



# City of Portland Design Commission

## Design Advice Request

### SUMMARY MEMO

**Date:** June 6, 2019  
**To:** Kurt Schultz, SERA Architects  
**From:** Hillary Adam, Land Use Services  
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**Re:** EA 19-131007 DA – 1120 SE Morrison  
Design Advice Request Commission Summary Memo – May 16, 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 May 16, 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 May 16, 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 3 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 3 Land Use Review Application.

*Encl:*  
Summary Memo

*Cc:* Design Commission  
Respondents

**Executive Summary.** The Commission acknowledged that for a U-shaped building, a courtyard facing east was preferred. However, they suggested that the building was so massive that the impact to the adjacent neighborhood could be reduced by splitting the building into two north/south-oriented bars with the west bar responding more to the large footprint massing of the industrial neighborhood to the west and the east bar broken into smaller massing expressions to better relate to the smaller-scaled residential neighborhood to the east. An elevated north/south-oriented terrace could provide open space to upper level units. Belmont should remain a strong retail street with no blank walls. The Commission stated that they expected the applicant to return with no request for a ground floor windows or ground floor active use Modification. The Commission stated that a more modern expression was more appropriate in that it could better blend into the neighborhood west of 12<sup>th</sup> and help to break down the mass along 12<sup>th</sup>.

**Commissioners Present.** *Julie Livingston, Don Vallaster, Jessica Molinar, Zari Santner, Brian McCarter; Sam Rodriguez - recused*

**Summary of Comments.** Following is a general summary of Commission comments by design tenet.

## CONTEXT

### 1. Policy.

- a. **Plan – 2035 Comprehensive Plan / Neighborhood Plan.** *No comments.*
- b. **Standards – Central Employment / Central City.** *The Commission directed the applicant to meet both the ground floor windows standard and the ground floor active use standard, both of which appeared to not be met along SE 11<sup>th</sup>. They noted that with a full block site, uses currently shown along SE 11<sup>th</sup> can be reconfigured so that the standards are met.*
- c. **Streets –** *The Commission acknowledged that SE 11<sup>th</sup> was the appropriate location for the garage entry.*

2. **Natural.** *The Commission noted that for a U-shaped building, a courtyard oriented to the east was appropriate due to the slopes on site.*

### 3. Built.

- *The Commission noted that the scale of the buildings west of 12<sup>th</sup> are much larger than those east of 12<sup>th</sup>, but also said that more mitigation is required to break down the mass and scale of the building at the east façade.*
- *They noted that the building was very massive and bulky and suggested that splitting the building into two bars, oriented north/south with an elevated courtyard between could help mitigate for this mass, further suggesting that the east bar would need to be broken into two different expressions to respond to the smaller-scaled context to the east.*
- *The Commission noted that this was not a historic district and therefore the building should not reference historic styles so explicitly; they suggested a more contemporary design expression could help to break down the scale of the building as historic styles rely on symmetry whereas contemporary styles have more freedom with regard to massing and volumetric shifts.*

## PUBLIC REALM

### 1. Site organization.

- *All Commissioners expressed an expectation that the ground floor active use and ground floor windows standards would be met at the time of the Type III and no Modifications should be requested to those standards.*
- *The Commission noted that the ground floor plan (other than along 11<sup>th</sup>) was well-thought-out, stating appreciation for the ground level retail spaces along Belmont ascending with the sidewalk, though finding an alternate location for the fitness room would help improve the NW corner.*
- *The Commission noted that if the courtyard is reoriented to a north-south direction resulting in an elevated private plaza, this should not result in blank walls along Belmont, but should have retail beneath.*
- *The Commission expressed support for building to the property lines (with some area for spill-out) and said that if a courtyard is proposed on the east, it should be activated with spill-out activities.*

## **2. Circulation System.**

- *The Commission was in support of a midblock garage entry on 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue.*
- *The Commission expressed support for another residential entry on Belmont because of the grade changes on the block and the location of the heavily-used Belmont bus stop.*
- *The Commission noted that accessible paths to main entries should not be relegated to the sides and that everyone should have the same experience upon entering the main entry doors of the building.*

## **QUALITY & PERMANENCE**

### **1. Exterior materials.**

- *The commission understood staff's points about stucco but noted that they have approved it in the past, stating that brick, stucco, and fiber cement are complementary materials for the area. They noted that a brick base wrapping the ground level would be stronger.*
- *The Commission noted that the based on the feedback provided, the design of the building (and therefore the material proposed) is likely to change so few comments were provided on the materials.*
- *The Commission noted that the appropriateness of metal as an exterior material is dependent on the design ultimately proposed.*

### **2. Coherency.**

- *The Commission expressed a preference for adding balconies to the building in order to break up the massing and mitigate for the flatness of the large façades. It was suggested that balconies should not project toward the smaller-scaled neighborhood east of 12<sup>th</sup>, unless they were partially recessed.*
- *One Commissioner noted that there are many examples in London about how to break up the scale of larger buildings so that they fit within a smaller-scaled context.*
- *One Commissioner noted that the brick arch forms are not relevant to the area or the design of the building.*

- *One Commissioner noted that the heavy spandrel on the 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue façade was awkward.*
- *The Commission noted appreciation for the symmetry expressed in how the upper level west-facing terrace completed the ground level courtyard open space sequence.*

**3. Resilience.**

- *One commissioner noted concerns with the likelihood of bio-growth on light colored exterior surfaces.*

**Exhibit List**

- A. Applicant's Submittals
  - 1. Initial Drawings
  - 2. Revised Drawings, received April 25, 2019
- B. Zoning Map
- C. Drawings
  - 1. Packet for May 16, 2019 DAR
- 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. none
- F. Public Testimony
  - 1. none
- G. Other
  - 1. Application form
  - 2. Staff memo to Design Commission, dated May 6, 2019