



City of Portland, Oregon
Bureau of Development Services
Land Use Services
FROM CONCEPT TO CONSTRUCTION

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MEMORANDUM

Date: June 1, 2018
To: Portland Design Commission
From: Benjamin Nielsen, Land Use Review, 503-823-7812
Re: EA 18-159309 DA – *Block 216*
Staff Memo for the June 7, 2018 Design Advice Request Meeting

You should have received, separately, a drawing set for the Design Advice Request for a proposed new mixed-use retail, office, hotel, and residential condominium building, occupying a full block at 900-936 SW Washington St in the West End Subdistrict of the Central City Plan District. This is the first DAR for the proposal, and the first time the Commission has seen this proposal. The project can be summarized as:

- **33-story, 428'-10" tall, and approximately 750,000 SF mixed use building.**
 - Approximately 10,000 SF of retail space is proposed at the ground floor.
 - Hotel uses will be found on the ground floor, second floor, and floors 9-17.
 - Office uses will be found on the ground floor and floors 3-8. These uses open onto roof terraces on the north side of the building.
 - 128 residential units will be found on floors 20-33.
 - Shared amenity uses will be found on floors 18 & 19.
- The proposed building is **massed as a terraced podium and tower**. The tower will occupy the southern half of the block.
- **Four floors of structured parking are proposed under the building**. Access is currently proposed from mid-block off SW Washington St.

Development Team:

Architects: Phil Beyl, Jesse Emory, & Kyle Andersen, GBD Architects Inc
Developer: Brian Owendoff, BMO Commercial Real Estate LLC
Project Valuation: \$235,000,000

This project will be evaluated against the **proposed code revisions in the Central City 2035 plan**. These code provisions are anticipated to be effective on July 9, 2018. Some important new aspects of this code to consider:

- **FAR** can increase above allowed 9:1 + bonus 3:1 with additional transfers from other properties.
- **Max "bonus height" = 460'**. Projections above bonus height are prohibited. The proposal currently meets this standard.
- Bonus height on this site may only be earned if it meets a new **shadow standard for shadow cast on O'Bryant Square**. Shadows are limited to 50% at noon on 3/21, 6/21, and 9/21, 75% at noon on 12/21, and 75% at noon on 3/21, 6/21, and 9/21. The proposal currently meets this standard.
- The **Ground Floor Windows Standard** will change to require only 40% of wall area between 2'-10' above grade on each façade to be glazed.

- **Bird-Safe Exterior Glazing standards** will apply within the first 60' above grade and within the first 15' of any part of the building above an adjacent eco-roof, roof garden, or other landscaped area.
- The **Ground Floor Active Use standard** applies along all four street frontages.
- **Eco-roofs must cover 100% of building roof area** with an allowance for up to 40% of the roof area to be covered with mech. equipment, stairwells/elevator enclosures, skylights, or uncovered common outdoor areas. This standard is not met.
- The building must be **registered for a green building certification program**. This applies at the time of permit.
- The **Required Building Lines standard** applies along SW 9th Ave. Specifically:
 - The **building must be set back at least 12' from the street lot line along at least 75% of the length lot line**.
 - **At least 50% of this area must be landscaped** with ground cover and shrubs. One tree for every 400 SF of setback area is also required.
 - This standard is not met with the proposed ground floor plan.
 - This is to help accommodate the Green Loop connection between the South Park Blocks and the North Park Blocks. Director Park and O'Bryant Square are important nodes along this route as well.

Suggested DAR Discussion Items. At this preliminary stage of design, the primary issues focus on how the building fits within its context in terms of site design, ground floor programming, and proposed massing. One predominant issue to grapple with is identifying the correct location for loading and parking to best integrate with the context and activate the pedestrian realm while working around the proposed tower location and core, which is best located on the southern portion of the site to allow light penetration to O'Bryant Square.

1. Context.

a. Relationship with Green Loop.

- The proposed building essentially turns its back on the Green Loop (SW 9th Ave), with a large loading area, in addition to not meeting the setback standard along that street. As the Green Loop develops over the next 15-20 years, SW 9th Ave may become primarily a pedestrian- and bike-priority street. Loading would ideally be located along SW Alder St, directly across from the loading areas of the Galleria (City Target) to preserve the pedestrian environment along the Loop.
- The required 12' landscaped setback will (re)introduce a new design vocabulary into the Downtown core. How should the building respond to the setback?
 - Would upper-story projections over the setback area or structural columns touching down within the setback—creating an arcade condition, like those at the Brewery Blocks or Fred Meyer along W Burnside—be contextually appropriate?
 - Are precedents from the middle of the 20th Century with towers set back from the sidewalk behind a plaza, such as the Standard Insurance Center, PacWest Tower, or Wells Fargo Tower in the southern portion of Downtown, more appropriate reference points?

b. Relationship with O'Bryant Square. The building should embrace O'Bryant Square with its program and massing.

- All three massing studies show a terraced podium, with the terraces stepping down to the west, and the highest point of the podium facing the square. Does this help to establish and anchor the corner of the square, or would the terracing better respond to its context by stepping down to the east, facing the square and the Green Loop?
- A cut corner facing the square could create a fifth elevation to help activate the square. A similar condition already exists at Director Park, where an entrance to Nordstrom directly faces the park's northeast corner.

- The tower's location on the south side of the site seems like the correct location for establishing a good relationship with the square and meeting the shadow standard.
 - c. Relationship with surrounding landmark structures. There are four landmark structures which line three of the four block faces across from the subject site: the Pittock Block across SW Washington, the Stevens Building and the Woodlark Building across SW 9th, and the Galleria (Olds, Wortman & King Department Store) across SW Alder.
 - The Galleria largely turns its back to SW Alder, with its parking garage entry and loading docks facing this street. SW Alder also hosts several other loading functions heading east towards the Morrison Bridge—perhaps most notably at the landmark Meier and Frank Building. Both of these conditions suggest that loading and parking may be best located on this street.
 - The main entrance to the Pittock Block is located in the middle of the block along SW Washington St, almost directly across from the proposed parking garage entry.
 - The proposed building seems to turn its back on SW 9th Ave/Green Loop and landmark structures across the street with the proposed loading dock and hotel back-of-house uses on the second floor.
 - d. West End and Midtown Blocks character.
 - The general scale of massing of the proposed tower, which is about one-half block wide, fits in well with the scale of other relatively new towers in the Midtown Blocks area—the Fox Tower and Park Ave West—and the West End--Indigo.
 - Each building façade should have only one primary lobby entry. The hotel lobby entry would be best centered on SW 10th Ave, and the residential lobby entry may be best on the SW 9th Ave façade, rather than also facing NW 10th Ave.
 - Though staff recommends consideration of an angled corner entry facing O'Bryant Square, the proposed angled entry at the northwest corner is not contextual to the West End.
- 2. Pedestrian Realm.**
- a. The proposed size of the loading area street frontage is much too large. Loading frontage like that at the Park Avenue West tower or the Galleria can be used as a relative guide for maximum street frontage devoted to loading uses.
 - b. Few canopies appear to be proposed along SW 10th Ave and SW 9th Ave.
 - c. Stairs should be kept off the facades to allow more room for active ground floor uses to be visible from the street.
- 3. Quality & Permanence.**
- a. Integration of the tower massing with the terraced podium massing will be important considerations as the design evolves.
 - b. The massing of the tower is broken in two places: the pool area breaks the tower mass on floors 18 and 19 on the south and west elevations, and a hole may be cut into the north elevation (shown in plan but not in the massing studies) on the 18th floor with a folding window system. The coherency of the tower would be better maintained without these disruptions.
 - c. Balconies are proposed at the residential units (shown in plan only). Some are well-integrated into the massing, but others protrude. Coherency of the tower mass may be better preserved if all were set into the mass rather than protruding from it.
 - d. A telescoping maintenance crane is shown on the roof of the tower. This will be a permanent fixture that, while serving an important function, may detract from the overall quality of the tower.

Approval Criteria

The Design Review approval criteria for this site are the Central City Fundamental Design Guidelines.

Please contact me with any questions or concerns.

Attachments: Drawing Package, sent separately

Central City Fundamental Design Guidelines Matrix (blank, for your use)

Links: Central City Fundamental Design Guidelines
(<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/bps/34250>)