



City of Portland Design Commission

Design Advice Request

SUMMARY MEMO

Date: 3/6/2019
To: Kim Lan | Alamo Manhattan Properties, LLC
From: Tanya Paglia, Design Review
503-823-4989 | tanya.paglia@portlandoregon.gov
Re: EA 18-281485 DA – The Landing at Macadam
Design Advice Request Commission Summary Memo – February 7, 2019

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. Following, is a summary of the comments provided by the Design Commission at the February 7, 2019 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/11686822>.

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 7, 2019. 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 land use review application, public notification and a Final Decision] 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 Type III Land Use Review Application.

Encl:
Summary Memo

Cc: Design Commission
Respondents

Executive Summary.

- Locating towers on the two waterfront blocks, Blocks 41 and 44, is not the ideal placement. It would be better to see the taller massing on the two inland blocks, Blocks 42 and 45, with a stepping down towards the Greenway and river. That said, towers are a welcome element and building towers on the waterfront blocks could be approvable with the correct response to the river.
- Above grade parking could be acceptable but should be ringed with active uses.
- Complete coverage of the four blocks with building podiums does not respond to guidelines. There should be cutouts for at grade open spaces that enhance the public realm.

Commissioners Present. Chair Livingston, Commissioner McCarter, Commissioner Molinar, Commissioner Rodriguez, Commissioner Santner, Commissioner Vallaster were present. Commissioner Clark was absent.

Summary of Comments. Following is a general summary of Commission comments.

Placement of towers:

- All commissioners were very supportive of towers and high density on the site but there was concern with the proposal to place towers on the two waterfront blocks, Blocks 41 and 44, with lower buildings proposed on the inland blocks, Blocks 42 and 45. Multiple commissioners felt that the towers were not optimally located within the four-block site as they would prefer the greater height on the inland blocks (42 and 45) rather than on the riverward parcels. Moving the height inland would create a graceful transition down to the river. The commission views the project as a 4-block site and so the placement of towers within the site will be part of ongoing discussions whenever the project comes before the Commission. It was noted that the CCFDG D2. *South Waterfront Area* specifies: Graduate building heights from the western boundary down to the waterfront.
- Multiple commissioners stated that keeping towers on the waterfront blocks and not on inland blocks would not be a deal breaker, but the towers on the waterfront need to respond exceptionally well to the river. The greenway is an important public space for the city and the waterfront buildings must be spectacular and must erode towards the greenway. All towers should be slender, and especially towers along the river. To be successful the tower designs need to be all about the greenway.
- Commissioners expressed that even better than just moving the towers from the greenway-adjacent blocks to the inland blocks would be locating towers at the river and even taller towers behind them on the inland blocks. The guidelines don't speak to the economics of a project, so the economic motivation for riverfront towers is not within the Commission's purview.

Massing:

- While towers along the waterfront are not a deal breaker, they have to be done well. Limiting the length of east-west tower massing may not be a code requirement, but the Commission will be looking for sculpted, slender, visually permeable massing to meet the approval criteria.
- Commissioners noted that the mid-rise zone of massing shown at the DAR was overly complicated while towers in the neighborhood tend to be simple with great detailing. The applicant should take a close look at where breaks in the massing are in the existing tall buildings. Massing should be very responsive to the architecture already found in the South Waterfront district where buildings are very sleek and simple above the ground floor while

moves at the public realm level are rich, featuring carve outs, activation and connections with special attention to connecting people to the river.

- Given that the code specifies limits for north-south dimensions to allow east-west views but is intentionally silent on limits to the east-west dimensions there was some support for longer east-west tower volumes from one commissioner, while the majority felt that design guidelines spoke to this despite the zoning code's silence.
- A few commissioners noted that there is too much 5 and 6 story massing in this part of South Waterfront and that some height variations – especially on Blocks 42 and 45 – to create variety in the skyline should be explored. In addition, Abernethy and Lane are unrelieved 6 story stretches. Stepping back to create variety and move away from blockiness was encouraged. They noted that four point towers with diverse podiums would have been preferable to create that variation.

Above grade parking

- Most commissioners agreed that parking above the ground floor could be a deal breaker under public realm guidelines (including CCFDG A8 and C7) unless handled correctly, especially given its location in buildings abutting the greenway. There cannot be a 3 or 4-story wall of dead space above the ground floor along the edges of each block. While not to the same extent as the first floor, the second, third and fourth floors all have an important relationship with the public realm. The program of these floors is also worthy of discussion.
- The site's blocks are big enough that the parking footprint can be reduced and pushed up more levels and then wrapped with active uses. Ring the floors with really good uses at the perimeter. Other projects all over the country have housing units or other active uses wrapping all the way around upper floor parking. This has been carried up as high as four stories in various developments. Such active uses located along the perimeter will benefit from the light and air available there while also giving back to the public realm, unlike the dead space of parking. A commissioner noted that a compelling design around parking dead space that "knocks us out" might be approvable, but a much better response would be to wrap all sides with active uses.
- Public access to the greenway and the river will be along Lane, Abernethy, Lowell. They need to be incredible streets. If you take the proposed design and visualize which parts of the podium mass will be parking adjacent to those accessways, you find it not to be the desired condition along greenway accessways. Those accessways should be exceptional with great frontages.
- The parking within the podiums of the waterfront blocks - 41 and especially 44 - is pushing those podiums way out so that they occupy the entirety of the block. Like the towers, the podiums need to erode towards the greenway and the river. The podiums should also erode along the pedestrian accessway paths to the river.
- It was noted that the previously approved designs for these blocks did not have any "exposed" parking either at the ground floor or above.
- While not currently proposed, it was noted that exposed parking on upper levels along the greenway would not be allowed.

Open Space and Pedestrian Environment

- While understanding that the project is in an extremely early stage, commissioners stated that the proposal's public realm needed to be more developed, greener and more successful. It

was noted that plans for South Waterfront envisioned the area as towers in a parklike setting with connections and permeability.

- Most commissioners agreed that the four buildings' podiums should be vibrant and should not occupy the full footprint of each block. They noted that it is common in this neighborhood for there to be courtyards and public spaces carved out of the podiums to contribute to the public realm. Outdoor spaces at the ground floor - including gathering places, stopping and viewing spaces and outdoor seating - need to be considered.
- All greenspaces shown in the proposal at the DAR were privatized and not accessible to the public realm. While upper level courtyards that will give relief to the street walls are being well thought through, ground floor carve outs also need to be a factor. While the shaping taking place above the podiums is appreciated, shaping also needs to happen at the ground floor. The elevated courtyards are not contributing a great deal to the street level experience because pedestrians can't see into them.
- The Atwater was cited as a building that does a great job of eroding down to the Greenway while also doing a beautiful job of upper level greenspace above the ground level.
- Commissioners noted that pedestrian access through the site was important and should be well thought out with greenway accessways - Abernethy and Lane and Lowell - having exceptional frontages. Massing should step back along these pedestrian streets. The experience of walking to the river needs to be incredible. One commissioner suggested that there should be something episodic at the end of the accessways where they reach the greenway as well.
- The applicant should provide context study of open spaces throughout the neighborhood to help visualize how their project fits in.

Exhibit List

- A. Applicant's Submittals
 1. Initial drawings, 1/10/2019
- B. Zoning Map
- C. Drawings, 1/31/2019
 1. Cover page
 2. Summary of development program
 3. Responses to approval criteria
 4. Context studies – Site location
 5. Context studies – Multi-modal circulation plan
 6. Context studies – Pedestrian & vehicle access points (attached)
 7. Context studies – Setbacks & heights
 8. Context studies – Open space
 9. Context studies – Neighborhood context buildings
 10. Massing & design – Project evolution
 - 11-14. Massing & design – Massing concept (attached)
 15. Site plan – Existing conditions
 16. Site plan – Proposed site plan
 17. Site plan – Adjacent rights-of-way, curb-cuts, entrances & heights
 18. Site plan – Utility plan
 19. Site plan – Proposed road cross sections
 20. Site plan – Preliminary plat

21. Floor plans – Block 41 program & massing diagrams
 - 22-23. Floor plans – Block 41
 24. Floor plans – Block 42 program & massing diagrams
 - 25-26. Floor plans – Block 42
 27. Floor plans – Block 44 program & massing diagrams
 - 28-31. Floor plans – Block 44
 32. Floor plans – Block 45 program & massing diagrams
 - 33-35. Floor plans – Block 45
 36. Landscape concepts
- 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. Bureau of Environmental Services
- F. Public Testimony
1. Public Testimony Sign-in Sheet, 2/7/2019
 2. Mike Houck, Director, Urban Greenspaces Institute, 1/24/2019 & 2/7/2019, wrote with concerns regarding how the project will design the Greenway, how ecoroof designs will be reviewed, and about retention of the conifers remaining on that reach of the Willamette.
 3. Mary & Philippe Henry de Tessan, residents of the Atwater, 1/27/2019, 2/7/2019 & 2/13/2019, wrote to contend that the project as proposed is far too massive and dense with inadequate parking.
 4. Jack Winters, PhD, local resident/stakeholder, 2/7/2019 & 2/8/2019, wrote with concerns around river access, blandness of design, possibility of oversupply, and interest in seeing specific program elements including a larger grocery market and riverfront restaurant/pub.
 5. Todd Woodruff, resident of the John Ross building, 2/7/2019, wrote with concerns about the taller buildings being located next to the river with shorter buildings inland as well as the bulk of the taller buildings.
 6. Jeanne Galick, South Portland greenway advocate, 2/7/2019, wrote with concerns about the future of mature trees on the site along the river's edge which provide essential habitat and are an important landscape element.
 7. Joan Meyer, resident of the Atwater, 1/22/2019 & 2/4/2019, wrote with questions about previous entitlements, height limits, as well as support for 'indoor' loading docks for sanitary waste trucks to lessen the on-street noise element, traffic congestion, and visual impact to the surrounding neighborhood.
 8. Patricia & Jim Eddy, residents of the Atwater, 2/4/2019, wrote with concerns about the scale of the proposed waterfront buildings.
 9. James Gardner, Land Use Chair, South Portland Neighborhood Association (SPNA), 1/23/2019, wrote with questions about previous entitlements and requesting further information on the current proposal.
- G. Other
1. Application form
 2. LU decision for Land Division (LU 17-160442 LDP) 9/22/2017.
 3. Early Assistance Summary notes (LU 18-256404 APPT), held 11/6/2019
 4. Early Assistance Summary notes (LU 18-273342 APPT), held 12/18/2019
 5. Staff memo to Design Commission, 1/31/2019
 6. Revised Staff memo to Design Commission, 2/6/2019
 7. Staff presentation, 2/7/2019
- H. After First Hearing
1. Staff Summary from first DAR, 2/26/2019









