



**City of
Portland, Oregon**
Bureau of Development Services
FROM CONCEPT TO CONSTRUCTION

Dan Ryan, Commissioner
Rebecca Esau, Director
Phone: (503) 823-7300
Fax: (503) 823-6983
TTY: (503) 823-6868
www.portland.gov/bds

Design Advice Request

DISCUSSION MEMO

Date: October 27, 2020
To: Portland Design Commission
From: Hannah Bryant, Design Review Team
503.865.6520 | Hannah.Bryant@portlandoregon.gov
Re: EA 20-194404 – WELBY
Design Advice Request Memo – November 5, 2020

Attached is a drawing set for the Design Advice Request meeting scheduled on November 5, 2020. Please contact me with any questions or concerns.

I. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

DAR for a proposed half block, 15-story, mass-timber, mixed-use building in the Pearl District. Proposed program includes two levels of automated below-grade parking accessed from NW Kearney Street, ground-level retail, two levels of office, and residential units and amenity spaces on the top 12 floors. Proposed materials include fiber cement, metal panel, wood at the ground level and punched windows with Juliette balconies. A loading dock is proposed on the NW 13th frontage.

II. DEVELOPMENT TEAM BIO

Architect	Leslie Cliffe Bora Architects
Owner's Representative	Michi Slick Killian Pacific
Project Valuation	\$85 million

III. FUTURE DESIGN REVIEW APPROVAL CRITERIA: *Central City Fundamental Design Guidelines* and *River District Design Guidelines*

V. STAFF ANALYSIS & RECOMMENDED DAR DISCUSSION TOPICS

Staff advise you consider the following among your discussion items on November 5, 2020:

CONTEXT

1. **Policy.** The following summarizes key policy context as it applies to the subject site.
 - a. **Development Standards – EX (Central Employment) zone / Central City Plan District.** Though early in the design process, the proposal appears generally compliant with zoning code standards (allowed use, maximum setbacks, parking, loading, landscaping, windows,

etc.). Below is not a comprehensive list of development standards that apply to this site, but include those that influenced the early design phase.

- NW 13th Avenue adjacent to this site is subject to a Special Building Height Corridor, per Map 510-18. The portion of the building within 20' of NW 13th Avenue may be no more than 75' in height. Adjustments to this standard are prohibited.
- The NW 13th Avenue frontage is also subject to Ground Floor Active Use standards, per Map 510-9. Active use spaces must be 25' deep.
- The site is just east of, but not within, a mapped view corridor as shown on Map 510-20.
- Retail Sales and Service uses are limited at this site, per Map 510-12. This means Retail Sales and Service is limited to 50,000 sf of net building area per use.
- Base height at this site is 75' and the max height with bonuses is 250' (Map 510-4).
- Max FAR is 5:1 (Map 510-2). The applicant intends to use FAR bonuses and/or transfers to acquire additional FAR. There is no maximum to FAR bonuses and transfers that may be earned.
- Bird-Safe glazing applies (33.510.223).
- Ecoroof standards will apply (33.510.243).
- Growth Parking is proposed (33.510.261).

b. **Streets** – The development proposal includes partial vacation of NW 14th Avenue to facilitate improved bike and turning lanes. PBOT has indicated its non-binding support for the proposal, but the determination is made by City Council. Ideally, the vacation will be complete prior to Design Review approval.

2. **Terraces.** Staff questions the northern orientation of the terraces, and the likelihood of successful plantings and activation if the outdoor spaces are largely shaded (see C.23). *Guideline C11: Integrate Roofs and Use Rooftops*
3. **Massing.** Neighborhood context is historic warehouses and recent mixed-use derived from the rectilinear warehouse typology with regular, punched fenestration patterns. The irregular massing, staggered terraces and chamfered corners of this proposal are unique within the surrounding architectural context. The step downs are intended to relate to proximate buildings (see C.19). A step down toward NW 13th Avenue is required. Staff poses the atypical form of the building offers variety, while also being a contextual response. Guidelines direct new development to relate to the urban warehouse character of the District, with a unified, monolithic, tripartite design. *Guidelines: A5-1-1: Reinforce the Identity of the Pearl District Neighborhood, C1: Enhance View Opportunities, C4: Complement the Context of Existing Buildings, C5: Design for Coherency*

PUBLIC REALM

1. **Ground Level.** The ground floor has a 20' height, dual lobbies and multiple retail/commercial spaces. A loading dock is proposed for NW 13th Avenue. The NW 14th frontage has corner retail but is otherwise reliant on a bike repair space as ground level activation. Active use spaces must be at least 25' deep and meet standards of 33.510.225.C. *Guidelines A8: Contribute to a Vibrant Streetscape*
2. **Parking and Loading.** PBOT supports access from NW Kearney. This is a cobble street. Staff will work with PBOT to ensure the street can stay a cobble street to reinforce the character that once was. The proposed driveway throat is over 20'. Staff supports a narrower driveway since the car stackers effectively limit vehicle traffic. (see C.26) *Guidelines: A5-1: Reinforce Special Areas; C3-1: Integrate Parking; C9-1: Reduce the Impact of Residential Unit Garages on Pedestrians*
3. **Canopies.** Canopies are shown over the length of the NW 13th loading dock, and at main entrances. Exhibit C.26 only shows canopies at entries on NW Kearney and NW 14th Avenue.

Staff supports deep canopy coverage at every bay, with deeper canopies at entrances.
Guidelines: A4: Use Unifying Elements, B2: Protect the Pedestrian, B6: Develop Weather Protection.

4. **Art and Water Features.** Staff notes that water features and art are required per Guidelines A5-3 and A5-4. These features typically require 3-D site space and should be considered in conjunction with other schematic design elements. *Guidelines A5-3: Incorporate Water Features, A5-4: Integrate Art, A8: Contribute to a Vibrant Streetscape.*
5. **Loading Dock.** Staff supports the ramp access to the loading dock, its connection to the adjacent dock to the north, and its generous canopy coverage. Staff would support further activation of the loading dock with spill-out seating. *Guidelines B2: Protect the Pedestrian, B4: Provide Stopping and Viewing Places, B3: Bridge Pedestrian Obstacles, B7: Integrate Barrier-Free Design, C7: Design Corners that Build Active Intersections, C10: Integrate Encroachments*

QUALITY & PERMANENCE

1. **Exterior materials.** The proposal is for fiber cement exterior cladding with wood at the ground level. The precedent studies provided by the applicant demonstrate masonry materials. Staff questions the use of wood cladding at the ground level as masonry is typical in this neighborhood context and wood may not be durable in this urban, active environment. Staff also encourages the applicant to research specific fiber cement cladding at this early phase, as some fiber cement products are not durable for a building of this scale nor in a setting as urban as this site. *Guidelines C2: Promote Quality and Permanence in Development, C4: Complement the Context of Existing Buildings, C8: Differentiate the Sidewalk Level of Buildings*