



# City of Portland Design Commission

## Design Advice Request

### DISCUSSION MEMO

**Date:** May 6, 2019  
**To:** Portland Design Commission  
**From:** Hillary Adam, Land Use Services  
 503-823-3581 | hillary.adam@portlandoregon.gov  
**Re:** EA 19-131007 DA – 1120 SE Morrison  
 Design Advice Request Memo – May 16, 2019

Attached is a drawing set for the Design Advice Request meeting scheduled on May 16, 2019. Please contact me with any questions or concerns.

#### I. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

DAR for a proposed 7-story full-block mixed use building with ground floor retail and amenity spaces with residential units above, organized around a central raised courtyard facing west. Approximately two levels of below-grade parking are proposed. Exterior materials have not yet been identified. No Modifications or Adjustments have yet been identified.

#### II. DEVELOPMENT TEAM BIO

|                               |                                       |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>Architect</b>              | Kurt Schultz   SERA Architects        |
| <b>Owner’s Representative</b> | Sam Rodriguez   Millcreek Residential |
| <b>Project Valuation</b>      | \$ 50 million                         |

#### III. FUTURE APPROVAL CRITERIA: *Central City Fundamental Design Guidelines and the Special Design Guidelines for the Design Zone of the Central Eastside District of the Central City Plan* (see attached matrix)

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

Staff advise you consider the following among your discussion items on May 16, 2019:

#### CONTEXT

1. **Policy.** The following summarizes key policy context as it applies to the subject site.
  - a. **Plan – 2035 Comp Plan / Central City / Central Eastside.** The Central Eastside subdistrict of the Central City Plan District comprises the area bound by Powell Boulevard to the south, I-84 to the north and extending from the River to SE 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Much of the Central Eastside is occupied by industrial and employment uses including manufacturing and creative office as well as retail to support those uses. The subject site is located at the eastern edge of the area, closer to residential uses. The current uses on the site include artist studios as well as an automotive repair shop and refrigeration supply store.

- b. **Development Standards – Central Employment / Central City.** Though early in the design process, the proposal appears generally compliant with zoning code standards (allowed use, maximum setbacks, parking, loading, landscaping, windows, etc.). FAR over the base 3:1 will need to be achieved through bonuses or transfers. The Ground Floor Active Use (33.510.225) and the 40% Ground Floor Windows (33.510.220) standards apply on all four streets; it appears that the neither standard would be met along SE 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue and would therefore require Modifications. The Ground Floor Active Use standard requires that 50% of wall facing sidewalks, plazas, and public open areas be designed to accommodate active areas and be at least 25' deep, at least 12' high, and must include windows and doors. The Ground Floor Windows Standard requires that 40% of ground floor wall area between 2' and 10' above the finished grade facing sidewalks and publicly-open areas be windows. While calculations have not been provided, it appears that the proposed amount of Ground Floor Active Use on SE 11<sup>th</sup> equals about 28% and the amount of Ground Floor Windows equals approximately 30%.
- c. **Streets** – The project site lies within a Freight District; each street is also noted as a Greenscape Overlay street. SE Morrison – Traffic Access Street, Major Transit Priority Street, City Bikeway, City Walkway, Priority Truck Street, Major Emergency Response Route; SE 12<sup>th</sup> – Traffic Access, Transit Access Street, City Bikeway, City Walkway, Major Truck Street, Major Emergency Response Route; SE Belmont – Traffic Access Street, Major Transit Priority Street, City Bikeway, City Walkway, Priority Truck Street, Major Emergency Response Route; SE 11<sup>th</sup> – Traffic Access Street, Transit Access Street, City Bikeway, City Walkway, Major Truck Street, Major Emergency Response Route.

Because both Belmont and Morrison streets are classified as Major Transit Priority Streets and Major Truck Streets, vehicle access is not allowed on these streets and must be located either on SE 11<sup>th</sup> or SE 12<sup>th</sup>. Buses run along each street with frequent service provided on SE Belmont and Morrison Streets.

2. **Natural.** The site slopes significantly downward from the northwest corner to the southwest corner; grades are noted on the Level 1 plan.
3. **Built.**
- a. **Massing.** Many other residential buildings in the Central Eastside and in the adjacent Buckman neighborhood feature a U-shape plan, albeit at a smaller scale. Modera Belmont is a similarly scaled project, though only 6 stories, located 5 blocks to the west that was designed by the same team and reviewed by the Commission in 2015.
- b. **Orientation.** Staff notes that the north-south dimension on this block is 185' after dedication while the east-west dimension will remain 200'. This reduced width results in a narrower courtyard (~45') than could otherwise be obtained if the courtyard was oriented to the south; however, orienting the courtyard to the east allows for an at-grade entry into the courtyard and a breakdown of the scale of the building along the eastern side which faces the residential neighborhood while allowing the larger façades to be oriented parallel to the more intensely-used transit streets. The applicant has also considered a southern orientation as well as a western orientation, as shown on page C8.
- c. **Expression.** Staff encourages the Commission to consider recent approvals in the Central Eastside (some of which will be included in the staff presentation) as part of the discussion of Context. The proposed design articulation is very similar to a Goose Hollow building approved by the Design Commission in 2014 which was designed by the same architect, and somewhat similar to a building designed by this architect and approved by the Landmarks Commission in 2005, which begs the question if this design is appropriate for

this location, where buildings at this full-block scale are more modern and contemporary in their design expression.

## PUBLIC REALM

1. **Site organization.** Staff supports the location of retail at all corners with residential access located midblock. Staff has concerns with the size of the retail space at the northwest corner, and especially the extent of back-of-house uses located along SE 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue as this street needs more activation to ensure the success of the proposed retail. It appears that the retail could be expanded, and the trash and electrical rooms could be reoriented in order to reduce their impact on the public realm. Staff also encourages retail spill-out into the opening at the courtyard entry for greater activation of this space; this can be encouraged with seating and doors fronting on this plaza.
2. **Circulation System.** The proposed design shows equitable access to the main entry and into the courtyard from the sidewalk. Because bus stops are located across the street along each frontage and the southwest corner is the downhill side of the site, an additional secured access entry for residents should be provided at the west or south side of the building in order to further reduce barriers to entry to the building.

## QUALITY & PERMANENCE

1. **Exterior materials.** Both brick and stucco U-shaped courtyard apartment buildings are represented in Central Eastside and nearby Buckman. Staff is particularly supportive of brick as an exterior material here as brick is more durable and this is an area in transition and demands a resilient material, particularly at the ground level. Other exterior materials include painted fiber cement panel, vinyl windows, aluminum storefront, and steel canopies.
2. **Coherency.** The applicant has made gestures toward breaking up the scale of the building with large and small recesses in the massing and the windows show a regular pattern which is supportable. However, introductions of brick veneer archways are shown across the building, some highlighting primary entries and some highlighting areas without entries or back-of-house locations. The rhythm and logic of these archways is unclear at this time and staff suggests a simpler solution for adding interest to the building; archways, if proposed, should only be located at the main residential entry in order to ensure greater flexibility over time without compromising coherency. Also, the canopy locations are a bit inconsistent, relative to association with entries, and appear to be based on building design rather than along an ample amount of the sidewalk including at entries.
3. **Resilience.** The ecoroof standard requires that 100% of the roof area be ecoroof with a 40% reduction allowed for mechanical, elevator overruns, uncovered common outdoor areas and the like. The courtyard counts as part of the total roof area. It is yet unclear as to whether or not a Modification will be requested. As is noted above, staff has concerns with a stucco building and would also encourage the use of an intrinsically-colored fiber cement panel rather than a painted fiber cement panel to minimize long-term maintenance requirements.