



City of Seattle

Department of Planning and Development
D. M. Sugimura, Director

**CITY OF SEATTLE
ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE DIRECTOR
OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

Application Number: 3012392
Applicant Name: Tim Abell, Pacific Housing NW
Address of Proposal: 2721 17th Avenue S

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION

Land Use Application to allow a six-story structure containing 46 residential units and 2,046 sq. ft. of retail space. Parking for 17 vehicles to be provided below grade.

The following Master Use Permit components are required:

Design Review – Seattle Municipal Code Section 23.41 with Development Standard Departure:

1. Street Level Uses (SMC 23.47A.005.C2 and 23.47A.008 D)
2. Street Level Uses (SMC 23.47A.008 D3)

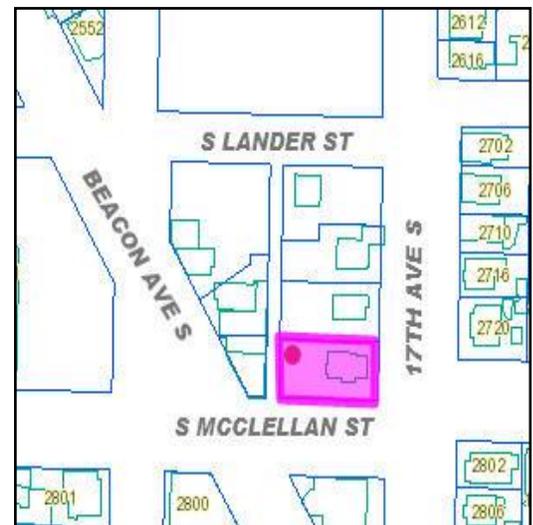
SITE AND VICINITY

The rectangular 7,200 sq. ft site is located on the northwest corner of S McClellan Street and 17th Avenue S. A 16-foot wide alley is located along the west property line.

The site is currently vacant.

The site is zoned NC2P-65' (Neighborhood Commercial 2 with a pedestrian designation). The adjacent zoning to the north, south and west is also NC3P-65'. To the east the zone changes to SF5000 (Single Family 5000).

The entire block is undeveloped except for the light rail station in the northwest corner. The site is located within the North Beacon Hill Residential Urban Village and Station Area Overlay. City of Seattle recently completed a rezone of



the Urban Village. The subject site and surrounding lots to north, south and west were rezoned from Neighborhood Commercial 2 with a forty foot height limit (NC2-40) to Neighborhood Commercial Two with a sixty-five foot height limit (NC2-65). The neighborhood has not yet been developed to the increased height limit and the majority of commercial structures along Beacon Avenue S are one and two story mid-century commercial buildings. Directly north of on the adjacent block is El Centro de la Raza. The adjacent S Lander Street was recently converted to a festival street, Roberto Maestas Festival Street. Both S Lander Street and S McClellan Street are considered principal pedestrian streets. To the east across 17th Avenue S existing zoning remained Single Family 5000 (SF5000) and consists of one and two story single family structures. The site has an existing alley along the west property line. Vehicle and all service to the building would be from the alley.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed project is for the design and construction of a mixed use building with approximately 46 residential units located above 2,046 sq. ft of retail space at the ground level. All of the parking (approximately 17 stalls) for the proposed development is to be provided in a below grade garage that is accessed from the adjacent alley.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

The applicant applied for a Master Use Permit on July 18, 2012. Notice of Application was published on September 6, 2012 and a 14-day comment period ended on September 19, 2012. The following comments were received.

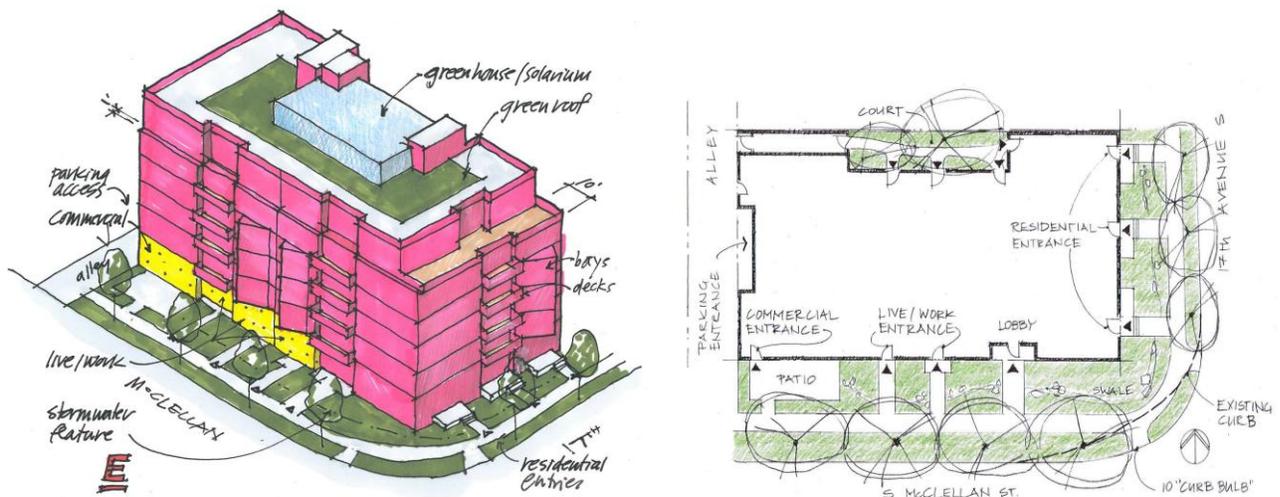
- Design should consider pedestrian views looking east from Beacon Avenue; do not treat west façade as the back of structure.
- Alley has considerable pedestrian traffic as it connects to the north with the light rail station and the festival street. Vehicle access and dumpster storage should be located on an adjacent street.
- Opposed to increased density.
- Insufficient parking provided.
- Concerned about increased traffic and decreased air quality of neighborhood.
- Developer should pay for pot hole repair and better drainage on S McClellan Street and 17th Avenue S.
- Proposed building will make a great addition to the neighborhood.
- Encourage street-level retail spaces to encourage small local businesses.
- Reduce setbacks to bring building wall closer to the street which will help activate retail space.
- Encourage the developer to consider providing car-sharing service.
- Include multiple levels of retails space and low-income residential units.
- Design should be conservative to fit surrounding area.

ANALYSIS - DESIGN REVIEW

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE MEETING: October 25, 2011

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

Five alternative design schemes were presented. All of the options included a multi-story, multifamily residential structure covering the great majority of the site, holding the corner of 17th and McClellan, while taking vehicle access from the public alley. Two of the options were designed for a 40 foot height limit, one with commercial use in the southwest region and one without and one with façade modulation and one without. Two of the options were designed for a 60 foot height limit and displayed the same two fundamental variations, one with commercial use and modulation and one without either. The applicant's preferred scheme was Option D shown below. The fifth option took Option D and developed some further modulation options.



PUBLIC COMMENT

Approximately 15 members of the public attended the Early Design Guidance meeting held on October 25, 2011. The following comments were offered:

- One person who worked on the neighborhood design guidelines indicated she thought they called for a setback at the third story level.
- Panel siding was not seen to be part of the existing context and a detailed use of stone, like used in the new branch library would be more appropriate.
- Commercial use at the sidewalk level would be very important in this location, especially along S. McClellan, as a contribution to the existing commercial core area.
- The building and adjacent areas need to be well lighted at the sidewalk level.
- The building should have deep modulation and decks avoiding a boxy appearance.
- A 65-foot tall building with limited or no upper level setbacks is a cause for concern requiring extensive use of height, bulk and scale control measures.
- Traffic gets heavy in the area where between 4:30 and 6:00 p.m. there is “a solid wall of cars” on McClellan.

- Building to the 65-foot height limit is good, and will work well, as long as there is more retail at the street level.
- Felt the panel siding would look good, that there is no need for upper level setbacks. Not concerned about traffic congestion because it makes pedestrians safer.
- Residential type siding would look out of place in this location.
- The design now looks like a little box, where it needs lightness, with a pedestrian environment along its base and commercial use all along McClellan.
- The materials should be the new branch library and the new light rail station.

At the EDG meeting, the Board focused on the following issues as they provided guidance:

Site Planning

A-2 Streetscape Compatibility. The siting of buildings should acknowledge and reinforce the existing desirable spatial characteristics of the right-of-way.

North Beacon Hill specific supplemental guidance:

- A. Retain or increase the width of sidewalks wherever feasible with consideration for bicycles creating a more comfortable environment for pedestrians and bicyclists.**
- B. Orient townhouse structures to provide pedestrian entrances to the sidewalk.**
- C. For buildings that span a block and face two streets, each street frontage should receive individual and detailed site planning as well as architectural design treatments**
- D. to complement the established streetscape character. This is especially important for through streets and triangular shaped lots.**
- E. Build at or near the edge of the sidewalk and restrict grade separations where commercial uses occupy the ground floor.**
- F. Provide a shallow setback and a minor grade separation between the first floor and the sidewalk where residential uses occupy the ground floor; this will promote privacy**
- G. and also accommodate entry porches and stoops.**
- H. Place planting strips smartly to incorporate a more pleasing environment for all**
- I. modes of transportation and incorporate LID interventions in the same space.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board indicated a commercial streetscape character is important along McClellan. Any live work units should incorporate a commercial appearance and be suitable for conversion to retail use at a later date. The development should extend the urban, commercial character of the urban village along its McClellan St frontage.

At the corner of 17th and McClellan, a transition into residential character needs to be explored and designed. Streetscape considerations for design review include the alley, the pedestrian experience, lighting and transparency. The Board indicated that modulation, transparency or other features should be used to enhance the pedestrian nature at the corner and around the corner on 17th Ave. S, to some appropriate degree.

- A-4 Human Activity. New development should be sited and designed to encourage human activity on the street.**

North Beacon Hill specific supplemental guidance:

- A. Provide for sidewalk retail opportunities and connections by allowing for the opening of the storefront to the street and the display of goods on the sidewalks.**
- B. Provide for outdoor dining opportunities on the sidewalk by allowing for the opening**
- C. of restaurant or cafe windows to the sidewalk and installing outdoor seating.**
- D. Install clear glass windows along the sidewalk to provide visual access into the retail or dining activities that occur inside.**
- E. Do not block views into the interior spaces with the backs of shelving units or posters.**
- F. Maximize window widths and heights along sidewalk face of buildings to create inviting and interactive atmosphere between indoor and outdoor activities.**

- A-6 Transition Between Residence and Street. For residential projects, the space between the building and the sidewalk should provide security and privacy for residents and encourage social interaction among residents and neighbors.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board stated that the incorporation of stoops between residential units and the street are highly favored. Residential entries to units along 17th Ave. S should be recessed from and elevated above the sidewalk. This transition would be well addressed with stoops.

B. Height, Bulk and Scale

- B-1 Height, Bulk, and Scale Compatibility. Projects should be compatible with the scale of development anticipated by the applicable Land Use Policies for the surrounding area and should be sited and designed to provide a sensitive transition to nearby, less intensive zones. Projects on zone edges should be developed in a manner that creates a step in perceived height, bulk, and scale between anticipated development potential of the adjacent zones.**

North Beacon Hill specific supplemental guidance:

Much of the North Beacon Hill business district is zoned for 40 foot tall mixed-use buildings. Most of the existing commercial structures in the area are one and two-stories adjacent to single family houses. Large, monolithic buildings are discouraged. Proper consideration of the scale, massing and detail of individual buildings will contribute to a project's compatibility with surrounding residential areas and a satisfying public environment.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed the necessity for modulation to be incorporated into all four sides of the building. The additional upper level setback from the east as shown in Design Option E was endorsed as a good approach offering a lessened appearance of height, bulk and scale as viewed from the area of single family zoning in that direction. A well modulated west façade facing the alley is as important as the other sides as this side too will be visible from a distance. Four of the Board members thought that a horizontal, upper level setback from McClellan may not be necessary.

C. Architectural Elements and Materials

- C-4 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.**

North Beacon Hill specific supplemental guidance:

- A. Brick and Stone are the most common surface treatment in the commercial areas and are strongly encouraged. Below are some examples of bricks and stone used on Beacon Hill.**
- B. Signs should add interest to the street level environment. They can unify the overall architectural concept of the building, or provide unique identity for a commercial space within a larger mixed-use structure. Design signage that is appropriate for the scale, character and use of the project and surrounding area. Signs should be oriented and scaled for both pedestrians on sidewalks and vehicles on streets.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board stated that quality materials should be used. It stated that the guidelines for materials are well suited to this location and should be used when designing the building. Consideration of the context of materials used on other buildings is important next to the Sound Transit Station. The Library building has steel and glass and a lot of slate. The applicants should be creative in their use of materials. On the first floor, where a high level of pedestrian traffic is desired and anticipated, quality and durability of materials is highly important.

D. Pedestrian Environment

- D-6 Screening of Dumpsters, Utilities, and Service Areas. Building sites should locate service elements like trash dumpsters, loading docks and mechanical equipment away from the street front where possible. When elements such as dumpsters, utility meters, mechanical units and service areas cannot be located away from the street front, they should be situated and screened from view and should not be located in the pedestrian right-of-way.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board identified this as an important design consideration for this proposal.

- D-7 Personal Safety and Security. Project design should consider opportunities for enhancing personal safety and security in the environment under review.**

North Beacon Hill specific supplemental guidance:

- A. Defensible Space**
- B. Access Control**
- C. Surveillance**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed the importance of security lighting around the building and asked to see it incorporated future design materials.

D-8 Treatment of Alleys. The design of alley entrances should enhance the pedestrian street front.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed how the alley has some view corridor and pedestrian function in addition to vehicle access. It should be designed with the pedestrian experience in mind with considerations of lighting, transparency and chamfering the corner at McClellan.

D-9 Commercial Signage. Signs should add interest to the street front environment and should be appropriate for the scale and character desired in the area.

D-10 Commercial Lighting. Appropriate levels of lighting should be provided in order to promote visual interest and a sense of security for people in commercial districts during evening hours. Lighting may be provided by incorporation into the building façade, the underside of overhead weather protection, on and around street furniture, in merchandising display windows, in landscaped areas, and/or on signage.

D-11 Commercial Transparency. Commercial storefronts should be transparent, allowing for a direct visual connection between pedestrians on the sidewalk and the activities occurring on the interior of a building. Blank walls should be avoided.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed indicated that each of these three guidelines (D9, D10, and D11) are important along S. McClellan and the commercial transparency guideline is especially important.

The Board that transparency through the building at the residential entry and lobby is would be an important feature for the pedestrian experience.

D-12 Residential Entries and Transitions. For residential projects in commercial zones, the space between the residential entry and the sidewalk should provide security and privacy for residents and a visually interesting street front for pedestrians. Residential buildings should enhance the character of the streetscape with small gardens, stoops and other elements that work to create a transition between the public sidewalk and private entry.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board indicated that the main residential entry should be clearly visible and identifiable. The stoops too should have identifiable entry points. While the code mandated separation from sidewalk would seem to work well for the units facing 17th Ave. S., the unit at the corner with McClelland St. might need to be looked at differently and have more of an on grade approach.

E. Landscaping

E-2 Landscaping to Enhance the Building and/or Site. Landscaping, including living plant material, special pavements, trellises, screen walls, planters, site furniture, and similar features should be appropriately incorporated into the design to enhance the project.

- A. Give purpose to plantings by incorporating multiple functions of the plantings, i.e., a planting can be a bioretention cell, provide shelter, shade and habitat while enhancing the overall aesthetic of Beacon Hill.**
- B. Native plants to the Pacific Northwest are encouraged because of their proven ability to perform well in our climate and their regional cultural significance.**
- C. Consider adding a focal element, for instance, an art piece to outdoor space.**
- D. Retain significant trees whenever possible.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board indicated that landscape should be used to enhance the building and that the courtyard proposed on the north side and stoops along the east facing live work units would be particular areas of landscape opportunity.

FINAL RECOMMENDATION MEETING: November 13, 2012

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

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

or contacting the Public Resource Center at DPD:

Address: Public Resource Center
700 Fifth Ave., Suite 2000
Seattle, WA 98124

Email: PRC@seattle.gov

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.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Approximately 11 members of the public attended the Recommendation meeting held on November 13, 2012. The following comments were offered:

- Vehicle access by the alley will exit onto busy intersection to the south or festival street to the north. When Festival Street is closed access to and from the site will be very difficult.
- Alley should not be used for vehicle access.
- Work with Seattle Police Department to design landscaping to create safe spaces.
- Incorporate pedestrian street lighting on McClellan Street.
- Incorporate upper level setbacks at 40'.
- Enlarged parking planter strip with green stormwater is a good addition to the project.
- Do not like color choice of orange and green. However use of brick is good.
- 17th Avenue S will have substantial increased traffic and currently lacks sufficient parking for increased density and commercial visitors to site.

- Providing benches on McClellan will encourage use by transients. Do not want to encourage people to stop sit.
- Alley will exist into busy intersection or Festival Street. When Festival Street is closed design issue for access.
- Compliment trying to make the building attractive.

PRIORITIES & BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

At the Recommendation meeting, the Board focused on the following issues:

1. 17th Avenue Façade:

- a) The Board was concerned about the decreased top floor setback on 17th Avenue S. The Board recommended the 6th floor setback on 17th Avenue S increase from 7 feet to 10 feet from street property line consistent with original EDG approved massing proposal. This setback is required to mitigate height, bulk and scale impacts to adjacent single family zoning across the street (B-1).

2. Materials:

- a) The Board was pleased with the proposed material palette, particularly the brick provided on the residential 17th Avenue S façade.
- b) The Board agreed the cementitious panel provided throughout the structure should be a high quality commercial grade material (C-4).
- c) The Board noted the use of real wood at ground level near all street level entries as a point of continuity in the overall development was a strong material application (C-4).

3. Lighting:

- a) The Board was concerned about the lack of lighting provided throughout the site. The Board noted a number of locations that would benefit from increased lighting.
- b) The Board wished to see additional lighting provided in the alley. The Board encouraged lighting to be provided on the exterior wall at equal intervals to create a rhythm that will be continued with future development along the alley. Further focused lighting should be included in all recessed entries along the alley and alley artwork, grass landscaping and concrete support at intersection of alley and McClellan Street (D-7, D-10)
- c) The Board felt the central courtyard on the north façade would benefit from additional lighting to avoid a feeling like a dark hole once the property to the north is developed. Lighting should be cutoff to minimize impacts to residential units above (D-7).
- d) The Board recommended the applicant investigate use of pedestrian scale lighting on S McClellan Street to create a safe, comfortable pedestrian environment. Provide lighting along the length of the sidewalk, as well as, seating areas and areas of landscaping to minimize dark corners (D-7, D-10).

4. Architectural Concept

- a) The Board was pleased with the evolution in asymmetrical massing. The building provides two primary massings each designed to reflect the uses adjacent, commercial along Beacon Avenue S and residential along 17th Avenue S.
- b) The Board was also very pleased with the ground level townhouse units on 17th Avenue Ave S which relate well to the single family homes across the street.
- c) The Board agreed that the widened sidewalk meeting the street level wall adjacent to the primary residential entry and ground level commercial use was a good choice.

5. Landscape Design

- a) The Board felt the proposed landscaping at street level should be informed by Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CEPTED) techniques to encourage safety places and minimize potential hiding spots.
- b) The Board recommended the landscaping along S McClellan Street adjacent to the residential unit be designed to minimize headlights from entering window along the corner. Consider use of short trees directly adjacent to wall to maximize privacy while minimizing dead spaces next to sidewalk. (E-2)

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

Several departures from the development standards were proposed at the Final meeting.

1. **Street Level Uses (SMC 23.47A.005 C2, D1 and. 23.47A.008 D1):** The Code requires that certain street level uses should be located on at least 80% of the street level street facing facades. The applicant proposes 56.7% due to the location of residential use along S McClellan Street.

The Board unanimously recommended in favor of this departure. The Board was satisfied that the location of residential use will not detract from the vibrancy of commercial use along the principal pedestrian street, S McClellan Street. Locating residential use along 17th Avenue across the street from the single family zone creates an unusual challenge along the street corner. Providing usable residential use along the corner requires maintaining sufficient depth to provide a viable space. The design has been revised since the EDG submittal to include brick material treatment at ground level, windows into living space areas and textured landscaping between the façade and the sidewalk to help mitigate privacy issues and blank facades facing the pedestrian street. (A-4, A-5, A-6, A-10, B-1, C-3, C-4, D-2, E-2).

2. **Street Level Uses (SMC 23.47A.008 D3):** The Code requires residential uses along a street facing, street level facades shall be setback 10 feet from the sidewalk or located at least 4 feet above or below sidewalk grade.

The Board unanimously recommended in favor of this departure with conditions. The Board felt the residential use at ground level would be enhanced by being located above the sidewalk grade. However the Board recognized the site is flat and stepping the ground floor plate was unnecessary. The Board felt the overall building design is enhanced by maintaining a consistent street wall along the street property line, locating the residential uses closer than 10 feet to the sidewalk. Privacy impacts are mitigated by strategic landscaping to obscure

visual site lines into the ground level living spaces. The Board wished to see additional use of architectural treatment on the inside or outside of the structure to mitigate vehicle headlights from direct shot into unit. Finally consider use of low level lighting on sidewalk and within landscaping buffer adjacent to sidewalk to provide safe spaces (A-2, A-6, A-10, C-4, D-2, D-7, D-10, and D-2).

The design review process prescribed in Section 23.41.014.F of the Seattle Municipal Code describing the content of the DPD Director's decision reads in part as follows:

The Director's decision shall consider the recommendation of the Design Review Board, provided that, if four (4) members of the Design Review Board are in agreement in their recommendation to the Director, the Director shall issue a decision which incorporates the full substance of the recommendation of the Design Review Board, unless the Director concludes the Design Review Board:

- a. Reflects inconsistent application of the design review guidelines; or*
- b. Exceeds the authority of the Design Review Board; or*
- c. Conflicts with SEPA conditions or other regulatory requirements applicable to the site; or*
- d. Conflicts with the requirements of state or federal law.*

Subject to the following conditions, the design of the proposed project was found by the Design Review Board to adequately conform to the applicable Design Guidelines.

At the conclusion of the Recommendation meeting in November 13, 2012, the Board recommended approval of the project with the following conditions:

1. Location of residential use on McClellan must be mitigated by landscaping, meeting CEPTED standards. Locate landscaping close to the building to block vehicle headlights and avoid create dark pockets next to the sidewalk. Treat ground level residential unit either on the interior or with exterior architectural treatment to both block vehicle headlights and provide privacy along the sidewalk area. Potential treatment includes raising the window sills, or providing architectural detailing on lower section of windows to avoid direct line of site to sidewalk.

ANALYSIS & DECISION – DESIGN REVIEW

Director's Analysis

Five members of the Southeast Design Review Board were in attendance and provided recommendations (listed above) to the Director and identified elements of the Design Guidelines which are critical to the project's overall success. The Director must provide additional analysis of the Board's recommendations and then accept, deny or revise the Board's recommendations (SMC 23.41.014.F3). The Director agrees with and accepts the conditions recommended by the Board that further augment the selected Guidelines.

Following the Recommendation meeting, DPD staff worked with the applicant to update the submitted plans to include the recommendations of the Design Review Board. The Director of DPD has reviewed the decision and recommendations of the Design Review Board made by the

five members present at the decision meeting and finds that they are consistent with the City of Seattle Design Review Guidelines for Multifamily and Commercial Buildings. The Director agrees with the Design Review Board's conclusion that the proposed project and conditions imposed result in a design that best meets the intent of the Design Review Guidelines and accepts the recommendations noted by the Board. The Director is satisfied that all of the recommendations imposed by the Design Review Board have been met.

Director's Decision

The design review process is prescribed in Section 23.41.014 of the Seattle Municipal Code. Subject to the above-proposed conditions, the design of the proposed project was found by the Design Review Board to adequately conform to the applicable Design Guidelines. The Director of DPD has reviewed the decision and recommendations of the Design Review Board made by the five members present at the decision meeting, provided additional review and finds that they are consistent with the City of Seattle Design Review Guidelines for Multifamily and Commercial Buildings. The Design Review Board agreed that the proposed design, along with the conditions listed, meets each of the Design Guideline Priorities as previously identified.

A revised Master Use drawing set has been submitted showing the following conditions have been satisfied.

- a) The top floor abutting 17th Avenue S has been setback 10 feet from the street property line.
- b) A revised lighting plan has been submitted showing additional lighting as all recesses along the alley, at the location of proposed artwork, grass landscaping and the support column. Additional lighting has been supplied along S McClellan Street sidewalk and street furniture. Additional lighting has been proposed within the north façade courtyard.

Therefore, the Director accepts the Design Review Board's recommendations and **CONDITIONALLY APPROVES** the proposed design and the requested departure with the conditions summarized at the end of this Decision.

CONDITIONS-DESIGN REVIEW

Prior to Issuance of a Master Use Permit

1. The Master Use Permit drawings shall be modified to demonstrate additional lighting for the sidewalk along S McClellan Street to create a safe, comfortable pedestrian walking environment consistent with the Design Review Board recommended condition.
2. The Master Use Permit drawings shall be updated to show treatment of ground level residential units to both block vehicle headlights and provide privacy along the sidewalk area. Potential treatment includes raising the window sills, or providing architectural detailing on lower section of windows to avoid direct line of site to sidewalk.

