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December 5, 2019

Portland Design Review Commission  
% Staci Monroe  
City of Portland Bureau of Development Services  
1900 SW Fourth Avenue  
Portland, Oregon

RE: LU 19-25732 DZM SWGW PC#19-198390; Alamo Manhattan Blocks

Commissioners:

I would first like to thank BDS Staff for their thoughtful and thorough review. I agree with their findings and recommendations, but would like to highlight two areas of particular concern for us.

First, as noted on page 16 of the staff report: C1: Enhance View Opportunities; the proposal does not meet guidelines. As you found at your advisory review, it is important to set the towers back from River Parkway and the Greenway. This was among the first findings noted in staff's summary of your advisory review. The current proposal ignores your advice.

As proposed, the Block 41 tower stretches in the east/west dimension for something like 250 feet — much longer than a normal Portland block, creating a 'wall' blocking views and shadowing the District in a manner totally inconsistent with the context of other towers in the District. I presume this is driven by the desire to squeeze as many units onto the site as possible; but I would note that the proposed 357 units is more than the 300 units on the John Ross block and 267 on the Ardea block— and those towers are 7 levels taller than those proposed. Similar, Block 44 is proposed at 367 units in 24 levels, and hovers over River Parkway for 125 feet. I believe the proposal for both blocks has tried to maximize the number of units to the extent that the buildings were warped into forms completely unfriendly to the neighborhood and out of context. As you have recommended, the towers need to be set back from River Parkway and the Greenway in the east-west dimension to allow views from the North to open slightly along the River Parkway corridor, and to be less imposing on the River Parkway streetscape and the Greenway.

Second, the we share the staff's concern noted on Page 14 of the staff report, Criteria B4 and B5, regarding plazas, parks and open spaces. In general, I do not see that this development gives back to the neighborhood the way spaces at the John Ross and Ardea do, with landscaping, adjacent retail, landscaping and fountains. I'm concerned about duplicating the Ella, with little or no public space, where landscaping and fountains are behind locked gates.

I'd also note our agreement with staff that the upper towers should not be lighted as noted on page 22, C12 and B2-1.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and your service. I have attached my comments from the August advisory review for the record.

Sincerely

Neil & Annette McFarlane



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August 28, 2019

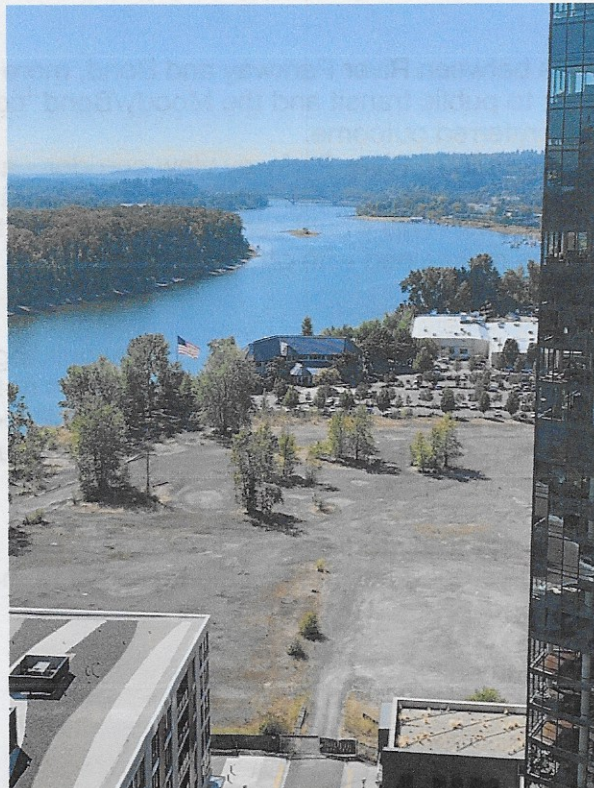
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I would like to express my concern with the proposed design of the 4 blocks in South Waterfront before you on August 29th, 2019.

First, I would love to see the blocks developed and the road and greenway connections completed here and throughout the District. However, the towers proposed on the riverfront blocks would impose severe blockages of river views, and in so doing, are out of compliance with Central City and South Waterfront design criteria and guidance.

Key guidance I reference are the 'fundamental' central city design guideline regarding enhancing views. From the South Waterfront plan, here are some key phrases:

- 'carefully designed to incorporate human-scale elements are **tremendous** river views'
- 'the **Willamette River** and Greenway are the focus of the district'
- 'provide physical and **visual** connections the the Willamette River from both the district and the adjoining neighborhoods' '**limit building height** to 50' on the portion of the site that is within 50' of the centerline of **designated street corridors**'.







The pictures above illustrate the importance of River Parkway as a view corridor. The towers as currently planned, without any setbacks from River Parkway, would block the river view of hundreds of south facing units in the Atwater, Meriweather, the John Ross and Ardea almost entirely. The 'L' shape of the most southern tower makes this worse.

#### Potential Fixes?

1. Move the towers to the blocks between River Parkway and Bond, more respectful of existing River views and closer to public transit and the Moody/Bond 'core.' I believe this would be the neighborhood's preferred outcome.
2. Alternatively, setback of the towers from River Parkway view corridor - along the lines of the Atwater Tower's setback. In other words, give the 'north-south' views as much consideration as the east-west views. This would certainly require substantial slimming of the towers. Unit count could be maintained with other approaches.

#### Other Issues

1. We agree with staff comments on the 'blockiness' of the 6 story buildings.
2. Looks like a covered 'entry' is the only public area proposed. That is not what the neighborhood guidelines call for. See the John Ross plaza at River Parkway and Gaines, the Ardea's central plaza, and the public accessible fountains at the Mirabella, John Ross, Atwater and Ardea that make walking in the area a pleasure.

We hope the applicant can respond positively to these comments. We look forward to welcoming a complex designed to be a good neighbor to the buildings to the north, and west, and its 1200 units to our neighborhood.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.  
Neil & Annette McFarlane