



## City of Seattle

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

### CITY OF SEATTLE ANALYSIS, RECOMMENDATION AND DECISION OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

**Application Number:** 3012469  
**Applicant Name:** Runberg Architecture for Teutsch Partners  
**Address of Proposal:** 1601 9th Avenue

#### **SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION**

Land Use Application proposing a seven-story building containing 74 residential units above 3,870 sq. ft. of retail space. Parking for 35 vehicles will be provided within the structure at grade.

The following Master Use Permit components are required:

**Design Review** – Seattle Municipal Code Section 23.41 with Development Standard

Departures:

1. Upper level setback (SMC 23.49.058.F.2)
2. Green Street setback (SMC 23.49.056.F.4)
3. Driveway width (SMC 23.54.030.D.1.c)

#### **SITE & VICINITY**

The development site is a corner lot, currently developed with a surface parking lot, which has street frontage along 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue to the east, Pine Street to the south, with alley access along the west property line. The site is square in shape and comprises a land area of approximately 13,335 square feet. The site features a gentle slope of approximately 8 feet over a distance of 120 feet, sloping downward from its southeast corner to the northwest corner. The site does not include a mapped environmentally critical area.

The subject site and adjacent properties to the north and west are zoned Downtown Office Commercial Two with a 300 to



500 feet height limit (DOC2 500/300 – 500). Properties across 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue to the east and across Pine Street to the south are zoned Downtown Mixed Commercial (DMC 340/290 – 400).

A variety of building types and styles are found in the immediate neighborhood. The area is in transition with a number of new developments currently under construction or slated for construction in the near future. The Convention Place Transit Center across 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue to the east is set below street grade establishes a sense of openness in the area. Two historic landmark buildings, The Camlin Hotel and The Paramount Theater anchor the area with well appointed street facing facades, establishes the areas sense of place. The Camlin abuts the development site to the north while the Paramount is across the intersection.

### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The proposal is for a six-story structure containing 74 residential units above street-level commercial and accessory residential use. Approximately 3,870 sq. ft. of retail use is proposed along Pine Street, with residential lobby/tenant amenity space located adjacent to 9th Ave. The proposal is designed as a “bridge” across the underground bus and light rail tunnel eliminating the ability to provide below grade parking. Parking for 35 vehicles will be provided within structure at ground level accessed from the alley.

### **ANALYSIS - DESIGN REVIEW**

#### **Public Comment**

Approximately four members of the public attended the Second Early Design Review meeting. The following comments, issues and concerns were raised:

- Noted that indicated that creative treatment should be applied to any blank wall element along 9th Ave.
- Stated that an expansion of the Washington State Convention Center may take place in the air space above the transit station across 9th Ave. from the project site and that this eventuality will add to the urban density surrounding the site.
- Encouraged the proposed building to add to the existing architectural diversity of the surrounding area which contains both new buildings and grand historic ones.

DPD received one letter. A concerned neighbor voiced concern about construction related activities including the potential noise impacts to nearby residential uses. The concerned neighbor would like DPD to limit noise generating activities in the evening and early morning hours.

### **GUIDELINES**

After visiting the site, considering the analysis of the site and context provided by the proponent, and hearing public comment, the Design Review Board members provided the siting and design guidance described below and identified highest priority by letter and number from the guidelines found in the City of Seattle’s “Downtown Design Guidelines”. The Neighborhood

specific guidelines are summarized below. For the full text please visit the [Design Review website](#).

## **A. Site Planning & Massing**

*Responding to the Larger Context*

- A-1 Respond to the Physical Environment. Develop an architectural concept and compose the building’s massing in response to geographic conditions and patterns of urban form found beyond the immediate context of the building site.**

The Board indicated the façade design approach should be simple and elegant. Of the precedent images shown in the packet (p. 41) the one second from left in the bottom row was noted as showing a good relationship to a historic building. Also noted was the Agnes Lofts, particularly the way its front façade turns the corner for a distance.

## **B. Architectural Expression**

*Relating to the Neighborhood Context*

- B-1 Respond to the Neighborhood Context – Develop an architectural concept and compose the major building elements to reinforce desirable urban features existing in the surrounding neighborhood.**

The Board discussed the massing of the preferred alternative. One member found it a bit boxy. It was observed that the building could maintain the Camlin façade line. A bay coming out right next to the Camlin appeared to crowd it. The bay it was stated could be shifted and it would be OK for it to be longer, even if a departure were required. The façade could be notched and, the Board indicated, the façade needs to be developed further. The Board indicated that the massing was generally acceptable with three members indicating that some “backing off from the Camlin” needs to be incorporated into the design.

## **C. The Streetscape**

*Creating the Pedestrian Environment*

- C-1 Promote Pedestrian Interaction. Spaces for street level uses should be designed to engage pedestrians with the activities occurring within them. Sidewalk-related spaces should be open to the general public and appear safe and welcoming.**
- C-3 Provide Active—Not Blank—Facades. Buildings should not have large blank walls facing the street, especially near sidewalks.**

All four Board members were concerned about the pedestrian experience along 9<sup>th</sup> Ave. where parking is proposed within the structure, without an intervening use for approximately 55 feet. Trading the pedestrian experience for parking, it stated, does “not ring true.” While the Board did not indicate that the parking arrangement was unacceptable, it did indicate that obtaining a recommendation of a departure to allow it would be a challenge. It indicated that an option incorporating a human activated use, visible and interacting with the pedestrian experience in at least a good portion of the

façade should be developed and shown to the Board the next time it reviews this proposal. Any alternative treatment of the area should involve extraordinary materials, art, landscape and textures.

- C-4 **Reinforce Building Entries.** To promote pedestrian comfort, safety, and orientation, reinforce the building's entry.
- C-5 **Encourage Overhead Weather Protection.** Encourage project applicants to provide continuous, well-lit, overhead weather protection to improve pedestrian comfort and safety along major pedestrian routes.
- C-6 **Develop the Alley Façade.** To increase pedestrian safety, comforts, and interest, develop portions of the alley façade in response to the unique conditions of the site or project.

#### **D. Public Amenities**

##### *Enhancing the Streetscape & Open Space*

- D-1 **Provide Inviting & Usable Open Space.** Design public open spaces to promote a visually pleasing, safe, and active environment for workers, residents, and visitors. Views and solar access from the principal area of the open space should be especially emphasized.
- D-2 **Enhance the Building with Landscaping.** Enhance the building and site with substantial landscaping—which includes special pavements, trellises, screen walls, planters, and site furniture, as well as living plant material.
- D-3 **Provide Elements that Define the Place.** Provide special elements on the facades, within public open spaces, or on the sidewalk to create a distinct, attractive, and memorable “sense of place” associated with the building.
- D-5 **Provide Adequate Lighting.** To promote a sense of security for people downtown during nighttime hours, provide appropriate levels of lighting on the building facade, on the underside of overhead weather protection, on and around street furniture, in merchandising display windows, and on signage.

#### **E. Vehicular Access & Parking**

##### *Minimizing the Adverse Impacts*

- E-1 **Minimize Curb Cut Impacts.** Minimize adverse impacts of curb cuts on the safety and comfort of pedestrians.
- E-2 **Integrate Parking Facilities.** Minimize the visual impact of parking by integrating parking facilities with surrounding development. Incorporate architectural treatments or suitable landscaping to provide for the safety and comfort of people using the facility as well as those walking by.

- E-3 Minimize the Presence of Service Areas. Locate service areas for trash dumpsters, loading docks, mechanical equipment, and the like away from the street front where possible. Screen from view those elements which for programmatic reasons cannot be located away from the street front.**

## **MASTER USE PERMIT APPLICATION**

The applicant revised the design and applied for a Master Use Permit with a design review component on April 12, 2012.

## **DESIGN REVIEW BOARD RECOMMENDATION**

The Design Review Board conducted a Final Recommendation Meeting on September 11th, 2012 to review the applicant's formal project proposal developed in response to the previously identified priorities. At the public meetings, site plans, elevations, floor plans, landscaping plans, and computer renderings of the proposed exterior materials were presented for the Board members' consideration.

### **Public Comments**

One member of the public attended the Recommendation meeting. The following comments, issues and concerns were raised:

- Supportive of the design direction with the underlying site constraints and looks forward to seeing the existing surface parking lot redeveloped.
- The design team did a great job in their design solution in adding a gem to the neighborhood.

## **A. Site Planning & Massing**

### ***Responding to the Larger Context***

- A-1 Respond to the Physical Environment. Develop an architectural concept and compose the building's massing in response to geographic conditions and patterns of urban form found beyond the immediate context of the building site.**

The Board generally agreed this was an optimum presentation with lapses in the deployment of truss system and how it relates to the building's structural integrity upon the street facades. As viewed from the east along Pine Street, a perspective that will feature the highest visibility, the proposed building is compatible within its neighboring context.

## **B. Architectural Expression**

### ***Relating to the Neighborhood Context***

- B-1 Respond to the Neighborhood Context – Develop an architectural concept and compose the major building elements to reinforce desirable urban features existing in the surrounding neighborhood.**

Staff clarified that a departure for structural building overhang is narrowly defined in the Land Use Code and what was previously presented before the Board was no longer a viable design option to allow the building's massing to project into the right-of-way. The applicant responded with a design approach which no longer required a departure request. The Board was supportive of the design direction reducing the building's mass within the development site. With narrower horizontal shifts in the building's mass on the upper level, greater emphasis was directed towards how material and color transitions and building modulations occur. The Board agreed that the proposed building was sympathetic in scope and scale to its surrounding but noted its roof would be highly visible and needed further refinement. In the context of the surrounding taller buildings and topography, the roof top should be treated as if it were a façade, to create greater visual interest, not leaving a large portion of the roof top a blank canvas.

## C. The Streetscape

### *Creating the Pedestrian Environment*

#### **C-1 Promote Pedestrian Interaction. Spaces for street level uses should be designed to engage pedestrians with the activities occurring within them. Sidewalk-related spaces should be open to the general public and appear safe and welcoming.**

The Board agreed that the large storefront windows along Pine Street, a heavily traveled pedestrian corridor, would provide opportunities to engage the public realm. The exposed metal trusses behind the storefront windows appeared artificial and disconnected from the upper level. The design team explained the truss system was engineered to meet the load capacity of the building while straddling the tunnel below. The Board noted that the continuous overhead weather protection will provide a safe haven and allow pedestrians to visually explore nuanced design elements along both street frontages, such as the exposed truss system and car stacking mechanism.

Along 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue, the street level design included a metal mesh screen layered behind a metal art panel and landscaping. The metal panels would be a laser cut design responding to the exposed trusses to create an organic form with openings into the mesh screen behind. The design concept was vetted through the Green Street program to maintain a coherent design aesthetic throughout the length of the Green Street. The Board was encouraged with the design composition but felt additional design evolution was required once the Board understood how the car stacking mechanism would operate. Behind the screening wall is the parking garage that will feature a 3-car stacking device. The Board recognized a unique opportunity to allow the public a view into the inner workings of the car stacking device by opening greater visibility into the garage. The Board supported a street-level design along 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue featuring with warmer exterior wood materials, benches, vegetation, lighting and other details to engage the public.

#### **C-3 Provide Active—Not Blank—Facades. Buildings should not have large blank walls facing the street, especially near sidewalks.**

Staff explained that the departure request to allow parking at street level was not in the purview of the Design Review program to grant, but was allowed per Code as a Type 1 decision (SMC 23.49.019.B.2.b). See C-1.

The Board felt the upper level façade was well conceived in its alignment to the datum lines of the adjacent landmark building (The Camlin Hotel). The modulated feature shifted to the corner was more gracious to the Camlin Hotel. At street-level, the decorative layered metal screen with landscaping at the base needed additional refinement. Though the surface level parking garage is hidden behind a metal screen, it occupies a significant portion along the sidewalk and is not engaging the pedestrian realm. Once the applicant explained how the parking garage would operate with a stacking car device, the Board saw an opportunity to take advantage of this unique mechanism in Seattle and directed the applicant to allow openings so the public could have views into the garage where they could see it operating.

**C-4 Reinforce Building Entries. To promote pedestrian comfort, safeties, and orientation, reinforce the building's entry.**

The design included accentuated entries to distinguish residential from commercial portals. The residential canopy offers a change in material and size extending from wood soffits creating a sense of warmth along the 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue Green Street. Access to commercial use will be taken from the commercially oriented Pine Street. The Board supported the location of the entries, but was concerned that the truss system did not look coherent. The Board sought a rationalization for why the truss system seemed disjointed from the upper level. The Board acknowledged the difficulty of erecting a building with unique constraints that the site presented, and application of visually exposed trusses. The Board directed the design team to further refine and make more coherent the truss system with the upper level structural vertical elements along Pine Street.

**C-5 Encourage Overhead Weather Protection. Encourage project applicants to provide continuous, well-lit, overhead weather protection to improve pedestrian comfort and safety along major pedestrian routes.**

The Board reviewed a site plan and elevations of the proposed building in relation to the right-of-way. The proposed canopies will be continuous and extend approximately 8 feet from the exterior façade along both street fronts. Four different types of directional lighting will provide visual interest and increase safety around the structure's perimeter. Accent lighting is featured along 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue where LED channel lights will be introduced along the vertical edge of the reveals in the concrete to highlight the art screen in the evening. The Board supported the lighting plan including the down-lights upon the alley façade.

**C-6 Develop the Alley Façade. To increase pedestrian safety, comforts, and interest, develop portions of the alley façade in response to the unique conditions of the site or project.**

The Board reviewed an analysis of the building massing and elevation profile within the surrounding context of existing and proposed structures. In deference to a new 38-story mixed-use tower proposed across the alley from the development site, the west (alley) façade offered a visually interesting design. For the majority of the Board members the upper level alley façade was the most successful in establishing a visual vocabulary with its selection of materials, color and fenestration. The building is modulated above the

podium level to establish a lower level outdoor landscape court at the northwest corner to increase light and air to a number of units. The modern design of the proposed building is complementary to the adjacent Camlin in form and architectural styling.

## **D. Public Amenities**

### *Enhancing the Streetscape & Open Space*

- D-1 Provide Inviting & Usable Open Space. Design public open spaces to promote a visually pleasing, safe, and active environment for workers, residents, and visitors. Views and solar access from the principal area of the open space should be especially emphasized.**

The Board was pleased that the right-of-way improvements include richly landscaping with moderately sized planter boxes, green walls, and seat cubes encouraging social activity. When fully mature, 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue will provide a vegetated street edge framed by an elegantly sculpted street-level façade. See C-1.

- D-2 Enhance the Building with Landscaping. Enhance the building and site with substantial landscaping—which includes special pavements, trellises, screen walls, planters, and site furniture, as well as living plant material.**

The landscape design included roof top and podium level outdoor decks. At street-level, along the 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue Green Street a number of landscape layers are presented to help establish a sense of place. The commercially oriented Pine Street focused on façade appearance and the installation of the curb bulb due in part to proximity of existing street trees, two bus shelters and underground utilities circumventing the addition of landscaping. The lower deck (38' X 38") located at the northwest corner will provide ground cover and six deciduous trees to create visual interest for the upper level floors with units facing the outdoor space. The roof deck level (118' X 40') adjoins an interior common amenity area featuring a number of outdoor rooms all framed within a richly landscaped buffer along the south edge. The Board noted concern with the visible significance of the remaining roof top area when considered from a larger context of surrounding buildings. The remaining roof area is sterile in comparison to the roof deck and needs further refinement to add greenery.

With the exception of additional refinements to increase green elements on the roof top and opening up pockets to see into the car stacking device along 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue, the Board was supportive of the proposed landscaping improvements.

- D-3 Provide Elements that Define the Place. Provide special elements on the facades, within public open spaces, or on the sidewalk to create a distinct, attractive, and memorable “sense of place” associated with the building.**

See D-1

- D-5 Provide Adequate Lighting. To promote a sense of security for people downtown during nighttime hours, provide appropriate levels of lighting on the building**

facade, on the underside of overhead weather protection, on and around street furniture, in merchandising display windows, and on signage.

See C-5.

**E. Vehicular Access & Parking**

**E-1 Minimize Curb Cut Impacts. Minimize adverse impacts of curb cuts on the safety and comfort of pedestrians.**

The Board was pleased that access to service areas, loading and parking will be fully accessed from the alley.

**E-2 Integrate Parking Facilities. Minimize the visual impact of parking by integrating parking facilities with surrounding development. Incorporate architectural treatments or suitable landscaping to provide for the safety and comfort of people using the facility as well as those walking by.**

See C-1, C-5, & D-1.

**E-3 Minimize the Presence of Service Areas. Locate service areas for trash dumpsters, loading docks, mechanical equipment, and the like away from the street front where possible. Screen from view those elements which for programmatic reasons cannot be located away from the street front.**

See E-1.

Board Recommendations:

The recommendations summarized below were based on the plans submitted at the September 11th, 2012 meeting. Design, siting or architectural details not specifically identified or altered in these recommendations are expected to remain as presented in the plans and other drawings available at the September 11th public meeting. After considering the site and context, hearing public comment, reconsidering the previously identified design priorities, and reviewing the plans and renderings, the five Design Review Board members present unanimously recommended approval of the subject design and the requested development standard departures from the requirements of the Land Use Code (listed below).

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD	REQUIREMENT	PROPOSED	JUSTIFICATION	RECOMMENDATION
1. Upper level setback. 23.49.058.F.2	When a lot is located on a designated Green Street, a continuous upper-level setback of fifteen (15) feet shall be provided on the street frontage abutting the green street at a height of 45 feet.	To provide a zero foot setback at the upper level.	Partly due to the structure's proposed height of 70 feet in contrast to what would be otherwise be allowed 300 – 500 feet above street grade. The Board unanimously recommended in favor of the proposed departure with respect to the structure's proposed six-story height in relationship to neighboring building. The Board agreed that stepping the upper level back for 2-stories creates a	<b>Approved</b>

			massing incongruous with the neighboring vernacular. The preferred design minimizes visual distraction from the abutting landmark building. (A-1, B-1, C-3, D-2, & D-3)	
2. Green Street setback. 23.49.056. F.4.	The Code requires a 2 foot wide setback from the street lot line along 9th Avenue Green Street within the Denny Triangle Urban Center Village and fifty percent of the setback area must be landscaped.	To provide 2 foot setback at street level and allow the upper levels to encroach back into the setback area the full 2 feet. At grade at least fifty percent of the setback area will be landscaped.	Wood soffits with recessed lighting will provide a warm and engaging element for the cantilevered portion of the structure. The design with a more subtle horizontal modulation responded to the guidance though it was less dramatic, the Board voted unanimously in favor of the requested departure. (A-1, B-1, C-1, C-3, & D-5).	<b>Approved</b>
3. Driveway width 23.54.030.D.1.c	The Code requires that a residential driveway of any length serving more than 30 parking spaces shall be at least 20 feet wide for two-way traffic	To provide a 15'-4" width.	The unique installation of the car stacking device restricts vehicle mobility within the structure and at any one time vehicle mobility is limited by the car stacking device, one vehicle at a time. The Board unanimously recommended approval of the proposed departure with the understanding that opportunities to open up the inner workings of the car stacking device would be a major asset to the development proposal as viewed from the 9th Avenue right-of-way. (E-1, E-2)	<b>Approved</b>

The Board recommended the following **CONDITIONS** for the project. (Authority referenced in the letter and number in parenthesis):

1. The roof top should be treated as a façade and provide visual interest for properties looking down at its top as viewed from neighboring buildings and sites. The northern expanse of the roof top is underwhelming and signifies neglect. An artistic move is required to add greenery to the roof top. (B-1, D-2)
2. The design of the ground level base of the south façade should become more coherent with the spatial arrangement of the truss system to better align with the upper level and open view into the commercial spaces or provide a more substantial presentation of the need to maintain the trusses structurally. (C-4)
3. The design of the layered art wall, green wall, and other landscape features along the 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue Green Street frontage should open up views into the unique car stacking mechanical device. An opportunity exists to allow the public a glimpse into mechanism that would be both engaging and firmly establish a sense of place. (C-1)
4. The street-level façade surrounding the opening into the parking garage along 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue should be artistically framed to visually engage the pedestrian realm. (C-1, C-3)

## **DIRECTOR'S ANALYSIS - DESIGN REVIEW**

The Director has reviewed the Downtown Design Guidelines and finds that the Board neither exceeded its authority nor applied the guidelines inconsistently in the approval of this design. The Director agrees with the conditions recommended by the five Board members and the recommendation to approve the design, as stated above.

## **DECISION - DESIGN REVIEW**

The proposed design is **CONDITIONALLY GRANTED**.

## **CONDITIONS DESIGN REVIEW**

### *Prior to Building Permit Issuance*

1. The roof top should be treated as a façade and provide visual interest for properties looking down at its top and as viewed from neighboring buildings and sites. The northern expanse of the roof top is underwhelming and signifies neglect. An artistic move is required to add greenery to the roof top.
2. The design of the ground level base of the south façade should become more coherent with the spatial arrangement of the truss system to better align with the upper level and open view into the commercial spaces or provide a more substantial presentation of the need to maintain the trusses structurally.
3. The design of the layered art wall, green wall, and other landscape features along the 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue Green Street frontage should open up views into the unique car stacking mechanical device. An opportunity exists to allow the public a glimpse into mechanism that would be both engaging and firmly establish a sense of place.
4. The street-level façade surrounding the opening into the parking garage along 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue should be artistically framed to visually engage the pedestrian realm.

### *Prior to Building Application*

5. Include the departure matrix in the zoning summary section on all subsequent building permit plans. Add call-out notes on appropriate plan and elevation drawings in the updated MUP plans and on all subsequent building permit plans.

### *Prior to Issuance of all Construction Permits*

6. Embed the MUP conditions in the cover sheet for all subsequent permits including updated building permit drawings.

### *Prior to Issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy*

7. Compliance with all images and text on the MUP drawings, design review meeting guidelines and approved design features and elements (including exterior materials, landscaping and ROW improvements) shall be verified by the DPD planner assigned to

this project (Bradley Wilburn, 206.615-0508). An appointment with the assigned Land Use Planner must be made at least five (5) working days in advance of field inspection. The Land Use Planner will determine whether submission of revised plans is required to ensure that compliance has been achieved.

*For the Life of the Project*

8. Any proposed changes to the exterior of the building or the site or must be submitted to DPD for review and approval by the Land Use Planner (Bradley Wilburn, 206.615-0508). Any proposed changes to the improvements in the public right-of-way must be submitted to DPD and SDOT for review and for final approval by SDOT.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ (signature on file) \_\_\_\_\_ Date: January 31, 2013  
Bradley Wilburn, Senior Land Use Planner  
Department of Planning and Development

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