in delivery trucks parking on the sidewalk, blocking the flow for pedestrians. The Board also suggested that significant landscaping and hardscape variety could mitigate potential use conflicts at this location. (PL1-B Walkways and Connections)
- e. The Board concluded that they lacked adequate information and detail at this time to clearly understand the condition, particularly how the various uses could be

accommodated without conflict, and how it will better meet the intent of the design guidelines than a code-compliant solution. (PL1-B Walkways and Connections)

- f. For the next meeting, the Board requested a complete exploration of possible solutions, including the possibility of using below-grade space to lower 'demand' for curb-cut width. Thorough documentation and detail of the proposed solution will be needed for the Board to understand. A code-compliant option should also be included as that is required in all Design Review processes. (PL1-B Walkways and Connections)

## **7. Architectural Expression:**

- a. At the EDG meeting, the Board supported the proposed palette of high-quality materials expressed differently across the project and a unique expression that was both forward-looking and connected to the cultural history of this site. In response to this guidance, the applicant described the proposed design as a contemporary response to the evolving character of the neighborhood using vibrant color, high quality materials, and significant glazing (relative to opaque wall), in a weave of warp and weft. At the ground-plane they described a 'base' course keyed to the architectural scale and character of nearby commercial structures.
- b. The Board was unanimous in support of this concept but divided on how successfully it had informed design decisions and how legible it would be in the overall composition of the building (CS3-A Emphasizing Positive Neighborhood Attributes, CS3-B Local History and Culture).
- c. Several Board members echoed public comment regarding the lack of a neighborhood-specific character in the design and agreed that it likely would fit in any number of other locations in the city. Board members also suggested a loop-back with community members could be helpful, hearing from those they had already engaged for feedback on their approach. Another Board member felt that the proposed design was successful in its use of pattern, glazing, and color to achieve their intent. (CS3-A Emphasizing Positive Neighborhood Attributes, CS3-B Local History and Culture)
- d. The Board supported the proposed townhouse units fronting 24th Avenue but expressed concern that having the building podium read so clearly had compromised the positive scale-mitigating elements that townhouses could bring to this (residential-scale) street. The Board recommended further development of this element to strengthen the unique characteristics of this commendable urban housing typology. (CS3-A Emphasizing Positive Neighborhood Attributes, CS3-B Local History and Culture)
- e. Several secondary architectural features and details (such as balconies, awnings perforated metal walkways, hardscapes, columns, garage doors, etc.) were described by the applicant in the presentation, but not represented in the documents. The Board requested that these details be included for the next meeting. (DC4-A Exterior Elements and Finishes)
- f. In response to the conceptual signage plan, the Board noted that the hierarchy of signage will be important, particularly that the signage for the proposed drug store at the corner of 23rd and E Union St not overwhelm the signage for the smaller businesses, and more particularly those located in the central courtyard. To supplement the wall signage and reinforce wayfinding to those retailers in the courtyard, the board recommended adding wayfinding elements in the ground-plane and cited the hardscape design at the Capitol Hill transit station as a possible precedent. The Board suggested that a successful hardscape concept combined with architectural features and signage would draw people

to the courtyard and retail entrances without the need for a “plaza entrance here” sign. The Board requested that in addition to signage details that a diagram with signage locations and retail entries be presented at the next Recommendation meeting. (DC3-B Open Space Uses and Activities, DC4-A Exterior Elements and Finishes)

At the time of the Early Design Guidance the following Type I requests (determinations are made administratively by SDCI) were reviewed by the Board who provided SDCI with the following feedback:

1. **Street Level Facades (SMC 23.47A.008.A.3.):** The Code requires that all street-level street-facing facades be located within 10-feet of the street lot line, unless a wider sidewalk, plaza, or other approved landscape or open space are provided. The applicant proposes a building with two portals into a central courtyard. This results in approximately 44- total feet (20-feet along E Union St and 24-feet along 23<sup>rd</sup> Ave) of street-facing façade that is not within 10-feet of the street lot line and requests that this area meet the definition of wider sidewalk, plaza, or other approved landscape or open space.

The Board was supportive of the Type I request agreeing that the wider sidewalks that reinforce this significant neighborhood intersection with high pedestrian activity with portals into the central courtyard met the intent of this code requirement (CS2-B, DC1-B).

2. **Driveway Slope (SMC 23.54.030.D.3.):** The Code allows for a maximum driveway slope of 15% except as provided in subsection 23.54.030.D.3. The applicant proposes a 20% slope.

The Board was supportive of the Type I request agreeing the request met the criteria of SMC 23.54.030.D3.

## SECOND RECOMMENDATION December 19, 2018

### PUBLIC COMMENT

The following public comments were offered at this meeting:

- Concerned about transparency at street edges.
- Concerned that the project does not connect to the African-American community.
- Concerned that the Washington Fountain is not being respected enough.
- Requested that the development team consider the history of this neighborhood with redlining and gentrification and changing demographics, otherwise the city and the developer are complicit in a new segregation.
- Praised the project’s potential to move the needle on affordable housing if followed with intention and sustained action. Thanked member of the design team for facilitating the community outreach and to Africa town for their engagement. Encouraged the developer to work with local artists on creation of the murals.
- Concerned about a lack of representation and images of the 24<sup>th</sup> Avenue edge, concerned that it is out of scale with the residential context.
- Appreciated the stoops and setback at 24<sup>th</sup> and a request for more modulation to fit with residential scale across the street.
- Concerned that the meeting venue was inappropriate for this project and suggested that it should be held at a venue more central to the community.

- Concerned for the future of the Central District as rising land value and housing costs drive out members of the historic community.
- Concerned that seniors and future generations of this community do not have a voice in this process.
- Concerned that after a lengthy presentation, members of the community still did not understand what this building would look like.  
Requested that the fountain be moved into the courtyard.
- Appreciated the community outreach.
- Recommended additional community outreach to inform the neighborhood of the design and progress.
- Supported the project and the location of the fountain.
- Requested that space be made for the barbershop to return; it is a community asset.
- Concerned that the post office was not included in the design, a request for its return.
- Concerned that this project looks like Belltown.
- Concerned that the community is being driven off this site; the existing tenants should be offered an opportunity to return.
- Concerned that this project depends on the quality of the artwork and a request that the building also be well designed.

The following written comments were submitted to SDCI after the deadline for comments that were summarized for the Board:

- Several comments supported the most recent design.
- Supported the community spaces.
- Several comments stated that the project will activate the block using retail and art and will reduce crime.
- Noted the project is responsive to the zoning along 24<sup>th</sup> St with residential uses.
- Stated the wide portals on three sides of the project allow for good connectivity through the block and easy access to the retail lining the square. Felt the public square will be an engaging and inviting space.
- Suggested breaking down the building's mass to respect neighborhood scale, height, and character.
- Appreciated the brick storefronts referencing the charming existing buildings at the northeast corner of 20<sup>th</sup> and Union.
- Commented that the pedestrian experience and retail sizes do not reflect the cultural context.
- Several comments stated the design and programming are responsive to community desires.
- Several comments encouraged collaborating with the Central District arts groups to select a local artist for the murals.
- Several comments were concerned that the art projects appeared to be conceived as individual installations. Encouraged cohesion, aesthetic appeal, permanence, and durability.
- Hoped that cultural identity will form the murals.
- Several comments requested that the artwork not resemble advertisements.
- Supported the central tree.
- Encouraged sustainability via solar panels and a green roof.

SDCI received non-design related comments concerning affordability, displacement, and segregation.

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/>.

## **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. 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue Frontage**

- a. The Board supported the removal of the sky bridge as it affords a clearer entry point and supports the design intent to draw pedestrians to the courtyard.
  - i. The Board also noted the potential for a focal point (e.g., a piece of art, the tree) to attract pedestrians to the courtyard and asked that these views from the street be carefully considered.
- b. The Board echoed public comment (and their guidance from the previous Recommendation meeting (below) that the street edge lacked the degree of transparency required to make this an engaging edge. (CS2-B-2, PL3-C, PL2-I-ii)
- c. The Board noted their previous recommendations related to concerns regarding the 23rd Ave frontage. At EDG this was shown as a highly-transparent façade with full-height windows and logical locations for entries to accommodate a variety of business uses and sizes (EDG Packet, p. 59). At the last Recommendation meeting, the percentage of glazing on this façade had been significantly reduced and replaced with brick panels. The Board did not support this change as it decreased the porosity and visibility, they had encouraged at EDG. Furthermore, it was unclear how the retail space at this northwest corner might be further divided in conjunction with the façade treatment. The Board requested that composite floor plans be presented at the next meeting demonstrating how this space might be further divided in consideration of the 23rd Avenue façade. (PL3-C-1. Porous Edge, PL3-C-2. Visibility)
- d. The Board also asked that multiple entrances (or provision for them) be included to allow for the future subdivision of these spaces for smaller retail businesses. (PL3, CS2, CS3)

### **2. 24<sup>th</sup> Avenue**

- a. The Board echoed public comment (and their previous guidance (below) in the request that the townhouse elements at this edge be further modulated to break the monolithic scale of the podium down into recognizable residential-scale elements.
- b. At the previous meeting, the Board supported the proposed townhouse units fronting 24th Avenue but expressed concern that having the building podium read so clearly had compromised the positive scale-mitigating elements that townhouses could bring to this (residential-scale) street. The Board recommended further development of this element

to strengthen the unique characteristics of this commendable urban housing typology. (CS3-A Emphasizing Positive Neighborhood Attributes, CS3-B Local History and Culture)

3. **Portal Entrances:** The Board discussed their previous concerns that the portal entrances were not yet welcoming enough to the public and needed further study. Reviewing the current proposal, they offered the following guidance.
  - a. **23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue:** The Board enthusiastically supported the removal of the skybridge and the five-foot increase in the width of this passage (per above).
  - b. **E. Union Street:** The Board supported the five-foot increase in the width of this passage, noting their appreciation of this direct response to their previous guidance.
    - i. The Board supported the use of wood decking at the ‘undercut’ street-edge area and its potential to encourage and welcome public use of this area.
    - ii. The Board expressed concern regarding the street furniture and ‘bar’ shown at this edge and asked that they not divide the space in to separate areas or diminish the perceived width of the portal on Union.
    - iii. Staff note: It was somewhat unclear that this shift had reduced the size of the area at 24th and Union (rather than the courtyard). Please make this shift clear in the new documents.
  - c. **Skybridge at E. Union Avenue:**
    - i. At the previous meeting the Board asked for an exploration of the removal of the lowest level of this skybridge or even its complete elimination; there was concern that the ‘closure’ of this portal from the second floor to the seventh presented a significant impediment to this portal achieving the welcoming character that the Board, the public and the applicant had identified as critically important
    - ii. At this meeting, the Board recognized this skybridge as a potentially project-defining element, and asked for a careful consideration of its composition as either a substrate for art or carefully-wrought ‘other’ in the larger architectural composition.
  - d. **24th Avenue:**
    - i. The Board enthusiastically supported the removal of the skybridge, and the site planning changes made possible by the consolidation of solid waste areas.
    - ii. The Board found the larger curb cut an acceptable solution given the groundplane, architectural, and landscape elements added to insure the safety of pedestrians and other users of the fountain plaza. (PL1, PL3, CS2)
4. **The Art:** The Board expressed their concerns regarding the large role art will play in the project and their dismay that this now-critical element had not appeared in the design documents until this (second Recommendation) meeting. For the next meeting the Board asked for:
  - a. A narrative and graphic explication of how the art will support the architectural Design Concept for this project.
  - b. A complete description of the outreach efforts that will be employed to ensure all of the arts and cultural organizations in the Central Area have been informed of the process and offered a role in its pursuit.
  - c. An explanation of the process that will be employed in the selection of artists, the content of their briefs, and the criterion by which the work will be evaluated.
  - d. An explanation of how wayfinding and signage elements will be developed as art within this process.
  - e. A catalog of the locations, media and general character of all art installations.



- f. A description of the strategies that will be used in the maintenance and preservation of this work, and if the intent is permanence, a description of the methods and materials that will be employed in the work's creation and protection. (DC1-4, DC2, DC4-A)

## 5. Courtyard

- a. After a wide-ranging discussion of the location and 'role' of the proposed tree, a majority of the Board supported the relocation of the tree away from the center of the courtyard with the following notes:
  - i. Egress to and from retail storefronts not be compromised
  - ii. The accommodation of a wide range of users and uses be carefully considered.
- b. The Board supported the design of the groundplane but asked that it be constructed in the high-quality materials with strong-reading patterns shown in the principal documents (rather than lesser materials and minimal construction/expansion joints that might be employed).
- c. The Board supported the connection to the future courtyard created by this project and the proposed Africatown project and asked that it be developed as a more direct connection rather than the 'pork-chop' shape shown in these drawings. (DC-3, PL-3)

## 6. James Washington Jr. "Fountain of Triumph" (1997).

- a. The Board discussed the location and details of this installation at length, concluding that the current location at 24<sup>th</sup> and Union could work but needed further design development to insure a successful installation.
- b. The Board asked that the Central District community and the Dr. James & Janie Washington Cultural Center organization be consulted for input on these decisions.

## 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 Recommendation the following departures were requested:

1. **Residential Uses at Street Level (SMC 23.47A.005.C.1.a.):** The Code permits residential uses to occupy a maximum of 20% of the street-level street-facing façade in pedestrian-designated zones facing a principal pedestrian street. The applicant proposes to increase this width to 30% of the façade facing E Union Street.

The Board continued to be inclined to support the departure request provided additional information is provided at the next Recommendation meeting. Information should include a composite floor plan for the residential lobby. (PL3-C Retail Edges)

2. **Driveways (SMC 23.54.030.D.2.):** The Code requires a 22-foot wide driveway for non-residential driveways accommodating two-way traffic. The applicant proposes to reduce this width to 20-feet.

The Board continued to indicate preliminary support for the departure request as the reduced width minimizes the presence of the driveway and serves as a traffic calming measure. The Board recommended a driveway width as narrow as possible. (CS2-C)

3. **Curb Cut Width (SMC 23.54.030.F.):** The Code allows a minimum curb cut width of 22-feet, a maximum width of 25-feet, and an exception to allow for a 30-foot width if truck and auto access are combined. The site's frontage along 24<sup>th</sup> Ave would allow for a total of four curb cuts. The applicant proposes one curb cut at a width of 55-feet to provide auto access to the garage and loading berth and trash and recycle pick up within the portal.

The Board continued to indicate preliminary support for the departure request finding that one curb cut on 24<sup>th</sup> Ave located as close to E Union St as possible offered an acceptable response to the existing context with single-family development located along the east side of 24<sup>th</sup> Ave at the sound end of the block. The reduction of possible impacts of these service uses on the building aesthetics and safer pedestrian circulation is important. (DC2-C)

At the time of the Second Recommendation the following Type I requests (determinations are made administratively by SDCI) were reviewed by the Board who provided SDCI with the following feedback:

1. **Street Level Facades (SMC 23.47A.008.A.3.):** The Code requires that all street-level street-facing facades be located within 10-feet of the street lot line, unless a wider sidewalk, plaza, or other approved landscape or open space are provided. The applicant proposes a building with two portals into a central courtyard. This results in approximately 44- total feet (20-feet along E Union St and 24-feet along 23<sup>rd</sup> Ave) of street-facing façade that is not within 10-feet of the street lot line and requests that this area meet the definition of wider sidewalk, plaza, or other approved landscape or open space.

The Board was supportive of the Type I request agreeing that the wider sidewalks that reinforce this significant neighborhood intersection with high pedestrian activity with portals into the central courtyard met the intent of this code requirement (CS2-B, DC1-B).

2. **Driveway Slope (SMC 23.54.030.D.3.):** The Code allows for a maximum driveway slope of 15% except as provided in subsection 23.54.030.D.3. The applicant proposes a 20% slope.

The Board was supportive of the Type I request agreeing the request met the criteria of SMC 23.54.030.D3.

## DESIGN 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

**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-C Relationship to the Block**

**CS2-C-1. Corner Sites:** Corner sites can serve as gateways or focal points; both require careful detailing at the first three floors due to their high visibility from two or more streets and long distances.

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

**CS2-D-1. Existing Development and Zoning:** Review the height, bulk, and scale of neighboring buildings as well as the scale of development anticipated by zoning for the area to determine an appropriate complement and/or transition.

**CS2-D-3. Zone Transitions:** For projects located at the edge of different zones, provide an appropriate transition or complement to the adjacent zone(s). Projects should create a step in perceived height, bulk and scale between the anticipated development potential of the adjacent zone and the proposed development.

**CS2-D-4. Massing Choices:** Strive for a successful transition between zones where a project abuts a less intense zone.

**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-1. Fitting Old and New Together:** Create compatibility between new projects, and existing architectural context, including historic and modern designs, through building articulation, scale and proportion, roof forms, detailing, fenestration, and/or the use of complementary materials.

**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.

**CS3-A-3. Established Neighborhoods:** In existing neighborhoods with a well-defined architectural character, site and design new structures to complement or be compatible with the architectural style and siting patterns of neighborhood buildings.

**CS3-A-4. Evolving Neighborhoods:** In neighborhoods where architectural character is evolving or otherwise in transition, explore ways for new development to establish a positive and desirable context for others to build upon in the future.

**CS3-B Local History and Culture**

**CS3-B-1. Placemaking:** Explore the history of the site and neighborhood as a potential placemaking opportunity. Look for historical and cultural significance, using neighborhood groups and archives as resources.

**CS3-B-2. Historical/Cultural References:** Reuse existing structures on the site where feasible as a means of incorporating historical or cultural elements into the new project.

**PUBLIC LIFE**

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

**PL1-B Walkways and Connections**

**PL1-B-1. Pedestrian Infrastructure:** Connect on-site pedestrian walkways with existing public and private pedestrian infrastructure, thereby supporting pedestrian connections within and outside the project.

**PL1-B-2. Pedestrian Volumes:** Provide ample space for pedestrian flow and circulation, particularly in areas where there is already heavy pedestrian traffic or where the project is expected to add or attract pedestrians to the area.

**PL1-B-3. Pedestrian Amenities:** Opportunities for creating lively, pedestrian oriented open spaces to enliven the area and attract interest and interaction with the site and building should be considered.

**PL3 Street-Level Interaction: Encourage human interaction and activity at the street-level with clear connections to building entries and edges.**

**PL3-C Retail Edges**

**PL3-C-1. Porous Edge:** Engage passersby with opportunities to interact visually with the building interior using glazing and transparency. Create multiple entries where possible and make a physical and visual connection between people on the sidewalk and retail activities in the building.

**PL3-C-2. Visibility:** Maximize visibility into the building interior and merchandise displays. Consider fully operational glazed wall-sized doors that can be completely opened to the street, increased height in lobbies, and/or special lighting for displays.

**PL3-C-3. Ancillary Activities:** Allow space for activities such as sidewalk vending, seating, and restaurant dining to occur. Consider setting structures back from the street or incorporating space in the project design into which retail uses can extend.

**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 Facade Composition**

**DC2-B-1. Façade Composition:** Design all building facades—including alleys and visible roofs—considering the composition and architectural expression of the building as a whole. Ensure that all facades 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 facades 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-1. Meeting User Needs:** Plan the size, uses, activities, and features of each open space to meet the needs of expected users, ensuring each space has a purpose and function.

**DC3-B-2. Matching Uses to Conditions:** Respond to changing environmental conditions such as seasonal and daily light and weather shifts through open space design and/or programming of open space activities.

**DC3-B-3. Connections to Other Open Space:** Site and design project-related open spaces to connect with, or enhance, the uses and activities of other nearby public open space where appropriate.

**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.

**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-A-2. Climate Appropriateness:** Select durable and attractive materials that will age well in Seattle’s climate, taking special care to detail corners, edges, and transitions.

**BOARD DIRECTION**

At the conclusion of the Second RECOMMENDATION meeting, the Board recommended the project return for another meeting in response to the guidance provided.