



Uptown is a vibrant and dynamic neighborhood. Uptown businesses, restaurants, shops, parks, arts and cultural activities remain open during construction of the New Arena at Seattle Center.

UPTOWN LAND USE REVIEW COMMITTEE NOTES

Project: 3036456-ED and 3036517-LU

Planner: Greg Johnson

Reviewed: 118 W. Mercer on September 14, 2020

	<p>This project was reviewed at both concept design stage and pre-EDG stage.</p> <p>Project proposed: 113 units on 19,210 SF. Zoning is split with half the site at MR and the other half at SM-UP and 12 blocks from the intersection of Queen Anne Ave and Mercer.</p> <p>Project proposes 2 levels of below-grade parking</p>
	CONTEXT + SITE
CS1	<p>TOPOGRAPHY AND PLANTS & HABITAT</p> <p>Concept Design Comments:</p> <p>There is very little slope on this site. The applicant had previously suggested including live-work units along 2nd Ave W which is desired and preferred by LURC. The design needs to incorporate both a residential feel to these units as well as visually safe and attractive transitions into these units. To be successful for the residents to have both visual privacy and a sense of safety. Using plants and plantings could provide some of this.</p> <p>Half the site is zoned MR and thus a residential feel is preferred on all if not most of 2nd Ave. W; we understand the land use designation requiring transparency and commercial or LW, <u>however</u> h2nd Ave has a calmer residential feeling block & commercial is unlikely to be successful. Live-Work or flat out residential units on this ground level is an appropriate and preferred use.</p> <p>EDG Design Feedback/Comments:</p> <p>LURC unanimously supports the design that has evolved and supports the Option 3 Preferred Massing, with the geometric proportion. This massing integrates the two different zonings into 1 building and responds to early community feedback.</p>
CS2	<p>SENSE OF PLACE</p> <p>Concept Design Comments:</p> <p>LURC members recommended the project design incorporate site identity with art, welcoming signage and distinct architecture.</p> <p>LURC members recommended and preferred the corner design & program in order to promote visual and human activity.</p> <p>LURC supports the building's strong corner and promotes the inclusion of small public plazas at corners encourages open space along the sidewalk, especially in a vehicle-intense street such as Mercer.</p> <p>EDG Design Feedback/Comments:</p>

	LURC supports the massing & the overall design, as it successfully creates a sense of Place. This is one project in which the owner & design team have been very thoughtful & made all the right moves to create this sense of place.
CS3	<p>PLACEMAKING</p> <p>Concept Design Comments:</p> <p>There are two facades for this building, as it is on the corner of Mercer St. and 2nd Ave W. LURC members reiterated the language in the Uptown specific design guidelines to incorporate and include design features that enhance and celebrate the Arts District with banners, building names, wayfinding, signage and art. LURC members strongly encourage the design team to make visual art an integral part of the design concept, especially along Mercer.</p> <p>EDG Design Feedback/Comments:</p> <p>The design team has exceeded expectations on this front & has integrated many artistic design features into the architecture. LURC members were very complimentary. We love the idea of a corner art piece as well as a banner or mural on the east facing stair tower. The Uptown Arts Coalition is eager to work with the owner/design team on an integrated art piece with perhaps a community process similar to the one recently completed on the Plymouth project at 2nd/Mercer.</p>
PL	PUBLIC LIFE - CONNECTIVITY
PL1	<p>ENHANCE OPEN SPACE</p> <p>Concept Design Comments:</p> <p>This is a small site and LURC members understand creating open space and a plaza would be difficult but does encourage the applicant to promote a physical and visual connection for pedestrians.</p> <p>All of Uptown is a “walking district.” New development needs to support outdoor uses, activities and seating that create an attractive and vibrant pedestrian environment.</p> <p>EDG Design Feedback/Comments:</p> <p>The design team has again exceeded expectations with the proposed Urban Porch concept, the art inspired screens at the storefront level, the building setback which creates breathing room and a nice space between the street traffic, pedestrians and the lobby/porch uses..</p> <p>The additional setback at the corner of Mercer & 2nd We is am additional design move that was termed “wonderful” by many LURC members.</p>
PL3	<p>STREET-LEVEL INTERACTION – has been addressed above</p> <p>Concept Design Comments:</p> <p>Garage entry at north end of the building along 2nd Ave W is supported by LURC members.</p> <p>The fenced, enclosed trash area at north end located in the MR setback is an appropriate place for trash. LURC members recommended swapping program spaces & locating the fitness room facing east in order to gain another residential unit along 2nd W which serves to create a between landscape frontage & pedestrian experience.</p> <p>EDG Design Feedback/Comments:</p>

	<p>LURC members were pleased to see how successful this swap became & likes the rhythm created at ground level</p> <p>RESIDENTIAL AND LIVE-WORK ENTRIES</p> <p>Concept Design Comments:</p> <p>LURC members recommend the design team design entries to be important. Individual unit entries that are accessed from the sidewalk or other public spaces should consider appropriate designs for defensible space as well as safety features such as landscape barriers, hedges, decorative fencing and gating. Landscaping should be consistent with these features.</p> <p>EDG Design Feedback/Comments:</p> <p>The design team has been successful at separating the residential spaces and entries along 2nd 21st with the 18"-24" elevation change and the deeper planting area. We are so pleased that design norms have changed to accept the design of better separations between LW units and the sidewalk. The design we saw successfully responds to the Uptown-specific design criteria for this situation.</p> <p>Concept Design Comments:</p> <p>RETAIL ALONG MERCER was recommended as desirable by some LURC members. If retail is not programmatically viable for the applicant, then special attention should be paid to make the design attractive and interesting for pedestrians.</p> <p>EDG Design Feedback/Comments:</p> <p>The current design with urban sun porch concept works well for either co-work space or commercial/retail space in future. We appreciate the thoughtfulness in creating a space that is flexible and can pivot and change when this pandemic is over & there is a stronger demand for restaurant/retail/commercial space than what currently exists in this neighborhood.</p>
PL4	<p>ENTRY LOCATIONS + RELATIONSHIPS</p> <p>Concept Design Comments AND EDG Design Feedback/Comments:</p> <p>This has been successfully addressed & described above</p>
DC	<p>ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN CONCEPT</p>
DC2	<p>ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT</p> <p>Concept Design Comments:</p> <p><u>LURC members emphasized human scale and quality detailing as more important than consistency with a particular period or style.</u></p> <p>Corner lobby entry, leasing and fitness room. Several LURC members recommended the developer consider swapping the fitness center location with the residential units facing the BofA parking lot on the east and including more residential units along 2nd.</p> <p>EDG Design Feedback/Comments: LURC members were pleased to see how successful this swap became & likes the rhythm created at ground level – this move serves to create a better design for the neighborhood</p>

	<p>BLANK WALLS – LURC members suggested incorporation of artwork whether a mural or an inexpensive banner be added to the east facing blank wall.</p> <p>The use of exterior canopies or other OH weather protection features is favored throughout Uptown for residential and commercial uses.</p> <p>EDG Design Feedback/Comments: LURC members were pleased to see how successful the design response has been.</p> <p>2ND FLOOR WINDOWS – The design presented includes a two story storefront intended to provide scale to the exterior faced. This design move was well received with one member expressing concern over the privacy of residents on the 2nd floor and suggested the design team address this. One example provided was what the Center Steps project has accomplished on their 2nd floor window treatments as guidance.</p> <p>EDG Design Feedback/Comments:</p> <p>The design has not advanced enough to provide feedback, but the inclusion of this 2-story space provides a solid datum point and a clear base-middle-top design parti.</p>
DC4	<p>EXTERIOR ELEMENTS + FINISHES</p> <p>MATERIALS</p> <p>Concept Design Comments:</p> <p>Brick, tile, and/or other interesting more modern (high quality) exterior finish materials are strongly preferred at street level</p> <p>Uptown’s evolving and dynamic architectural context embraces a range of modern innovative design that reflects the Uptown Arts District. Most cladding materials are accepted, with attention to color and detail to promote good design features</p> <p>Storefront signs that are unique, integrate creativity and individual expression are desired.</p> <p>EDG Design Feedback/Comments:</p> <p>We did not review any proposed specific cladding materials, beyond the proposed storefronts and screens/windows along Mercer, which were well supported and approved.</p> <p>EXTERIOR LIGHTING</p> <p>Concept Design Comments:</p> <p>Creative distinct lighting fixtures and schemes that enhance the unique identity of the Uptown Arts and Cultural District is strongly encouraged. Lighting should add visual interest for both pedestrians and drivers while not disturbing any adjacent residential properties.</p> <p>EDG Design Feedback/Comments:</p> <p>We did not review any proposed specific lighting and expect that will evolve as the design progresses.</p>
	<p>ADDITIONAL EDG-RELATED LURC FEEDBACK:</p> <p>There was unanimous support for the proposed design, Option 3 massing & the level of details shown.</p> <p>The roof deck which has been pulled back from the edge a bit provides a good separation between the parapet & the resident’s usage of the open area.</p>

	<p>LURC members were very pleased to see the incorporation of art into the design & architecture – it celebrates the Uptown Arts District & provides an inviting aesthetic integration for the neighborhood.</p>
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	<p>This is one of the projects wherein both the Developer & the Design Team have “nailed it” with respect to the design at EDG level. We sincerely hope the SDCI staff concurs & does not impose onerous design details on the project, which costs money, especially when they have already incorporated so many great design moves & responded so well to the community’s comments.</p>
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