

## Camacho, Rudy

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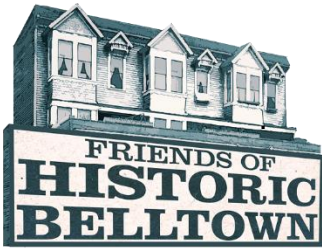
**From:** Steve Hall <shall@pointconsulting.us>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 19, 2016 3:25 PM  
**To:** PRC  
**Cc:** Sodt, Sarah; Ames, Laurie; Dean McColgan (dmccolgan1@msn.com); Bagshaw, Sally  
**Subject:** 2234 2ND AVE (City Project # 3020027)  
**Attachments:** Design review letter.FoB.3020027.pdf

Attached please find comments from *Friends of Historic Belltown* regarding early design guidance for the “Mama’s property,” 2234 2ND AVE (City Project # 3020027).

Please let me know if you have any questions. Thanks!

**Steve Hall**

206.441.1882 / Cell 450.1979



January 19, 2016

Sent Via E-mail to [PRC@seattle.gov](mailto:PRC@seattle.gov)

City of Seattle – DPD – PRC  
700 5th Avenue, Suite 2000  
Seattle, WA 98124-4019

**SUBJECT:** Early Design Guidance Comments for  
The “Mama’s property”  
2234 2ND AVE (City Project # 3020027)

Please consider the following comments from *Friends of Historic Belltown* regarding early design guidance for the commercial/residential development proposed for 2<sup>nd</sup> and Bell (the “Mama’s property”). Our comments are based on the December 7, 2015 early design package submitted by the applicant (prepared by STUDIO19 ARCHITECTS).

## Who We Are

*Friends of Historic Belltown* is a neighborhood group that formed to support the nomination of the Wayne Apartments for historic landmark status. The Wayne, which is now a formally designated City landmark and subject to protection by City ordinance, is located adjacent to the proposed 8-story residential/retail development on the southeast corner of 2<sup>nd</sup> and Bell (the “Mama’s property”).

Our group’s primary goal is to maintain Belltown’s eclectic, independent and historic character. Toward this end, we have identified the following three priorities:

- **Preserving and restoring historic and iconic Belltown buildings** by promoting the preservation and reuse of existing buildings and by encouraging the development of new buildings that reflect and respect Belltown’s historic architecture and neighborhood character.

*“It Starts on Second”*

[www.friendsofhistoricbelltown.org](http://www.friendsofhistoricbelltown.org)  
[info@friendsofhistoricbelltown.org](mailto:info@friendsofhistoricbelltown.org)

- **Encouraging local entrepreneurship** by promoting small, local businesses that create social and economic engagement, interaction and synergy. We are particularly interested in promoting businesses related to music, film, art, crafts and social spaces (coffee/food/bars).
- **Sustaining Belltown’s culture and diversity/ inclusion** by increasing affordable housing that allows relatively low-income residents to live in Belltown, including service-industry workers, artists, musicians and young people just starting out on their own. We believe lower-income residents significantly contribute to Belltown’s character and culture.



Friends of Historic Belltown formed to protect the historic Wayne Apartments, located adjacent to the Mama’s building

## Current *Friends of Historic Belltown* Activities Related to the Mama's property

*Friends of Historic Belltown* is currently working on several tasks directly related to early design considerations of the Mama's property.

Regarding historic preservation, we are currently working with the City's Office of Historic Preservation to

- Nominate the "Mama's building" and associated garage and brick alleyway as a historic landmark under Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) Chapter 25.12 - Landmarks Preservation
- Nominate the corner store and "Bedlam Coffee" building (across the street from the Mama's building) as a historic landmark
- Find developers/investors interested in restoring the historic Wayne Apartments
- Develop a comprehensive Belltown historic preservation plan

We are also working through the Belltown Community Council to initiate a Belltown Neighborhood planning process that would tier to the City's Comprehensive Plan. The last Belltown neighborhood plan was completed in 1998.

We will also be submitting comments on the proposed redevelopment of the Mama's site as part of the City's SEPA threshold determination to be made per SMC 25.05.330.



*Friends of Historic Belltown* is working to designate the Mama's building (including the "garage building" off Bell Street) and the corner store across the street as City Landmarks, joining the Wayne Apartments to create a historic micro-district in the heart of Belltown

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## Specific Comments Regarding Early Design

We have three primary comments regarding early design considerations for the proposed redevelopment of the Mama's property:

1. **Reconsider Design Cues.** The early design report seems to take its design cues from the “206 Bell” building across the street. However, we believe that the 206 building may not be the appropriate model. Many people in the Belltown neighborhood feel that the 206 building does not fit in well with Belltown’s neighborhood character.
2. **Consider a wider range of alternatives.** We request that the City and developer work with the community (through the Belltown Community Council) to more rigorously explore and identify alternatives for this site that may still meet the applicant’s objectives, but that better respect and reflect Belltown’s neighborhood character.
3. **Consider mitigation.** We request that the -- as part of early design review – the City consider opportunities and options to mitigate the proposed demolition and loss of the historic and iconic buildings that have resided in this location for nearly 100 years.

The following sections provide the details regarding each of these three comments.



## 1. Reconsider the “206” Planning Context

Based on our review of the applicant’s early design options, the design team considers the 206 building across the street to be the “new face of Belltown,” and the applicant’s plans seem to reflect this “new face.”

But is the 206 really the new face of Belltown? Or is it the familiar face of aluminum/glass-skinned “urban living” apartments that are currently being built throughout Seattle? In short, we’re not sure that the 206 building is the appropriate model upon which to base designs for the Mama’s site or anywhere else in Belltown.

Therefore, our first request is that the City and the applicant reconsider the “precedent” of the 206 building to confirm that this design concept and architectural style truly reflects Belltown’s neighborhood character.

Directly related to this, we request that the City consider how the proposed building’s design would be compatible with the adjacent historic Wayne Apartments.

Specifically:

- A. Would the proposed building “establish a harmonious transition between newer and older buildings,” as encouraged by the Belltown Design Guidelines. The guidelines also state that “compatible design should respect the scale, massing and materials of adjacent buildings and landscape.”
- B. Would the proposed building “complement the architectural character of an adjacent historic building or area,” as encouraged by the Belltown guidelines?



**3- 206 BELL APARTMENTS**  
206 Bell Street | Mixed-use building  
The 206 Bell apartments face our site directly across Bell St. As part of the new face of Belltown, these apartments serve as a strong precedent in our area for articulation of the street level, retail entries, and facade modulation.

Cut out from page 9 of the Applicant’s early design plan

## **2. Consider working with the community (through the Belltown Community Council) to more rigorously explore and identify alternatives**

This comment relates directly to our first comment in that we believe that the early designs – as presented in the December 7, 2015 applicant report -- frames the options (and opportunities) for this site too narrowly.

This site at 2<sup>nd</sup> and Bell is central to Belltown identity and sets the architectural tone for the entire central Belltown neighborhood. As such, we believe that early design review should consider options more inspiring and creative than “modern urban living” apartments over non-descript and unspecified retail space.

A survey of Belltown residents conducted just last month by the Downtown Seattle Association found that the concerns of Belltown residents centered Belltown’s growth “not being managed appropriately” and that this unplanned growth is “changing the character and uniqueness of the Belltown Community.”

We believe that this project – with its central location within the heart of Belltown – provides an excellent opportunity for the developer, City and community to work together to more rigorously explore development options for this site in terms of overall architectural style, facade composition, streetscapes and other elements that will define this special part of Belltown for decades to come.

Specifically, we request that the City initiate a process to publically explore alternatives to the current plans that reflect and respect Belltown’s neighborhood character.



The corner of 2<sup>nd</sup> and Bell is at the heart of Belltown and deserves a rigorous evaluation of alternatives

### **3. Consider -- as part of early design review -- opportunities and options to mitigate the proposed demolition of a historic and iconic Belltown building**

*Friends of Historic Belltown* believes that the existing buildings on site (including the garage building and brick alley off of Bell Street) meet the criteria for landmark designation, as outlined in the City's Landmarks Preservation Ordinance (SMC 25.12.350). We base this opinion on our knowledge of the ordinance and designation criteria gained through the successful landmark nominations for the Wayne and Franklin apartments.



The Mama's property includes a historic garage off Bell Street that is amazingly intact, as noted in a 2007 inventory of historic properties.

While retention/restoration of the historic buildings on the Mama's property may not be economically feasible, we believe that the demolition of these structures is nevertheless a significant adverse impact, as defined in the City's SEPA regulations (threshold determinations, SMC 25.05.330).

The significance of this adverse impact is based on both the historic values to be lost as well as the central location of the property and associated adverse effects on neighborhood aesthetics and character.

Because of the significance of these adverse effects, we believe that the city should consider if there are opportunities



to mitigate this impact under the City's authority granted through SMC 25.05.660 (Substantive Authority and Mitigation). We believe that such mitigation could include two types:

- Measures that avoid or minimize adverse losses to Belltown neighborhood character due to the loss of a historic, iconic building
- Measures that compensate for adverse effects on historic and aesthetic resources and neighborhood character that cannot be mitigated

We believe that mitigation may include both on- and off-site options, and that on-site options should be considered now as part of the early design phase review. Such measures may include:

- developing design concepts that retain the historic brick facade and alleyway
- developing interior design concepts that include features of value to the community, such as a planned, underground performance space (for music and other arts), affordable housing, or other interior features, functions and uses that could replace, in part, the lost values of a historic and iconic building
- creating other public amenities that increase the overall value of the proposed development to the community

Therefore, *Friends of Historic Belltown* recommends that the applicant work with the Belltown community (through the Belltown Community Council) to develop a site-specific Mitigation/Development Plan that outlines how the applicant would mitigate the loss of a historic and iconic Belltown building.

The ultimate goal of mitigation would be to develop designs that respect and reflect Belltown's character, that minimize and avoid adverse impacts to Belltown's character and historic resources, and that compensate for unavoidable adverse impacts on historic and other neighborhood values.

Thank you for considering our comments.

We look forward to working collaboratively with the City, the developer, the Belltown Community Council (and its Housing and Land Use Subcommittee), and the community to help create a redevelopment project that is worthy of replacing a historic and iconic building and that is worthy of this extremely significant location in the heart of Belltown.

Collectively, we believe we can develop a project that the Belltown community will actually be excited and happy about and that will bring value and enjoyment to the community for years to come!

Sincerely,

***Friends of Historic Belltown***

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**Sally Bagshaw**, Seattle City Council  
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**Laurie Ames**, City Neighborhood Council

