



City of Portland Design Commission

Design Advice Request

SUMMARY MEMO

Date: March 16, 2021
To: BARGHAUSEN CONSULTING ENGINEERS INC – Nick Wecker
From: Arthur Graves, Design Review
503.865.6517 | Arthur.Graves@portlandoregon.gov
Re: EA 20-224880 DAR – CVS Building
Design Advice Request Memo – January 28, 2021

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 January 28, 2021 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 January 28, 2021. 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 Commission appreciated the opportunity to discuss the proposal at this early design stage. Design Commissioners had significant concern for many aspects of the proposal: site and building design; response to context; response to pedestrian realm; drive though and vehicle area; and approvability of code modifications.

Commissioners Present on January 28, 2021. Commissioners Present: Julie Livingston (Chair), Zari Santner, Chandra Robinson, Jessica Molinar, and Brian McCarter.

Commissioners absent: Sam Rodriguez (Vice-Chair), Don Vallaster (who provided written commentary).

PBOT Comments:

- PBOT (Fabio De Freitas) presented expressing concerns with the current site layout and design's lack of response to previous PBOT comments (from EA 20-149243 PC), specifically regarding requested traffic studies and access to the site, including all driveways, predominantly the driveway to MLK Jr. Blvd. and the driveway associated with the drive-through. Because of these issues, PBOT stated that they do not support the current proposal.

Note: Commissioners had concern that their feedback was not well served at this time due to PBOT comments having not been fully addressed and resolved. Concern is that PBOT comments will have significant impacts to the design and site layout of the building, parking, drive-through, etc. which will in turn affect where the building, entrances, etc. will be on the site.

Summary of Design Commissioner Comments: Following is a general summary of Commission comments.

Regarding Modifications Requested:

- Commission agreed that the submittal was not meeting minimum Contextual, Public Realm, and Quality and Permanence (and Cohesion) guidelines. Requesting code modifications without meeting these standard aspects of the guidelines is very problematic. Commissioners stated that the project must first significantly "better meet" the applicable design guidelines before modifications to the code requirements can be expected to be approved.
- While Commissioners felt that some of the modifications (to *Fences, Landscaping, and Signs*) could be met, they had significant concern for the more substantive modifications to *Required Building Lines, Setbacks, and Ground Floor Windows*. Commission did not feel that any of the modifications being requested were being "better met" with the submitted design.
- Commissioners agreed that the requested modifications to *Required Building Lines, Setbacks, and Ground Floor Windows* have significant impact to, and are detrimental to, the pedestrian realm. The current design, building and vehicle area location and siting, and size of the building, do not enhance or protect the pedestrian, or meet the baseline of the applicable guidelines and so are not approvable.

Regarding Context, Pedestrian Realm, and Quality and Permanence:

CONTEXT:

- Commissioners agreed that the current corporate design does not meet context and pedestrian oriented guidelines and is out of place in this area of Portland. The proposed site layout and building design are almost entirely auto focused and out of context with the district and require significant alterations to meet guidelines.

- Commissioners strongly agreed that the current site layout and building design are meeting very few guidelines. Specifically the following guidelines are not being met: *A1, A2, A3, A5, A5-4, A5-5, A6, A7, A7-1, A8, A9, B2, B3, B4, B5, B6, B7, B6-1, B7, C1, C1-1, C1-2, C2, C4, C5, C6, C7, C9, and C10* (of the *Special Design Guidelines for the Design Zone of the Central Eastside District of the Central City Plan*).
 - Commissioners noted that *Guideline B5 (Make Plazas, Parks and Open Space Successful)* could be met if the intent and design of the area with sequoias were to be designed/developed for active pedestrian use and not just a stormwater planter, as it currently appears to be designed.
 - Commissioners noted that *Guideline C5 (Design for Coherency)* is specifically not met due to the random building proportions and bays, and corner towers that do not relate to the surrounding context of the sub-district.
- Commissioners commented that although the building is proposed to be brick and includes storefront systems with lites that appear to be divided (both aspects that are pulled from the surrounding warehouse district) the remaining building design, scale, orientation, lack of detailing, etc. are all out of character with the context of the district and require significant attention and redesign to ultimately meet the guidelines and be approvable.

PUBLIC REALM:

- Commissioners agreed that the proposed use perpetuates a design that includes a vehicle dominant layout and orientation that is not meeting the majority of the guidelines and is difficult to approve. This was specifically noted by Commissioners regarding: the building siting and design; location of the entry; large walls with little or no glazing at the pedestrian level; lack of canopies; etc.
- Commissioners agreed that the design was not responding to the pedestrian realm in how the building addresses the street as well as how the building and site (including the vehicle area) participate and contribute to the public realm.
- Commissioners agreed that while attention to the public realm is important in all proposals, because this is a full-block site with significant street frontages and pedestrian activity, the character of the district and the projects responding to the public realm must be significantly addressed on all frontages to meet guidelines.
- Commissioners agreed that the sequoias must be incorporated into the site design for a successful pedestrian realm.

QUALITY & PERMANENCE:

- Commissioners agreed that while the use of brick is supported, more information is needed showing detailing and articulation to see if what is proposed is consistent with the neighborhood context.
- Commissioners stressed that quality and permanence also include the overall cohesion of the design (see guideline *C5 – Design for Coherency*), which needs significant revision to meet guidelines.

Exhibit List

- A. Applicant's Submittal
 - 1. Original Drawings/DAR Submittal Package: December 16, 2020
 - 2. Applicant Presentation to the Commission: January 28, 2021
- B. Zoning Map (attached)
- C. Drawings
 - 1. Survey Plan
 - 2. Vicinity Plan
 - 3. Site Plan (attached)
 - 4. Elevations (attached)
- 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 emailed posting/notice
- E. Service Bureau Comments
 - 1. Bureau of Environmental Services
 - 2. Bureau of Transportation
- F. Public Comments – None Received
- G. Other
 - 1. Application Form
 - 2. Staff Memo to the Design Commission
 - 3. Staff Presentation to the Design Commission: January 28, 2021