



# City of Portland Design Commission

## Design Advice Request

### SUMMARY MEMO

**Date:** July 31, 2019  
**To:** Kurt Schultz, SERA Architects  
**From:** Hillary Adam, Design / Historic Review Team  
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**Re:** EA 19-131007 DA – 1120 SE Morrison  
Design Advice Request Commission Summary Memo – July 18, 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 July 18, 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 July 18, 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.**

- The majority of the Commission was in support of the revisions made since the previous DAR and the general direction of the design.
- The Commission expressed appreciation for the extent of retail around the building and the relocation of back-of-house uses to the interior of the building.
- While many Commissioners supported the floating corners on the west side of the building, they also suggested that an alternate design that dropped columns to the ground at these corners could be presented as an option in the LU package.
- The majority of the Commission was in support of the current 4' penthouse recess, which also corresponds to other recesses on the building where balconies are located, but also noted that additional *usable* balconies are desirable provided they don't make the façades too busy.
- The Commission supported the stacked windows on the western portions of the building and the increased ground floor expression on the east to help break down the scale of the building.
- The Commission noted concerns with the white stucco resulting in maintenance concerns.

**Commissioners Present.** *Present: Livingston, Molinar, Santner, McCarter, Robinson; Absent, but provided written comments: Vallaster; Recused: Rodriguez.*

**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.

### **CONTEXT**

- The Commission stated that excellent progress had been made from the previous DAR in the proposal's response to Commission comments and the guidelines, specifically C-4, C3-1, and C3-2.
- The Commission noted that the massing responds well to the context; considering that there are two very different massing contexts on either side of the site, the proposed building is appropriately scaled on the east and west sides. Specifically, the breakdown on the east side and the recessed upper floor respond well to the east side residential neighborhood.
- Some Commissioners noted that the following elements help break up the massing of the 200' long façades: changes to the windows expression (stacked and punched), changes to the ground floor expressions (pilasters and no pilasters), and changes to the canopies (big and heavy vs. small and thin). Thus, the Commission supported the stacked windows, where shown, as well as the taller storefront expression on the east, while one Commissioner described this storefront expression as rather formal for its location across from the smaller-scaled residential neighborhood. It was suggested that an alternate design option be presented that grounds the west corners which currently appear to float. The Commission also favored thin horizontal canopies on the east rather than the sloped version shown.
- One Commissioner stated that the floating corners were not characteristic of the historic buildings of the Central Eastside which were presented as precedents. Another Commissioner stated that while they are not characteristic of the historic buildings, the context of the Central Eastside is changing and the feeling of the floating corner as one approaches it, going west to east in particular, would be very striking and would thus have a positive impact on the public realm.
- Some Commissioners expressed a preference for the 4' recessed penthouse to be set further back, ideally to allow for usable outdoor space; however, the majority of the Commission accepted the proposed depth. One Commissioner stated that recessing the penthouse further

would make the lower part of the building seem smaller and more contextual. One Commissioner noted that the lack of active space did not impede the proposal's response to guidelines but adding that a little more richness in the wall surface would offset the absence of active use at the top of the building.

- The majority of the Commission applauded the general direction toward a more contemporary design; however, some Commissioners noted that an additional layer of detail (with a light touch) would be more contextually responsive given the added detail present on the historic warehouse buildings in the Central Eastside. One Commissioner noted the window to wall area ratio and the different window expression at the top floor and corners in some of the historic buildings that characterize this district. There was some discussion about parapet detailing and deeper window punches to provide this extra layer of detail.
- One Commissioner noted a concern with the relentless of the windows on the north and south façades, saying that the façades feel busy and noted appreciation for the additional window changes and the color and the texture of the material at the penthouse level which help to make those façades feel less relentless. She also wondered if the canopies on the east could be reduced in number since not all of the spaces are retail entries to alleviate that relentless feeling.
- Some Commissioners suggested that additional Juliets and/or balconies could add more texture to the building, noting that the Juliets may need some additional depth since they don't seem to be doing enough to break down the scale of the east façade. The Commission suggested that the addition of Juliets or balconies on the north and south façades of the east wing be considered.

## **PUBLIC REALM**

- The Commission noted that the activation of the sidewalk edges is a big improvement from the previous DAR. Commissioners particularly appreciated the extent of retail proposed and the changes to the bike lounge and trash area, as presented at the hearing which reduced the back-of-house uses at the street edge to a minimum.
- The Commission also supported relocation of the residential lobby to the northwest corner. One commissioner stated that he was ambivalent about whether the lobby should have an additional door to the west.
- The Commission was excited about the potential of the east-facing courtyard and the spillout space at the sidewalk edge and that transition from public realm to the private realm beyond the fence. It was also noted that the courtyard would likely be activated by residents entering from the east to access their mail at that level.
- The Commission expressed appreciation for how the design works with the grade to have retail and activation at multiple levels. A couple Commissioners noted that the southwest corner was particularly inviting and responsive to guideline C-7. One Commissioner noted that this guideline does not have to mean that this requires corners to be glazed. The Commission acknowledged the logic of the current column order but encouraged the applicant to return with different architectural options for the southwest and northwest corners that may include bringing columns down at the corners.
- One Commissioner expressed concerns about activation of the lobby, suggesting some rearrangement of spaces and/or the addition of a door between the bike lounge and the lobby. Other Commissioners recalled similar projects by the applicant with programmed lobby spaces that allow for activation of those spaces.

- The Commission appreciated the presence and general placement of canopies but noted an absence along SE Morrison. The majority of the Commission preferred thin horizontal canopies at the east end, noting that the angle of the canopies accentuated the number of them.
- One Commissioner noted that the 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue elevation may be too formal for this location, but other Commissioners were comfortable with the height of the retail expression, stating that the smaller bays give it more of a human scale and that dropping the height may ultimately result in a squat appearance on this elevation.

## QUALITY & PERMANENCE

- The Commissioners discussed the proposed use of white stucco, noting that while it was appropriate for the context and they have approved it before but that there were concerns about maintenance, noting that while the material itself may last a long time, mildew could make it appear to be in poor condition not long after it's constructed. Some discussion occurred regarding the color of the stucco, but it was noted that with any color change, the entire composition of the building would have to be considered.

## 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
  - 2. Packet for July 18, 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
  - 5. Posting Notice for July 18, 2019 DAR
  - 6. Applicant certification for July 18, 2019 DAR
- E. Service Bureau Comments
  - 1. none
- F. Public Testimony
  - 1. Tim Scott, comments received May 31, 2019
- G. Other
  - 1. Application form
  - 2. Staff memo to Design Commission, dated May 6, 2019
  - 3. Staff presentation, May 6, 2019
  - 4. Applicant presentation, May 6, 2019
  - 5. Summary of May 6, 2019 Commission comments
  - 6. Staff memo to Design Commission, dated July 3, 2019
  - 7. Staff presentation, July 18, 2019
  - 8. Applicant presentation, July 18, 2019
  - 9. Summary of July 18, 2019 Commission comments