



# City of Portland Design Commission

## Design Advice Request

### SUMMARY MEMO

**Date:** May 13, 2019  
**To:** David Howard, Mark Coplin, Jason Erdahl | Ankrom Moisan Architects  
**From:** Tanya Paglia, Design Review  
503-823-4989 | tanya.paglia@portlandoregon.gov  
**Re:** EA 19-134120 DAR – 3100/3150 NE Sandy Blvd | MorningStar at Laurelhurst  
Design Advice Request Commission Summary Memo – May 2, 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 2, 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 2, 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 2<sup>nd</sup> DAR and Type III Land Use Review Applications.

*Encl:*  
Summary Memo

*Cc:* Design Commission  
Respondents

## Executive Summary.

1. While the loading dock placement on Sandy is not ideal, given PBOT's testimony, the loading dock location presented is approvable.
2. Some amount of ground floor residential on NE Hassalo St is acceptable if resolved well and buffered with excellent landscaping.
3. A prominent entry along Sandy is a must and the ideal location is to place it in the notch.
4. The chamfered corner should be carried all the way up the building.
5. The Sandy Blvd frontage is a design issue that should be looked at holistically and landscaping isn't working there.
6. Because Modifications have to better meet design guidelines, the height and landscaping Modification requests are not yet supportable.
7. Building landscaping over the open vehicle ramp would vastly improve the entire southern side of the development.

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

**Summary of Comments.** Following is a general summary of Commission comments by design tenet. Please refer to the attached Community Design Guidelines matrix for a summary of the concept's response to future approval criteria.

### 1. Loading Dock Placement.

- Commissioners noted that having the loading on Sandy, a busy, prominent transit street, would typically be a non-starter but there were no other options that work given the unique constraints of this site as noted in the testimony from PBOT (described below), and the applicants are entitled to have loading.
- Factors that help mitigate the undesirable placement on Sandy Blvd include: the loading dock is to be used sparsely; the hammerhead layout will allow vehicles to enter and exit in a forward motion and thus watch for ped/bike conflicts; deliveries can be scheduled for non-peak times of day; and drivers will be regular and know the site and potential on-street conflicts well.
- While there is no other place loading can work, it will still have an impact on the public realm so additional mitigation measures, including design, should be considered as the project develops.

#### PBOT Comments:

- Due to site constraints, PBOT has concluded that the location shown in the proposed floor plans is the only viable loading option and is supportable. Reasons include:
  - High demand for residential parking in the area make on-street loading for this site not an option.
  - Generally, the project will result in minimal impacts to Sandy Blvd and will in fact result in a trip reduction onto- and off of- Sandy Blvd as opposed to the current use on the site which includes a large surface parking lot and a commercial establishment.

- Many smaller deliveries such as linens will be dropped off and picked up from the porte-cochere, and only bigger deliveries such as large food deliveries will happen via the loading bay on Sandy Blvd.
- The loading bay design allows vehicles to enter and exit in a forward motion.
- NE Hassalo St is a dead-end and is too constrained for loading to work there, especially given the sharp grade changes on the site.
- PBOT is supportive of the location along the Sandy frontage being at the eastern end of the property as it is at maximum distance from the busy intersection of NE Sandy and NE 31<sup>st</sup> Avenue.
- NE 31<sup>st</sup> and NE Hassalo are below the minimum width which would be required for new roadways so they are particularly narrow and not an ideal place for loading vehicles to access the site.

## **2. Ground Floor Residential.**

Note: At the time of the hearing, ground floor residential units were no longer being proposed at the corner of NE 31<sup>st</sup> Ave and Sandy Blvd and were now located exclusively along a short stretch of the NE Hassalo frontage.

- Commissioners found the change to be positive and were supportive of ground floor units along the Hassalo (southern) frontage if well designed. They would not have supported ground floor residential use at the corner of Sandy Blvd as shown in the previous packet.
- The residential use is pushed back 10' and at a lower grade than the sidewalk creating a buffer for privacy which is a plus. The type and quality of landscaping will make all the difference in creating even more privacy, while also enhancing the public realm.
- Commissioners noted that in an ideal world, the units would be above the sidewalk grade, not sunken, but understand the user/programming constraints of state requirements.
- Because of the quasi-below-grade location of the units and the landscape buffer, a dark unwelcoming condition has been created. This area needs to be better resolved. Find creative ways to create privacy while also avoiding a dark, cave-like condition along the streetscape.
- While some Commissioners stressed adding more privacy through better landscaping, others noted there should be more windows, more light and more opportunity for visual communication between inside and outside.

## **3. Prominent Entrance and Sandy Façade Notch.**

- From a guidelines perspective the porte-cochere on Hassalo is not the building's primary entrance and there needs to be a prominent main entrance on Sandy.
- As shown, the entrance located at the chamfered corner appears as an afterthought and does not read as a prominent main entrance, but as a side door. It should not be a door to a corridor flanked with offices but should be connected with more prominent and active uses.
- Commissioners liked seeing an entrance at the prominent corner of Sandy and NE 31<sup>st</sup> Ave but were not happy with almost 400' of building wall along Sandy having no other entrances.
- Commissioners noted that while a corner entrance is good, the main entrance doesn't have to be at the corner and there should also be another entry somewhere along that 400' façade.

- Further, if the corner is programmed well and a prominent entry is provided elsewhere, there doesn't necessarily have to even be a door at the beveled corner. With or without a door, the corner should be glassy with spaces inside reprogrammed with active uses to celebrate the prominent corner and convey a sense of place.
- The notch along the Sandy 400' frontage is an opportunity for something meaningful like a prominent primary entry and is where one would expect to see an entrance. Thus, placing the main entrance in the notch would be ideal: it would locate an entrance along the long Sandy frontage and add meaning to the required notch.
- Commissioners noted that they would be supportive of a Modification to shift the location of the notch if it helped achieve a really great entrance on Sandy Blvd that enters into a truly active space such as a lobby.
- The notch is also an opportunity to break up the building in a truly meaningful way with different massing on either side of the notch. It doesn't have to be the exact same building on both sides of the big notch.

#### **4. Corner of Sandy and NE 31st Ave.**

- Having a chamfered corner is a successful urban response to the intersection and is a must given the context of the other buildings.
- The combination of a chamfered corner at the ground floor with a squared building above isn't working. The bevel doesn't read if you only do it at the ground floor and it makes the ground level dark and unwelcoming.
- Commissioners noted that they would prefer a really great chamfered corner that carries all the way up the building.

#### **5. Sandy Blvd Ground Floor Articulation.**

- While raised planters give a bit more privacy and security to people inside the building, extensive landscaping along Sandy may not do well on the north side of the building under canopies and is not a great fit for the urban context of the transit street.
- The Sandy Blvd frontage is a design issue that should be looked at holistically. It needs to be well-composed and the façade needs to be modulated. A 400' long stretch of unmodulated building is not a great response to guidelines. Look at neighborhood context for massing and façade articulation precedents.

#### **6. Modifications.**

- Because Modifications have to better meet design guidelines, the height and landscaping Modification requests are not yet supportable.

##### Height step-downs

- As height is an integral part of the form of the building, spectacular massing and architectural articulation that make the need for the Modification clear could justify this request or if adding those outcroppings of height somehow makes the building more of a coherent whole.
- An excellent landscape buffer would also help the argument of better meeting guidelines.
- Several Commissioners noted that the intent of the height step-down standard makes less sense on a site with these unique conditions (location vis-à-vis residential sites, odd narrow

shape, steep slope, etc). In this particular site the step-down standard isn't necessarily improving the conditions for neighbors. The standard was written for general conditions that don't always apply. With a shallow site the zoning code requirement can create a single loaded top floor which is unusual.

#### Landscape buffer

- This would be a hard Modification to justify. Unless the buffer is spectacular with many large trees, it would be difficult to make a case that it better meets guidelines.
- The next plan set should include a landscape plan that specifically shows tree and plant placement to better understand the Modification request.

Note: There was discussion about whether 30" of dirt above a structure meets the L3 landscape standard. It does not meet L3 as it will not be counted as "in ground". The metric of 30" is part of another standard, 33.130.225.B.2.c which is for "raised landscaped areas" under the "urban green alternative landscaped area" options for the 15% landscape requirement of the commercial zone and does not apply to the L3 standard defined in 33.248.

#### **7. Hassalo Frontage.**

- The outdoor walkway along the south façade is awkward and is squeezing the setback along the landmark site.
- Building landscaping over the open vehicle ramp would vastly improve the entire southern side of the development.
- If you have to have a porte-cochere, it is located in the most appropriate place (on a dead-end street).

## Exhibit List

- A. Applicant's Submittals
  - 1. Project Narrative, Zoning Code Summary, Response to Approval Criteria
  - 2. Original plan set – NOT APPROVED/reference only 3/15/2019
  - 3. Second plan set – NOT APPROVED/reference only 4/2/2019
  - 4. Ground floor plan – NOT APPROVED/reference only 4/10/2019
- B. Zoning Map
- C. Drawings
  - DAR package submitted in advance
    - 1. Cover Page
    - 2. Table of Contents
    - 3. Existing Site Survey & Zoning Requirements
    - 4. PROJECT NARRATIVE & ZONING SUMMARY
    - 5. NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT
    - 6. Site Views
    - 7. Site Analysis
    - 8. Site Concept Evolution
    - 9. Conceptual Floor Plan – Sandy Blvd
    - 10. Conceptual Floor Plan – Hassalo St
    - 11. Conceptual Sections
    - 12. Conceptual Sections
    - 13. Conceptual Floor Plan
    - 14. Conceptual Floor Plan
    - 15. NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER
    - 16. Concept Development Images
    - 17. SITE CHARACTERISTICS AND MASSING
    - 18. Concept Elevations
    - 19. Concept Elevations
    - 20. Zoning Massing & Modifications Diagrams
    - 21. Zoning Massing & Modifications Diagrams
  - Updated pages submitted on the day of the DAR
    - 22. Conceptual Floor Plan – Sandy Blvd (attached)
    - 23. Renderings of Sandy Blvd Corner Options (attached)
    - 24. Renderings of View along Sandy Blvd
    - 25. Rendering and Section of Sandy Blvd Frontage
    - 26. Renderings of Sandy Blvd Frontage
    - 27. Conceptual Floor Plan – Hassalo St (attached)
    - 28. Renderings of Hassalo and 31<sup>st</sup> Corner
    - 29. Renderings of Hassalo St frontages
    - 30. Conceptual Sections
    - 31. Conceptual Sections
    - 32. Zoning Massing & Modifications Diagrams
- 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 Transportation Engineering and Development Review
- F. Public Testimony
  - 1. Public Testimony Sign-in Sheet, 5/2/2019

G. Other

1. Application form
2. Pre-Application Conference Summary notes (EA 18-2260608 PC), held 11/29/2010
3. Staff memo to Design Commission, 4/23/2019
4. Staff presentation, 5/2/2019
5. Applicant Presentation, 5/2/2019

H. After First Hearing

1. Staff Summary from first DAR, 5/13/2019