



Seattle Design Commission

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

April 5, 2007

Greg Nickels
Mayor

Karen Kiest
Chair

Tasha Atchison

Pam Beyette

Evan Bourquard

Brendan Connolly

John Hoffman

Mary Johnston

Dennis Ryan

Darrell Vange

Guillermo Romano
Executive Director

Layne Cubell
Senior Staff

Projects Reviewed

King County/Metro Trolley Barn
Downtown Walking Tour
Commission Business
Seattle Center Long Term Investment Program

Convened: 8:30am
Adjourned: 3:30pm

Commissioners Present

Karen Kiest, Chair
Pam Beyette
Evan Bourquard
Brendan Connolly
John Hoffman
Dennis Ryan
Tasha Atchison

Staff Present

Guillermo Romano
Layne Cubell
Tom Iurino
Kadie Bell



**Department of Planning
and Development**
700 5th Avenue, Suite 2000
PO Box 34019
Seattle, WA 98124-2000

T: 206-615-1349
F: 206-233-7883

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Apr. 2007 Project: **King County/Metro Trolley Barn**
Phase: *Concept Design*
Previous Briefing: No Previous Reviews
Presenters: Bert Gregory, Mithun
Bill LaPatra, Mithun
Jay Jannette, Mithun
Greg Smith, Urban Visions
Lewis Howie, Mark Anderson Consultants
Bob Isler, King County/Metro
Heather Marx, Seattle Department of Transportation
Bryan Stevens, Department of Planning and Development
Genna Nashem, PSPB/Department of Neighborhoods
Attendees: Gary Johnston, Department of Planning and Development
Victoria Schoenburg, Parks Department
Broderick Smith, Urban Visions

Time: 1.0 hours

(SDC Ref. #121/RS0606)

Recusal: Commissioner Connolly

Action

The Commission appreciates the team's thorough presentation. The Commission provides some advisory comments and unanimously approves the concept design.

- **The Commission appreciates the comprehensive project design goals.**
- **There is support for preservation of a 16 foot alley with a northbound orientation and encouragement of an early turning movement traffic analysis that contributes to the design of the alley.**
- **The apron and trolley yard enclosure is of interest and concern as it is critical to the design. The maintenance barn bay structure should be explored further as well.**
- **The Commission suggests concentration of a unified structural expression and requirements for enclosure with an emphasis on permeability and transparency.**
- **The Commission appreciates and supports the involvement of an artist and urges the team to treat the art with boldness and clarity to animate the site.**
- **The ground plane should be explored more at the northwest corner.**
- **Strong storefront edges that spill out onto the street should be a goal, as is finding an appropriate retail tenant.**
- **The Commission encourages the team to explore the tree line and ground plane alignment along Occidental. The solar screening is appreciated, but we are also interested in keeping eyes on the square.**
- **Sustainable design strategies are supported by the Commission and should be integrated into the public realm space. Displays do not need to be limited or concentrated on the north face, but should be integrated throughout.**
- **An iconic quality for the corners is strongly encouraged.**
- **The team should strengthen the visibility of the building on the alley.**

Proponent's Presentation

There are many elements to this project. It is an extraordinary mixed-use project. It is necessary to look at the urban context and the overall urban design of the square is critical. This is the heart of the square and this creates a great deal of responsibility for the design team. Occidental is one of the most adored streets in Seattle. The design team has attempted to understand and take stock of this. Historic buildings in the area are very sustainable and have incorporated sustainable principles. What are the emotional qualities of the square? This building will be a major backdrop to the park. We want to embrace its size and be a complement to what is happening in the park.



Project goals:

- To *complete* Occidental Park with an *active* east building
- To create a *keystone* of Pioneer Square and *backdrop* for Occidental Park
- To create a *21st* century building compatible in a *historic neighborhood*
- To *celebrate* the Seattle streetcar's home base
- To be an *environmental champion* and reflect this in the architecture

There will be the streetcar and retail on the ground plane. The parking program in the project is small, but important. There will be 117 stalls—for both the public and tenants. The parking will be hidden as much as possible. The apartments will be primarily high quality workforce. Office is located on the top floors.

Textures are important and skins are being explored that are compatible with the historic fabric, but have a 21st century flare. There are a number of turning movements by trolleys into the barn off Main Street. There are some areas that present safety issues for the sidewalk and side streets. King County, SDOT and the design team are exploring how best resolve these turning movements by the trolleys. ADA accessibility is a concern to the building as there are currently water runnels that will have to be mitigated. Waterfall Garden Park is popular and the relationship to it needs to be considered. The primary relationship is to Occidental Park and activating this area is the main concern.

There are 5 bays in the streetcar facility for night housing and service. There is an apron space for washing the cars. A 26 foot clear space in the barn. The high volume is needed for cranes and lifting the shells off the cars for maintenance. Artistic fence and gate system may border the barn. Transparency is a goal for the barn and the retail space including a window from the retail or café space into the barn. Entry space in to the retail will activate Occidental. The façade may include a sustainability display to educate the public.

Public Comments

Bob Isler, King County Metro: KCM is very excited about the project and this place will be excellent in terms of location and a great opportunity for the streetcar's visibility. A goal for the County is to get the streetcar back in service.

Genna Nashem, Pioneer Square Preservation Board: Consider the two-foot pullback rule for City of Seattle alleys. Historically protected buildings should not have an 18-foot wide alley.

- The team prefers a 16-foot alley.

Commissioner Questions and Comments

- Is there a preference for a one-way or two-way alley?
 - One way is more desirable since it is only 16 feet.
- There is a large conflict point with alley traffic traveling south due to the streetcar travel along South Washington.
- 16 foot or 18 foot alley—what is the plan for accessing parking?
 - Cars will enter the garage from the south and exit and travel to the north
- The upper levels: What is envisioned for the east façade of the buildings, will it take advantage of the light? What is the building's height?
 - The east façade will feature the trolley barn at ground level with parking and then offices above.
 - City Council has granted a zoning amendment that requires a residential component, allows the inclusion of the streetcar maintenance barn, and increases the height limit to 130'.
- Where you hoping for visual access from the alley to the streetcar?
 - Yes, it is currently conceptual, but we plan to include operable windows and the ability for pedestrians to look in.
- Much of the area's architecture chose to recognize or round corners, have you thought about the corners in the urban design sense?
 - Yes, the corners are strong elements. How you turn a corner is a big question. It is necessary that they weave together. Building corners will be addressed as key features and need to be inviting.
- You should do a vehicle turning analysis early on.
 - Yes, the façade will be pulled back in places to account for turn radius and also that will drive the design of the apron.
- The northwest corner should be better—what can you do?
 - Communicating the concepts of sustainable design will hopefully become an attraction. Also, we are exploring options such as outdoor activity on the edge. It should pull people through the building, not just attract people. Having retail will help pull people through.
- I agree that the northwest corner needs more attention. This will be the biggest challenge.
 - We are trying to balance pedestrian activity with a need to get cars through quickly. The goal of activating the street will hopefully spill over into Occidental where we will be encouraging kiosks, etc. to extend the vitality of the buildings. This will be coordinated through SDOT.

- The corner at the southwest also presents an opportunity to activate the area. This is a challenge, especially with the streetcar there.
 - Yes, it is hard to create the energy needed to keep tenants in the building. This site is the missing link for the neighborhood and this presents an opportunity to make the area better.
- Parks operates the public restroom or is it DON?
 - Dept. of Neighborhoods. Discussions with the City are in process about not getting rid of the restroom outright, but moving it inside the building.
- The north challenge: is there anyway to take loading internal to the building?
 - It is a space challenge, especially with the streetcar barn's program requirements. Our goal and need is to serve the tenants of the building.
- The art conversation: Can the site be used as a link to other parts of the city? This is an opportunity to do something great. Is it possible to have agencies work together? At what stage will the artist join the team?
 - It is the #1 item on our agenda right now. Integration of art is important and finding opportunities is a priority.
- How does the desire for art integration, iconic elements and sustainable principles relate to the ground level of the building?
 - Need to explore further how they might all relate
 - Something stronger at the top of the building visible from below as in Melbourne where the yellow wind turbines on a green roof are inspiring.
- What is the response to the Preservation Board's comments so far?
 - We are not trying to mimic historic buildings. The team recognizes the project needs to be compatible with area buildings, not a historic re-creation, but rather modern in expression
- The bold approach with artists is good. It will hopefully be distinct. The Seattle struggle is to do art with clarity.
- Can you integrate that with the sustainability strategy? You should bring those together and the exhibit of sustainability strategies should extend along the entire façade.
- How does the apron work? The hard line of building enclosure is set back and then there is a permeable layer in the front? Why can't there be one line of enclosure? Is it necessary to continue that street edge? You should avoid the dual layer.
 - One is related to human comfort. The washing of the cars needs an area. There was no way to allow for the sweep of the cars, have enough visibility and clearance, and ensure no pedestrian conflicts.
 - A permeable edge to see the cars is desired.
- Is there a reason for the cars to be outside for ventilation?
 - Yes, it is advisable, and the building volume that is heated is also a consideration.
- The ceiling of the retail and barn is the same?
 - No, the retail is lower, at 19 feet.
- You might consider if all those trees are necessary. The floors of residential could be good for crime prevention in the park.
 - The trees provide shading in the summer and lose their leaves in the winter.
 - Some of the trees are too close and hit the building. Trimming and perhaps removing a few trees will be explored.
- Any special pavers should be the highest quality to continue the high quality of the building. The edge pavement will make a big difference and needs to fit the context.
- If you are thinking of targeting a particular retail use, consider this when designing the streetscape space and choosing materials.

- Would like to applaud you for designing the building to ensure that the ground floor space accommodates retail uses that will activate the street.
 - Weather protection on the buildings and how that interfaces with the trees is also being explored.

Apr. 2007 Project: **Downtown Walking Tour**
 Phase: *Staff Discussion*
 Previous Briefing: none
 Presenters: none

Time: 2.0 hours

(SDC Ref. #169/RS0609)

Summary

Commission and Staff walked through downtown exploring first hand and discussing several key projects already reviewed or soon to be reviewed by the Design Commission. These included: City Hall Park, King Street Station, Fire Station 10, King County/Metro Trolley Barn and Civic Square (former PSB site).

5 Apr. 2007 Project: Commission Business

Time: 1.0 hours

ACTION ITEMS

- A. Timesheets
- B. Minutes from 03/15/07/Bell
Unanimously approved by the Commission.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

- C. DC 2007 Rosters and 1st Q Summary/James
- D. DC Administrative Policies - 2007 Revisions/Cubell
- E. Civic Square – Joint DC/DRB Panel/Romano and Cubell
- F. 2007 Get Engaged Program Recruitment/Cubell
- G. Major Projects Updates/Commission Staff

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- H. Urban Sustainability Forum – Ed Mazria, 4/25 at Seattle Ctr.
- I. Green Building in North America Symposium, 5/1, City Hall

5 Apr. 2007 Project: Seattle Center Long Term Investment Program

Phase: *Design Concepts*

Previous Reviews: January 18, 2007 and December 21, 2006

Presenters: Robert Nellams, Seattle Center
Jill Crary, Seattle Center
Dennis Forsyth, SRG Partnership
Rick Zieve, SRG Partnership
Lesley Bain, Weinstein A/U
Shannon Nichol, Gustafson Guthrie Nichol

Attendees: Janet Pelz, Pelz Associates
Steven Wright, Friends of the Green
Christa Valles, Council Staff

Time: 1.5 hours

(SDC Ref. #220/RS0611)

Summary

The Commission thanks the design team for their thorough presentation and their commitment to an inclusive community process. The Commission offers the following summary of its comments:

- **Master Plan Green Space Concepts**
 - **The Design Commission applauds the band of green concept of Scheme Four but encourages the careful consideration of its relationship to the east-west paved linkage and suggests a more successful balance of the hardscape and green space.**
 - **Scheme Four is the most promising, but reconsider subdividing the grid elements and include clear wayfinding that identifies Seattle Center icons.**
 - **The Commission questions the location of the new Children’s Museum and how it relates to adjacent building spaces, and urges careful consideration of any new buildings on site.**
 - **Give consideration to different transportation modes and how these can enhance Seattle Center and reinforce it as both a hub and as a destination point.**
 - **The Commission wonders about adding a smaller “green window” at the northwest to Scheme Three to strengthen connections to the neighborhood.**
 - **Recommend the incorporation of circulation studies that look at both service needs and public access to better inform future design discussions and communications.**
 - **The Commission looks forward to seeing how these varied pieces and site specific concept studies will continue to be integrated together in a coherent master plan.**
 - **Financing plans and property acquisition strategies are real issues that should be taken into account and must inform the larger design direction for the Seattle Center campus.**
 - **Understand that the Pacific Science Center is not a formal part of the Seattle Center campus, but realize its importance in this discussion of long term investment options. Concerns about the negative impacts of the existing**

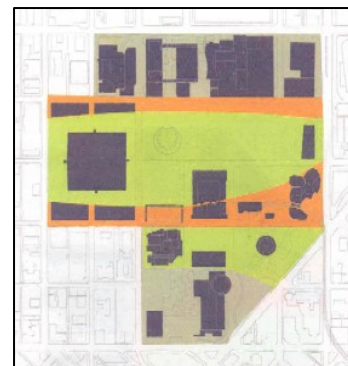
- **Pacific Science Center must factor into any planned improvements to the connectivity and larger arrival experience for the campus, as a whole.**
 - **The Commission encourages continued study of the northwest corner and N/S axis and the larger connections to areas beyond the perimeter of Seattle Center, including the Olympic Sculpture Park.**
- **Center House**
 - **The sustainable design attitude and adaptive reuse strategy for this building is appreciated and recognized as a strong statement ,but the Commission wonders if this is the lynchpin of the campus.**
 - **The Commission encourages the focus on activation of the center space and the interior of the Center House and asks the design team to aim for a balance between transparent and solid components in its exterior expression.**
 - **Pay attention to service access requirements and clarify public entry points.**
 - **The Commission wonders about retaining the Children’s Museum element, but recognizes practical considerations might counter this suggestion.**
- **Memorial Stadium**
 - **The Commission supports its removal and appreciates the simplicity of the flat grass activity space and amphitheater concept.**
- **Theatre District**
 - **The Commission encourages the exploration of a trolley route on Mercer as a possible way to strengthen the theatre district concept.**
- **Key Arena**
 - **A strong gateway marker and more porous and pedestrian friendly streetscape is encouraged along First Avenue as an entry experience to Key Arena and Seattle Center. A similar approach is supported for other significant arrival points around the campus perimeter.**

Proponent’s Presentation

Public input and several meetings with the Century 21 Committee over the last few months have resulted in many good ideas and some common themes have emerged. Diagrams of the site and concept studies for specific areas illustrate possible design options now being explored:

Public Green Space

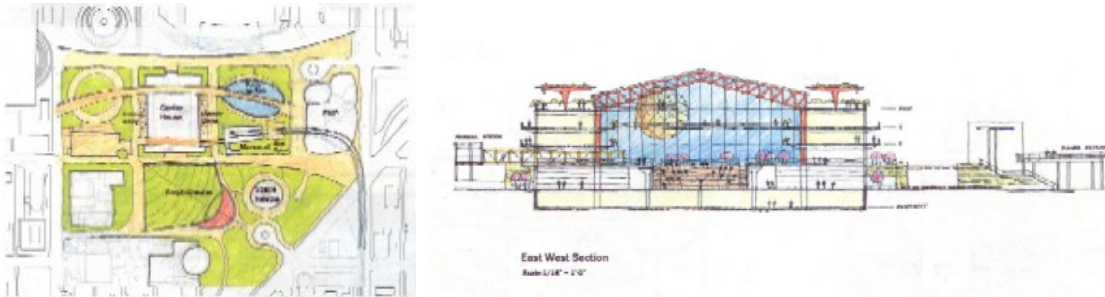
- **Big Green Window—with and without Center House**
This holds the edge in a coherent way and connects better with the city. There was a strong consensus to keep the Center House at the center of the green. A commitment to sustainability within the city also guided the retention of the Center House.
- **Big East-West Green—with and without Center House**
This connects the Space Needle, Center House and International Fountain with a spine of paving through the green. The edges of the green space would be sculpted with pavement, trees, etc. The edges were also designed with respect to the grade. A warped geometry was used to achieve continuity among existing facilities on site.
- **Central Plaza and Green Frame**
This idea tends to pull activity to the east and has a



consistent swath of green space, but does not provide one very large green space. This links icons and highlights the monorail station. This places a plaza in the center of the center in lieu of a green space.

Center of the Center—Center House

This will be a reinvention of the existing Armory building, substantially altering all sides, not a mere renovation. There are three different options being explored currently. The goal is to make the building more porous and to allow natural light in and activate the interior. Sustainable design features will be explored further for the Center House. One idea is large aircraft doors that open to the south. Also a clear roof would allow visibility inside for those in the Space Needle elevator.



The floor layout currently has three different schematic designs. These all include a space that connects the first and second level spatially. There are interior and possibly exterior balconies on all levels for circulation. The roof could also be activated with the use of a café/restaurant and would overlook all surrounding activities. The idea is to activate the *entire* building.

Driven by zoning considerations, the Center School is brought to grade and is one level, which makes it hidden, and allows for kids to spill out into the open Center. There is a teen center in the basement that is directly below Center School. The inclusion of tables and terraces to create an active sidewalk experience at the east and west is shown in the plans. There are also stronger axial connections both east-west and north-south to allow people to flow through the building.

Memorial Stadium

Seattle Center would like to take over Memorial Stadium from the Seattle School District. Scheme 3 is the best representation and it includes parking in the center of the Center. People indicated there needs to be more flat grass. The end of the flat grass area could be an outdoor amphitheater for 4,000 covered and more uncovered seating out on the lawn. This could be used for movies, broadcasting interior activities. An outdoor amphitheater would be unique to Seattle and adds a new market. While parking (three levels) was the first notion, this is not the focus. The site would also conceal the new transportation center/hub, under the green, that would include buses, cars, drop offs, etc. The related concept is to replace the Mercer garage since it has made a desolate site out of Mercer. The new garage and transit hub brings people up and directly into the center of the Center. There is an above ground structure to hide the green, buffering it from adjacent uses, that also provides restroom facilities. Opening up Memorial Stadium will maintain views through the campus.

Scheme 1 shows there are also options in the event the School District retains ownership of this area. There is also the possibility of building an exhibition hall below grade. Scheme 2 illustrates a large area of parking where the stadium is now. Scheme 4 includes another large parking area and the exhibition hall. Scheme 5 includes an above-grade exhibition hall.

Theatre District

Along Mercer Street there are fine cultural elements that are currently underutilized. The north edge of the campus could be highlighted and emphasized if the Mercer parking garage currently there is relocated. This will draw pedestrians into the campus and activate the edge. Potential new development, focused on activating the north streetwall, will make the edge more permeable and inviting.

Transportation

There is discussion of BRT on Aurora and an East-West streetcar is being explored. Also, the Queen Anne neighborhood has adopted the “Bermuda triangle” to the Southeast and is exploring land use options centered on transit. The Sculpture Park is close by and connections between the two sites should be explored. A Sculpture Park Sky Train is being discussed and would extend from the Sculpture Park to Seattle Center and onto South Lake Union.

Key Arena

There are two primary schemes being explored. 1) Small-scale concerts and sporting events are options if the Sonics leave. 2) There could be a permanent venue on one side and dinner theatre on the opposite side. There are ideas for development of surrounding areas that include glass pavilions and buildings that “talk to the streetscape.” The northwest corner needs to be opened up, some of the Northwest Rooms will be removed and a skate bowl is being considered which has garnered some good support so far.

Public Comments

- Steven Wright, Friend of the Green: We are in support of more green space and are pleased with the efforts and direction of the project.

Commissioner Questions and Comments

- The Space Needle and International Fountain are not addressed.
 - These are shown in a figure-ground format that allows for their anomalous and iconic recognition.
 - A key idea is to provide more public space around the Space Needle by getting rid of low-rise distractions, particularly low quality buildings like the Fun Forest.
- Did you do sectional and larger site orientation studies?
 - The ground is a collection of unusual objects and we wanted to give them breathing space, but activate them as much as possible.
 - We looked at the edges and we determined through public input that the Center House should remain at the heart.
 - Each building is unique and a lot of the planning to date has been haphazard.
- The word “window” illustrates how the city is viewed—would like to hear more details on that particular concept.
- Have you considered linking the Center House with the monorail?
 - No, there is a separate project that is underway and there is a general goal to not stop monorail service.
 - Taking it into the building would cause the entire line to be rebuilt due to codes. But, there will be clear connections and an obvious presence in the atrium.
- How does the Center House relate to the outside with respect to transparency?

- There are patios on both the east and west with tables and chairs, shown on the floor plans. Additionally, there is spill out shown through paving. On the exterior, there are main entries with a canopy and large windows that replicate an east-west concourse.
- The Center House is described as having a more historical quality at the north-south and not as much in the middle
 - There is a lot of detail on the building on the north side, but the middle is lacking character.
- To help inform your upcoming public meetings, we would like a quick preview of what will be shown and how you might pull all the concepts together.
 - There are several drafts/schemes and these are still works in progress:
 - 1) Do nothing
 - 2) “Center of the Center”, assumes no Memorial Stadium acquisition
 - 3) “Big Green Window”, avoids Key Arena outdoor activity spaces, but includes others near the center, such as a pool, vending, etc.
 - 4) “East-West”, is the most comprehensive and includes a new children’s museum and everything else in plans
- What is the phasing strategy and dependency among the different concepts? All schemes are hinged on what needs to happen next, but can you enable some elements to occur sooner? Which are most feasible?
 - Will work on clarifying that.
- The Pacific Science Center is not part of this campus plan?
 - This is dependent on factors outside this team’s control, but that site is owned by the Science Center itself.
- The East-West scheme downplays the north-south access, but that’s still needed too.
 - There is access, but the E/W axis dominates.
 - There was no support for the North-South scheme and it was dropped.
 - It is difficult to say what the major link is from the Sculpture Park—whether it is Broad or Eagle Street.
- With Scheme 4, there is great north-south access, but the southern edge is not as strong. I appreciate the paved band that links the south and north west. In some schemes there is too much paved space and not enough green.
 - Some of the pavement could be turned green and still be effective.
 - We will take a second look at this.
- The “band of green” diagram describes an activity zone and a placeholder as well as argues for a strengthening to Key Arena. This makes for a more urbane walk along Mercer. This diagram should really drive what’s shown in Scheme 4.
- The Children’s Museum site is a problem because more areas need to be framed rather than filled on campus.
 - It is included in this area because other children’s areas are in that region of the center. This site currently has a flexible use pattern. The desire for a stand alone building is strong and is outside our control.
- What is the blue?
 - They are water features and the shapes illustrated are not indicative of what they will look like.
 - The possibility of an ice rink has been explored.
- I like the attitude that is exhibited in these diagrams about the Center House and also the sustainability goals. I cannot determine if this is the lynch pin for the site.

- The simplicity of the arena in the round and the flat grass concept for the Memorial Stadium site is strong and enables people to read the center. There is a good contrast between this concept and the Center House.
- The reuse of the existing Center House building is appreciated. The amount of glazing and openness could be costly and that is cautioned. The examples used show a good balance between transparent and opaque surfaces. The interior balconies are a great idea and should bring people inside to celebrate the interior.
- The reuse is essential, but there are concerns over what is the front and back of the building as it is now. It is important to think about where the public vs. service access is.
 - The service access is planned around a service elevator on the east side. The loading is on the lowest level and a tunnel on the basement floor connects to parking.
 - Main entries will be well delineated.
- A systems approach is needed for the whole site and should be illustrated as layers that would inform other decisions about siting and design.
- The “Green Window” concept could include a smaller green window to the northwest to better connect to the neighborhood.
- Harrison is important and should be considered for East-west view corridors and connectivity, not sure the trolley works there.
- The theatre district could include the trolley and becomes a strong area on its own.
- Before presenting the schemes to the public, you need to remember the edges. These should become stronger elements for welcoming in the adjacent neighborhoods. There is still a historic reliance on framing Key Arena and that might take attention away from your other strong ideas for First Avenue North.
- The skateboard park at the northwest corner is strongly supported and would be a great addition.
- The different modes of transportation could be combined into one hub or they could be dispersed to create activity all over.