



**RECOMMENDATION OF THE
EAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD**

Record Number: 3039628-LU

Address: 900 University St

Applicant: Jodi Patterson O’Hare for Ken Boyd, Mithun

Date of Meeting: August 28, 2024

Board Members Present: Emily van Geldern, Chair
Jacob Cosman
Akhil Arun

Board Members Absent: Gina Gage
Joe Reilly

SDCI Staff Present: Joseph Hurley

SITE & VICINITY

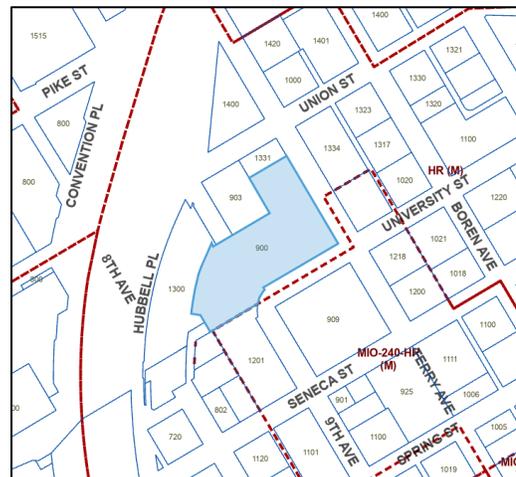
Site Zone: Highrise (M)

Nearby Zones: (North) Highrise (M) [HR (M)]
(South) HR (M) & Major Institution Overlay-240-Highrise (M) [MIO-240-HR (M)]
(East) HR (M) & MIO-240-HR (M)
(West) HR (M)

Lot Area: 98,347 sq. ft.

Current Development:

The subject site is currently developed with four highrise structures built in 1954 (west tower), 1956 (central tower), 1983 (east tower), and 2007 (north tower). Only the existing west tower, which currently functions as a senior living facility, is considered within the proposed area of work; the other towers are to remain. The site is irregular in shape and slopes steeply downward from southeast to northwest approximately 64 feet.



Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:

The subject site is located at the northwest edge of the First Hill/Capitol Hill Urban Center and is bound by non-arterial streets Terry Ave to the northeast, University St to the southeast, and 9th Ave to the northwest. The proximate blocks to the east are largely developed with residential and healthcare structures, as well as office, hotel, and retail structures throughout. The Washington State Convention Center and a mix of office and retail structures are present to the northwest across Interstate 5. Public open spaces Jim Ellis Freeway Park and Pigott Memorial Corridor bound the site to the west and south, respectively.

The neighborhood fabric reflects the varying eras of development and their associated scale and architectural styles which span the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. A historic residential character is legible throughout the neighborhood and identifiable by traditional brick and masonry materials. A number of historic City landmark structures are found in the vicinity, including Cassel Crag Apartments to the east. By contrast, newer highrise construction has trended towards assuming a curtain wall system which reflects development in the adjacent Downtown neighborhood. The neighborhood character is additionally influenced by an institutional presence created by the close proximity of several healthcare campuses. A recent development trend to create housing by increasing density has resulted in taller structures, particularly nearer to the Downtown core.

Access:

Vehicle access is proposed from 9th Ave. Pedestrian access is proposed from University St.

Environmentally Critical Areas:

Multiple mapped steep slope areas are located on the subject site and within the proposed area of work.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Design Review Early Design Guidance for a 33-story, 202-unit apartment building. Parking for 182 vehicles proposed. Existing west tower to be demolished. Early Design Guidance conducted under 3039974-EG.

The design packet includes information presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the record number at this website:

<http://www.seattle.gov/DPD/aboutus/news/events/DesignReview/SearchPastReviews/default.aspx>

Any recording of the Board meeting is available in the project file. This meeting report summarizes the meeting and is not a meeting transcript.

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE – SEPTEMBER 27, 2023

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

- Cited Design Guideline DC2.A1 - Site Characteristics and Uses in support of Scheme ,3 noting the site's steep slope, fire lane, and proximity to existing buildings on Horizon House's campus, and supported the required departure as a reasonable request.
- Cited Design Guideline DC2.A2 - Reducing Perceived Mass and requested special attention be given to reducing the perceived mass of the tower and podium. Encouraged an emphasis on verticality rather than width for the tower, and modulation for the podium.
- Cited Design Guideline DC2.B2 - Blank Walls and encouraged the use of a green wall to help the podium appear as an extension of Freeway Park and to strengthen the Urban Treehouse design concept.

The following public comments were offered at this meeting:

- Supported the proposed design and departures as an appropriate response to existing context, particularly connectivity to Freeway Park and the existing Horizon House Buildings.
- Commended the applicant team for the extensive and productive public outreach work that began two years ago and continues with regular meetings.
- A representative of the First Hill Improvement Association offered the following comments:
 - Stated that due to the site's steep slope, fire lane, and proximity to existing buildings on Horizon House's campus, they support Scheme 3. They find the requested departures reasonable and believe the departures should be supported by the Board. Cited DC2.A1 - Site Characteristics and Uses
 - Noted that this tower proposal is parallel to the Pigott Corridor and that special attention should be given towards reducing the perceived mass of the tower and podium and to consider emphasizing verticality rather than width for the tower, and use recesses/indentations for the podium. Cited DC2.A2 - Reducing Perceived Mass.
 - Noted that because the podium is adjacent to Freeway Park as well as the Pigott Corridor, they strongly encourage the use of a green wall to help the podium appear as an extension of the park, as well as to strengthen the applicant's massing concept of an urban treehouse. Cited DC2.B2 - Blank Walls

The Seattle Department of Transportation offered the following comments:

- SDOT broadly supports the applicant's proposed scheme across the three design options to provide primary passenger vehicle, fire, freight and solid waste service from the lower-grade dead-end portion of 9th Ave at the north of the site.
- Noted that the First Hill Public Realm Action Plan calls for marked, textured crosswalks at the Intersection of Terry Ave & University St to improve the visibility of people walking in the area and encouraged the project team to work with SDOT staff to study potential crosswalk implementation at this intersection as part of the project's street improvement plan.
- SDOT also encourages the project team and the Board to consider additional pedestrian improvements to the intersection of 9th Ave and University St. The First Hill Public Realm Action Plan calls for a ROW plaza space with expanded sidewalks, space for people biking, and legible integration with the adjacent Freeway Park.
- SDOT notes that a clear, comfortable connection to Freeway Park would likewise be a desirable improvement. SDOT looks forward to comment from the Board meeting and to working with the applicant team to design a more welcoming public space at this intersection.

- In addition, an SDOT standard hammerhead or cul-de-sac style turnaround is required on the lower portion of 9th Ave, which likely can be provided via public access easement over existing paving. SDOT will work with the project team on this improvement as part of the permitting process.

Seattle Public Utilities offered the following comments:

- SPU strongly recommends roll-off compaction for residential recycle and garbage with solid waste truck access off 9th Avenue and requires turning studies that demonstrate trucks can collect compactors with adequate clearance to protect private property.
- As an SPU Best Management Practice, we highly encourage the project to plan on-floor access to all three solid waste streams - garbage, compost, recycle.

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 Seattle Design Guidelines 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 record number: <http://web6.seattle.gov/dpd/edms/>

PRIORITIES & BOARD GUIDANCE

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. The Three Schemes:** The Board considered the proposed design options and after hearing public comment concluded that Scheme 3 had the most potential to meet the intent of the Design Guidelines. They gave guidance for the project proceed to MUP application with the following notes and guidance.
 - a. The Board recognized public comment regarding the importance of Freeway Park to residents of the neighborhood and commended the applicant for the careful consideration given to this important area in the development of their schematic options. (CS2-B)
 - b. The Board considered the merits of the three primary schematic design options, as well as the additional schematic tower placement studies provided on page 31 of the Early Design Guidance (EDG) packet. (DC2-A)
 - c. The Board expressed appreciation for those additional schematic explorations, agreeing that they helped bring into focus the strength of the massing choices shown in the applicant's preferred option, Scheme 03. In that scheme, the tower is split into two distinct massing elements and oriented to the orthogonal street grid rather than facing Freeway Park. The Board agreed that Scheme 03 was the best option to break down the scale of the tower and provided an appropriate transition of space between the tower and the Landmarked Jim Ellis Freeway Park. (CS2-B, CS3, DC2-A)
 - d. The Board recognized the additional height available on this HR (Highrise) zoned site and discussed the merits of a taller, more slender tower versus the more modest tower height of the three proposed schemes. Ultimately the Board unanimously agreed to support the

preferred scheme as the best response to the context of the site and nearby development, including both shorter and taller nearby structures. (CS2-D, CS3, DC2-A)

- e. The Board agreed that the proposed terraces would be highly visible due to topography and the adjacent Freeway Park, particularly as nearby sites were redeveloped. The Board supported the conceptual design and gave guidance to use great care to ensure its expression was aesthetically pleasing. (DC3-B, DC3-C, DC4-D)

2. Tower Massing and Modulation:

- a. The Board supported the two distinct tower massing forms proposed in Scheme 03 and agreed that creating a degree of differentiation between the two massing elements through their architectural expression could strengthen the design concept, helping the tower better fit into existing context and reducing the perceived scale. (CS2-B, CS2-D, DC2-A)
- b. The Board also expressed concern regarding the limited height difference between these two elements at the top of the tower. The Board agreed that the distinction of the two masses should be strengthened through some combination of height difference and architectural expression of the two elements at the top of the tower. The Board stated that if additional overall height were proposed as part of the solution that they would almost certainly support it. (DC2-A, CS2-D, CS2-B)
- c. The Board considered the proximity of this project to the existing tower across Freeway Park (2 Union Square) and how this new proposed tower would respond to that context. The Board asked that perspective views including both towers be provided in the Recommendation packet, from both the Park and nearby streets. (CS2, CS3)

3. Podium Massing and Articulation:

- a. Echoing public comment, the Board agreed that the podium will be highly visible from nearby streets and Freeway Park and gave guidance to use both erosion to break down its scale and to create depth and texture and visual interest. The Board suggested thinking of the podium as an extension of Freeway Park and, again echoing public comment, consider using green walls as a surface treatment. (CS2, CS3-A, DC2-A, DC4-A)
- b. The Board particularly emphasized the need to treat potential blank walls at the podium structure and the associated Design Guideline criteria for design treatments that provide human scale and visual interest. (DC2-B, DC2-C)
- c. The Board supported the applicant's stated intent to connect the project to Freeway Park through formal articulation and exterior materials. The Board requested complete details and specifications demonstrating these strategies in the Recommendation packet, with a particular emphasis on the podium and terraces. (CS2-B, CS3-A, DC2, DC3-C)
- d. The Board discussed the architectural character of the two-story element containing the entry on University Street and agreed that this should be designed to feel open and welcoming. The Board provided guidance that this articulation should be distinct enough from the adjacent towers ("transparent and blazing" was offered by one Board member) to stand out as a separate element, which will help reduce the project's overall perceived scale. (PL3-A, DC2-A)
- e. The Board discussed the project's appearance from the pedestrian realm (as shown in view 3 on sheet 50 of the EDG packet) and encouraged increasing the height of the columns to visually 'lift' the base of the tower by an additional story. The Board agreed that increasing the scale of this colonnaded area would make it more compatible with the surrounding

context and create a more welcoming and engaging experience for pedestrians. (CS2-B, PL3, DC2-B, DC3)

- f. The Board agreed that it would be critically important to have a complete understanding of how the podium and tower would appear from various points in Freeway Park and the adjacent streets, in both winter and summer, and requested these be provided at the Recommendation phase. (CS2, CS3, DC2, DC4)

4. Streetscape and Circulation

- a. The Board discussed the location of the new building entrance and how it would connect to the Piggott Corridor and Freeway Park. The Board noted the entrance's lack of architectural distinction in the EDG packet. Echoing public comment, the Board agreed that connections to Freeway Park and to the public realm were critical to the success of the project and provided guidance that this entry be appropriately scaled, distinctly expressed and clearly legible. (CS2-B, PL1-B, PL3-A)
- b. The Board asked that complete details be provided in the Recommendation packet to demonstrate the following aspects of the design, which they identified as high priorities (CS1-B, CS1-C, CS1-D, CS2-B, PL1-B, PL2-B, PL3-A, DC3-A, DC3-B, DC3-C):
 - i. site circulation, both public and private,
 - ii. site planning, including landscape and hardscape design at building edges and terraces,
 - iii. lighting for security and as part of the design concept, and
 - iv. the potential for wind to impact pedestrian areas.
- c. The Board expressed concern regarding the limited new connectivity and circulation provided between the project and adjacent streets, but recognized the substantial constraints placed on the site by topography and existing street grid. The Board noted they would be open to design changes and/or potential departures the applicant may propose to increase connectivity and strengthen the pedestrian realm. (PL1, DC3)

RECOMMENDATION – AUGUST 28, 2024

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comments were offered at this meeting and SDCI staff did not receive any design related comments in writing prior to the meeting.

The following were provided by Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPR):

- Design documentation to date has not provided sufficient information regarding the relationship of the tower to structures in Freeway Park, particularly the relationship of the new terraces to the park structures as they step down the slope in Piggott Corridor and the relationship of the tower at grade with the two Freeway Park entries. It is unclear how the removal of existing trees between the tower and park structures will affect the open space character from within the park and around the park entry. SPR requests perspective views showing the relationship of the tower to existing park structures and entries into Piggott Corridor. Without this information it is unclear whether the project has met the intent of guidelines CS2-B-2 and CS2-B-3 in relation to Freeway Park.

- Design documentation to date has not provided sufficient information regarding the relationship of the tower podium and terraces to the replacement stairs for the Freeway Park/Pigott Corridor entry. The orientation of the new stairs appears to align with the tower's new entry rather than addressing the park. The new stair width may meet current code but may not signal to the public that this is a park entry. SPR requests perspective views from the tower's lower entry at the fire lane access showing the relationship of the replacement stairs to existing park structures and to demonstrate meeting guideline DC3-B-3.
- Both departures use guidelines related to open space and public life for rationale, however as mentioned above, at this time SPR does not have enough information about how the frontages and departures provide a welcoming condition for all users. SPR requests enlarged perspective views showing the relationship to existing park structures, indicating change of grade, circulation path and entries within Pigott Corridor to demonstrate meeting guidelines CS2-B, DC1, DC3, PL1-A.

SDCI received non-design related comments concerning sustainability and housing demand.

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 Seattle Design Guidelines and Neighborhood Design Guidelines of highest priority to the site and explore conceptual design, siting alternatives and eventual architectural design.

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BOARD RECOMMENDATION

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 recommendations.

1. Board Deliberation

- a. The Board asked for the clarification of a number of design issues, including anticipated pedestrian volumes at the 9th Avenue entrance, the exterior cladding materials of the podium and their relation to Freeway Park, signage and wayfinding cues at Freeway Park entrances, plant species at greenscreen areas, and the height of pole-mounted light fixtures.

2. Tower Massing and Modulation:

- a. The Board reaffirmed their support for the two-part tower massing forms proposed at Early Design Guidance (EDG) phase, recognized how the design had evolved in response to their EDG guidance, and agreed that the differentiation between the two massing elements would help mitigate the tower's perceived scale. (CS2-B, CS2-D, DC2-A)
- b. The Board expressed appreciation for the design development diagrams included on page 23 of the Recommendation packet and the perspective views (pages 25, 27, et al.) that included Freeway Park and the adjacent towers. The Board agreed that the proposed massing and architectural expression would help the project fit existing context. The Board recommended approval of the proposed massing and modulation. (CS2, CS3, DC2)

3. Podium Massing and Articulation:

- a. The Board discussed the architectural character of the two-story element containing the entry on University Street and agreed that its composition and articulation created an appropriate level of distinction from the adjacent structures and recommended approval of this aspect of the design. (DC2, PL3-A, DC2-A)
- b. The Board supported the applicant's stated intent to connect the podium to Freeway Park through form and exterior materials. The Board agreed that the scale of the podium elements and the proposed cladding materials and landscape elements were an appropriate response to context and recommended approval of this aspect of the design. (DC2, CS2, PL2, CS3)
- c. The Board supported the creation of occupiable outdoor space in the terrace areas above the University Street, 9th Avenue and Freeway Park, agreeing that these were appropriately scaled and well composed and had the potential to foster connection, human activity and security and recommended approval of this aspect of the design. (PL2, CS2, CS3, DC2)

4. Freeway Park

- a. The Board reiterated their EDG comments regarding the importance of Freeway Park as open space, place, pedestrian connection, and the associated responsibility for the design to respond to this context. (DC3-C, DC3-B, CS2-B, PL1-A)
- b. The Board recognized comments from Seattle Parks and Recreation regarding the entrances, pedestrian circulation areas and edges shared with Freeway Park and agreed that there was not enough information in the packet to determine if the design met the intent of the Guidelines regarding response to open space. The Board recommended a condition that the applicant work with SDCI Staff, in conjunction with Seattle Parks and Recreation, to ensure that the design of Park edges and entrances along the Pigott Corridor enhance and reinforce the character of Freeway Park, considering their scale and composition, and the use of wayfinding cues including signage, hardscape materials, and larger-scale landscape elements. (PL1-B, DC3-B, CS2-B, DC3-C)

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

The Board's recommendations on the requested departures are based on the departure's potential to help the project better meet these design guideline priorities and achieve a better overall project design than could be achieved without the departures.

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

1. **HR zone upper-level development standards (23.45.520.B.2, B.3 & B.5):** The Code requires that if any proposed or existing structures in HR zones exceed a height of 85 feet all structures or portions of structures greater than 45 feet in height are subject to the following standards: The maximum width of an individual tower is 130 feet, the average and maximum gross floor area per story is limited to 10,000 square feet and 10,500 square feet respectively, and where two or more towers are located on the lot, the minimum horizontal separation between proposed towers or between proposed and existing towers shall be 40 feet. The applicant proposes a tower width of 175 feet with no separation from the existing tower and a single floor (that includes the two-story entry) of 11,200 gross square feet.

The Board recognized the extreme slope of the lot and limitations of a code-compliant solution and recommended approval of the departure, agreeing that the design of the separate appearing tower and an entrance area that appears two-story from the street would better meet the intent of Design Guidelines PL3-A Entries and CS2-B Adjacent Sites, Streets, and Open Spaces than a code compliant alternative.

2. **Structures over 240' in HR Zones (23.45.509.C.2):** The Code requires that for all development containing one or more structures with height greater than 240' feet that at least 20% of the lot area at grade be common amenity area meeting the standards of Section 23.45.522. The applicant proposes no common amenity area to be located at the average grade, due to topography changes across the site and the location of average grade. The applicant proposes common amenity area on levels B1 and L1, noting that common amenity area on these levels is equal to 25% of the total lot area.

The Board recognized the complex geometry and significant slope of the site and agreed that the proposed location of the common amenity areas made them comparably more viable and recommended approval of the departure. The Board agreed that proposed design with departure would better meet the intent of Design Guidelines DC1 Project Uses and Activities, DC3 Open Space Concept and PL1-A Network of Open Spaces than a code compliant alternative.

DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES

The Seattle Design Guidelines and Neighborhood Design Guidelines recognized by the Board as Priority Guidelines are identified above. All guidelines remain applicable and are summarized below. For the full text please visit the [Design Review website](#).

CONTEXT & SITE

CS1 Natural Systems and Site Features: Use natural systems/features of the site and its surroundings as a starting point for project design.

CS1-A Energy Use

CS1-A-1. Energy Choices: At the earliest phase of project development, examine how energy choices may influence building form, siting, and orientation, and factor in the findings when making siting and design decisions.

CS1-B Sunlight and Natural Ventilation

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

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

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

CS1-C Topography

CS1-C-1. Land Form: Use natural topography and desirable landforms to inform project design.

CS1-C-2. Elevation Changes: Use the existing site topography when locating structures and open spaces on the site.

CS1-D Plants and Habitat

CS1-D-1. On-Site Features: Incorporate on-site natural habitats and landscape elements into project design and connect those features to existing networks of open spaces and natural habitats wherever possible. Consider relocating significant trees and vegetation if retention is not feasible.

CS1-D-2. Off-Site Features: Provide opportunities through design to connect to off-site habitats such as riparian corridors or existing urban forest corridors. Promote continuous habitat, where possible, and increase interconnected corridors of urban forest and habitat where possible.

CS1-E Water

CS1-E-1. Natural Water Features: If the site includes any natural water features, consider ways to incorporate them into project design, where feasible

CS1-E-2. Adding Interest with Project Drainage: Use project drainage systems as opportunities to add interest to the site through water-related design elements.

CS2 Urban Pattern and Form: Strengthen the most desirable forms, characteristics, and patterns of the streets, block faces, and open spaces in the surrounding area.

CS2-A Location in the City and Neighborhood

CS2-A-1. Sense of Place: Emphasize attributes that give a distinctive sense of place. Design the building and open spaces to enhance areas where a strong identity already exists, and create a sense of place where the physical context is less established.

CS2-A-2. Architectural Presence: Evaluate the degree of visibility or architectural presence that is appropriate or desired given the context, and design accordingly.

CS2-B Adjacent Sites, Streets, and Open Spaces

CS2-B-1. Site Characteristics: Allow characteristics of sites to inform the design, especially where the street grid and topography create unusually shaped lots that can add distinction to the building massing.

CS2-B-2. Connection to the Street: Identify opportunities for the project to make a strong connection to the street and public realm.

CS2-B-3. Character of Open Space: Contribute to the character and proportion of surrounding open spaces.

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

CS2-C-3. Full Block Sites: Break up long facades of full-block buildings to avoid a monolithic presence. Provide detail and human scale at street-level, and include repeating elements to add variety and rhythm to the façade and overall building design.

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-2. Existing Site Features: Use changes in topography, site shape, and vegetation or structures to help make a successful fit with adjacent properties.

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-A Network of Open Spaces

PL1-A-1. Enhancing Open Space: Design the building and open spaces to positively contribute to a broader network of open spaces throughout the neighborhood.

PL1-A-2. Adding to Public Life: Seek opportunities to foster human interaction through an increase in the size and quality of project-related open space available for public life.

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.

PL1-C Outdoor Uses and Activities

PL1-C-1. Selecting Activity Areas: Concentrate activity areas in places with sunny exposure, views across spaces, and in direct line with pedestrian routes.

PL1-C-2. Informal Community Uses: In addition to places for walking and sitting, consider including space for informal community use such as performances, farmer’s markets, kiosks and community bulletin boards, cafes, or street vending.

PL1-C-3. Year-Round Activity: Where possible, include features in open spaces for activities beyond daylight hours and throughout the seasons of the year, especially in neighborhood centers where active open space will contribute vibrancy, economic health, and public safety.

PL2 Walkability: Create a safe and comfortable walking environment that is easy to navigate and well-connected to existing pedestrian walkways and features.

PL2-A Accessibility

PL2-A-1. Access for All: Provide access for people of all abilities in a manner that is fully integrated into the project design. Design entries and other primary access points such that all visitors can be greeted and welcomed through the front door.

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

PL2-B Safety and Security

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

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

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

PL2-C Weather Protection

PL2-C-1. Locations and Coverage: Overhead weather protection is encouraged and should be located at or near uses that generate pedestrian activity such as entries, retail uses, and transit stops.

PL2-C-2. Design Integration: Integrate weather protection, gutters and downspouts into the design of the structure as a whole, and ensure that it also relates well to neighboring buildings in design, coverage, or other features.

PL2-C-3. People-Friendly Spaces: Create an artful and people-friendly space beneath building.

PL2-D Wayfinding

PL2-D-1. Design as Wayfinding: Use design features as a means of wayfinding wherever possible.

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

PL3-A Entries

PL3-A-1. Design Objectives: Design primary entries to be obvious, identifiable, and distinctive with clear lines of sight and lobbies visually connected to the street.

PL3-A-2. Common Entries: Multi-story residential buildings need to provide privacy and security for residents but also be welcoming and identifiable to visitors.

PL3-A-3. Individual Entries: Ground-related housing should be scaled and detailed appropriately to provide for a more intimate type of entry.

PL3-A-4. Ensemble of Elements: Design the entry as a collection of coordinated elements including the door(s), overhead features, ground surface, landscaping, lighting, and other features.

PL3-B Residential Edges

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

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

PL3-B-3. Buildings with Live/Work Uses: Maintain active and transparent facades in the design of live/work residences. Design the first floor so it can be adapted to other commercial use as needed in the future.

PL3-B-4. Interaction: Provide opportunities for interaction among residents and neighbors.

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.

PL4 Active Transportation: Incorporate design features that facilitate active forms of transportation such as walking, bicycling, and use of transit.

PL4-A Entry Locations and Relationships

PL4-A-1. Serving all Modes of Travel: Provide safe and convenient access points for all modes of travel.

PL4-A-2. Connections to All Modes: Site the primary entry in a location that logically relates to building uses and clearly connects all major points of access.

PL4-B Planning Ahead for Bicyclists

PL4-B-1. Early Planning: Consider existing and future bicycle traffic to and through the site early in the process so that access and connections are integrated into the project along with other modes of travel.

PL4-B-2. Bike Facilities: Facilities such as bike racks and storage, bike share stations, shower facilities and lockers for bicyclists should be located to maximize convenience, security, and safety.

PL4-B-3. Bike Connections: Facilitate connections to bicycle trails and infrastructure around and beyond the project.

PL4-C Planning Ahead For Transit

PL4-C-1. Influence on Project Design: Identify how a transit stop (planned or built) adjacent to or near the site may influence project design, provide opportunities for placemaking.

PL4-C-2. On-site Transit Stops: If a transit stop is located onsite, design project-related pedestrian improvements and amenities so that they complement any amenities provided for transit riders.

PL4-C-3. Transit Connections: Where no transit stops are on or adjacent to the site, identify where the nearest transit stops and pedestrian routes are and include design features and connections within the project design as appropriate.

DESIGN CONCEPT

DC1 Project Uses and Activities: Optimize the arrangement of uses and activities on site.

DC1-A Arrangement of Interior Uses

DC1-A-1. Visibility: Locate uses and services frequently used by the public in visible or prominent areas, such as at entries or along the street front.

DC1-A-2. Gathering Places: Maximize the use of any interior or exterior gathering spaces.

DC1-A-3. Flexibility: Build in flexibility so the building can adapt over time to evolving needs, such as the ability to change residential space to commercial space as needed.

DC1-A-4. Views and Connections: Locate interior uses and activities to take advantage of views and physical connections to exterior spaces and uses.

DC1-B Vehicular Access and Circulation

DC1-B-1. Access Location and Design: Choose locations for vehicular access, service uses, and delivery areas that minimize conflict between vehicles and non-motorists wherever possible. Emphasize use of the sidewalk for pedestrians, and create safe and attractive conditions for pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers.

DC1-B-2. Facilities for Alternative Transportation: Locate facilities for alternative transportation in prominent locations that are convenient and readily accessible to expected users.

DC1-C Parking and Service Uses

DC1-C-1. Below-Grade Parking: Locate parking below grade wherever possible. Where a surface parking lot is the only alternative, locate the parking in rear or side yards, or on lower or less visible portions of the site.

DC1-C-2. Visual Impacts: Reduce the visual impacts of parking lots, parking structures, entrances, and related signs and equipment as much as possible.

DC1-C-3. Multiple Uses: Design parking areas to serve multiple uses such as children's play space, outdoor gathering areas, sports courts, woonerf, or common space in multifamily projects.

DC1-C-4. Service Uses: Locate and design service entries, loading docks, and trash receptacles away from pedestrian areas or to a less visible portion of the site to reduce possible impacts of these facilities on building aesthetics and pedestrian circulation.

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-A Massing

DC2-A-1. Site Characteristics and Uses: Arrange the mass of the building taking into consideration the characteristics of the site and the proposed uses of the building and its open space.

DC2-A-2. Reducing Perceived Mass: Use secondary architectural elements to reduce the perceived mass of larger projects.

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.

DC2-C Secondary Architectural Features

DC2-C-1. Visual Depth and Interest: Add depth to facades where appropriate by incorporating balconies, canopies, awnings, decks, or other secondary elements into the façade design. Add detailing at the street level in order to create interest for the pedestrian and encourage active street life and window shopping (in retail areas).

DC2-C-2. Dual Purpose Elements: Consider architectural features that can be dual purpose—adding depth, texture, and scale as well as serving other project functions.

DC2-C-3. Fit With Neighboring Buildings: Use design elements to achieve a successful fit between a building and its neighbors.

DC2-D Scale and Texture

DC2-D-1. Human Scale: Incorporate architectural features, elements, and details that are of human scale into the building facades, entries, retaining walls, courtyards, and exterior spaces in a manner that is consistent with the overall architectural concept

DC2-D-2. Texture: Design the character of the building, as expressed in the form, scale, and materials, to strive for a fine-grained scale, or “texture,” particularly at the street level and other areas where pedestrians predominate.

DC2-E Form and Function

DC2-E-1. Legibility and Flexibility: Strive for a balance between building use legibility and flexibility. Design buildings such that their primary functions and uses can be readily determined from the exterior, making the building easy to access and understand. At the same time, design flexibility into the building so that it may remain useful over time even as specific programmatic needs evolve.

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

DC3-A Building-Open Space Relationship

DC3-A-1. Interior/Exterior Fit: Develop an open space concept in conjunction with the architectural concept to ensure that interior and exterior spaces relate well to each other and support the functions of the development.

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.

DC3-C Design

DC3-C-1. Reinforce Existing Open Space: Where a strong open space concept exists in the neighborhood, reinforce existing character and patterns of street tree planting, buffers or treatment of topographic changes. Where no strong patterns exist, initiate a strong open space concept that other projects can build upon in the future.

DC3-C-2. Amenities/Features: Create attractive outdoor spaces suited to the uses envisioned for the project.

DC3-C-3. Support Natural Areas: Create an open space design that retains and enhances onsite natural areas and connects to natural areas that may exist off-site and may provide habitat for wildlife.

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.

DC4-B Signage

DC4-B-1. Scale and Character: Add interest to the streetscape with exterior signs and attachments that are appropriate in scale and character to the project and its environs.

DC4-B-2. Coordination with Project Design: Develop a signage plan within the context of architectural and open space concepts, and coordinate the details with façade design, lighting, and other project features to complement the project as a whole, in addition to the surrounding context.

DC4-C Lighting

DC4-C-1. Functions: Use lighting both to increase site safety in all locations used by pedestrians and to highlight architectural or landscape details and features such as entries, signs, canopies, plantings, and art.

DC4-C-2. Avoiding Glare: Design project lighting based upon the uses on and off site, taking care to provide illumination to serve building needs while avoiding off-site night glare and light pollution.

DC4-D Trees, Landscape, and Hardscape Materials

DC4-D-1. Choice of Plant Materials: Reinforce the overall architectural and open space design concepts through the selection of landscape materials.

DC4-D-2. Hardscape Materials: Use exterior courtyards, plazas, and other hard surfaced areas as an opportunity to add color, texture, and/or pattern and enliven public areas through the use of distinctive and durable paving materials. Use permeable materials wherever possible.

DC4-D-3. Long Range Planning: Select plants that upon maturity will be of appropriate size, scale, and shape to contribute to the site as intended.

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

DC4-E Project Assembly and Lifespan

DC4-E-1. Deconstruction: When possible, design the project so that it may be deconstructed at the end of its useful lifetime, with connections and assembly techniques that will allow reuse of materials.

BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations summarized above were based on the design review packet dated August 12, 2024, and the materials shown and verbally described by the applicant at the August 28, 2024 Design Recommendation meeting. After considering the site and context, hearing public comment, reconsidering the previously identified design priorities and reviewing the materials, the three Design Review Board members recommended APPROVAL of the subject design and departures with the following condition.

1. Work with SDCI Staff, in conjunction with Seattle Parks and Recreation, to ensure that the design of Park edges and entrances along the Pigott Corridor enhance and reinforce the character of Freeway Park, considering their scale and composition, and the use of wayfinding cues including signage, hardscape materials, and larger-scale landscape elements. (PL1-B, DC3-B, CS2-B, DC3-C)