



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

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MEMORANDUM

Date: September 5, 2018
To: Phil Beyl & Jesse Emory, GBD ARCHITECTS
From: Benjamin Nielsen, Senior City Planner
Benjamin.Nielsen@portlandoregon.gov, 503-823-7812
Re: 18-159309 DA – Block 216
Design Advice Request Summary Memo August 16, 2018

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 August 16, 2018 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/11841488/>.

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 August 16, 2018. 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 August 16, 2018.

Commissioners in attendance on August 16, 2018: Andrew Clarke, Julie Livingston (chair), Jessica Molinar, Zari Santner, Tad Savinar (vice-chair), Don Vallaster

Executive Summary

- Commissioners stressed several times that this building is precedent setting and probably the most important building and site that this commission will review. “It will set the tone for everything in the city that comes next.” Commissioners also view this as a “special site that needs a special response to context.”
- Commissioners remain concerned that the proposed building—which they view as one of the most important buildings and sites in the city center—does not yet integrate well with its immediate historic context, with wider context of taller buildings in the Midtown Park Blocks and West End, and in the broad context of the city’s skyline. A large-scale rethinking of how the building responds to these three scales is needed to address this overriding issue.
- Discussion about how the building relates to the Green Loop and SW 9th Ave context was mostly pushed to a continued DAR on August 23, 2018, though commissioners expressed concerns about setting precedent for the rest of the Green Loop by modifying the entire setback standard to zero.

Context

- As stated above, Commissioners generally view the idea of context on three scales for this proposal: the immediate context of the landmark buildings, which are experienced from the pedestrian scale and up to 5-6 stories in height, or so; a middle-scale context—the body of the tower—which responds to the more-contemporary language of newer, taller buildings in the surrounding neighborhoods; and a district-scale context which considers the tower, and particularly its top, in the context of the city’s skyline and how the building is perceived from distant locations like a bridge or the river.
 - One commissioner stated that it “feels like the building is trying to be all those things at all times from all levels,” and that it is not cohesive. Another asked what the important moves were versus the subtle ones and pointed out that they all seemed the same right now.
 - Due to the area’s strong context, which has buildings that are “consistently honest and obvious and add a rhythm to the city”, that the building overall needs to be much more “succinct and clear”, rather than “referential”. Commissioners were clear to point out that the design does not need to be “muted”, “dumbed-down”, or not contemporary, but rather the design needs to be “clarified”.
 - One commissioner said, “Start to strip away; there’s a lot left that will successfully meet guidelines.” Another asked how you can reduce the design to its relevant moves.
- Commissioners stated that the podium of the proposed building did not respond sufficiently to the surrounding historic landmark building context.
 - Commissioners stated that the overall irregularity of the podium—both in form and façade articulation—did not create a good relationship to the surrounding landmark buildings.
 - The focus on adjacent building datums was viewed as being an insufficient response and likely very difficult to discern.
 - One commissioner pointed out that the entries need to be more-clearly expressed and asked how the design might take advantage of them and make them read in different ways.
 - Regarding the terraces, commissioners stated that a regularized, “hard-edge” terraces that fit in with the nearby historic context and that are well-integrated with the rest of the building design would be more appropriate; “the building should be terracing...honestly and in a consistent manner.”

- Referencing back to the overall podium design, one commissioner stated that the “terracing is such a strong move unto itself; all the other façade changes are watering it down.”
- The commission also expressed that the terraces need to provide an experience to pedestrians outside the building, and not just those inside. The terraces need to respond to O’Bryant Square and relate to the Green Loop as well as being well-integrated with the overall building composition. The cascading/draping greenery shown in inspiration/concept photos should be reflected in the design.
- Commissioners also discussed the context of the tower from the aforementioned middle-scale and city-scale. They stated that it would best integrate with and complement the existing context with a few simple, strong moves.
- Discussion about how the building relates to the Green Loop and SW 9th Ave context were largely pushed to a continued DAR on August 23, 2018, though commissioners stated that the building needs to strongly reinforce the future Green Loop context and O’Bryant Square with active, flexible ground floor uses, entries, and stopping places as well as a strong, coherent overall design.

Public Realm

- Overall, commissioners stated that the building is doing a good job meeting the weather protection guideline (B6). Commissioners also thought the pedestrian realm was, in general, benefiting from a “richly-programmed” ground floor, with some exceptions, as described below.
- Some commissioners expressed concerns that the north and south facades were the least successful, particularly at the ground level, and that in light of the modification request to the setback along SW 9th, these needed an extra effort to be more consistent with the guidelines.
 - Pay particular attention to ground floor response to guidelines regarding stopping places and support of O’Bryant Square; “entrances can be special places.”
 - All four streets are important pedestrian streets. There should be more expression of entryways along all four.
- Commissioners have particular concerns about the design of the retail space (food hall) along SW 9th Ave.
 - One commissioner reiterated his earlier comment that food carts/stalls should open directly onto SW 9th Ave to offer a completely different experience than is found elsewhere in Portland—one that is “gritty and earthy”.
 - Another commissioner agreed and referenced the success of the food carts at Portland International Airport (in Concourse C).
 - A third also agreed and stated that there was an opportunity for SW 9th Ave to be all service windows with an interior food court behind.
 - Commissioners expressed concern about the future of the food hall space vis a vis the setback modification along SW 9th Ave. Specifically, the food hall could change into a standard retail space (housing a drug store, for example) or other much less active commercial use (such as a dentist’s office). Commissioners stated that it will be critical to show how the space can transform into a more-standard retail/commercial use space and still successfully meet both the design guidelines and reinforce the purpose and desired character of the Green Loop.
- Nearly all commissioners stated that the proposed hotel drop-off area will not meet design guidelines that strive for an active streetscape with flexible-use spaces, and that it should be internalized. They also stated that it would not successfully meet guidelines B1 – Reinforce and Enhance the Pedestrian System and B2 – Protect the Pedestrian. One stated, “the more area given to auto activities, the more harm that does to that side of the street.”

- Commissioners asked to see different concepts for how to incorporate the drop-off area into the building, including options that do not end up working out.
- Commissioners touched briefly on a few aspects of the SW 9th Ave/Green Loop frontage.
 - They pushed to remove all parking on the street, or at least on the west side, fronting the building, and devote that area to space for pedestrians and pocket parks.
- The ground floor response to guideline B4 – Provide Stopping and Viewing Places needs more development.
- Some commissioners questioned the placement of numerous large vents along the sidewalk as well as the large gas meter area next to the large loading area. They expressed concerns about the human experience of walking past metal vents as opposed to windows or building material and stated that vents, louvers, and grilles should not be expressed where they are not needed.
- Commissioners also pointed out a somewhat minor comment regarding the fire command room, stating that it should be moved off of the exterior face of the building.

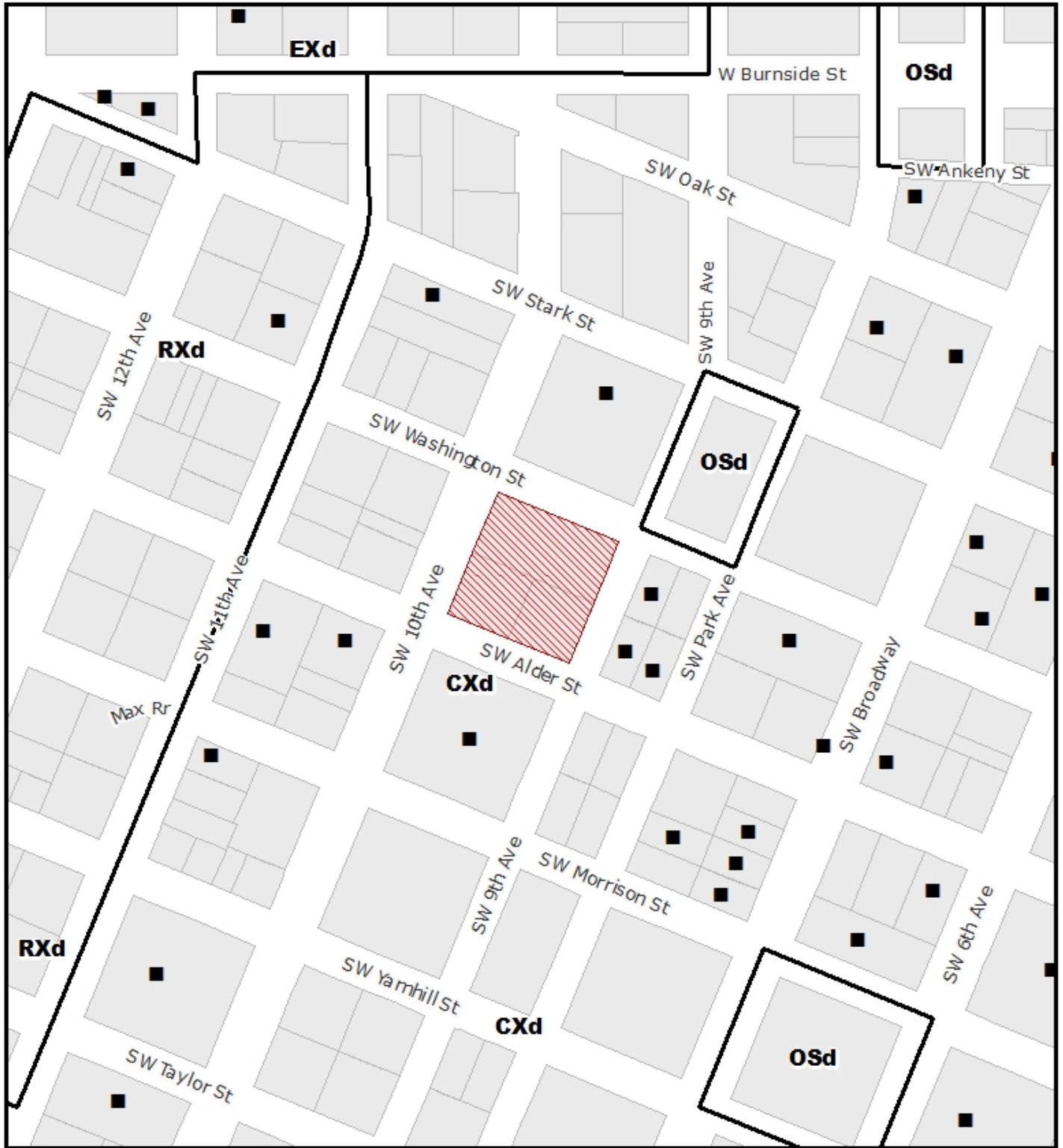
Quality & Permanence

- Regarding guidelines pertaining to quality and permanence, commissioners focused most of their conversation around overall building coherency and stated that materials shown so far exhibit very high quality.
 - Commissioners asked that the design team continue to bring in material samples to future Design Advice Requests and the eventual Design Review hearing(s).
- Regarding coherency (guideline C5):
 - Commissioners mostly agreed with staff comments regarding quality and permanence in the staff memo to the commission, dated August 10, 2018.
 - Commissioners stressed that the building needs additional simplification and clarification. They were “looking for the logic and reason” of how the building is put together and how it relates to its surroundings. It should be “simple and elegant”, though staff notes that simple does not mean “simplistic”.
 - One commissioner stated that the quality of design of the building is not quite synced up with the quality of the proposed materials.
 - There was quite a bit of discussion about how the podium and tower relate to each other. Commissioners expressed concern that the tower seemed devoid of any relation to the podium; however, they also stated that contrast between the tower and the podium is as important as the relationship between the two. One commissioner added that “contrast may create the kind of specialness that this area demands.”
 - One commissioner noted that the pilaster expression of the east and west elevations becomes diluted on the south and, particularly, north elevations. This causes the podium to lose its strength and dilutes the distinction between the tower and the podium.
 - One commissioner also recommended bringing back the “dovetail” of the tower into the podium, as it helped reinforce the angular design concept expressed in the tower.
 - Regarding the terracing on the east side of the podium, commissioners agreed that it needed to be more regularized.
 - Regarding the tower, commissioners said that it should be “extremely proud, solid, and centered” and contrasted it to the Fox Tower, which has “many folds and flips” and is not what this building should be.
 - One commissioner expressed some consternation with the proposed fins on the tower, stating that they seemed like they were “from another vocabulary.”

- o Regarding the top of the tower, one commissioner said that it is “going to plant the flag for everything south and west” of the site. Another said that the “bar is high.”

Exhibit List

- A. Applicant’s Submittals
 - 1. Original drawings & narrative
 - 2. Drawing set, received 05/25/2018
 - 3. Revised drawing set/presentation to Design Commission, received 06/07/2018
 - 4. Revised draft drawing set, received 08/01/2018 and dated 08/16/2018
 - 5. Revised drawing set, received 08/08/2018 and dated 08/16/2018
 - 6. Table of Contents sheet for exhibit A.5
 - 7. Revised drawing set/presentation to Design Commission, received 08/16/2018
- B. Zoning Map (attached)
- C. Drawings
 - 1-127. See Exhibit A.5 (exhibits C.11, C.93 & C.94 attached)
- D. Notification
 - 1. Posting instructions sent to applicant
 - 2. Posting notice as sent to applicant
 - 3. Applicant’s statement certifying posting
 - 4. General information on DAR process included with e-mailed posting/notice
- E. Service Bureau Comments
 - 1. BES
 - 2. PBOT
- F. Public Testimony
 - 1. Comment sign-in sheet from 06/07/2018
 - 2. Suzanne H. Crowhurst Lennard, 06/07/2018, comments in opposition
 - 3. Deanna Mueller-Crispin, 06/07/2018, comments in opposition
- G. Other
 - 1. Application form
 - 2. Email chain among PP&R, BPS, PBOT, and BDS staff re: Park Avenue Urban Design Vision, 05/14 - 05/16/2018
 - 3. Staff Memo to the Design Commission, 06/01/2018
 - 4. Staff Presentation to the Design Commission, 06/07/2018
 - 5. Design Advice Request Summary Notes from 06/07/2018, dated 06/28/2018
 - 6. Email from Kurt Krueger, PBOT, re: Green Loop, 07/04/2018
 - 7. Email from Laura Lillard, BPS, re: SW 9th Ave design, 07/30/2018
 - 8. Allison Rouse, Portland Parks & Recreation, 08/14/2018, comments re: O’Byrant Square



ZONING



THIS SITE LIES WITHIN THE:
 CENTRAL CITY PLAN DISTRICT
 DOWNTOWN SUBDISTRICT
 WEST END SUBAREA



Site



Historic Landmark

File No.	EA 18-159309 DA
1/4 Section	3029
Scale	1 inch = 200 feet
State ID	1N1E34CC 5900
Exhibit	B Apr 25, 2018



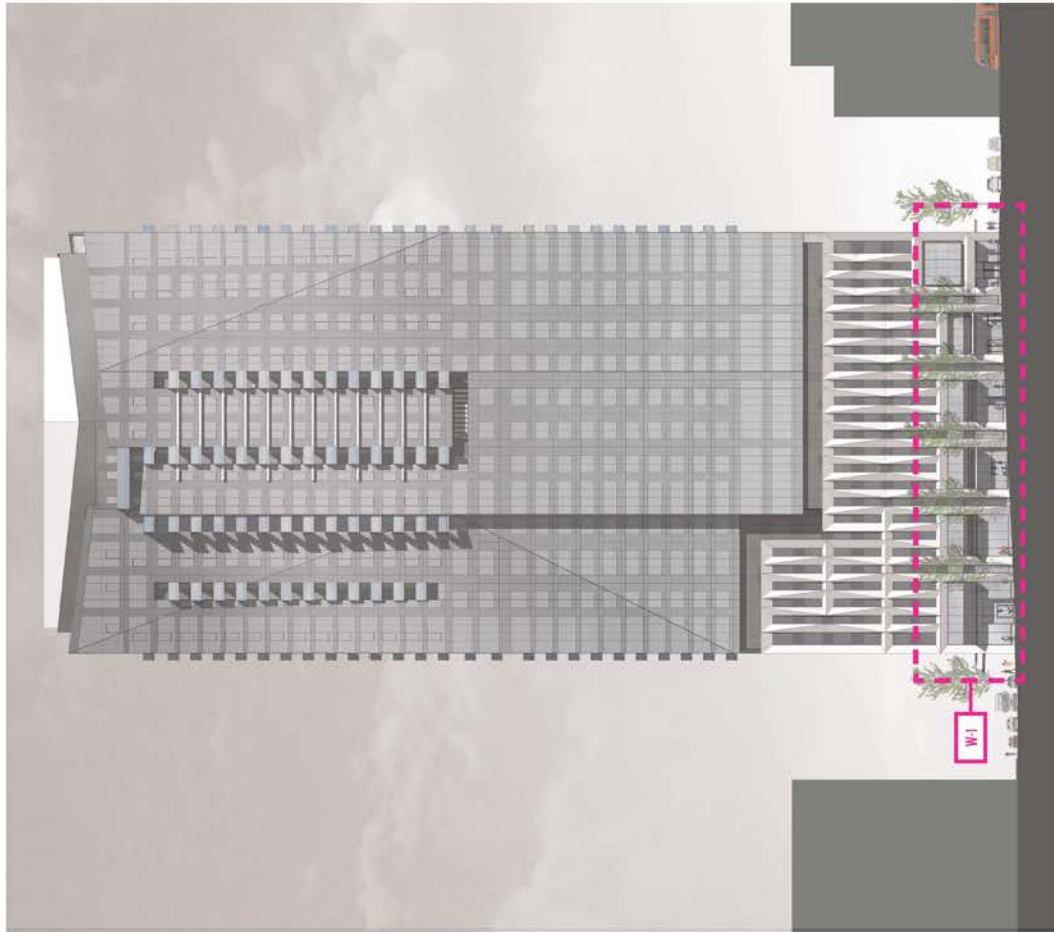
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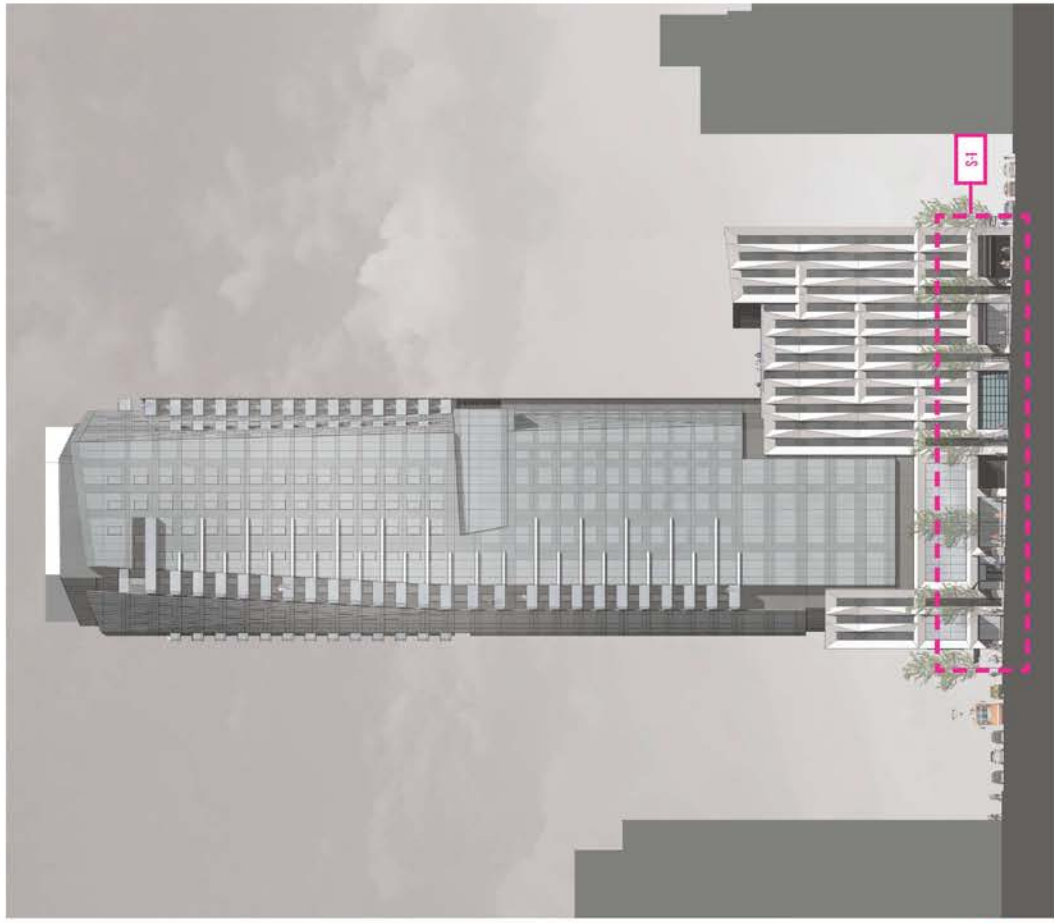
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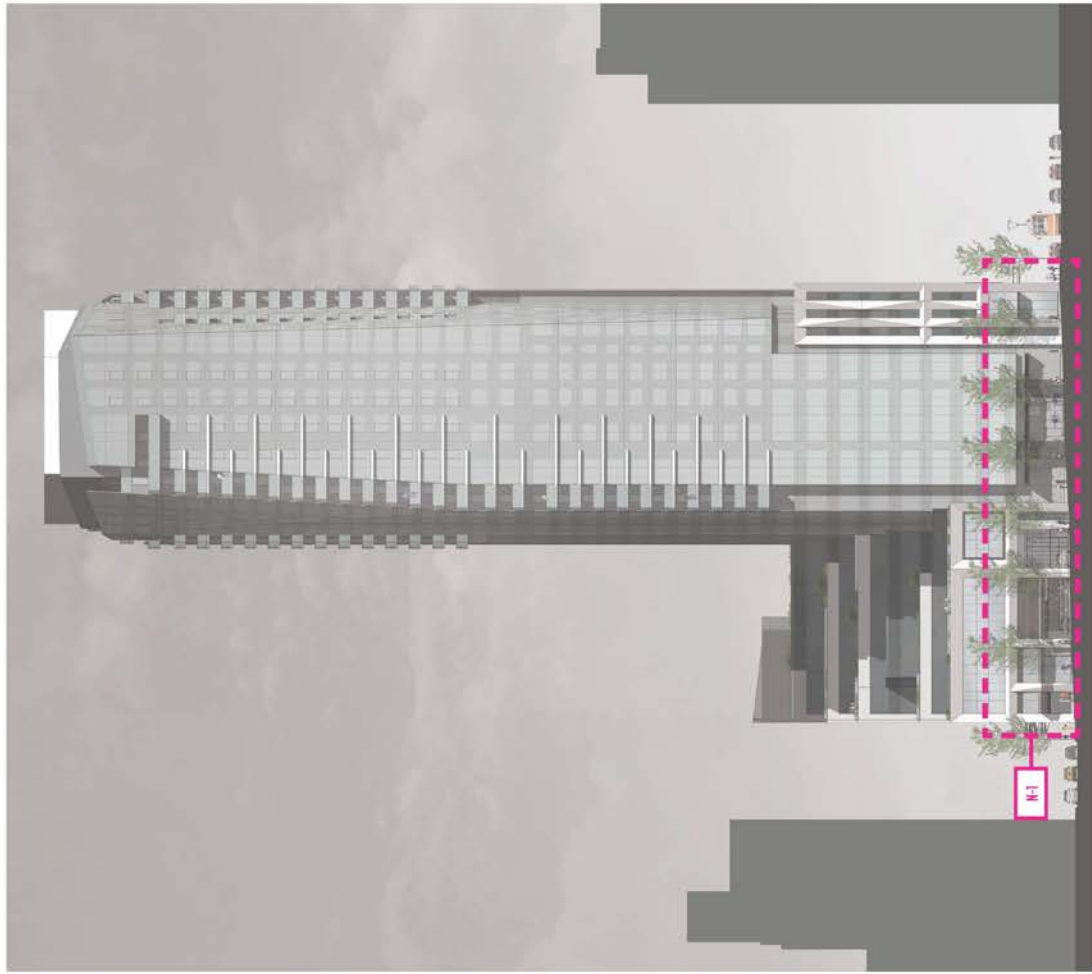
FLOOR PLAN | LEVEL 01



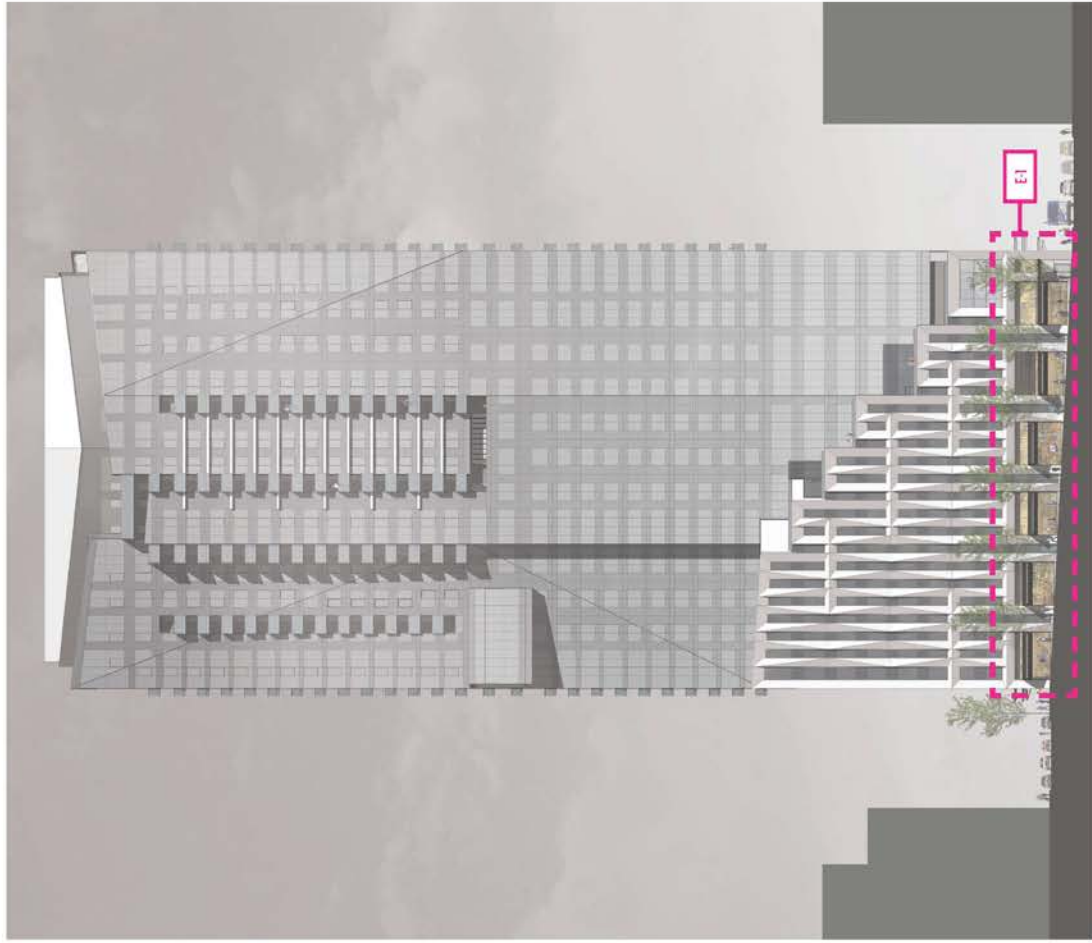
WEST ELEVATION



SOUTH ELEVATION



NORTH ELEVATION



EAST ELEVATION