



City of Portland Design Commission

Design Advice Request

SUMMARY MEMO

Date: June 5, 2019
To: Portland Design Commission
From: Tanya Paglia, Design Review
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Re: EA 19-138785 – 1634 SW Alder
Design Advice Request Commission Summary Memo – May 23, 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 23, 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 23, 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. Overall, commissioners felt that the building was a very successful contextual response to the neighborhood and they applauded the use of brick as the primary material and the employment of a tripartite composition. They responded favorably to the general design direction and comments indicated that there was much more right with the design presented than wrong with it. Thus, they would not want to see large changes that could potentially move away from the things that were already successful about the design. The largest issue discussed was the scale of the building in relation to the pedestrian realm along the sloping 17th Ave frontage. While other options should also be explored, landscaping at the base of the building was supported by all commissioners present as a way to potentially mitigate this issue while not detracting from the building's design.

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.

1. Recognize Tanner Creek / Incorporate Art and Water Features

- The majority of commissioners agreed that the Tanner Creek, art and water guidelines need to be addressed in some way, but not necessarily a large art piece, and per the applicant, RACC wouldn't likely be interested in doing something with a Tanner Creek theme.
- It was suggested that perhaps this project could create a prototype for some sort of standardized way of acknowledging the historic path of the creek such as a medallion that repeats throughout the neighborhood.
- The applicant suggested that this was something they could discuss with the Goose Hollow Foothills League.

2. Scale of SW 17th Frontage

- Commissioners noted the challenge of breaking down the building's scale at the ground level given the 18 foot slope along this frontage.
- Landscaping along the edge of the building would provide softening at the ground level and it's a traditional pattern in the neighborhood. It would be helpful when combined with elongated planted tree wells to give a sense of walking through greenery along the sidewalk.
- The windows into the bike room along the 17th Ave frontage were noted as a good way of working with the extreme slope of the site.
- Balconies could also help.
- It was pointed out that many of the historical examples of buildings in the neighborhood are of a similarly large scale, but the scale is broken down with details at the windows and in other places. The proposed building should incorporate further fine-grained detail that is substantial enough to be seen.
- The top of the building could be a place to break down the scale by employing more detail. All the historical examples in the neighborhood, such as Commodore Hotel, have architectural details that address the sky whether with ornate parapets, cornices, building form, or intricate architectural details near the tops of the buildings.
- At seven stories tall, the top of the building will be very visible from the vantage point of the pedestrian and perhaps the top of this building is too simple and detracting from the tripartite composition.

- Two Commissioners disagreed that adding detail at the top could be helpful, noting that it's a quiet building trying to make a nod to older buildings without overdoing it with too much fussy detail.
- All agreed that the design is on track with a nice composition that is very appropriate to the neighborhood and so advised against changing it too much because that could lose what is already working.
- The great materials and the simple windows without spandrels set in the wall were noted as some of the simple elements that are working well.

3. Tripartite Scale

- The tripartite composition is contextual with the neighborhood and the simplicity works well given the excellent materials.
- The tripartite composition works well on Morrison in providing pedestrian scale but the building's base may be too tall on Alder. However, the strong datum lines carrying around the whole building is working well for coherency, so would not want to change that.
- Exploring ways to make the base heavier could help. One way could be by highlighting the rustication – setting it heavier or highlighting it with color change.

4. Weather Protection

- The canopies could turn the corners from Alder to 17th and from Morrison to 17th to add more weather protection.

5. End Wall

- Commissioners wondered if any buildings in this area have large expanses of fiber cement as is proposed for the building's end wall. Tanner Creek Lofts was brought up as an example.
- It was noted that the one-story Monty's motor company is likely to go away and be replaced by a taller building, but the Commodore Hotel is fairly permanent.
- Three of the five commissioners present agreed that the other three facades being brick helps mitigate the end wall being fiber cement, and that the brick should continue to wrap the corners as shown, however brick should also carry across one additional bay above the Commodore Hotel.
- The other two were satisfied with the proposal as shown – brick wrapping one bay on each side with fiber cement as the rest and noted it would be more cohesive than adding another bay of brick over the Commodore as it remains symmetrical if left as is.
- All noted that any fiber cement used should be one of the thicker fiber cement products and be detailed well.

Exhibit List

- A. Applicant's Submittals
 - 1. Applicant's Original Plan Set, 3/27/2019
 - 2. Applicant's Second Plan Set, 4/25/2019
- B. Zoning Map
- C. Drawings
 - DAR Plan Set, May 9, 2019
 - 1. COVER
 - 2. C2 TABLE OF CONTENTS
 - 3. C3 VICINITY MAP
 - 4. C4 SITE IMAGES
 - 5. C5 ADJACENT CONTEXT
 - 6. C6 GOOSE HOLLOW CONTEXT
 - 7. C7 WOOD PARTNERS PROJECTS
 - 8. C8 URBAN DESIGN
 - 9. C9 MASSING DIAGRAMS
 - 10. C10 SITE PLAN
 - 11. C11 FLOOR PLAN - LEVEL P1 (SW ALDER) (attached)
 - 12. C12 FLOOR PLAN - LEVEL 1 (SW MORRISON) (attached)
 - 13. C13 FLOOR PLAN - LEVELS 2-5
 - 14. C14 FLOOR PLAN - LEVEL 6
 - 15. C15 FLOOR PLAN - MEZZANINE LOFTS
 - 16. C16 SOUTH ELEVATION (attached)
 - 17. C17 WEST ELEVATION (attached)
 - 18. C18 NORTH ELEVATION (attached)
 - 19. C19 EAST ELEVATION (attached)
 - 20. C20 SECTION LOOKING WEST
 - 21. C21 MATERIALS
 - 22. C22 VIEW FROM SOUTHWEST (attached)
 - 23. C23 VIEW FROM NORTHWEST (attached)
- 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: None
- G. Other
 - 1. Application form
 - 2. Pre-Application Conference Summary notes (EA 18-274415), held 1/22/2019
 - 3. Staff memo to Design Commission, 5/13/2019
 - 4. Staff presentation, 5/23/2019
 - 5. Applicant Presentation, 5/23/2019
- H. After First Hearing
 - 1. Staff Summary from first DAR, 6/5/2019