



The City of Seattle

## International Special Review District

Mailing Address: PO Box 94649, Seattle WA 98124-4649  
Street Address: 600 4th Avenue, 4th Floor

ISR D 236/17

### MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF TUESDAY, November 28, 2017

Time: 4:30pm  
Place: Bush Asia Center  
409 Maynard Avenue S.  
Basement meeting room

#### **Board Members Present**

Eliza Chan  
Stephanie Hsie, Vice Chair  
Sergio Legon-Talamoni  
Carol Leong  
Tiernan Martin, Chair  
Herman Setijono

#### **Staff**

Rebecca Frestedt  
Melinda Bloom

#### **Absent**

Valerie Tran

Chair Tiernan Martin called the meeting to order at 4:30 pm.

#### **112817.1 BOARD BRIEFING**

112817.11 450 S. Main St. – KODA Fifth Avenue Flats  
*Applicant: Yang Lee, KMD Architects (on behalf of Da-Li International)*

Briefing on proposed Preliminary Design proposal, which covers the project’s bulk/massing/scale, of a new of a 17-story condominium development with ground floor retail and 3-levels of below-grade parking on the site of an existing surface parking lot. Topics to be covered include the applicant’s responses to board feedback about façade composition and the ground floor and entrance configuration.

Briefing materials in DON file. Following are board and public questions and comments.

Jason McCleary and Yang Lee, KMD Architects, presented. They provided an overview of changes made since the last briefing. The presentation included discussion of building composition, revisiting a study of other buildings in the District. Regarding the activation of the building at the corner at the ground floor, he said that one of the challenges they are

grappling with at the corner is ADA accessibility due to the steep slope. He presented four options for the entry configuration.

Mr. Lee said they started to look at the color pallet and were inspired by the HTKubota building on S. Main St., because it is earthen and closer to Japanese architecture. He presented the evolution of building “skin” styles in the district. He spoke about the inspiration of the “wave” pattern in the proposed fenestration.

Mr. McCleary spoke to different approaches for the façade –a wave motif and a standard wall scheme. He went over slide 51 of the presentation showing solid base studies. He said that they feel that the solid motif goes against the zoning for the District by creating additional layers to the building.

Mr. Lee said that they’re referencing the Japanese teahouse as visual inspiration, with a color treatment that is timeless, bright, open and full of light. He presented views from the interior.

Mr. McCleary said the inspiration and color pallet of the teahouse motif will help to differentiate the tower from glass towers. He said throughout the lobby they want to create a connection to the neighborhood. Clear glass. Seating inspiration drawn from terraced seating in Danny Woo Garden, creating an open space that is well-lit, warm and inviting. He mentioned that they are seeking a code amendment for an elevator overrun.

Public Comment:

Cynthia Brothers asked what analysis has been done on light, shadow and traffic impacts.

Ms. Frestedt said that shadow study/impact had previously been presented to the Board, but she had not seen a traffic study.

Steve Sawata, CID Coalition member, cited Secretary of the Interior Standard #3. He said there is another glass building just like this at 8<sup>th</sup> and Virginia. He said the wave is so metaphorical it is difficult to parse out. He said the building looks like an extension of the downtown core. He said it is confusing how it integrates into the neighborhood. He said it looks like residents are looking down on the community, as a form of surveillance rather than integration.

Jim Lee, resident, asked about parking.

Mr. McCleary said they are far under market demand for parking; he said the bus tunnel beneath the site limits what they can do.

Jim Lee asked if public space as shown on page 72 will be enclosed. He asked if people (the public) would be removed by security when retail closes.

Don Liu cited slide 73 and asked the intent for upper level glazing.

Midori Liu said she liked the design. She asked about the ceiling height.

Mr. McCleary said ceiling height is 9’.

Joseph Lachman, JACL, echoed Mr. Sawata's comments. He said the building doesn't echo Nihonmachi. He said the building is an extension of the downtown into the area, instead of reflection of the community. He advised the team to look at historical elements and talk to historians, artists and poets.

Mike Omura, SCIDPDA, reiterated the comment he made at the first briefing, expressing concern about the setback along Main. He cited slides 74-75 and noted there was some homage to Hirabayashi Place datum but on the north side there is a significant setback that creates a datum line that is more sympathetic and he would like to see that applied on S> Main St. He asked about hybrid retail examples of residential lobby shared with public and said he would like to see other examples.

Mr. Martin read public comment cards submitted by the community (in DON file). One card expressed concern about negative impacts on the residents of Hirabayashi Place, specifically noise pollution and shadows. Another spoke to the Great Wave off Kanagawa painting by Hokusai, referenced in the applicant's presentation, and said that the painting shows respect to the power of nature, taking back what it created. There was a question about the designer's intent in using this as inspiration. There was concern that the glass façade would reflect the gloominess of Seattle.

Ms. Frestedt passed out shadow studies presented at a past briefing.

Mr. Lee said the setback at the north is a code requirement; only the alley side of Hirabayashi Place will be affected.

Mr. McCleary said a traffic study was submitted as part of SEPA. He said the next packet going in will have traffic study. He said five parking spaces will be dedicated to retail and 70 will be for condos; it is all they can do because of the bus tunnel. He said that most units will not have parking stalls.

Mr. Sawata asked if that will require a variance.

Ms. Frestedt said that no parking is required in downtown zones.

Mr. McCleary said he is not familiar with the building at 8<sup>th</sup> and Virginia; the inspiration for this building came from the neighborhood. He said that by standing next to the 5<sup>th</sup> & Jackson office building there's not much opportunity to stand down. He said that their design is "place-making".

Mr. Lee said the inspiration for the great wave came from Hirabayashi Place painting. He said they asked Interim about the painting and were told that the wave patten was the most significant in Japanese culture. He said he wasn't saying they are the big wave.

Mr. McCleary said it is subjective; it is their interpretation of what this community represents and how it relates to the use of the building and they are drawing from buildings around.

Ms. Frestedt asked if they have examples of hybrid lobby.

Mr. Lee provided photo on slide of the Via6 building across from Amazon building.

Mr. Omura asked how big the Via6 lobby and if they have multiple retailers.

Mr. Lee said it is twice the size of this one, with space for multiple retailers.

Mr. McCleary said ideally multiple retail tenants would interconnect; they are working on that concept.

Jim Lee asked how that would be used and if it is open to public.

Mr. McCleary said the HOA will have to make decision on how it will work.

#### Board Questions:

Mr. Martin reminded the Board that they would prioritize the Preliminary Design details. He identified the following categories of issues that had been raised: identified the use of visual order of SROs in Nihonmachi/stacked massing, corner activation studies and exploration of visual order and color of skin.

Mr. Legon-Talamoni said he saw two approaches on inspiration: 1) looked at existing buildings and dissected massing of this building into three layers, and 2) abstracted and synthesized and implemented the wave into the building. He noted that part of the inspiration is literal and part is abstraction (of the wave). He asked how they arrived at the decision for literal and abstracted decisions.

Ms. Hsie cited 23.66.302 e, she expressed frustration that after 4 meetings, the building has not changed. She said the angles they put in the façade are visually distracting and not typically seen in Nihonmachi. She said the wave and teahouse themes don't work together. She said the board is seeing the same massing for the 3<sup>rd</sup> time. She asked why they'd want a wave the height a tsunami on the building. What's the deeper meaning?

Mr. Lee said, the short answer is place-making. He said they are creating a place that speaks to community. He said they are still holding the corner; because of Hirabayashi Place they will pay respect by having a setback; it activates the entire massing. He said once they develop the massing they will look more closely at the skin. He said they did studies of the skin, but they looked like every other building. He said they looked at the form and saw opportunity to develop into a more sophisticated window pattern which is hard to do given the location of demising walls and the interior configuration. He said they were intentionally trying to break away from the 5<sup>th</sup> & Jackson building.

Ms. Leong said they can do a better job of getting on the same page with the community. She said she sees the intent of the wave and the tea room but it is difficult seeing the correlation in the end result.

Mr. Martin said he wanted to reinforce Ms. Hsie's comments, noting that there has been only minor revision to massing. He referenced SMC 23.66.336A. – General requirements. He said he was concerned about their intent to 'stand up to' the existing buildings, such as the 5<sup>th</sup> & Jackson building, rather than reinforce scale, mass, and form of Nihonmachi. Emphasis has been on the skin doing most of the work. He said this is not as successful as they want; the wave doesn't establish a relationship to the neighborhood. He said he prefers a bulk and mass scheme that

does the work with the skin playing a smaller role. He said a “bold corner” as placemaking can feel like an imposition. He said he wants alternatives.

Mr. McCleary said they did community outreach. Three options were presented; community overwhelmingly preferred one option.

Ms. Hsie said holding the corner is fine, but it bleeds into the base. Putting building on a podium is somewhat more successful.

Mr. McCleary disagreed and said they were strongly opposed to putting it on a podium.

Ms. Frestedt said that some issues brought up by the board have not been resolved. She noted that there are other examples of buildings with podiums in the District. Speaking to the applicants, she said the risk they take if they do not respond to the Board’s concerns is that they project may not get approved. She said they can continue to propose an option not supported by the board, but having it denied is not good for anyone if there are other solutions. She said a willingness to look at options will move the project forward. She said she believes there is a solution that will meet Guidelines and there needs to be a willingness from both parties to explore.

Ms. Leong left at 6:21 pm.

Discussion ensued about the hybrid lobby configuration.

Mr. Martin noted the hybrid retail café connected to the lobby. He said the preferred option maximized the seating area and pushes entrances further north.

Mr. Legon-Talamoni wanted to see further development of what a hybrid lobby would look like.

Mr. Martin appreciated the effort and diagramming and noted that it clarifies the grade. He referred to it as “transparent, but inaccessible” and it is still a closed glass box. He said Option 3 most successful; it reduces seating and the larger ramp is more successful. He said it makes it clearer that it is how to access the area.

Mr. Legon-Talamoni disagreed and said he preferred Option 5. He appreciates that the first thing that is seen and experienced is transparency. He said, regarding the mass above the retail, to experiment with the solid-to-void ratio, noting balance of privacy for community and residents. He supported the minimized ramp which he said could be used as a back drop for a kiosk.

Ms. Hsie agreed and suggested shading full amount of retail floor space, showing a more developed plan identifying security operations and delineating what is private space. She noted support for tea house concept and patterning and transparency at

grade. She said not to shy away from opaque walls above and questioned if floor to ceiling glass is appropriate?

Mr. Martin said floor to ceiling glass could be covered with blinds and that you lose some of the architectural character when blinds are down. He said to see how tea house motif can be incorporated.

Ms. Hsie appreciated inclusion of the night view, but the corner reads as a lantern.

Mr. Legon-Talamoni said to integrate solid/void in podium into the vertical element and to bring spandrels, darker elements into the vertical portion of the building.

Ms. Hsie said it comes back to massing. She commented that the same pattern, repeated over again creates a more monotonous pattern and makes the massing less clear. She recommended simplifying the façade. She said the podium really highlights what you are trying to emphasize. 1920's industrial buildings are very ordered. She encouraged simplification of the façade and doesn't see how wave pattern going up and down relates to massing. She referenced SMC 23.66.336 and breaking up monotonous surfaces. Podium gives back to the community and pedestrian experience, what's happening above is for the skyline.

Mr. Martin wanted to see exploration of revisions to the skin

Mr. McCleary said he could understand how reduction in scale can be done in other ways and that perhaps what they were attempting is too literal.

Ms. Frestedt that fenestration and how it is articulated is part of massing and how it is broken down.

Mr. Martin asked if the top of the southeast corner is illuminated in the night view.

Mr. McCleary said the parapet should reflect the size of the building; a ribbon of light is proposed to show top piece to anchor the top of the building.

Ms. Hsie said she wants to help move the project forward. She said the diagram on page 45 has to be really strong and show the pedestrian experience and how the building fits in with that is important. She said the first 4 – 6 stories are important.

Mr. Lee said larger windows make a safer community.

Ms. Hsie said that is true for ground floor but she wasn't sure about for upper floors. She said floor to ceiling glass is a downtown building element and she suggested they study a sill or more opaque patterning.

Mr. Martin suggested that they continue to include a night view when showing options.

**112817.2 BOARD BUSINESS**

**Adjourn**

Rebecca Frestedt, Board Coordinator  
206-684-0226  
rebecca.frestedt@seattle.gov