



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

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Design Advice Request

DISCUSSION MEMO

Date: December 23, 2020
To: Portland Design Commission
From: Grace Jeffreys, Design / Historic Review Team
503-865-6521 | grace.jeffreys@portlandoregon.gov
Re: EA 20-219065 – 550 MLK
Design Advice Request Memo – January 7, 2021

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

I. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Design Advice Request for a proposed half block, “5-over-2” mixed-use project with ground level commercial retail spaces, residential amenities, parking with approximately 60 parking stalls, and approximately 120 residential units of varying sizes at levels 2 – 7.

A previous proposal achieved Design Review and Historic Resource Review approval in 2017 for a mixed-use building on this site with retail, hotel and residential uses (LU 17-109848 DZ, HR, Decision attached). Approval included two options for height (8 and 7-stories) and two versions of parking (with and without a basement). Conditions of approval were added:

- D. Should there be a fence and gates along SE Stark, the courtyard shall be left open to the public during regular business hours.*
- E. The perforated steel at the balconies shall be a minimum of 16 gauge thick.*

The focus of this DAR discussion should include the early design concept, challenges created by a 3-foot dedication that may necessitate modification to 33.510.225 Ground Floor Active Uses on MLK, and treatment of courtyard.

II. DEVELOPMENT TEAM BIO

Architect	Marcus Lima GBD Architects
Owner’s Representative	Sarah Zahn UD+P
Project Valuation	\$ 22 million

III. FUTURE DESIGN REVIEW APPROVAL CRITERIA: (see attached matrix)

- **Design Review (DR)** - *Central City Fundamental Design Guidelines (CCFDG) and Special Design Guidelines for the Design Zone of the Central Eastside District of the Central City Plan (CEDG)*
- **Historic Resource Review (HRR)**, for a small part of the site at the interior of the block in the historic district - *Central City Fundamental Design Guidelines (CCFDG) and East Portland/Grand Avenue Historic District*
- **Modifications** - Section 33.825.040 for the DR area, Section 33.846.070 for the HRR area.
- **Adjustments** - Section 33.805.040

IV. STAFF ANALYSIS & RECOMMENDED DAR DISCUSSION TOPICS: Staff advise you consider the following among your discussion items on January 7, 2021:

CONTEXT

1. **Development Standards:** EXd Base Zone / Central City Plan District /Historic Resource Protection Overlay added for small part of site mid-block. Though early in the design process, one anticipated modification has been identified:
 - a. **Applicant seeks discussion of active ground floor use requirements on the west facade along SE MLK Avenue.** In particular, areas of depth below 25'-0" from face of building to back of retail spaces. The proposed building does not meet the depth portion of this requirement for greater than 50% of its façade:

33.510.225 Ground Floor Active Uses, Map 510-9. Ground Floor Active Use requirements apply on the MLK frontage. This standard requires that 50% of each street frontage must feature active use spaces that measure at least 25' deep, at least 12' high and feature windows and doors.
2. **Streets - TSP Designations.**
 - a. Pedestrian District: Central City Pedestrian District (changed in 2019). Because this site is now in a Pedestrian district, a 3-foot dedication is required along SE MLK.
 - b. Streets: Adjacent streets are classified as follows:
 - SE Martin Luther King Boulevard (one-way headed south): Major Transit Priority, Major City Traffic, City Bikeway, Major City Walkway.
 - SE Stark Street: Traffic Access Street, City Bikeway, Major City Walkway, Local Service Transit.
 - SE Washington Street: Traffic Access Street, Local Service for Transit, Bikeway and Walkway.
 - c. Transit: Readily available.
3. **District Policies/ Goals/ Objectives** From the [Central Eastside Design Guidelines](#), the following are particularly applicable to this site:
 - a. Policies: The policies note the importance of the MLK/ Grand couplet as the main transit, pedestrian and commercial spines of the district. *Develop Martin Luther King and Grand Avenues as the principal north-south connection and commercial spine in the district for transit and pedestrians with the East Portland "Grand Avenue" Historic District as its focus* (page 1).

- b. **Goals/Objectives:** The goals and objectives define the urban vision.

Both the historic fabric as well as warehouses and light industrial buildings are important to the character of the area. *Encourage the special distinction and identity of the design review areas of the Central Eastside District* (page 7).

- **Design.** **The building character should relate to the surrounding context of warehouses and light industrial buildings.** While early in the design process, the connection to the context is unclear. (*Guidelines C3-1 Design to Enhance Existing Themes in the District and C4 Complement the Context of Existing Buildings*).
- **Historic Adjacencies.** **The scale and character of new development should complement and enhance the directly adjacent historic buildings and district** (*Guidelines C3-1 Design to Enhance Existing Themes in the District and C4 Complement the Context of Existing Buildings*). The proposal directly abuts 2 Primary Contributing Resources in a Historic District, one of which is a Historic Landmark:
 - o **New Logus Block.** An individually listed Historic Landmark built in 1892 and located at 525-535 SE Grand Ave.
 - o **Shleifer Furniture Building.** A listing on the Historic Resource Inventory built in 1897 and located at 509 SE Grand.
- **Street Frontages.** **The Stark and Washington facades should more directly face these streets.** The street-facing facades on SE Stark and SE Washington are activated at the corner, but because the focus is towards MLK, they appear as building sides rather than street frontages. (*Guidelines A8 Contribute to a Vibrant Streetscape and B1 Reinforce and Enhance the Pedestrian System*).

The sidewalks and public realm should serve multiple functions. *Promoting the historical use of the public sidewalks to continue to serve as multifunctional, a personality trait of the district. Besides accommodating pedestrian passage, the Central Eastside sidewalks serve as staging areas for goods to move in and out of buildings, as well as displaying goods. They become "showrooms" to the public, an extension of internal services* (page 7).

- **Courtyard.** **The courtyard off SE Stark should act as an extension of the sidewalk, and it will be important to activate its edges and show it is accessible to the public.** The Applicant seeks discussion of design concepts for ground floor courtyard space on the north facade along SE Stark St. In particular, access off of SE Stark and visual connection from the street. To ensure the courtyard is welcome, the Design Commission added a condition of approval to the previous Design Review approval (LU 17-109848 DZ, HR) that "Should there be a fence and gates along SE Stark, the courtyard shall be left open to the public during regular business hours". (*Guidelines A5 Enhance, Embellish & Identify Areas and C8-1 Allow for loading and staging areas on sidewalk*).
- **Courtyard.** **The courtyard could also provide opportunities for the integration of works of art and water features expected in the guidelines** (*Guidelines A5-4 Incorporate works of art and A5-5 Incorporate water features*).

PUBLIC REALM

1. **Site organization.** It will be important to provide a rich human-scaled experience at the ground level on each frontage that supports passersby as well as building visitors.

