

## **Condo Developer Turns to Weber + Thompson for Solution on Challenging Denny Triangle Site**

*City Issues Permit after Seattle Architecture Firm Overcomes 'Triangular' Problem*

SEATTLE – May 24, 2007 – Situated next to the famous pink elephant sign at downtown Seattle's Elephant Car Wash is a parcel of land that, until recently, most developers considered a white elephant.

Conventional wisdom held that the small, triangular lot – bounded by Denny Way, Sixth Avenue and Wall Street – was suitable only as a place to park cars.

All that changed when Levin Menzies & Associates, a San Francisco Bay Area company, hired Weber + Thompson, a Seattle architecture, interior design and planning firm, to figure out how to build a condominium high-rise on the challenging property near the Space Needle.

Weber + Thompson collaborated with Vancouver, B.C.-based engineering firm Glotman Simpson to design the 29-story ICON project. City officials have approved the master-use permit for the slender condominium tower, and construction is scheduled to begin in early 2008.

“Many people are asking how we took a supposedly impossible site and made this happen,” said Paul Menzies, a Levin Menzies & Associates principal. “The key was pairing an architectural and engineering team with smarts and creativity with our development and construction team, and then working the numbers so that we could find a constructable solution.”

Weber + Thompson also designed Fifteen Twenty-One Second Avenue, Seattle's first tall-and-slender high-rise to be entitled and built under the city's new zoning code. Glotman Simpson has diverse structural engineering experience in its hometown of Vancouver, B.C., where tall, slender towers on small lots are the norm.

“This was a roll-up-your-sleeves solution that required thoughtful collaboration among all the members of the team,” said Blaine Weber, AIA and a founding principal of Weber + Thompson.

The Denny Triangle site's 10,665-square-foot unconventional shape does not lend itself easily to efficient floor and parking plates. “Making the structural and parking systems work effectively and finding ways to add saleable area to the project to offset the extra costs were the most challenging aspects,” said Weber, who leads his firm's Urban Projects/High-Rise Team, which is designing 12 high-rise towers in Seattle.

“We often find that challenges provide opportunities, and that was definitely the case with ICON,” said the project's lead designer, Weber + Thompson principal Dan Foltz, AIA.

The project could not, for instance, rely on a traditional shear-core structural solution. Foltz explained how – in lieu of a shear core – an outrigger structural system provides lateral resistance while avoiding a perimeter moment frame. In addition, some mechanical parking helps offset the inefficiencies of the site, he said.

While those systems are key to the project's success, passersby will not notice them; instead, according to Menzies, they will see a remarkable piece of architecture. “We strive to develop architecturally unique towers, and we charged Weber + Thompson to make this the best possible project for this high-profile location near the Space Needle,” he said.

ICON will have punched decks between the various juxtaposed forms, and pre-cast concrete architectural frame features will break the mass of each façade into more slender vertical and smaller-scaled elements, Foltz explained. The top of ICON will have a

generous roof-top garden deck as well as a sculptural, iconic element that will allude to the Space Needle. This halo, which will be lit at night, is intended to be a beacon.

“The triangular shape of the site drives a three-sided form that is slender by nature,” Foltz said. “As towers are largely about view, that is a huge benefit.” He further explained how the shape of the tower not only allows for grabbing more air and light, but also changes the building’s profile as one moves around it. “Views from ICON tower will be some of the best in town.”

Rather than units, ICON will have 224 “home spaces.” “The word ‘unit’ is prosaic and uninspiring,” said Menzies. “Home space more accurately reflects the deep emotional connection people develop with the place where they live.”

The average home space size will be about 900 square feet. Most home spaces will be in the 570-1,100 square foot range with a handful of larger sizes up to 1,400 square feet.

Weber + Thompson will design the interiors, integrating interior design elements at the beginning of the overall design process. The interiors will capitalize on the building’s shape, and the home spaces will feel “very light and airy,” Foltz said.

Menzies said a financial services company has made a proposal to finance ICON, and his company is finalizing an agreement with a general contractor.

**EDITOR’S NOTE:** High-resolution images of ICON are available upon request.

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#### **About Weber + Thompson**

Seattle-based Weber + Thompson is a full-service, West Coast design firm specializing in architecture, interior design and planning. The award-winning company has an experienced staff of 90+ design and construction professionals. Since 1987, Weber + Thompson has developed a diverse practice with projects that include master-planned communities and high-rises as well as high-density urban infill, residential, hospitality, senior housing and commercial office projects. Weber + Thompson seeks effective results through a thoughtful and collaborative design process. For more information, visit [www.weberthompson.com](http://www.weberthompson.com) or contact Weber + Thompson at (206) 344 -5700 or [info@weberthompson.com](mailto:info@weberthompson.com).

#### **About Levin Menzies & Associates**

Levin Menzies & Associates (LMA) is a real estate investment and development firm located in the San Francisco Bay Area. The company has substantial and varied experience in both commercial and residential projects. LMA is proud to employ a cadre  
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of credentialed and experienced individuals who apply imagination and intelligence to identify potential acquisitions, plan development strategies, contribute to innovative design, obtain entitlements, manage construction, and market and sell the finished product. All of LMA’s development activities will soon be vested in a successor firm, Laconia Property Company.