



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

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MEMORANDUM

Date: February 22, 2016
To: Jenny Jenkins, ANKROM MOISAN ARCHITECTS
From: Benjamin Nielsen, City Planner, Land Use Services
Benjamin.nielsen@portlandoregon.gov, (503) 823-7812
Re: 15-269535 DA – Bridge Housing / Riverplace Parcel 3
Design Advice Request Summary Memo for February 18, 2016 Hearing -

Thank you for taking advantage of the opportunity to hold a Design Advice Request regarding your project. I hope you find it informative and valuable as you continue with your project development. Attached is a summary of the comments provided by the Design Commission at the February 18, 2016 Design Advice Request. This summary was generated from notes taken at the public meeting and a subsequent review of the public meeting recordings. To review those recordings, please visit: <http://efiles.portlandoregon.gov/Record/8573184>.

These Design Commission comments are intended to guide you in further design exploration of your project. These comments may also inform City staff when giving guidance over the course of future related land use reviews. It should be understood that these comments address the project as presented on February 18, 2016. As the project design evolves, the comments, too, may evolve or may no longer be pertinent.

Design Advice Requests are not intended to substitute for other Code-required land use or legislative procedures. Please keep in mind that the formal Type III land use review process [which includes a pre-application, a land use review application, public notification, a Staff Report and a public hearing] must be followed once the Design Advice Request meetings are complete, if formal approval for specific elements of your project is desired.

Please continue to coordinate with me as you prepare your formal land use application, or if you desire another Design Advice Request meeting with the Commission.

Encl:
Summary Memo

Cc: Design Commission
Respondents

This memo summarizes **Design Commission** design direction provided on February 18, 2016.

Commissioners in attendance on February 18, 2016: David Wark (Chair), Tad Savinar (Vice-Chair), Julie Livingston, Don Vallaster.

Site Design & Site Issues

- The Commissioners' biggest area of concern is the new private street/driveway/garden court extension of SW River Drive, particularly how much of this area is devoted to parking access for the retail spaces and the underground garage. The Commissioners provided strong, if nuanced, guidance to look at providing the majority of, and preferably all, parking access from SW Moody Ave. The Commissioners said that providing parking access off this street extension is “not a non-starter, but really close” to one.
 - Work to clearly define the character and nature of this new street.
 - This outdoor space currently seems too undefined and too devoted to cars. If parking access were to remain on this street, determine how people can successfully coexist with automobiles—there may be a workable design solution that can accommodate both, but it's likely a compromise and might not be the best overall design solution. One idea suggested by the Commissioners is to consider providing on-street parking on at least one side to provide a buffer to pedestrians—something akin to SW Park Avenue. Pedestrian space needs to be very clearly defined.
 - The Commissioners reiterated several times that this street needs to be something engaging and that contributes to the success and vitality of your project and the neighborhood—this is tied in with extending active ground floor uses farther to the south along this street.
 - This private street/garden court also needs to serve to help the two buildings relate to each other.
- What is the relationship of the buildings and the landscape to each other? They seem quite different right now—the landscaping, though the softer element, is more angular and aggressive than the buildings. What's the potential for these two elements to be more unified?
- There were some questions about the trellis and the large, circular feature in the site plan. Who will be using this and how will this trellis be used? It intersects awkwardly with the garage doors and parking access. If parking access were not to be provided from here to the underground garage, this element could be a lot more approachable.
- The entire south side of the site and buildings are “pretty darn visible,” and the site should be thought of as a “total gateway” – serving both as a gateway into Downtown from the south and into the South Waterfront from the north and west. The site and buildings need to be designed and composed on all sides—the south side cannot be an afterthought—it needs to be part of the entire composition.
 - One Commissioner saw opportunities for vertical green elements—hanging gardens or vines—to help incorporate elements of the landscape and the buildings.
 - Also consider how the electrical substation will be viewed with the buildings. Turning your back on the substation is not an appropriate solution—it's an open space, and it could be something quirky or wacky. Commissioner Savinar referenced a substation in Seattle which incorporates an artistic intervention by Buster Simpson from the late 1970s or early 1980s as an example of transforming it into a really unique and interesting place that people want to see.
 - Generally speaking, also remember to consider all the additional infrastructure surrounding the site. Commissioner Wark commented on how well the bicycle ramp talks about the site's context, and stated that the site needs more gestures like that. The East Building, particularly, could be anywhere—how can that building talk about the forces that are acting on it and around it right now?
 - A final summary comment was added to “embrace the substation with landscaping.”
- Explore the potential to connect the southern termination of the private street/garden court with the bike path along the western edge of the site.
- Provide more of the surrounding context on your site plans, including the entirety of SW River Pkwy and the alignment of SW River Dr to the north, including the streetcar stops, crosswalks, signal locations, and centerline of River Dr.

Massing

- What is the architectural relationship between the two buildings? Are there shared elements, and are they going to dialog with each other? Overall the massing seems good, excepting the comments below.
- It seems like the two buildings are gesturing towards each other, but the East Building is turning its shoulder towards the private street/garden court below and to the West Building. The darker-colored western wing on the East Building should be pulled back to allow the massing of the two buildings to relate more to each other and to allow the roof terrace landscaping on both buildings to leapfrog from one to the other. Commissioner Livingston suggested this would do a lot to make the buildings seem more “in the round.”
- Commissioner Vallaster also commented that the east wing of the West Building seemed like a stuck-on piece, and that though it’s the same scale as the East Building, they don’t really relate to each other or to the massing of the larger tower. Commissioner Livingston added that she hoped the east wing on the West Building and the west wing on the East Building could both be modified in a way to strengthen the tower on the West Building.

Elevations & Composition

- Commissioners complimented the composition of the West Building, saying there was a self-assuredness to the tower and contrasted that with the busyness and relative mania of the East Building. They stated that the East building should be calmed down and as self-assured as the West Building.
- The northeast corner of the East Building could be a very successful, nice urban experience, but one Commissioner recommended working on the geometries of this corner, which seemed a little awkward.
- There seemed to be no rationale behind the punched windows at the ground floors on the East Building, and the Commissioners were unanimous that these should be removed from the ground floor, though they seemed to work at the maker spaces. Specifically, the punched windows were called the wrong typology for a retail-type space (and for a lobby) and that they suggested a residential space was behind.
- Canopies will be important to include along the ground floors.
- Regarding balconies, there was agreement that the East Building needs more—it would enliven the entire building. The West Building could go without balconies if the building were extremely well-composed, otherwise modest balconies or Juliette balconies may be needed there.

Ground Floor Active Uses

- As stated above in the Site Design & Site Issues section, the Commissioners would like to see active uses extend south along the new private street/garden court and replace some or all of the parking functions. How do you pull people down the length of the street? How do you make the street into a place—something that contributes to your project?
- Ideally, active uses would extend farther south along SW Moody Ave as well, but Commissioners indicated that the extent of active uses there may be sufficient given the context of the vicinity.

Materials

- Commissioners were very skeptical of the proposed brick gradations on the East Building and recommended pursuing a simpler brick concept. However, if the gradient brick were to be used, there was discussion that it should begin at the northeast, rounded corner rather than beginning and ending at either end on the south side.
- Few comments were offered at this point about the concrete discussed at the base or the white, composite metal panel mentioned on the West Building. The large gray masses between the white frames and windows shouldn’t be flat metal, and the Commission seemed agreeable (without seeing details at this point) to the idea of a ribbed metal or other textured material here.

Public Testimony

- Parking is a concern for Deryl Grenz and Caroline Whitney, and more should be added for both residential and commercial uses.
- Ms. Whitney also had comments about the proposed brick façade being a component that is already too common in the area—look for something more creative.
- Ms. Whitney also stated that a grocery store—even a small one—would be a great addition to the neighborhood.

Exhibit List

- A. Applicant's Submittals
 - 1. Original Drawing Set
 - 2. Revised Draft Drawing Set
 - 3. Revised Drawing Set for 2/18/2016 Hearing
- B. Zoning Map
- C. Drawings
 - 1-40. Revised Drawing Set for 2/18/2016 Hearing
- D. Notification
 - 1. Posting instructions sent to applicant
 - 2. Posting notice as sent to applicant
 - 4. Applicant's statement certifying posting
 - 5. General information on DAR process included with e-mailed posting/notice
- E. Service Bureau Comments
 - 1. Bureau of Environmental Services
 - 2. Portland Bureau of Transportation
- F. Public Testimony
 - 1. Daryl Grenz, email regarding need for more parking spaces, received 2/18/2016
 - 2. Public Testimony Sign-up Sheet for 2/18/2016 hearing
- G. Other
 - 1. Application form
 - 2. Staff Presentation to the Design Commission on 2/18/2016
 - 3. Applicant's Presentation to the Design Commission on 2/18/2016