



City of Portland, Oregon
Bureau of Development Services
Land Use Services

FROM CONCEPT TO CONSTRUCTION

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MEMORANDUM

Date: July 10, 2015
To: Portland Design Commission
From: Jeff Mitchem, Development Review
503-823-7011
Re: 15-170829 DA – Block 41
Design Advice Request Summary Memo July 23, 2015

Overview

Attached, please find a drawing set and a CCFDG/SOWA Cheat Sheet for the Design Advice Request for a 6-story, 200-unit apartment building with

- *Retail.* 3,500 square feet of retail facing SW River Pkwy,
- *Auto Parking.* 187 underground parking spaces,
- *Bike Parking.* 342 residential long-term bike parking spaces (level P1-118, level 01-86, level 02-06-138). Two (2) retail short-term and two (2) retail long-term.
- *Loading.* Two (2) Std B loading stalls – NW corner
- *Materials* include brick on lower floors (3) and metal panel on upper floors (3). Metal canopies, aluminum storefront, VPI vinyl windows, glass railings.
- *Greenway* improvements are proposed per Title 33 Standards with deferred implementation. An on-site “riverwalk” is proposed parallel to the two required Greenway trails.

The major components of the project are:

- *Ground Floor.*
 - *River Pkwy.* Retail, residential lobby, leasing, central courtyard access
 - *Lane St.* Loading, garbage/recycling, townhomes (7) with stoops
 - *Abernathy St.* Parking access, residential lobby, townhomes (4) with stoops
 - *Greenway.* Townhomes, courtyard access, river walk.
 - *Courtyard.* Approximately 10,000SF, townhomes (11), lobby, long-term bikes. Oriented to Greenway with though-access to River Pkwy.
- *Upper Floors.* 5 levels of apartments (200 units) – studios, 1 bdr, 2 bdr.
- *Amenity Deck.* Level 4 exterior landscaped with seating and gathering areas including an interior lounge and workout room.
- *Roof.* Configured as patterned rock similar to components recently approved on Block 37 adjacent to the north. RTUs are ganged organically and screened.

Context

The South Waterfront sub-District is the last major underdeveloped area within Portland’s Central City. The area, which is the subject of the adopted South Waterfront Plan (adopted November 13, 2002), is a low-lying narrow stretch of land bound on the east by the Willamette River and on the west by the I-5 freeway. The sub-District lies within the larger 409-acre North Macadam Urban Renewal Area. Consisting of about 130 acres of land and 6,500 linear feet of riverfront, until recently the plan area was largely occupied by industrial uses and vacant parcels. The South Waterfront Plan includes a vision, policies, objectives and action items that will,

over the next 20 years, transform this area into a vibrant urban community integrated with the river environment.

The Willamette River and Greenway are the focal points of the plan, both physically and philosophically. This is evident throughout the plan's approach to its key components – the waterfront greenway trail; open spaces, including riverfront habitat areas and parks; the desired mix of uses; a pedestrian-oriented urban form; distinct architecture; a multi-modal transportation network; and environmentally sensitive development that incorporates sustainable building materials and strategies and innovative stormwater management techniques. A new street system, which hosts automobiles, bicycles, and the Portland Streetcar, links the district to the downtown core. The Portland Aerial Tram connects South Waterfront with Oregon Health Sciences University and other medical facilities on Marquam Hill.

The Block 41 site is bound by the South Waterfront Greenway Area on the east, SW River Parkway on the west, SW Lane St on the north, a designated "Green Accessway;" and by SW Abernathy on the south. The site is located within the North Macadam Pedestrian District. According to the South Waterfront District Street Plan, Criteria and Standards updated in 2007 by the City of Portland Office of Transportation, a "Green Accessway" is part of a constellation of street types identified for this portion of the City. Green Accessways provide the means for high-intensity pedestrian, bike, and visual accessibility through large blocks with a focus on "green" stormwater management solutions. Native and "native-like" vegetation is encouraged to provide habitat, and to recall the character of the riverfront. SW Lane is technically considered private property, but a 50'-0" wide pedestrian easement and PBOT standards lend it a strongly public sensibility.

Modifications/Adjustments

Modification – Tandem Parking (33.266.130.F.1.a.)

Required: Tandem parking requires an attendant.

Proposed: No attendant is provided.

Design Advice Topics

Below, staff has identified topics for inclusion in the DAR discussion. Please refer to the attached CCFDG/SOWADG Cheat Sheet for a summary of cited guidelines.

1. **Context.** The Applicant was advised to describe how the project's context – development character (massing, scale, height, views), greenway frontage, river (views, access), public space linkages, etc. – is responded to in the project's overall architectural parti. The massing diagrams in the DAR Drawing Set describe a parti predominated by the two primary influences of solar and river orientation with minimal genuflection toward adjacent buildings (Block 37) and Greenway step-down.
2. **Greenway**
 - a) **Frontage.** The Applicant was advised to emphasize the following design measures.
 - (1) *Massing / scale shifts* of the portion of the building fronting the greenway, especially in the northeast corner.
 - (2) *Transitions.* Layered gathering/movement spaces from private (unit stoops) to implied private (amenity and Riverwalk) to public (Greenway) with sufficient buffering between.
 - (3) *Setbacks* from the Greenway should be considered in regard to transitions and public/private interface. The proposed on-site "Riverwalk" (parallel to Greenway) is not consistently depicted in the DAR Drawing Set and appears to be physically constrained due to shallow Greenway setbacks at private stoops (4-6'.)
 - b) **Greenway Design Process/Timing.** The Applicant has indicated that they will be designing greenway improvements per Title 33 Standards and deferring construction, as allowed by code.
 - (1) 33.510.253 Standards design process.

- (2) 33.510.253.D.4.b. Deferred Construction within 4 years of Certificate of Occupancy.

3. Elevations

a) Composition, Materials and Coherency

- (1) *The Bi-partite building configuration* is expressed through the use of two primary building materials – brick on the bottom 3 floors and metal panel of the upper 3 floors. Staff questions the volumetric equivalency between the two masses, rather than a primary and secondary mass.
- (2) *Material and planar shifts* on all elevations should be less apparently indiscriminate and more programmatically derived.
- (3) *Balconies* on the north, west and south elevations appear undersized at approximately 5' x 5'. In addition, staff has concerns about the lack of recessed balconies integrated with massing shifts.

b) Greenway

- (1) More façade erosion and scale step down to the Greenway, especially given the Block 37 context (greater upper-story setbacks.)
- (2) Greater volume in the “entry portal” to the central courtyard which appears awkwardly scaled and vertically compressed.

c) SW River Pkwy

- (1) The primary composition of the upper 3 floors is a three-planar shift in 80' (approximate) segments, recessed approximately 2' per segment. Staff questions whether the recesses should be greater and/or more amplified.
- (2) Oblique storefront setback is depicted in plan, but does not appear to be rendered in the 3D model.

d) SW Lane St

- (1) Similar to the River Pkwy elevation, the primary composition of the upper 3 floors is a three-planar shift in 80' (approximate) segments, recessed approximately 2' per segment. Staff questions whether the recesses should be greater.
- (2) Proximity between loading door and townhome stoops with no apparent shift in wall plane concerns staff.

e) SW Abernathy

- (1) Similar to the other elevations, the primary composition of the upper 3 floors is a three-planar shift in 80' (approximate) segments, recessed approximately 2' per segment. Staff questions whether the recesses should be greater.
- (2) Inconsistency in plans/renderings leads to confusion about composition of this façade. The Ground Floor Plan depicts a well integrated garage entry and nicely composed lobby and townhome separation. Elevations and renderings depict a flatter, less differentiated façade.

4. Rooftop

a) Amenity

- (1) Staff is supportive of the Greenway orientation with direct visual and physical access to Greenway trail.
- (2) SOWA has a majority of green- and eco-roofs. Block 37 was the first approved rock surface for a roof. Staff seeks Commission input on the continuation of this trend, especially in light of the higher context development looking down on the project.

5. Central Courtyard

a) Pedestrian Access

- (1) From River Pkwy E-W connection is provided via central walkway into courtyard to Riverwalk (constrained frontage condition at residential stoops, per item 2.A.(3) above) to Lane St (N) and Abernathy St (S).

- (2) No direct Greenway access. Must travel north or south along the Riverwalk to either Lane or Abernathy Sts.

b) Solar Exposure

- (1) Building massing constrains exposure to the southeast (eroded 4th floor amenity deck).
- (2) Significant afternoon shadow cast due to ground-level courtyard depth (50') relative to adjacent south building wall (75').

c) Activation

- (1) Limited to private stoop frontage.
- (2) Potential blank wall condition at entry to courtyard from SW River Pkwy.
- (3) Possible to open leasing/lobby/retail and/or bike room into courtyard as social/gathering space?

d) Portal – Opening to Greenway from Courtyard

- (1) 18' clear x 38' wide. The awkward proportion appears squat. Staff advises increasing the vertical to 24' (1.618).

The review standards and criteria are the Central City Plan District (Chapter 33.510) and Central City Fundamental Design Guidelines (tabular summaries of which are attached to this memo) and the South Waterfront Design Guidelines. Please contact me with any questions or concerns – 503.823.7011 | jeffrey.mitchem@portlandoregon.gov.

Attachments: Central City Fundamental / South Waterfront Design Guidelines **Cheat Sheet**