



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

Dan Ryan, Commissioner
Rebecca Esau, Director
Phone: (503) 823-7300
Fax: (503) 823-5630
TTY: (503) 823-6868
www.portland.gov/bds

Design Advice Request

DISCUSSION MEMO

Date: January 25, 2021
To: Portland Design Commission
From: Tanya Paglia, Design Review Team
503-865-6518 | Tanya.Paglia@portandoregon.gov
Re: EA 20-219923 DA – Slabtown Savier
Design Advice Request Memo – February 4, 2021

Attached is a drawing set for the Design Advice Request meeting scheduled on February 4, 2021. Please contact me with any questions or concerns.

I. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Design Advice Request meeting for a proposal to develop blocks 261 and 262 in the Con-Way Master Plan area. The proposed development will be market rate apartments on both parcels. Block 261 will be a 5 story residential building with 138 residential units and tuck under parking accessed from NW 20th Ave on the east side of the site. The ground floor street frontages include a lobby in the southwest corner, a bike room along NW 20th Ave, and ground floor residential units with stoops along NW Savier St. Block 262 will be a 6 story residential building with 214 residential units with basement parking accessed from NW Raleigh St on the south side of the site. The building's lobby will face north onto NW Savier St and will be a mirror image of Block 261's lobby. The ground floor program will also include ground floor residential units, some with stoops, as well as live work units at the corner of NW 20th and NW Raleigh in the southwest corner of the site. Both buildings feature amenity rooms with outdoor terraces in the southwest corner of their top floors.

Note: The project site lies within the Con-way Master Plan area. The Master Plan was approved by the Hearings Officer under LU 12-135162 MS and includes 10 Development Standards and 7 Design Guidelines unique to sites in Conway (found in Section 5 of the Master Plan) which supersede any other zoning code applicable to the site. During the term of the Master Plan (October 2, 2012 to October 2, 2022), the uses that are allowed, applicable development standards, and sections of the Zoning Code that apply to development within the Master Plan are only those Zoning Code provisions, as modified by the Master Plan, that were effective on the date the Master Plan application was filed (April 24, 2012). Amendments to the Zoning Code that became effective subsequent to April 24, 2012 such as those related to Inclusionary Housing Zoning Code Project or the Commercial Mixed-Use Zone Project, do not apply to development within the Master Plan during its term.

II. DEVELOPMENT TEAM BIO

Architect	Kurt Schultz Sera Design And Architecture
Owner's Representative	Scott Rasmussen LMC
Project Valuation	\$70,000,000

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

- Con-way Master Plan Section 5
- Community Design Guidelines
- Potentially 33.825.040, Modifications that will better meet design review requirements

IV. POTENTIAL MODIFICATIONS

Subject to the following approval criteria:

- A. The resulting development will better meet the applicable design guidelines; and
- B. On balance, the proposal will be consistent with the purpose of the standard for which a modification is requested

Following Modifications may be requested:

1. None yet identified.

V. STAFF ANALYSIS & RECOMMENDED DAR DISCUSSION TOPICS

Staff advise you consider the following among your discussion items on 2/4/2021:

1. **Building Design Relationship to St Patrick's Church.** The relationship of the building on Block 262 to St Patrick's Church is of high importance. The church directly abuts the site to the east, thus the new building, and its east side in particular, needs to have a strong contextual response to its neighbor. St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church & Rectory is an individually listed National Register historic landmark built in 1891. It is one of only a few historic buildings in the area and is a major landmark of the Slabtown neighborhood. The Renaissance Revival / Beaux Arts structure was designed by architect Otto Kleeman and constructed of rough basalt masonry, quarried in Clackamas County. Per the National Register Nomination, it is "the second oldest surviving church building of any denomination in the city of Portland still used for religious purposes." The east end of the building on Block 262 needs to have a stronger response to the church. In the current design, the building responds with a one window bay wide change of color and a one floor step-down with a roof terrace. Block 262 needs a stronger response in interest, quality and composition to the very strong church design, and then the architecture of the entire block should build from this end of the building and its relationship with the landmark.

Stepping the building back more would also provide better breathing room for the church, which is the purpose of the required pocket park. The proposed massing of the two buildings could be reconfigured to provide more substantial breathing room for the church without a loss of floor area across the two blocks. The height limit of Block 261 is 150' and the current proposal is utilizing a fraction of that allowance. Pulling back the proposed building on Block 262 and increasing the buffer would also improve the relationship between the new building and the 130 year old landmark.

Note renderings on C29, C27, C30, elevations on C18, C20, and aerial view on C25 of the plan set.

Refer to Con-way NW Master Plan *Design Guidelines: 4 – Develop buildings that are appropriately scaled to the neighborhood, 5 – Provide transitions between the public and private realms when residential structures abut streets, parks and pedestrian accessways, 6. Integrate high-quality materials and design details;* and Community Design Guidelines: *P1 – Plan Area Character, P2 – Historic and Conservation Districts, P3 – Gateways, D7 – Blending into the Neighborhood, D8 – Interest, Quality, and Composition.*

- 2. Pocket Park West of St. Patrick’s Church.** Conway Design Guideline 7.F requires that Block 262 provides land for a small pocket park west of St. Patrick’s church and includes the following direction:

7.F.1 Design the space to give the historic church some “breathing room” and to provide opportunities for informally programmed activities organized primarily by adjacent development, the church or neighborhood.

7.F.2 Design of this pocket park shall be in collaboration with St. Patrick’s Church.

Conway Design Guideline 2 notes there should be an active ground floor adjacent to parks. Other Conway guidelines related to how the building meets the park include: *Conway Design Guideline 1* which states that buildings should provide human scale along edges of open space with door, window and wall treatments relating and contributing to pedestrian enjoyment and *Conway Design Guideline 5* which specifies that transitions should be provided between the public and private realms when residential structures abut streets, parks and pedestrian accessways. As proposed, the design is not yet meeting these guidelines at the pocket park.

A bike lounge, studio apartment and 2-bedroom apartment abut the pocket park. None of these are meeting the active ground floor design guideline. The ground floor residential use in particular is a problem as it will make the park feel like a private yard. The pocket park must feel like a public space. While the bike lounge feels less private than the residential units, they are not generally active spaces, and staff has concerns about film being added to windows to prevent potential bike theft. Staff recommends a tenant amenity room or a community room that could be used by the community (including the church) that has doors which can open onto the park.

Beyond ground floor uses, the building’s relationship with the pocket park also feels privatized. As designed, the park reads like a courtyard space for the building, and not a public space. The design is too linear and not holistic. It should surround from all sides. Pulling the building back and allowing more room for landscape would help the park, in addition to providing the amount of “breathing room” truly needed by the church.

Finally, the addition of gates to protect the park during off hours makes sense. However, staff would recommend a condition of approval to any eventual project approval that mandates that gates must be unlocked and fully open with no barrier during the day.

Note rendering on C29 of the plan set, the pocket park study on C24, and elevation on C18 of the plan set.

Refer to Con-way NW Master Plan *Design Guidelines: 1 – Provide human scale to buildings and edges along sidewalks, squares and pedestrian accessways, 2 – Develop urban edge variety adjacent to parks, pedestrian accessways and greenstreets, 5 – Provide transitions between the public and private realms when residential structures abut streets, parks and pedestrian accessways, 7A – Open space standards. Provide private open spaces that are well integrated with adjacent development, act as gathering places designed to adapt to a*

variety of activities, are linked together and to other nearby open spaces, are accessible to the public and provide distinctive neighborhood identity, 7F – Open space standards - Pocket park. Provide land for a small pocket park west of St. Patrick's Church; and Community Design Guidelines: P1 – Plan Area Character, E2 – Stopping Places, D1 – Outdoor Areas, D3 – Landscape Features.

- 3. Ground Floor Programming and Ground Floor Residential Units.** Active ground floor uses along street facing frontages are encouraged throughout the Master Plan area. Given the two blocks' location at the northeastern reaches of Con-way with no frontage on 21st or a pedestrian way, the large amount of ground floor residential could work only if the units are designed to provide a pleasant experience to pedestrians, and to successfully transition from the private to the public realm with generous stoops at the right height and depth from the sidewalk, with a planted buffer. Entrances to residential units must have adequate vertical and horizontal setbacks to allow privacy and "defensible space" which is more likely be utilized. They should be buffered by setbacks, raised ground levels, and landscaping to provide relief for residents and contribute to a sense of an active frontage. The proposal does a good job of locating lobbies, leasing and co-working space to the two corners of Savier and 20th Ave. It also places live/work at the corner of Raleigh and 20th. As noted above, active ground floor programming at the pocket park is a very high priority for this site and the current floor plan abutting the park is not yet working. The northern end of Block 261's ground floor is also a concern. There are no active uses on that entire end of the building and most of 261's frontage along NW 20th Ave is completely inactive. Adding live work to the northwest corner of the ground floor would go a long way towards activating that zone and would contribute to a vibrant and pedestrian-oriented streetscape.

Con-way NW Master Plan *Design Guideline 5* notes, "Where the first floor of a structure is a residential use, that floor should be raised above the sidewalk grade and set back from the property line to allow for the delineation of the public and private realms. The height of the first floor above the sidewalk should be approximately 3 feet, or enough to adequately delineate between public and private realms."

Refer to Con-way NW Master Plan Design Guidelines: 1 – Provide human scale to buildings and edges along sidewalks, squares and pedestrian accessways, 2 – Develop urban edge variety adjacent to parks, pedestrian accessways and greenstreets, 4 – Develop buildings that are appropriately scaled to the neighborhood, 5 – Provide transitions between the public and private realms when residential structures abut streets, parks and pedestrian accessways, 7.A – Provide private open spaces that are well integrated with adjacent development, act as gathering places designed to adapt to a variety of activities, are linked together and to other nearby open spaces, are accessible to the public and provide distinctive neighborhood identity; and Community Design Guidelines: P1 – Plan Area Character, E1 – The Pedestrian Network, E3 – The Sidewalk Level of Buildings, E4 – Corners that Build Active Intersections, D7 – Blending into the Neighborhood.

- 4. Balconies.** As entirely residential buildings, creating active frontages is a greater challenge. Balconies can help create more lively and active façades by increasing activity and life on the building's exterior and providing outdoor areas where active uses can take place and signs of occupancy can take root, enriching the pedestrian experience for people passing by. Con-way NW Master Plan *Design Guideline 1* notes, "Porches and balconies are particularly encouraged. These elements provide human scale, allow for interaction between residents and passers-by, and allow for informal surveillance of the street." While balconies and Julietts are proposed, staff would like the commission to comment on whether there are enough and whether they are in the optimal locations.

Refer to Con-way NW Master Plan *Design Guidelines: 1 – Provide human scale to buildings and edges along sidewalks, squares and pedestrian accessways, 4 – Develop buildings that are appropriately scaled to the neighborhood, 5 – Provide transitions between the public and private realms when residential structures abut streets, parks and pedestrian accessways;* and Community Design Guidelines: *P1 – Plan Area Character, E1 – The Pedestrian Network, D7 – Blending into the Neighborhood, D8 – Interest, Quality, and Composition.*

- 5. Parking and Loading.** As Blocks 261 and 262 will share a common ownership, connecting parking between them should be strongly considered. Connecting underground parking across these sites would allow for a single shared vehicle access point and eliminate the need to introduce multiple vehicle areas that interrupt the sidewalk along the proposed buildings' frontages and interrupt the buildings' façades with garage doors. Connecting the site's underground parking to that of a neighboring property would meet the Con-Way NW Master Plan's goals of prioritizing people over vehicles and implementing shared parking strategies. Maps 04-6 and 06-1 show a conceptual grouping of underground garages and the text for Map 04-6 notes that "Con-way will integrate shared parking strategies as a key element of the land transactions for those future developments."

For the vehicle access points proposed, weather protection should be added over the NW 20th entry on Block 261 (a recent example nearby on Savier is a good example). Additionally, the blank walls on either side of the vehicle entry area should be made active. Con-way NW Master Plan *Design Guideline 1* notes, "*In areas where vehicles are allowed (such as parking, loading, mews and driveways) use interesting architectural elements, consistent paving patterns, landscaping and site furnishings to soften the edge where they abut open spaces and to create multi-use areas that are pedestrian friendly.*"

Refer to Con-way NW Master Plan *Design Guidelines: 1 – Provide human scale to buildings and edges along sidewalks, squares and pedestrian accessways, 3 – Develop weather protection, 4 – Develop buildings that are appropriately scaled to the neighborhood, 5 – Provide transitions between the public and private realms when residential structures abut streets, parks and pedestrian accessways, 6 – Integrate high-quality materials and design details;* and Community Design Guidelines: *P1 – Plan Area Character, E1 – The Pedestrian Network, E3 – The Sidewalk Level of Buildings, E5 – Light, Wind, Rain, D4 – Parking Areas and Garages, D7 – Blending into the Neighborhood, D8 – Interest, Quality, and Composition.*

- 6. Façade Articulation, Materials, and Weather Protection.** The guidelines call for breaking up the continuity of long frontages in a variety of ways to achieve façades that are less monumental. These include shifting the wall plane, or shifting the materials, or both, as well as roofline shifts.

Per the Community Design Guidelines, *Guideline P1*, Appendix J which draws from the Adopted Northwest District Plan, new development should contribute to integrating the Transition Area into the more typical urban fabric of the Northwest District by adopting its finer-grained scale and pedestrian oriented form. Con-way NW Master Plan *Design Guideline 1* also emphasizes human scale noting, "*buildings and edges have a responsibility to contribute to pedestrian comfort and enjoyment. Buildings and edges adjacent to walkways should provide human scale and relationships which support pedestrian needs and interests.*" Con-way NW Master Plan *Design Guideline 4* also stresses the character of Northwest Portland as groupings of buildings that form "a diverse patchwork of buildings at various heights and densities" rather than monolithic structures.

The proposal is responding to these guidelines with a great deal of "pushing and pulling" of the facades. Staff would like the commission to weigh in on the extent and quality of the building

articulation. Staff would also like to the Commission to discuss the proposed materials at the DAR, in particular, the extensive use of painted fiber-cement shingles. The Con-way NW Master Plan Design Guidelines are fairly specific about preferred and discouraged materials while noting that cladding materials are constantly being developed so there might be allowances for new materials if they are consistent with the high-quality characteristics of the preferred materials. The Conway context has been set with primarily brick buildings, and very minimal application of fiber cement. Below is text from Con-way NW Master Plan *Design Guideline 6 – Integrate high-quality materials and design details* that lays out these preferred and discouraged materials:

“Preferred materials for exterior cladding include natural materials, such as wood and stone. Other preferred materials for exterior cladding include brick, metal panels, pre-cast concrete, stucco and tiles. Wood-clad, steel and aluminum assemblies are preferred for storefront systems and building entrances. Stone, masonry and cementitious tiles are preferred for exterior paving systems. For window systems, high-quality wood, wood-clad, Fiberglas and metal systems are preferred. If vinyl windows are proposed they must be commercial-grade and detailed in a careful manner that visually differentiates the window from surrounding trim elements or adjoining siding materials.

Discouraged materials for exterior cladding include plain concrete block, unfinished concrete, corrugated metal, plywood and sheet pressboard (sheet pressboard is fiber cement siding that is more than six-inches-wide). Residential- grade vinyl windows are discouraged for all window applications.

Foundation materials, where exposed, may be unfinished concrete or honed concrete block—when the foundation material is not revealed for more than 3 feet.”

Finally, staff would like commission feedback on whether the extent of weather protection provided is adequate. Staff believes the canopy coverage for public pedestrian coverage is minimal.

Refer to Con-way NW Master Plan Design Guidelines: 1 – *Provide human scale to buildings and edges along sidewalks, squares and pedestrian accessways*, 3 – *Develop weather protection*, 4 – *Develop buildings that are appropriately scaled to the neighborhood*, 5 – *Provide transitions between the public and private realms when residential structures abut streets, parks and pedestrian accessways*, 6 – *Integrate high-quality materials and design details*; and Community Design Guidelines: P1 – *Plan Area Character*, E1 – *The Pedestrian Network*, E2 – *Stopping Places*, E3 – *The Sidewalk Level of Buildings*, E5 – *Light, Wind, and Rain*, D7 – *Blending into the Neighborhood*, D8 – *Interest, Quality, and Composition*