



City of Portland Landmarks Commission

Design Advice Request

DISCUSSION MEMO

Date: February 4, 2018
To: Portland Historic Landmarks Commission
From: Meriam Rahali, Historic Resource Review
 503-823-5363 | Meriam.Rahali@portlandoregon.gov
Re: EA 18-269888 – New Office Building at the Weatherly Site
 Design Advice Request Memo – February 11, 2018

Attached is a drawing set, two additional views of the proposal along Grand Avenue, and approval criteria for the Design Advice Request meeting scheduled on February 11, 2018. Please contact me with any questions or concerns.

I. DEVELOPMENT TEAM BIO

Architect	Daria Supp & Ryan Bussard PERKINS + WILL
Owner’s Representative	Brett Phillips UNICO
Project Valuation	Scheme A: \$25.9 Million Scheme B: \$36.4 Million

II. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Design Advice Request meeting for a proposed 12-story, 160-foot tall mixed-use retail and office building located south of the Weatherly Building, in the East Portland/Grand Avenue Historic District, Central Eastside Subdistrict of the Central City Plan District.

Two development potentials (Scheme A and Scheme B) are included in this drawing set. Scheme A is on a partial block that does not include the southwest corner site. In this scheme, the building along SE Grand Avenue is two-stories high and the 12-story tower is along SE 6th Avenue. Scheme B is on a full block that includes the southwest corner site. In this scheme, the 12-story tower is on the full south site. Both schemes consist of the following primary components:

1. Schemes A & B:

- **Height 33.510.210.** The base height limit is 160 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 (4’ for parapet, 16’ for elevator, 10’ for mechanical equipment).
- **Bike parking** located on the ground floor of the existing Weatherly Building. Proposed number of both short-term and long-term bike parking spaces are not known.
- Two Standard A **loading spaces** are required. Two Standard A on-site loading spaces are proposed along the pedestrian alley with access from SE Grand Avenue and exit from SE 6th Avenue. Per Section 33.510.263.B, Parking and loading access standards, motor vehicle access to and from the alley unto SE Grand Avenue is prohibited because of the

street car alignment. Existing non-conforming vehicle access on NE Grand Avenue could potentially be allowed to remain if approved by the Bureau of Development Services (BDS) and the Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT).

2. **Scheme A:**

- **The Site** is zoned EXd (Central Employment with Design and Historic Resource Protection Overlays.) The site area is 32,470 SF without the southwest corner site.
- **Floor Area Ration (FAR) 33.510.200.** The maximum FAR for this site is 9:1. The proposed FAR is 6.5:1. This FAR includes the existing Weatherly Building FAR (Weatherly Building is 67,240 SF and New Office Building is 143,865 SF).
- Ground floor **retail** space on SE Grand Avenue, SE Belmont Street and SE 6th Avenue, and 2nd through 12th floors of **office space**.
- **Office lobby** on SE Belmont Avenue.
- Three levels/46,000 SF of **below-grade parking** that includes 78 parking spaces, accessed from SE 6th Avenue.

3. **Scheme B:**

- **The Site** is zoned EXd (Central Employment with Design and Historic Resource Protection Overlays). The site area is 35,720 SF including the southwest corner site (32,470 SF + 3,250 SF).
- **Floor Area Ration (FAR) 33.510.200.** The maximum FAR for this site is 9:1. The proposed FAR is 7.53:1. This FAR includes the existing Weatherly Building FAR (Weatherly Building is 67,240 SF and New Office Building is 201,900 SF).
- Ground floor **retail** space on SE Grand Avenue, SE Belmont Street and SE 6th Avenue, and 2nd through 12th floors of **office space**.
- **Office lobby** on SE Grand Avenue.
- Three levels/67,000 SF of **below-grade parking** that includes 150 parking spaces, accessed from SE 6th Avenue.

No Modifications or Adjustments have been requested. Because of lack of information, staff has not been able to verify if any Modification or Adjustment will be required.

The following **Dedication** will be required:

A 3.5-foot dedication along SE Belmont Street will be required by PBOT. This proposal takes into consideration this dedication.

III. APPROVAL CRITERIA: *Adopted Design Guidelines East Portland/Grand Avenue Historic Design Zone, Central City Fundamental Design Guidelines. And if any Modifications or Adjustments are requested, 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 February 11, 2019:

Macro Level Issues.

Compatibility with the District:

1. **Siting and Building Orientation.** Historically, this location was the site of a four-story structure, known as the "Tebbetts Oriental Theater". It was demolished in 1970 to make way

for the current surface parking. The theater was built to the street lot-line and directly abutting the Weatherly Building. Staff notes that the siting and building orientation of the proposal in scheme A do not take into consideration the importance of NE Grand Avenue within the Historic District, nor the careful siting and orientation of the adjacent Weatherly Building within the site. In this scheme, the orientation of the tower will also greatly impact the Weatherly Building by not being responsive to the bridgehead location. In scheme B, the siting and orientation of the proposed building are appropriate within the District but the scale of it is not (see comments below). In addition, the scheme B building wall includes setbacks along Grand Avenue which are discouraged in the Historic District as they break the traditional pattern of the District. The combination of setbacks and all glass ground level material make the building seem to not be anchored to the ground as most historic buildings do. Staff welcomes the Commission's feedback on both issues.

In this proposal, a pedestrian alley is proposed between the two buildings. Staff notes that though historically it was more appropriate for buildings to abut neighboring buildings, in this case, the proposed alley helps the proposal be more deferential to the Weatherly Building by allowing space to view the south façade of the Weatherly Building. Staff welcomes the Commission's feedback on the proposed alley.

- 2. Height, Scale, Form, and Proportion.** The Weatherly Building, constructed in 1928, is the most prominent building in the East Portland/Grand Avenue Historic District. It is shown to measure 175 feet to the top of the tallest roof elements. But these elements are setback from SE Grand Avenue, so the perceived height of the Weatherly Building is at its 12th floor, below the 160-foot tall proposed building. Therefore staff suggests the height of the proposed building be either reduced or sculpted to be more compatible with the perceived height of the Weatherly Building and the height of the District.

Staff notes that in scheme A, the two-story building facing Grand Avenue and the bulky, tall tower at the rear are not compatible with scale, form, or proportion of adjacent historic buildings, including the Weatherly Building and thus not appropriate in the Historic District. The scale, form and proportion of the proposed building in scheme B is also not visually compatible with the Historic District. The height to width and length relationships of the Weatherly Building or other nearby buildings should be instead used as a guide in determining compatibility of the form and massing of the new building. Staff welcomes the Commission's comments on the scale and proportion of the proposed building in relation to the Weatherly Building and the surrounding historic context.

- 3. Architectural Character.** The proposed building does not appear to reference historic buildings of the District nor the adjacent Weatherly Building. A full glass façade on Grand Avenue is not appropriate in the District, and the large amount of metal paneling facing the Weatherly Building is also out of character in the Historic District. Staff welcomes the Commission's comments on the architectural character of the proposal in relation to the Weatherly Building and within the Historic District.
- 4. Parking and Loading Location and Access.** Since SE 6th Avenue is on the Green Loop, staff supports loading off the pedestrian alley to help reduce the amount of curb cuts that would be required for both the parking and loading accesses along SE 6th Avenue. This would require PBOT approval and existing non-conforming vehicle access approval.

Mid Level Issues

- 5. Building Entrance.** Main entries to the buildings are encouraged on Grand Avenue, as it is one of the two main thoroughfares of the Historic District. Scheme B includes the main office

lobby on Grand but Scheme A puts it on Belmont. Staff welcomes the Commission's comments on the location of the main building entrance.

- 6. Materials, Colors, and Textures.** Staff is also concerned with the amount of metal paneling used in this proposal and notes that any detailed screens should be limited in size and location. Staff notes that the guidelines discourage the use of metal as a building material in the Historic District, but the use of brick and concrete are encouraged.

Micro Level Issues

- 7. Building Details.** Staff is concerned with the fins proposed on the new building. These fins are not considered to be compatible elements or special features of the Historic District but instead can be found in other part of downtown Portland. Staff welcomes the Commission's feedback on this issue.
- 8. Datums.** Staff is concerned with the lack of datums taken from adjacent contributing buildings of the Historic District that would help guide in determining compatibility of the new building. Staff welcomes the Commission's comments on this issue.
- 9. Other Design Comments.** Staff welcomes any additional comments related to design and design details of the proposal.