



**City of Seattle**

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**Department of Planning and Development**

Diane M. Sugimura, Director

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

**Application Number:** 3013479  
**Applicant Name:** Jim Westcott  
**Address of Proposal:** 800 Columbia Street

**SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTIONS**

Land Use Application to allow a 30-story, residential building containing 287 units and 234 parking stalls. Review includes 37,200 cu. yds. of grading.

The following approvals are required:

**Design Review - Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) Section 23.41**

**SEPA - Environmental Determination** pursuant to SMC 25.05

**SEPA DETERMINATION:**  Exempt  DNS  MDNS  EIS

DNS with conditions\*

DNS involving non-exempt grading or demolition or involving another agency with jurisdiction.

\* Notice of the Early Determination of Non-significance was published on August 16, 2012.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The applicant proposes to design and construct a residential building with 287 dwelling units and 234 below grade parking spaces.

The applicant submitted three design options at the Early Design Guidance meeting. In these schemes the width of the massing along Eighth Ave. corresponded to the proposed proportions and size of the adjacent open space or park; the wider and squatter the building mass, the smaller the park. Conversely, the taller and more slender the mass, the wider the park appears. The applicant did not present studies in the EDG packet for a park placed at mid-block (with its axis on St. James Cathedral) preferring the Eighth and Columbia corner to maximize solar conditions. At the EDG meeting, discussion did light on this issue.

The applicant also provided several options illustrating why a ramp from the alley to a below grade parking garage would consume much of the lobby and street frontage as well as the second floor.

The applicant's preferred scheme (one illustrated with much greater articulation than the other two options) lies close to the four story brick apartment building at the corner of Eighth and Marion St. The massing possesses three key visual concepts: interlocking volumes, a series of vertical layers and large scale public gestures at the roof line and the street. The segmented tower comprises a large mass representing most of the total floor plate as it wraps around a taller, slender vertical element on its southern flank. A gasket or vertical recession (potentially housing balconies) divides the two volumes on the Eighth Ave elevation. A fin extending the entire height of the tower further defines the break between the slender southern mass and the larger mass. The image of a recessed vertical column with a fin repeats itself on the south façade dividing the two large volumes once again. The composition forms a strong vertical corner although due to the park's location does not sit at the intersection of the two streets.

The architect at this point has not explicitly identified exterior materials. Still, the design reveals a series of layers beginning with a horizontally positioned frame hanging over the entrance on Eighth Ave. Behind the frame and rising above it, a building skin defines the larger volume wrapping the differently articulated southern volume and then a layer of glazing defines a volume within that reveals itself at the lobby and in the two vertical recessions. The public gestures, the elements projecting from the larger building mass that appeal to the casual viewer, include the framing device, ostensibly to define a podium, and a cantilevered, chevron shaped roof top canopy. From their appearance, each of these suggests a play of solid and void relationships and attempts to add drama to the pedestrian streetscape and the skyline.

The ground floor includes a lobby, driveway access to the garage and storage all facing Eighth Ave. The other salient feature, a fitness room, at this level occurs partially below grade inserted into the hill beneath the upper tier of the proposed park. This scenario would generate improvements to the alley in order to provide access to loading and service areas.

The park design represents an important element of the proposal. The applicant explored numerous design concepts including a variety of terraces cascading down the incline along Columbia St. and alternatively a mostly level space surrounded by dramatic walls at the perimeters. The preferred scheme, a more bifurcated approach, establishes a larger level space close to the Eighth Ave grade on the west side framed by a water feature on the south and an allee of trees on the north side. Stairs climb to a smaller and less well defined second level (located above a fitness room) that connect by a secondary set of steps to the Columbia St. sidewalk but not the alley.

By the Recommendation meeting, the applicant had refined the preferred scheme introducing a revised podium, more detailed facades and a plan for the corner park with a waterfall, a birch tree grove on level with Eighth Ave. and a smaller lawn at the alley level.

## **SITE & VICINITY**

The proposal site lies on the northeast corner of Eighth Ave. and Columbia St. Mid-rise apartment buildings occupy the adjacent parcel to the north and on two sites across the alley to the east. Larger residential towers rise across Marian St. (M Street) and Columbia (Skyline at First Hill). Directly across Eighth Ave lies the Polyclinic parking garage serving its medical office building. Other notable nearby buildings include the Landis at Eighth and Marian and St. James Cathedral and its complex of buildings. While the greater First Hill neighborhood is home to several major medical institutions, the Eighth Ave. corridor provides an intimate streetscape with mature street trees, small restaurants, a performing arts complex and retail uses. The recently constructed towers fronting Eighth Ave possess by and large a sensitivity to the streetscape by forming a two to three story base and offering generous open spaces close to the street. Other land uses in the neighborhood include numerous surface parking lots and mid-rise brick apartment buildings.

The 21,600 square foot site contains a surface parking lot and vacant land occupied not long ago by a small but novel office building designed by the noted architect Paul Thiry. The site's declension begins on the east at the alley and slopes approximately 18 feet to Eighth Avenue.

Multifamily Highrise (HR) designated zoning extends east, north and south from the site. Across Eighth Ave. the zoning changes to Neighborhood Commercial Three with a 160 foot height limit (NC3 160). NC3 forms a corridor along Madison St. Boren Ave divides much of the HR zone on First Hill from the NC zoning for the major institutions. West across I-5 the zoning transitions to Downtown Office Commercial (DOC).

## **ANALYSIS - DESIGN REVIEW**

### **Public Comments**

Approximately 20 members of the public affixed their names to the Early Design Review sign-in sheet. Speakers raised the following comments:

#### **Park/Open Space**

- Prefers Option # 3 for its open space. This space should be green, public and accessible.
- The water feature is problematic. There are social and economic issues as to whether a fountain of this size would succeed.
- Having white noise from the fountain is a good way to deflect the noise from I-5.
- Eliminate the water feature.
- Eliminate or minimize the steps in the park.
- Plant large trees in the park, not ornamental ones.
- Use pervious paving in the open space.
- Build a landscape barrier between the fitness area and the open space.
- Ensure public access to the open space.

- Think about safety issues for the park. Need quality lighting. Use the 1<sup>st</sup> Hill community designated lighting fixtures.  
Eighth Avenue
- Preserve the greenness of 8<sup>th</sup> Ave.
- 8<sup>th</sup> Ave is pedestrian oriented, dense and diverse.
- 8<sup>th</sup> Ave is a pedestrian arterial.
- A green pedestrian corridor begins at Freeway Park and continues southward. The landscape features along 8<sup>th</sup> Ave and the park should complement this sward.
- The city should create a street park on 8<sup>th</sup> Ave.
- There should be a more generous planting area between the sidewalk and the structure along 8<sup>th</sup> Ave.
- 8<sup>th</sup> Ave is difficult to navigate with a car. There is too much traffic. Where will cars park on the street? The garage entrance should be on the alley.
- A-2, E-1 are important guidelines.  
Building Program
- The fitness center is in a regrettable location.
- The loading dock on the alley should accommodate large trucks.  
Access
- Supports garage access from 8<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
Building Design
- The building looks institutional or corporate.
- Preserve the setback at the lower portions of the building.
- The materials and architectural elements (referred to as bundles in the packet) are not well defined.
- Highly reflective materials on the facades will create unwanted glare.
- A-2. The banner wall as a pedestrian oriented element is office-like in appearance.  
Other
- The neighborhood has an underserved population.
- Scrutinize the letter of agreement between the developer and the city. The open space must be in perpetuity.

DPD received several letters from the community. In summary, these letters repeat many of the themes mentioned in the above outline. The letters support the largest amount of area for the park but desire more green space and trees than shown in the concept drawings. The fountain and stairs seem unnecessary or too large. Maintaining the water element may generate significant maintenance issues over time. The park design ought to be inviting and accessible for all. A wider area in front of the building should be devoted to planting to be compatible with the existing green space between Cherry and Columbia streets.

## **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 "Design Review: Guidelines for Multi-family and Commercial Buildings".

## **PRIORITIES**

### **A Site Planning**

- A-1 Responding to Site Characteristics. The siting of buildings should respond to specific site conditions and opportunities such as non-rectangular lots, location on prominent intersections, unusual topography, significant vegetation and views or other natural features.**

Discussion of the site's topography focused on the merits of a vehicular ramp from the alley accessing the garage and the appropriateness of a two tiered park. The deliberation of the latter issue did not resolve the park design.

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

The Board prefers a greater amount of landscaping between the Eight Ave sidewalk and the lobby. It ought to recognize that the buildings in the Highrise zone are different from those in the nearby Neighborhood Commercial zone. The existing streetscape along the Eighth Ave. corridor reflects the greater emphasis on landscaping in the HR zone. The residential Skyline project (within the HR zone) possesses a lushly landscaped area for its length along Eight Ave. This greensward progresses toward the south. To the north of the site, the commercial zoning classification predominates with the newer buildings forming a more urban streetscape until the zoning classification transitions back to the HR zone north of Madison and Spring Streets as the corridor approaches Freeway Park and the softening of the landscape reveals itself again.

The framing device overhanging the streetscape, the Board observed, is too monumental for the intimate streetscape occurring along Eighth Ave. The base ought to appear much more compatible with the materials and textures that already exist along the corridor.

The monumentality of the lobby glazing, the columns, and the framing device relate directly to the shaft and the roof top canopy rather than to the brick, the canvas and metal awnings, the storefront windows, the balconies and the other delicate features that create Eight Avenue's pleasant streetscape.

- A-3 Entrances Visible from the Street. Entries should be clearly identifiable and visible from the street.**

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

Unless it is well designed and well programmed the park in itself will not likely encourage human activity. The creation of an intimately scaled building base (see A-2, D-1 and E-2) related to the surrounding buildings should reinforce existing edge conditions. Note that above M Street's brick base the tower steps back from the street. The two Skyline towers are also pulled back from the right of way leaving a generous landscaped area.

- A-5 Respect for Adjacent Sites. Buildings should respect adjacent properties by being located on their sites to minimize disruption of the privacy and outdoor activities of residents in adjacent buildings.**

The proposal forms a party wall with a portion of the adjacent structure to the north and introduces a dog run nearest the windows of the same building as it steps back from the property line in concert with the adjacent Clarwood apartments.

- 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.**

See guidance A-2 and E-1.

- A-7 Residential Open Space. Residential projects should be sited to maximize opportunities for creating usable, attractive, well-integrated open space.**

- A-8 Parking and Vehicle Access. Siting should minimize the impact of automobile parking and driveways on the pedestrian environment, adjacent properties, and pedestrian safety.**

After reviewing the ramp configurations from the alley, the Board members agreed that the garage access could occur on Eighth Ave.

- A-10 Corner Lots. Building on corner lots should be oriented to the corner and public street fronts. Parking and automobile access should be located away from corners.**

The Board endorsed the placement of the open space at the corner of Columbia and Eighth Ave to maximize solar exposure.

## **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 near-by, 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.**

Provide a scale to the proposal's lower floors commensurate with the level of detail and materials comprising the nearby residential buildings. As described in guidelines A-2, A-4 and C-1, the concept design does not achieve the intimacy of scale or fine grain that the Board expects and the speakers from the neighborhood desire.

## **C. Architectural Elements and Materials**

- C-1 Architectural Context. New buildings proposed for existing neighborhoods with a well-defined and desirable character should be compatible with or complement the architectural character and siting pattern of neighboring buildings.**

The Board conveyed its desire that the proposal relates to and enhances the existing neighborhood character. The site lies within a cluster of mid-rise residential buildings poised between larger institutional and commercial structures---an occurrence elsewhere on First Hill. The upper level portions of the tower, as opposed to the base, may engage in a visual conversation with the other tall buildings both nearby and across the freeway, but the lower portion should be of the neighborhood street.

- C-2 Architectural Concept and Consistency. Building design elements, details and massing should create a well-proportioned and unified building form and exhibit an overall architectural concept. Buildings should exhibit form and features identifying the functions within the building. In general, the roofline or top of the structure should be clearly distinguished from its facade walls.**

The efficacy of several of the prominent design elements (p. 31 of the supplemental drawings) ---the cantilevering roof, the podium frame and “spine element” --- received considerable doubts from the Board. The elements lacked cohesion and a convincing narrative that ties them together. The chevron shaped roof form echoes the neighboring Skyline project, but is this form important enough to repeat or celebrate?

- C-3 Human Scale. The design of new buildings should incorporate architectural features, elements, and details to achieve a good human scale.**

See guidance provided for A-4 and B-1.

- 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.**

- C-5 Structured Parking Entrances. The presence and appearance of garage entrances should be minimized so that they do not dominate the street frontage of a building.**

The appearance of the garage door will be an important consideration.

## **D. Pedestrian Environment**

- D-1 Pedestrian Open Spaces and Entrances. Convenient and attractive access to the building’s entry should be provided. To ensure comfort and security, paths and entry areas should be sufficiently lighted and entry areas should be protected from the weather. Opportunities for creating lively, pedestrian-oriented open space should be considered.**

The applicant preferred design for the corner park received significant criticism. Overall, the design’s appearance resembled something fitting for a corporate campus rather than a neighborhood center. The space should aspire to the magical and unexpected. It ought to house elements that engage the community. Each of the significant elements---the water feature, the steep stairs, the extensive quantity of paving, the entry canopy and the high retaining walls---provoked Board reaction. The design ought to maximize the amount of trees and green space. The water fountain, occupied too much space, and seemed superfluous in Seattle’s climate. The entry canopy, parallel to Eighth Ave., acts to privatize the space, forming a visual demarcation between the public sidewalk and an open space that appears adjunct to the apartment tower. Access to the upper area could be accomplished by using the sidewalk. The stairs appear both daunting, with the two landings higher than eye level of the person standing below, and utilitarian. High walls on the perimeter of three sides of the park’s lower portion may feel overwhelming as well.

Focus of the redesign should concentrate on more extensive green spaces, specification of large trees, and community oriented facilities. Collaboration among the developer, the Parks and Recreation department, and the neighborhood community is encouraged.

- D-2 Blank Walls. Buildings should avoid large blank walls facing the street, especially near sidewalks. Where blank walls are unavoidable they should receive design treatment to increase pedestrian comfort and interest.**
- D-3 Retaining Walls. Retaining walls near a public sidewalk that extend higher than eye level should be avoided where possible. Where higher retaining walls are unavoidable, they should be designed to reduce their impact on pedestrian comfort and to increase the visual interest along the streetscapes.**

As mentioned in D-1, the height of retaining walls in the park design raised concerns.

- D-5 Visual Impacts of Parking Structures. The visibility of all at-grade parking structures or accessory parking garages should be minimized. The parking portion of a structure should be architecturally compatible with the rest of the structure and streetscape. Open parking spaces and carports should be screened from the street and adjacent properties.**

Discussion briefly focused on the departure request for the garage door. Due to its presence on Eighth Ave., the garage door's size should be minimized as much as possible.

- 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.**

Discussion did not focus on this guideline. The applicant proposes to use the alley for access to the service areas.

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

The design of the park, in particular, will be scrutinized for responsiveness to safety and security concerns.

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

- .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.**

Although the subject proposal lies within a Highrise residential rather than a commercial zone, the notion that the building ought to enhance the character of the streetscape as described above was endorsed by the Board and the community members in attendance.

## **E. Landscaping**

### **E-1 Landscaping to Reinforce Design Continuity with Adjacent Sites. Where possible, and where there is not another overriding concern, landscaping should reinforce the character of neighboring properties and abutting streetscape.**

The character of the landscaping between the sidewalk and the structure should complement the primacy of the pedestrian orientation along Eighth Ave. Without commercial uses, the structure ought to step back at street level to create a lush and more welcoming face to the streetscape. For additional guidance see E-2.

### **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.**

Planting in front of the structure along Eighth Ave. should be robust. Bring the greenscape of the park around to the front of the building. The design should reinforce the charming pedestrian corridor that stretches from Freeway Park to James St. The design of the Eighth Ave. frontage (see p. 34 of the supplementary drawings) minimizes (if not eliminates) planting between the sidewalk and the structure. The entrance and lobby will need to be setback from the property line and the fin eliminated.

Board members repeated that the park should be a treasure.

### **E-3 Landscape Design to Address Special Site Conditions. The landscape design should take advantage of special on-site conditions such as high-bank front yards, steep slopes, view corridors, or existing significant trees and off-site conditions such as greenbelts, ravines, natural areas, and boulevards.**

See the guidance provided for D-1.

## **MASTER USE PERMIT APPLICATION**

The applicant revised the design and applied for a Master Use Permit with a Design Review and SEPA components on April 25, 2013.

## **DESIGN REVIEW BOARD RECOMMENDATION**

The Design Review Board conducted a Final Recommendation Meeting on August 21, 2013 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**

Approximately 42 members of the public affixed their names to the Recommendation meeting sign-in sheet. Speakers raised the following comments:

Park/Open Space

- The workshops to develop the park plan worked well. The development team listened to the public input.
- Add more planting in the park. The design has too much pavement.
- Ensure adoption of a binding covenant for park maintenance and availability to the public.
- The lower portion of the park has more paving due to the desire to accommodate people using wheelchairs and walkers.  
Eighth Avenue
- Sight triangles are problematic on 8<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
Building Design
- The building doesn't look residential.
- What are the glare impacts on the neighbors and the park?
- The monolithic glass front looks as if it would produce abundant amounts of glare.  
Other
- Installation of a dog run is a good idea, just not under apartment windows.

DPD received several letters from the community. Issues of concern included the need to maximize green space along Eighth Ave, traffic and pedestrian safety, wind tunnel effects, the wish for a building possessing a residential appearance, and the desire to ensure that the open space is always available to the public.

## **A Site Planning**

- A-1 Responding to Site Characteristics. The siting of buildings should respond to specific site conditions and opportunities such as non-rectangular lots, location on prominent intersections, unusual topography, significant vegetation and views or other natural features.**

The applicant returned to the Board with a two-tiered park and garage access from Eighth Ave. Service functions will occur off the alley.

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

At the EDG meeting, the Board advised the applicant to add landscaping between the building and the sidewalk along Eighth Ave. It also asked for a revision of the plinth to respond to the intimate nature of the streetscape. The updated plans complied with this guidance. See Recommendation meeting guidance C-2 and E-2 for the Board's responses.

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

In order to engage the building residents with the street and the park, program the lobby to place its most active spaces nearest the right of way and adjoining open space.

- A-5 Respect for Adjacent Sites. Buildings should respect adjacent properties by being located on their sites to minimize disruption of the privacy and outdoor activities of residents in adjacent buildings.**

The Board seemed persuaded that the location of the dog run would not interrupt the tranquility of the Clarwood residents.

- 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.
- A-7 **Residential Open Space.** Residential projects should be sited to maximize opportunities for creating usable, attractive, well-integrated open space.

## **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 near-by, 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.

The Board endorsed the departure requests to expand the bulk of the structure in the east/west direction with the intent to increase the size of the proposed open space at the street corner.

## **C. Architectural Elements and Materials**

- C-1 **Architectural Context.** New buildings proposed for existing neighborhoods with a well-defined and desirable character should be compatible with or complement the architectural character and siting pattern of neighboring buildings.

Considerable discussion focused on the design of the plinth and the roof top. Although the marquee above the lobby entrance resembles others in the vicinity, the Board directed the applicant to revise the design to wrap the corner to the park and to possess a more residential character. See guidance for C-2 and C-3.

- C-2 **Architectural Concept and Consistency.** Building design elements, details and massing should create a well-proportioned and unified building form and exhibit an overall architectural concept. Buildings should exhibit form and features identifying the functions within the building. In general, the roofline or top of the structure should be clearly distinguished from its facade walls.

At the early design guidance meeting, the Board questioned whether the roof warranted the chevron shaped cantilever mimicking to some extent the roof line of the neighboring Skyline at First Hill. Deliberation at the Recommendation meeting did not bring forward a desire to change the proposed roof shape.

However, the wing shaped entry canopy on Eighth Ave received criticism for its institutional, almost alien, appearance. The Board requested that the canopy engage with the park side by wrapping the corner similar to the images on p. 56 (Recommendation booklet) in order to create a more integrated podium.

An interior building exit stair lies on axis with the park staircase connecting the lower level with the Columbia St. sidewalk presenting an opportunity for an interesting relationship. Consider the enclosed stairs and the exit door, shown on p. 78 of the Recommendation booklet, as a significant element of the south façade and design accordingly. DPD staff will review and approve the changes to the appearance of the staircase and exit door.

In general, the Board approved the overall composition of the mass with its thin vertical shafts of glazing and even narrower fins and gaskets dividing the larger areas of fenestration.

**C-3 Human Scale. The design of new buildings should incorporate architectural features, elements, and details to achieve a good human scale.**

Considerable Board discussion focused on the responsiveness of the podium level to the park and the surrounding urban context. The entry canopy, in particular, lacked the human scale of the rest of the plinth. See C-2 guidance for the recommended condition to produce a more residential appearing marquee.

**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.**

Considerable deliberation focused on excessive glare impacts to the adjacent park. The Board recommended that the applicant prepare a detailed impact analysis by an expert on the south façade's impacts on the park. Based on the report, the planner may further condition the project to mitigate the effects the glazing would produce on the park.

**C-5 Structured Parking Entrances. The presence and appearance of garage entrances should be minimized so that they do not dominate the street frontage of a building.**

The materiality of the garage door facing Eighth Ave. will have perforations similar to the addition to the Jewish Family Services building at 1601 16th Ave.

**D. Pedestrian Environment**

**D-1 Pedestrian Open Spaces and Entrances. Convenient and attractive access to the building's entry should be provided. To ensure comfort and security, paths and entry areas should be sufficiently lighted and entry areas should be protected from the weather. Opportunities for creating lively, pedestrian-oriented open space should be considered.**

The park design received the Board's endorsement with the caveat that the results of the glare analysis may warrant either changes to the building's south façade or the park.

**D-3 Retaining Walls. Retaining walls near a public sidewalk that extend higher than eye level should be avoided where possible. Where higher retaining walls are unavoidable, they should be designed to reduce their impact on pedestrian comfort and to increase the visual interest along the streetscapes.**

- D-5 Visual Impacts of Parking Structures. The visibility of all at-grade parking structures or accessory parking garages should be minimized. The parking portion of a structure should be architecturally compatible with the rest of the structure and streetscape. Open parking spaces and carports should be screened from the street and adjacent properties.**

The departure request for a reduction in the garage door size received a recommendation to approve.

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

The Board endorsed the openness of the public/private park as shown preferring no fencing or gates. In the future, if public safety becomes an issue, the owners shall explore all other approaches to ensuring security before introducing barriers. Any solution with a barrier would require that the fence or gate disappear from sight when the park is available to the public.

## **E. Landscaping**

- E-1 Landscaping to Reinforce Design Continuity with Adjacent Sites. Where possible, and where there is not another overriding concern, landscaping should reinforce the character of neighboring properties and abutting streetscape.**

By the Recommendation meeting, the proposed design accommodated a greater setback at the street and a swath of landscaping between the sidewalk and the structure. This met the intent of the earlier guidance.

- 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.**

See guidance for E-1. A larger setback from Eighth Ave, revision to the vertical fin and plantings between the sidewalk and the structure allows for a greater visual connection between the park and the entry.

- E-3 Landscape Design to Address Special Site Conditions. The landscape design should take advantage of special on-site conditions such as high-bank front yards, steep slopes, view corridors, or existing significant trees and off-site conditions such as**

**Board Recommendations:** The recommendations summarized below were based on the plans submitted at the August 21<sup>st</sup>, 2013 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 August 21<sup>st</sup> public meeting. After considering the site and context, hearing public comment, reconsidering the previously identified design priorities, and reviewing the plans and renderings, the four 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).

STANDARD	REQUIREMENT	REQUEST	JUSTIFICATION	RECOMMENDATION
1. Highrise Setbacks SMC 23.45.518	At lot lines abutting neither a street nor an alley, portions of the structure above 45' shall be set back a minimum of 20'.	Portions above 45' on the north elevation would have a 15' setback.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allows for a 5' larger open space for the park as there is a 15' setback below 45' which is greater than the 5' minimum, 7' average.</li> </ul>	Approved
2. Highrise Setbacks SMC 23.45.518	At lot lines abutting a street, portions of the structure above 45' shall be set back a minimum of 10'.	On the west elevation, the setback would have a zero setback.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The zero setback on the west allows for a narrower building on the north/south axis, creating a larger open space at-grade.</li> </ul>	Approved
3. Highrise Setbacks SMC 23.45.518	At lot lines abutting the street, portions below 45' shall have a 7' average setback.	At lot lines abutting the street portions below 45' and above 18' would have a zero setback. Ground floor level would have a 10' average setback.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aligns with the portion of the façade above 45'. Creates a visual relationship to neighbor (Clarwood Apartments) and gives relief along 8<sup>th</sup> Ave.</li> </ul>	Approved
4. Highrise Setbacks SMC 23.45.518	At lot lines abutting the alley, the structure above 45' shall have a 10' minimum setback.	At the lot line abutting the alley, most portions of the structure would have a 3' setback.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A greater length in the east/west depth allows for a reduction in the north/south width of the structure creating a larger open space to the south.</li> </ul>	Approved
5. Screening of Parking SMC 23.45.536D.3.a	Garage doors may be no greater than 75' sq. ft. in area.	Proposed 189 sq. ft. area for garage door.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allows for the required two-way traffic into the garage.</li> </ul>	Approved

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

- 1) Program or place the most active portions of the lobby nearest the right of way and the adjoining open space in order to support an active street front and park. (A-4)
- 2) Redesign the entry canopy to wrap around the corner and to appear less institutional appearing in order to create a more humanely scaled podium. (C-2,C-3)
- 3) Design the exit stair and door that lie on axis with the park staircase that connects the lower level with the park's upper level to be a meaningful part of the south elevation. (C-2)
- 4) Prepare a detailed glare analysis by an expert evaluating the glazing of the south façade's impact on the park. Based on the report, the planner may further condition the project to mitigate the effects that the glazing would produce on the park. (C-4,D-1)
- 5) If public safety in the park becomes an issue in the future, the owners shall explore all other approaches to ensuring security before introducing physical barriers. Any solution requiring a barrier would require that the fence or gate disappear from sight when the park is open to the public. (D-7)

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

The Director finds no conflicts with SEPA requirements or state or federal laws, and has reviewed the City-wide 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 four Board members and the recommendation to approve the design, as stated above.

## **DECISION - DESIGN REVIEW**

The proposed design is **CONDITIONALLY GRANTED**.

## **ANALYSIS - SEPA**

The initial disclosure of the potential impacts from this project was made in the environmental checklist submitted by the applicant dated April 22, 2013. The information in the checklist, project plans, and the experience of the lead agency with review of similar projects form the basis for this analysis and decision. The SEPA Overview Policy (SMC 25.05.665 D) clarifies the relationship between codes, policies, and environmental review. Specific policies for each element of the environment, certain neighborhood plans and other policies explicitly referenced may serve as the basis for exercising substantive SEPA authority.

The Overview Policy states in part: "where City regulations have been adopted to address an environmental impact, it shall be presumed that such regulations are adequate to achieve sufficient mitigation" (subject to some limitations). Under certain limitations and/or circumstances (SMC 25.05.665 D 1-7) mitigation can be considered. Thus, a more detailed discussion of some of the impacts is appropriate.

### *Short-term Impacts*

Construction activities could result in the following adverse impacts: construction dust and storm water runoff, erosion, emissions from construction machinery and vehicles, increased particulate levels, increased noise levels, occasional disruption of adjacent vehicular and pedestrian traffic, a small increase in traffic and parking impacts due to construction related vehicles, and increases in greenhouse gas emissions. Several construction-related impacts are mitigated by existing City codes and ordinances applicable to the project such as: the Noise Ordinance, the Stormwater Grading and Drainage Control Code, the Street Use Ordinance, and the Building Code. The following is an analysis of construction-related noise, air quality, earth, grading, construction impacts, traffic and parking impacts as well as its mitigation.

### *Noise*

Noise associated with construction of the residential building could adversely affect surrounding uses in the area, which include residential and commercial uses. Surrounding uses are likely to be adversely impacted by noise throughout the duration of construction activities. Due to the proximity of the project site to residential uses, the limitations of the Noise Ordinance are found to be inadequate to mitigate the potential noise impacts.

Pursuant to the SEPA Overview Policy (SMC.25.05.665) and the SEPA Construction Impacts Policy (SMC 25.05.675 B), mitigation is warranted.

Prior to issuance of demolition, grading and building permits, the applicant will submit a construction noise mitigation plan. This plan will include steps 1) to limit noise decibel levels and duration and 2) procedures for advanced notice to surrounding properties. The plan will be subject to review and approval by DPD. In addition to the Noise Ordinance requirements to reduce the noise impact of construction on nearby properties, all construction activities shall be limited to the following:

- 1) Non-holiday weekdays between 7:00 A.M and 6:00 P.M.
- 2) Non-holiday weekdays between 6:00 P.M. and 8:00 P.M limited to quieter activities based on a DPD approved mitigation plan and public notice program outlined in the plan.
- 3) Saturdays between 9:00 A.M. and 6:00 P.M. limited to quieter activities based on a DPD approved mitigation plan and public notice program outlined in the plan.
- 4) Emergencies or work which must be done to coincide with street closures, utility interruptions or other similar necessary events, limited to quieter activities based on a DPD approved mitigation plan and public notice program outlined in the plan.

### Air Quality

Construction for this project is expected to add temporarily particulates to the air that will result in a slight increase in auto-generated air contaminants from construction activities, equipment and worker vehicles; however, this increase is not anticipated to be significant. Federal auto emission controls are the primary means of mitigating air quality impacts from motor vehicles as stated in the Air Quality Policy (Section 25.05.675 SMC). To mitigate impacts of exhaust fumes on the directly adjacent residential uses, trucks hauling materials to and from the project site will not be allowed to queue on streets under windows of the nearby residential buildings.

### Earth

The Stormwater, Grading and Drainage Control Code requires preparation of a soils report to evaluate the site conditions and provide recommendations for safe construction on sites where grading will involve cuts or fills of greater than three feet in height or grading greater than 100 cubic yards of material.

The soils report, construction plans, and shoring of excavations as needed, will be reviewed by the DPD Geo-technical Engineer and Building Plans Examiner who will require any additional soils-related information, recommendations, declarations, covenants and bonds as necessary to assure safe grading and excavation. This project constitutes a "large project" under the terms of the SGDCC (SMC 22.802.015 D). As such, there are many additional requirements for erosion control including a provision for implementation of best management practices and a requirement for incorporation of an engineered erosion control plan which will be reviewed jointly by the DPD building plans examiner and geo-technical engineer prior to issuance of the permit.

The Stormwater, Grading and Drainage Control Code provides extensive conditioning authority and prescriptive construction methodology to assure safe construction techniques are used; therefore, no additional conditioning is warranted pursuant to SEPA policies.

### Grading

Excavation to construct the mixed use structure will be necessary. The maximum depth of the excavation is approximately 60 feet and will consist of an estimated 37,200 cubic yards of material. The soil removed will not be reused on the site and will need to be disposed off-site by trucks. City code (SMC 11.74) provides that material hauled in trucks not be spilled during transport. The City requires that a minimum of one foot of "freeboard" (area from level of material to the top of the truck container) be provided in loaded uncovered trucks which minimize the amount of spilled material and dust from the truck bed enroute to or from a site. Future phases of construction will be subject to the same regulations. No further conditioning of the grading/excavation element of the project is warranted pursuant to SEPA policies.

### Construction Impacts

Construction activities including construction worker commutes, truck trips, the operation of construction equipment and machinery, and the manufacture of the construction materials themselves result in increases in carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions which adversely impact air quality and contribute to climate change and global warming. While these impacts are adverse, they are not expected to be significant.

### Traffic and Parking

Duration of construction of the apartment building may last approximately 24 months. During construction, parking demand will increase due to additional demand created by construction personnel and equipment. It is the City's policy to minimize temporary adverse impacts associated with construction activities and parking (SMC 25.05.675 B and M). Parking utilization along streets in the vicinity is near capacity and the demand for parking by construction workers during construction could reduce the supply of parking in the vicinity. Due to the large scale of the project, this temporary demand on the on-street parking in the vicinity due to construction workers' vehicles may be adverse. In order to minimize adverse impacts, the applicant will need to provide a construction worker parking plan to reduce on-street parking until the new garage is constructed and safe to use. The authority to impose this condition is found in Section 25.05.675B2g of the Seattle SEPA Ordinance.

The construction of the project also will have adverse impacts on both vehicular and pedestrian traffic in the vicinity of the project site. During construction a temporary increase in traffic volumes to the site will occur, due to travel to the site by construction workers and the transport of construction materials. Approximately 37,200 cubic yards of soil are expected to be excavated from the project site. The soil removed for the structure will not be reused on the site and will need to be disposed off-site. Excavation and fill activity will require approximately 3,720 round trips with 10-yard hauling trucks or 1,860 round trips with 20-yard hauling trucks. Considering the large volumes of truck trips anticipated during construction, it is reasonable that truck traffic avoid the afternoon peak hours. Large (greater than two-axle) trucks will be prohibited from entering or exiting the site after 3:30 PM.

Compliance with Seattle's Street Use Ordinance is expected to mitigate any additional adverse impacts to traffic which would be generated during construction of this proposal.

### Long-term Impacts

Long-term or use-related impacts are also anticipated as a result of approval of this proposal including: increased surface water runoff due to greater site coverage by impervious surfaces; increased bulk and scale on the site; increased traffic in the area; increased demand for parking; demolition of older structures, and increased light and glare.

Several adopted City codes and/or ordinances provide mitigation for some of the identified impacts. Specifically these are: The Stormwater, Grading and Drainage Control Code which requires on site collection of stormwater with provisions for controlled tightline release to an approved outlet and may require additional design elements to prevent isolated flooding; the City Energy Code which will require insulation for outside walls and energy efficient windows; and the Land Use Code which controls site coverage, setbacks, building height and use and contains other development and use regulations to assure compatible development. Compliance with these applicable codes and ordinances is adequate to achieve sufficient mitigation of most long-term impacts and no further conditioning is warranted by SEPA policies. However, due to the size and location of this proposal, green house gas emissions, traffic, parking impacts and public view protection warrant further analysis.

### Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Operational activities, primarily vehicular trips associated with the project and the project's energy consumption, are expected to result in increases in carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions which adversely impact air quality and contribute to climate change and global warming. While these impacts are adverse, they are not expected to be significant.

### Traffic and Transportation

The proposed apartment development would produce approximately 680 new daily vehicular trips, with 64 week day, PM peak hour trips. All study intersections currently operate at LOS D or better during the weekday PM peak hour. With the addition of anticipated growth by 2016, all intersections would operate at LOS D or better during the weekday PM peak hour except the James Street/6th Avenue intersection. This location would degrade from LOS D to LOS E operations.

No SEPA mitigation of traffic impacts to the nearby intersections is warranted.

### Parking

Per SMC 23.54.015 Tables A and B, urban centers have no minimum parking requirements. Located in the First Hill Urban Center Village, this project would not have to supply parking. The peak parking demand for the apartment uses is expected to be below national averages due to the project's location in the First Hill Urban Center Village, proximity to frequent transit service, and proximity to major employment centers in First Hill and Downtown Seattle. The peak parking demand for the proposed residential units was estimated based on the local vehicle ownership rate from US Census data. Based on the proposed mix of apartment units, a parking demand rate of 0.54 vehicles per dwelling unit was estimated for the development's residents and residential visitors. This ownership rate results in a peak parking demand for apartment residents and visitors of 156 vehicles. The proposed supply of 234 will provide ample parking to meet the anticipated demand.

No SEPA mitigation of parking impacts is warranted.

### Summary

In conclusion, several adverse effects on the environment are anticipated resulting from the proposal, which are anticipated to be non-significant. The conditions imposed below are intended to mitigate construction impacts identified in the foregoing analysis, or to control impacts not regulated by codes or ordinances, per adopted City policies.

### **DECISION - SEPA**

This decision was made after review by the responsible official on behalf of the lead agency of a completed environmental checklist and other information on file with the responsible department. This constitutes the Threshold Determination and form. The intent of this declaration is to satisfy the requirements of the State Environmental Policy Act (RCW 43.21C), including the requirement to inform the public agency decisions pursuant to SEPA.

- [X] Determination of Non-Significance. This proposal has been determined to not have a significant adverse impact upon the environment. An EIS is not required under RCW 43.21C.030 2C.
- [ ] Determination of Significance. This proposal has or may have a significant adverse impact upon the environment. An EIS is required under RCW 43.21C.030 2C.

### **CONDITIONS – DESIGN REVIEW**

#### Prior to MUP Issuance

Revise plans sets to show:

1. Program or place the most active portions of the lobby nearest the right of way and the adjoining open space in order to support an active street front and park.
2. Redesign the entry canopy to wrap around the corner and to appear less institutional appearing in order to create a more humanely scaled podium.
3. Design the exit stair and door that lie on axis with the park staircase that connects the lower level with the park's upper level to be a meaningful part of the south elevation.
4. Prepare a detailed glare analysis by an expert evaluating the glazing of the south façade's impact on the park. Based on the report, the planner may further condition the project to mitigate the effects the glazing would produce on the park.

#### 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 Commencement of Construction

6. Arrange a pre-construction meeting with the building contractor, building inspector, and land use planner to discuss expectations and details of the Design Review component of the project.

Prior to Issuance of all Construction Permits

7. 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

8. 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 (Bruce P. Rips, 206.615-1392). 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

9. If public safety in the park becomes an issue in the future, the owners shall explore all other approaches to ensuring security before introducing physical barriers. Any solution requiring a barrier would require that the fence or gate disappear from sight when the park is open to the public. Any changes to the park must be submitted to DPD and Park and Recreation for review.
10. 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 (Bruce Rips, 206.615-1392). 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.

**CONDITIONS – SEPA**

Prior to Issuance of a Demolition, Grading, or Building Permit

11. Provide a construction worker parking plan with the intent to reduce on-street parking. Construction workers may park on-site once the garage is completed.
12. A transportation route plan shall be provided to DPD and SDOT; this plan shall document proposed truck access to and from the site, and shall indicate how pedestrian connections around the site will be maintained during the construction period.

During Construction

13. Grading, delivery and pouring of concrete and similar noisy activities will be prohibited on Saturdays and Sundays. In addition to the Noise Ordinance requirements, to reduce the noise impact of construction on nearby residences, only the low noise impact work such as that listed below, will be permitted on Saturdays from 9:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M:
  - A. Surveying and layout.
  - B. Testing and tensioning P. T. (post tensioned) cables, requiring only hydraulic equipment (no cable cutting allowed).
  - C. Other ancillary tasks to construction activities will include site security, surveillance, monitoring, and maintenance of weather protecting, water dams and heating equipment.
  
14. In addition to the Noise Ordinance, requirements to reduce the noise impact of construction on nearby properties, all construction activities shall be limited to the following:
  - A. Non-holiday weekdays between 7:00 A.M and 6:00 P.M.
  - B. Non-holiday weekdays between 6:00 P.M. and 8:00 P.M limited to quieter activities based on a DPD approved mitigation plan and public notice program outlined in the plan.
  - C. Saturdays between 9:00 A.M. and 6:00 P.M. limited to quieter activities based on a DPD approved mitigation plan and public notice program outlined in the plan.
  - D. Emergencies or work which must be done to coincide with street closures, utility interruptions or other similar necessary events, limited to quieter activities based on a DPD approved mitigation plan and public notice program outlined in the plan.
  
15. Large (greater than two-axle) trucks will be prohibited from entering or exiting the site after 3:30 PM.
  
16. Non-noisy activities, such as site security, monitoring, weather protection shall not be limited by this condition.

Compliance with all applicable conditions must be verified and approved by the Land Use Planner, Bruce Rips, (206-615-1392) at the specified development stage, as required by the Director's decision. The Land Use Planner shall determine whether the condition requires submission of additional documentation or field verification to assure that compliance has been achieved.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ (signature on file) Date: November 11, 2013  
Bruce P. Rips, AAIA, AICP  
Department of Planning and Development