



**EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE  
OF THE  
CAPITOL/FIRST HILL/CENTRAL AREA DESIGN REVIEW BOARD**

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**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

**Project Number:** 3005925

**Address:** 2203 East Union Street

**Applicant:** Jay Janette, Mithun Architects for JC Mueller

**Meeting Date:** June 27, 2007  
**Report Date:** July 6, 2007

**Board members present:** Philip Beck  
Jason Morrow  
Rumi Takahashi  
James Walker, Chair

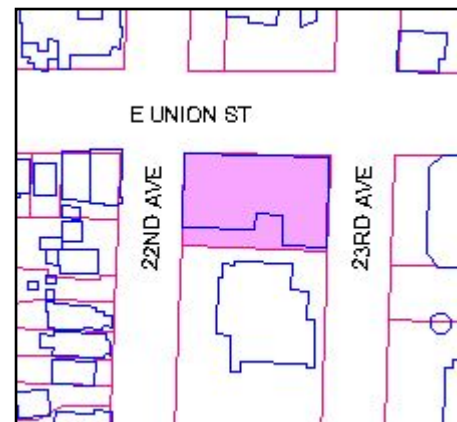
**Board members absent:** Sharon Sutton

**DPD staff present:** Lisa Rutzick, Land Use Planner

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**SITE & VICINITY**

The subject site, zoned Neighborhood Commercial 2 with a 40-foot height limit (NC2P-40'), is located between 22<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue at East Union Street. The applicant is pursuing a Contract Rezone for the site to Neighborhood Commercial 3 with a 65-foot height limit (NC3P-65'). The project site, where the Colman Building once stood, is 1-1/2 lots with no existing structure. There is no alley access to the site. The NC2P-40 zone continues to the north, east and south of the subject site. The zone across the street to the west of the site changes to NC2P-30, with SF 5000 to its south. The site is well served by public transit.



## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The proposal includes the construction of a six story mixed use building with approximately 5,000 square feet of ground level commercial retail uses, below grade parking for approximately 85 vehicles, and five levels of residential use with approximately 91 units above the base. Access to the site would be from 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue (seeking departure for garage access off 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue).

## **DESIGN PRESENTATION**

Three schemes were presented. All of the options include below grade parking with approximately 85 stalls. The preferred option shows parking access from 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue. The other two schemes show access from 22<sup>nd</sup> Avenue.

The first and preferred scheme (Design Scheme 1) proposed a six story mixed use building with retail along East Union Street and 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, and a residential amenity space at the corner of 22<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and East Union Street. Residential townhouses were proposed along 22<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and the south garden terrace as a response to the single-family residences along 22<sup>nd</sup> Avenue. Parking access is from 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue. This scheme incorporates setbacks from the south and west property lines to mitigate scale and allow for open space with a garden terrace. There is a centralized entry to the building that allows natural light into common spaces.

The second alternative (Design Scheme 2) proposed a six story mixed use building with retail along East Union Street and the northeast corner of 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue. Residential townhouses were proposed along 22<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and the south garden terrace. Parking access is from 22<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, which is not preferred due to pedestrian activity along the street. The south face of the building is set back from the property line (with exception to the garage entry with residential units above) to allow for the garden terrace. In this scheme, the garden terrace is exposed to 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue.

The third alternative (Design Scheme 3) proposed a 4 story mixed use building (current code compliant) with retail along East Union Street and the northeast corner of 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue. Residential townhouses were proposed along 22<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and the south garden terrace. The south face of the building is set back from the property line (with exception to the garage entry with residential units above) to allow for the garden terrace. Parking access is from 22<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, leaving the garden terrace exposed to 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue.

The open spaces for all three schemes would be at grade in the areas between building masses and at the garden terrace, as well as on the roof deck.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Approximately 31 members of the public attended the Early Design Guidance meeting. The following comments were offered:

- Clarify the proposed construction type. [Either wood frame over concrete for options 1 and 2 or all concrete for option 3]
- Question where is the closest 65-foot tall structure. [23<sup>rd</sup> and Madison]
- Excited to see development on this site.

- Regarding the contract re-zone, further exploration of the community benefit is critical. Important to carefully explore what will be offered in exchange for the extra height involved with the re-zone. Examples of this exchange might include guarantees of the type of commercial tenants, affordable units, etc.
- Commends the design team's work; however, feels that the proposed design is more in keeping with streets such as Broadway and Madison than this neighborhood. The proposed design doesn't adequately address the single family neighborhood. This intersection is more of a neighborhood commercial center, not an urban center as described.
- Unclear what the community benefit is for losing its collective air rights.
- The design context of the site is single family homes – this context has been ignored by the proposed design. While an attractive design has been presented, it is out of place with the neighborhood and needs to be challenged.
- The explanation that Option 3 does not work financially should be challenged because this proposal is going too far.
- Concerned with the vehicular access from 23<sup>rd</sup> creating a large gaping opening and leaving a tall wall on 22<sup>nd</sup>.
- Prefer garage entry on 23<sup>rd</sup>.
- A six story building on this site is disproportionate to the neighborhood, especially the single family development. Even a 40 foot tall building would be the tallest building around.
- Condos would be preferred to apartments. Like the ground level townhouse concept. Support ground floor retail uses.
- Strongly support preservation of street trees.
- Very supportive of overhead weather protection.
- Concerned with six foot tall fencing at the property line. This fencing should be carefully designed.
- Keeping the bus stop between the proposed driveway and the driveway to the south on 23<sup>rd</sup> is preferred.
- Would like to see special paving treatment along the sidewalks.
- If the garage is off of 23<sup>rd</sup>, left-hand turns should be prohibited.
- Hopes that the renovation of this corner will be the first of many other future redevelopments. The architecture should establish a strong design precedent that is sensitive to single family homes and is well-integrated into the neighborhood.
- The building should also be designed to be viewed from the south.
- A more reasonable design should propose that the building be stepped back so that the portion of the structure along 22<sup>nd</sup> Avenue is no higher than 40-feet in height.
- Concerned with traffic circulation through the neighborhood if access is located on 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue.
- Need some traffic calming devices along 22<sup>nd</sup> Avenue – perhaps this would be a helpful and reasonable exchange for the increased building height.
- Like design concept, but concerned with affordability of units and would like to see some affordable housing units in the neighborhood.
- Not concerned with extra height.
- Wants to see durable and well-maintained materials used on the building exterior.
- Prefer 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue for garage access.

## **DESIGN GUIDELINE PRIORITIES**

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 and identified by letter and number those siting and design guidelines found in the City of Seattle's *Design Review: Guidelines for Multifamily and Commercial Buildings* of highest priority to this project:

### **A. Site Planning**

- A-2 Streetscape Compatibility. The siting of buildings should acknowledge and reinforce the existing desirable spatial characteristics of the right-of-way.**
- 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 along the street.**
- 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.**
- 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.**
- A-10 Corner Lots. Buildings 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 agreed that the design and building program should encourage pedestrian activity. The commercial spaces should utilize transparent windows and overhead weather protection and other details that encourage pedestrian traffic to, from and around the site. The Board discussed several pedestrian features that would significantly improve the sidewalk environment and help them agree that the project is significantly better as a whole: overhead canopies, operable storefront windows, transparent fencing in front of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Avenue townhouse units, retail spaces that coordinate with ground level amenity room, a crosswalk across East Union Street at the intersection of 22<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, curb bulbs, specialty paving, artwork, public seating, bike racks and a well-designed and integrated planting strip and tree wells.

The Board also agreed that the town home units along the ground level of the west side of the building should endeavor to be quieter responding to the single family development across 22<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, while the east and north sides of the building should strive for active commercial use and activity. The two building corners located at the intersections should reinforce the transition of ground level uses. The Board liked the projecting window bays shown at the 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue intersection.

The Board looks forward to reviewing a high-quality well programmed and well landscaped ground level open space design. The Board recommended that the design include elements that emphasize the quality and experience of the open spaces. These elements should include operable windows, well programmed, well-landscaped spaces and a well-designed hard-scape along the right-of-way.

## **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 the anticipated development potential on the adjacent zones.**

The Board supported a design that maximizes the potential development allowed by the existing underlying zone. All Board members agreed that the bulk of the building as viewed from 22<sup>nd</sup> Avenue should read predominantly as a four story building, rather than a six story structure. However, the Board was split between the appropriateness of the proposed rezone to allow 25 additional feet to the building height. Two Board members felt that the proposed setbacks at the upper levels adequately addressed the issue of compatibility between the proposed building and the single family zone and development to the west; the other two Board members were not convinced that the proposed setback (of 12 feet from the west property line above the fourth level) would provide significant enough relief from the perceived building mass to those neighbors to the west.

Architectural Elements

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

**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.**

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

**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 Board agreed that Option 1 is preferred in terms of the retail configuration and found the location of ground level townhouse type units along 22<sup>nd</sup> Avenue to well considered and located to respond to the residential zone across the street.

The Board looks forward to seeing a cohesive architectural design with details that are thoughtfully considered to help enliven the pedestrian environment and unique location of this building at these two corners. The Board felt comfortable with the architectural concept and language proposed for the building. The Board discussed that the activity of this intersection is more likely to be neighborhood commercial focal point and this building should strive to respond to the strong residential character of the community, but also provide opportunity to commercial uses that will be unique to and serve this community.

The Board looks forward to reviewing a more details material and color palette that is reflective of and responsive to the surrounding architectural aesthetic. The Board also noted that the design of this building should create a strong precedent to which future development will respond. The Board mentioned concern with the proposed painted (colored) cement. All materials should be highly durable and age well.

The Board strongly agreed that the vehicular access, regardless of which street it is from, should be visually minimized and cause as little disruption to pedestrian circulation around the site as possible. The Board expressed a preference for the 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue garage entry over the 22<sup>nd</sup> Avenue entry given the proximity to the residential zone on the 22<sup>nd</sup> Avenue side. However, the Board voiced concern that having an entrance off of 23<sup>rd</sup> may create undesirable circulation issues whereby vehicles, unable to take a left onto 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, would take several right turns from the site and end up traveling down 22<sup>nd</sup> Avenue to reach East Union Street. Such a scenario needs to be examined by the traffic consultant to help inform the most appropriate access location. Efforts to prevent traffic movement down 22<sup>nd</sup> Avenue are encouraged. The Board also wants to know whether the METRO bus stop can be relocated as proposed.

## **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.**
- D-2 Blank Walls. Building 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-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 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.**
- D-7 Personal Safety and Security. Project design should consider opportunities for enhancing personal safety and security in the environment under review.**
- 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.**

The Board wants to see an exterior lighting plan and fixtures included that highlights building features and illuminates the sidewalk environment.

The Board would like to better understand the sequence of the ground level unit entryways, between the sidewalk, property line, exterior wall and front door entry. The Board encouraged the ground level entries to be higher than the six inches proposed in order to create more of a privacy buffer and transitional space between the public and private realm. Likewise, the Board wants to review a more detailed design of the residential entrance off of East Union Street, as well as those ground level units facing the south property line.

The Board was interested in the amenity room shown on the corner of the ground floor and will be interested to see how it interacts with the retail uses. The Board likes the tall 17' ceilings proposed for this space and the design should continue to include the tall height at this corner.

**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.**

The Board strongly and unanimously agreed that the mature street trees should be preserved, as they provide a significant buffer between the zones, both in terms of softening the proposed building, but also to reduce the sense of height, bulk and scale. The trees along 22<sup>nd</sup> Avenue are of particular importance.

**DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES**

Three departures from the Code were requested at this time.

**Departure Summary Table**

<b>STANDARD</b>	<b>REQUIREMENT</b>	<b>REQUEST</b>	<b>BOARD GUIDANCE</b>
<b>COMMERCIAL FRONTAGE SMC 23.47A.008.D</b>	Minimum of 80% for non residential use at street level.	70%	The Board wants to see a well-developed street level and right of way design.
<b>PARKING</b>	Access to parking	Take access to	The Board agreed that the

<b>LOCATION &amp; ACCESS SMC 23.47A.032</b>	shall be from a street that is not a designated Pedestrian street	parking from 23 <sup>rd</sup> Avenue, a designated pedestrian street.	23 <sup>rd</sup> entrance prevents intrusion to the residential neighbors; however, they want to see this evidenced by transportation professional.
<b>STRUCTURAL BUILDING OVERHANG SMC 23.54.035</b>	Width of bay window over property line allowed to project up to 9' with 45-degree angles.	Increase bay window projections to 12' with 90-degree angles.	The Board prefers the design of the bay projections proposed by the applicant rather than those allowed by Code.

**1. PARKING LOCATION AND ACCESS (SMC 23.47A.032)**

The Code requires that access to parking shall be from a street that is not a principal pedestrian street. The proposed location is on 23rd Avenue, which is a principal pedestrian street.

The Board indicated that they would consider the departure request based on anticipated traffic volumes and circulation patterns. However, the Board’s recommendation on the requested departure will be reserved until the final Board meeting and will be based upon the departure’s potential to help the project better meet these design guideline priorities and achieve a better overall design than could be achieved without the departure.

**2. STRUCTURAL BUILDING OVERHANGS (SMC 23.53.035)**

The proposed design would increase bay width of projections over the property line from nine feet to twelve feet.

The Board indicated that such a design approach to the bay window projections is preferred and more contemporary. However, the Board’s recommendation on the requested departure will be reserved until the final Board meeting.

**3. STREET-LEVEL DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS (SMC 23.47A.008)**

The applicant is requesting to allow less than 80% non-residential use (proposed 70%) at the ground floor on both 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue and Union Street.

The Board indicated that such a decrease may be supported provided the design details a creative, interesting and well-developed right-of-way and street level design as described under the Site Planning section of this meeting report.

The Board’s recommendation on the requested departure will be reserved until the final Board meeting and will be based upon the departure’s potential to help the project better meet these design guideline priorities and achieve a better overall design than could be achieved without the departure.



## **NEXT STEPS**

### **MUP Application:**

1. Submit application for Master Use Permit (MUP) application. Please call Lisa Rutzick (at 206-386-9049) when you have scheduled your MUP intake appointment.
2. Please include a written response to the guidance provided in this EDG. Per Attachment B of Client Assistance Memo 238, plan on embedding four 11x17 colored and shadowed elevations, landscape and right-of-way improvement plans and three-dimensional street level vignettes into the front of the MUP plan set (4 per sheet) as Design Review sheets.
3. A traffic study is required as part of the MUP application.

### **Recommendation Meeting:**

The Board would like to review the following:

4. Details of the open spaces, specifically those associated with the ground level retail and the residential entrances.
5. Three-dimensional renderings showing how the ground level uses, details and design relate to the sidewalk.
6. Details of pedestrian right-of-way improvements.
7. Color and materials board.
8. Series of colored renderings and/or graphics showing the proposed development from the pedestrian perspective.
9. Conceptual signage plan.
10. Conceptual lighting plan.
11. Provide information from METRO regarding relocation of bus stop.