



# City of Portland Landmarks Commission

## Design Advice Request

### DISCUSSION MEMO

**Date:** January 22, 2019  
**To:** Historic Landmarks Commission  
**From:** Meriam Rahali, Historic Resource Review  
 503-823-5363 | Meriam.Rahali@portlandoregon.gov  
**Re:** EA 18-264092 DA – PAE Living Building  
 Design Advice Request Memo – January 28, 2019

Attached is a drawing set and approval criteria matrix for the Design Advice Request meeting scheduled on January 28, 2019. Please contact me with any questions or concerns.

#### I. DEVELOPMENT TEAM BIO

<b>Architect</b>	Justin Brooks   ZGF Architects
<b>Owner’s Representative</b>	Jill Sherman   Gerding Edlen
<b>Project Valuation</b>	\$19 Million

#### II. PROGRAM & ZONING OVERVIEW

Design Advice Request meeting for a proposed 5-story, 58,733 square feet mixed-use retail and office building. The cross laminated timber structure will be in the Skidmore/Old Town Historic District and is planned to be designed to the Living Building Challenge guidelines. The proposal consists of the following primary component:

- **The Site** is zoned CX (Central Commercial) with Design and Historic Resource Protection Overlays. The site area is 11,740 SF (lot 1= 10,000 SF and lot 2= 1,740 SF).
- **Floor Area Ratio (FAR) and FAR Bonuses 33.510.200 and 33.510.205.** The maximum FAR for this site is 4:1. The proposed FAR is 5:1. The maximum FAR can be increased on a site if FAR is transferred or earned through a bonus as allowed by 33.510.205, Floor Area Bonus and Transfer Options. No information has been provided by the applicant on how FAR increase will be achievable.
- **Height 33.510.210.** The base height limit is 75 feet. The site is within an area not eligible for additional height. Minor projections listed in 33.510.210.B.2 are allowed to extend above the base height, except in a View Corridor, if the site is not eligible for height increase, projections above the height limit are prohibited. The east section of the site is located in a View Corridor where projections above 75 feet are prohibited.
- Approximately 4,900 SF of ground floor **retail** space on SW Pine Street and SW 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue, and 2<sup>nd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> floors of **office space**.
- **Office lobby** on SW 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue.
- Ground floor **bike hub** including bike storage, showers, restrooms, and lockers for tenant use, and **mechanical, electrical and compost** spaces.

- Large **rooftop solar array** and a small number of **rooftop mechanical equipment** located outside the View Corridor.
- Proposed **exterior materials** include brick veneer facades with Glass Fiber Reinforced Concrete (GFRC) used as an accent material around the ground level fenestration, painted metal panels above 2<sup>nd</sup> through 4<sup>th</sup> floors fenestration, and fiberglass triple-glazed storefront systems (A scheme of the building using Glass Fiber Reinforced Concrete (GFRC) as the main material was included in the drawing set as a design reference only. Because of higher cost, this scheme will not be considered.)

The following **Modifications/Adjustments** will be required:

**33.510.210** – to not meet Bird-Safe Exterior Glazing standards. The applicant has not confirmed if a Modification will be pursued;

**33.510.243** – to not meet Ecoroofs standards. Any Modification of the Ecoroofs standards must be approved by the Bureau of Environmental Services (BES);

**33.266.310** – to not meet the number of required on-site loading spaces from two Standard A spaces to none. Any Adjustment to the Loading standards must be approved by the Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT). PBOT will require a loading demand analysis in order to make their recommendation on this Adjustment.

The following **Dedication** will be required:

A 3-foot dedication along SW 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue will be required by the Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT). This proposal does not take into consideration this dedication. The applicant is appealing the dedication requirement. PBOT will be making the final decision.

**III. APPROVAL CRITERIA:** *Skidmore/Old Town Historic District Design Guidelines, Central City Fundamental Design Guidelines; 33.805.040 [Adjustment] Approval criteria and/or 33.846.070 Modifications Considered During Historic Resource Review. See attached matrix.*

#### **IV. STAFF ANALYSIS & RECOMMENDED DAR DISCUSSION TOPICS**

Staff advise you consider the following among your discussion items on January 28, 2019:

##### **Macro Level Issues:**

- 1. First Avenue.** In the early city, First Avenue was a key commercial street. In many respects, First Avenue is still the urban spine and main street of the District, critical to its historic sense of place. The proposed building reinforces the continuity of this urban spine, while adds to the vitality of its streetscape. The office entry, originally proposed on SW Pine Street, was moved to SW 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue to reinforce the importance of First Avenue. Staff welcomes any comments on the building's relationship to SW 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue, including the location of the lobby.
- 2. Mass, Scale, and Form.** The proposed building is 75 feet high but with only 5 stories. Most buildings in the District are generally two to five stories in height, but not many are 75 feet high. This fact, combined with its location between the three-story tall Pine Street Market to the west, and a surface parking to the north, puts pressure on the proposed building to be compatible with the characteristics of the District. Because of the empty lot to the north of the proposal and the small existing buildings to the south, staff is concerned about the best way to mitigate the perceived scale of the proposed building along SW 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue. Staff welcomes the Commission's comments on the scale of the proposal in relation to SW 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue and the immediately surrounding historic context.
- 3. Overall Style.** Skidmore/Old Town historic architectural character is defined by a mix of nineteenth-century building types and styles, including Italianate-style commercial buildings with cast-iron façade, more massive brick and stone Richardsonian Romanesque structures,

and early twentieth century Commercial and Utilitarian style buildings. Some of the District's most character-defining structures line 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue today, including several Italianate buildings, from the Failing and Seuffert buildings at the south and the New Market Theater in the center, to the Skidmore and Blagen blocks and the Norton House in the north.

The applicant describes the proposed building as a modern interpretation of the Italianate style, the predominant character of the District. Staff agrees with this description and finds the proposal compatible with the District's architectural style, but staff notes that the building facades lack some of the detailing found in the Italianate style buildings. Staff welcomes the Commission's comments on the overall style of the proposed building.

- 4. Consistent Street Wall.** Most historic buildings of the District are built to the street lot-line and directly abutting the neighbors. The building is proposed to be built to both street lot-lines and nicely abuts its neighbor to the west, the Pine Street Market. Staff is concerned about the appearance of the narrow bay closest to Pine Street Market on being setback on the south elevation. Staff welcomes the Commission's comments on how the proposal abuts its neighbor to the west.

#### **Mid-Level Issues:**

- 1. Street-Facing Facades and Cast-Iron Character.** The applicant has made efforts in integrating a cast iron character to the building street-facing facades without creating a false sense of history. The location of fenestration within the facades were carefully studied through an emphasis of verticality with strong horizontal lines. A tall ground floor with large plate of glass is proposed, while the proposed upper floors have smaller detailed windows. Staff is questioning the proposed shift of some of the brick piers as it is not an element found in the cast-iron character of the District and suggests incorporating more of the detailing found in the GRFC scheme (included in the drawing set) to help with the hierarchy and order of the façade.

In addition, staff notes that because of the extra bay found in the brick scheme elevations, the top floor windows look too narrow for their height when compared to the GRFC scheme. The lack of a defined cornice and the required height of the parapet due to the rooftop solar array accentuate these proportions. Staff welcomes the Commission's comments on the cast-iron character as well as lack of a defined cornice on the proposed building.

- 2. Windows at Property Lines.** Staff is concerned with the proposed windows at both property lines. Windows at property lines are typically not approved by Life Safety.
- 3. Building Materials.** The primary exterior material is proposed to be brick. Staff supports the use of this material with its light color, which is visually compatible with the adjacent Pine Street Market and the District's architectural character as a whole. Staff has concerns over the use of fiberglass storefronts in the District, especially at the ground floor level. Fiberglass windows are not typically used in historic context. Staff has also concerns over the size of the metal panels used above the windows at upper floors and would like to see samples. Metal panels on top of windows are rarely found in the District, but when found, they are in a much smaller size than the proposed panels. Staff welcomes the Commission's comments on building materials.
- 4. Building Details.** Though some textured brick is proposed at the top floor, more brick detailing at lower levels is needed to help add more interest while refining the facades.

#### **Micro Level Issues:**

- 1. Main Office Entry Setback.** Staff has concerns over the location of the main door to the office lobby that seems off center compared to the location of the main office entry setback. The

main door should be in the middle bay of the east façade where the office entry is indicated on the ground floor.

2. **Lighting.** Staff is not in favor of exterior lighting at each bay. Exterior lighting should be located at major entries only as not to compromise the historic character of the District. Staff welcomes any Commission's comments.
3. **Signage.** The location of the proposed signs seems appropriate, but more information is needed on the size and material of the signs.
4. **Canopies.** Not enough canopies are provided. Canopies should be provided to protect passerby in a manner sensitive to the building and the District. This is a new building, not a retrofit of a contributing building.
5. **Planter Boxes.** Staff is concerned with the planter box located above the main office entry as well as the top corner floor. In historic districts, planter boxes or hanging baskets are typically found at the ground level. Staff welcomes the Commission's comments on the use of planter boxes in upper levels in the District.