



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

FROM CONCEPT TO CONSTRUCTION

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MEMORANDUM

Date: September 4, 2015
To: Portland Design Commission
From: Grace Jeffreys, Development Review
503-823-7840
Re: 15-179927 DA – The Park Office
Design Advice Request Summary Memo for September 14, 2015 Hearing

Please find attached a revised drawing set and CCFDG/RDDG Summary Chart for the Design Advice Request for a mixed-use development project consisting of two buildings, a central plaza and below grade parking. The site is a large, irregular parcel across NW Front Avenue immediately west of Riverscape. You have seen a different proposal on this same site, most recently at the January 15, 2015 Design Commission Hearing (see summary notes previously sent August 13). This proposal was scheduled for a DA hearing on August 20th, but was rescheduled due to extended hearings. Since the initial drawing submittal sent on August 13, applicants have revised proposal in response to comments from the neighborhood and staff regarding block structure and frontage along NW 17th.

OVERVIEW

Proposal consists of two new buildings providing approximately 270,000 square feet of office, ground floor retail and amenity space, and underground parking. A single level of below-grade parking will provide up to 1.8 parking spaces per 1000 SF of building area and up to one (1) bike parking space per 1000 square feet of office. The two four- to six-story office buildings flank a central garden/plaza and both buildings contain roof terraces, inset decks and eco-roofs. A bike path is proposed between the buildings and the rail line.

NOTES:

- **Street vacation/s:** Private development in the right-of-way cannot be proposed unless the year-long (+) street vacation process has been completed. The applicant has applied for an Early Assistance meeting to discuss the street vacation process for Terminal Street, which follows the railroad tracks. The very short section of NW Upshur that fronts the property to the southwest was not included in this application. If this short piece NW Upshur is not vacated, zoning code standards such as 10' maximum setbacks, ground floor windows, and pedestrian standards will apply. Modifications to these may be requested. (Refer to Street vacation diagram attached)
- **Superblock:** If Terminal Street is vacated, standards for Superblock will apply. These include a maximum length to width ratio of 3:1 for the plaza, 12' wide minimum hard surfaces, and open area minimum of 50% area of vacated street.
- **Loading Access:** The current proposal showing loading access at the south end of the site from NW Front which is not yet approvable per PBOT. Applicants are working with PBOT to address this.
- **Adjustments/ Modifications Anticipated:** At time of submittal, applicant anticipates requesting an Adjustment to loading requirements to provide only one on-site loading space rather than the two required to the North Building. The project does propose providing the required two loading spaces to the South Building. Further Modifications may be requested relating to NW Upshur, as mentioned above.
- **Proposed Road Diet on Front Avenue:** The project intends to dedicate the property required for on-street parking on NW Front Avenue if and when the "Road Diet" is implemented. The owner

would install the correct curb locations, assuming that the lane repainting and bike lane extension will wait until continuity can be provided on Front Avenue from NW 15th to NW 9th.

DESIGN ADVICE TOPICS:

Below, staff has identified topics for inclusion in the DAR discussion.

1. **Block Structure/Massing/Context:** Proposed block configuration has been revised to better respond to existing urban fabric and block structures. The plaza has been revised to splay outward in both directions.
 - a. Plaza orientation. Would river connections be stronger if the larger part of the splay faced towards and better lines up with the open plaza created by the Riverscape and the river across NW Front, instead of towards the railway and pearl neighborhood beyond? Alternatively, can the massing of the buildings shift north so that the two plazas overlap, creating a stronger dialog between them?
 - b. NW 16th/Parking & Loading Access: Below-grade parking access ramps directly down from Front. While staff understands the discussion regarding the challenges of developing the site, if this access remained at grade through to the rear of the site, a more “street-like” feel at NW 16th could be created.
2. **NW 17th Frontage:** Street frontage along NW 17th has been revised to create a more urban edge, providing an opportunity for retail uses to activate the street. The development also now addresses the adjacent Dockside building at the corner of NW 17th & Front in a more urban manner. Are the relationships/ setbacks between the proposal and Dockside at the north and the railway at the south appropriate?
3. **Terminal & Upshur Streets/ South-west Frontage and South-east Corner:** The previous proposal showed a ground floor scheme with a bike path along the railway. A revised landscape/ plaza plan has not been submitted, but referring to previous drawings, are commissioners supportive of a continuous bike/pedestrian trail if Terminal is vacated, connecting NW Front to NW 17th?
4. **Building Design.**
 - a. The rhythm created by the brick piers and windows and the horizontal steel at floor levels reinterprets the historic warehouse and industrial nature of the area in a modern way. The ground floor recesses and inset decks carved out behind this structure help strengthen the concept. Staff would appreciate input on the way the new proposal treats the openings carved out at the top and edges of the building. The previous design showed structure framing these carve openings, while the new proposal eliminates the surrounding structure.
 - b. Previously, staff felt the overall design of the buildings needed more clarity, identity, and/or hierarchy. The revised proposal includes a parti which splits buildings along the center of the block and shifts them in relationship to each other. This is expressed in the development of the facades and the massing of the buildings. Does commission have further input?
 - c. The concept to reduce barriers between the inside and outside spaces of the buildings is compelling, and details will be critical to help illustrate how this is carried forward.
5. **Design and Materials.** Material choices are dark, Norman brick, milled steel and curtain wall. The applicant was asked to bring samples and further information to the hearing. Staff would like the Design Commissions input on the proposed steel cladding.
6. **Other Items at Commissioner Discretion.**

The review standards and criteria are the *Central City Plan District* (Chapter 33.510), the *Central City Fundamental Design Guidelines* and the *River District Design Guidelines*. (Tabular summaries of the guidelines are attached to this memo) Please contact me with any question or concerns: 503-823-7840, grace.jeffreys@portlandoregon.gov.

Attachments:

Central City Fundamental / River District Design Guidelines Summary Chart, Revised 9/3/15
Street Vacation Diagram

Letter from Steve Pinger, NWDA Planning Committee, 8/20/15. Note comments are based on previous scheme, sent 8/13/15.