



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: 7/25/2023
To: Portland Design Commission
From: Tanya Paglia, Design & Historic Review Team
503-865-6518 | Tanya.Paglia@portandoregon.gov
Re: EA 23-050424 DA – Con-way Block 292 East
Design Advice Request Memo – August 3, 2023 Meeting

This memo is regarding the upcoming DAR on 8/3/2023 for Con-way Block 292 East. The following supporting documents are available as follows:

- Drawings, Guidelines matrix and other documents – accessed here:
<https://efiles.portlandoregon.gov/Record/16233969/>

Note, Commissioners who requested hard copies will receive the drawing set by courier.

I. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Design Advice Request meeting for a proposal to develop Block 292 East in the Con-way Master Plan area with a 6-to-7-story residential building with approximately 166 units. The U-shaped building will have a courtyard that opens toward a mid-block pedestrian accessway to the west, and its lobby will be located in the southwest corner of the site facing south onto NW Raleigh St. Below-grade parking will have approximately 128 parking stalls and be accessed from NW Savier St on the north side of the site.

NOTES RELATED TO THE CON-WAY MASTER PLAN

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 Con-way (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, 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 which was 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. The Term of the current Con-way Northwest Master Plan was originally October 2, 2012 to October 2, 2022, however, it was extended due to the COVID pandemic and will remain in effect until January 1, 2024 (33.562.300.H).

II. DEVELOPMENT TEAM BIO

Architect	Kurtz Schultz SERA Design and Architecture
Owner's Representative	James Santana Cairn Pacific
Project Valuation	\$60,000,000

III. FUTURE DESIGN REVIEW APPROVAL CRITERIA:

- 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. Better meets design guidelines. The resulting development will better meet the applicable design guidelines; and
- B. Purpose of the standard. 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. Con-way Master Plan Development Standard 1 – Height: to allow an increase in the height limit of by 19' from the allowed 67' to a building height of 86'.
2. Con-way Master Plan Development Standard 8.D – Ground floor active use standard: Reduce the required distance from the finished floor to the bottom of the structure above by 1' from 16' to 15'.
3. Bicycle Parking Standard (33.266.220.C3): to allow a reduction in the spacing of bicycle racks from the required: 24" spacing to a proposed 18" spacing.
4. Modification to the Parking Stall Standard (33.266.130.F ; Table 266-4): to allow the reduction in width of some parking stalls due to structural column encroachment. Required: 8.5' width. Proposed: 8' width for some stalls.

Staff does not have concerns about Modifications 3 and 4 above, but would like input from the commission on 1 and 2. Refer to the staff discussion on Modification #1 below under "Context – Building height".

V. STAFF ANALYSIS & RECOMMENDED DAR DISCUSSION TOPICS

Staff advise you consider the following among your discussion items on 8/3/2023:

CONTEXT

- **Building height.** Without the two-level gabled penthouse element, the building would meet the 67' height limit. However, the added height of including the top two floors brings the building height to 86' which requires a Modification to Con-way Master Plan Development *Standard 1 – Height*. While the two-level penthouse adds a great deal of height (19' above the

height limit), it does not loom over the streetscape as it is set back from the roof edge by approximately 8'-14" and is broken up into multiple volumes. Staff would like the Commission to weigh in on whether they would support the Modification based on the 2 criteria listed above in Section IV.

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; Community Design Guidelines: P1 – Plan Area Character, D7 – Blending into the Neighborhood, D8 – Interest, Quality, and Composition.

- **Prominent Front Entrance.** The main lobby entrance should be prominent. Currently, the entrance is signaled by its location in a notch, but it otherwise lacks prominence and the entry courtyard within this notch could be improved.

Con-way NW Master Plan Design Guidelines: 1 – Provide human scale to buildings and edges along sidewalks, squares and pedestrian accessways, 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; Community Design Guidelines: E1 – The Pedestrian Network, E3 – The Sidewalk Level of Buildings, D2 – Main Entrances, D8 – Interest, Quality, and Composition.

- **Penthouse Roof Form.** The drawing set includes precedent images for the building's prominent two-story gabled penthouse expression. Staff is looking for feedback from the commission on its relationship to context, its coherency, and its size.

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; Community Design Guidelines: E1 – The Pedestrian Network, E3 – The Sidewalk Level of Buildings, D2 – Main Entrances, D8 – Interest, Quality, and Composition.

PUBLIC REALM

- **Utility Transformer Placement.** The transformer room sits right at the northern street frontage, not tucked back into the building, as expected in the new policy released last summer. Transformer should not be located on a sidewalk frontage, especially for new construction, and especially a full block development where there is room enough for better alternatives. Utility transformer rooms should be located within the building behind active uses or behind a loading area, or in underground parking garages, or underground below open space if the lid and associated no-build zone are integrated with the landscape design.

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; Community Design Guidelines: P1 – Plan Area Character, E1 – The Pedestrian Network, E3 – The Sidewalk Level of Buildings, D7 – Blending into the Neighborhood, D8 – Interest, Quality, and Composition.

- **Activating Ground Floor Street Frontages.** The building has three street frontages and one pedestrian accessway frontage, all of which should be activated. Providing live/work spaces the streets at a minimum creates flexibility, creating the potential for more active uses if/when demand picks up in the future. Because Raleigh (south frontage) is the street with the most active uses in the immediate area, the entire Raleigh frontage should be programmed with active uses to support the neighborhood main street created along this corridor with more canopy coverage across the full ground floor. The intersection of NW 21st and Raleigh is a very active restaurant/retail area that sits just to the west of this site. In addition, much of the ground floor across all three street frontages is residential and NW Savier has a long stretch of inactive uses. While staff is supportive of NW Savier as the street to receive the back of house uses, they occupy too long a swath of the frontage and better consolidation of these uses and/or design mitigation should be employed.

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;

Community Design Guidelines: *P1 – Plan Area Character, E1 – The Pedestrian Network, E3 – The Sidewalk Level of Buildings, E4 – Corners that Build Active Intersections, D4 – Parking Areas and Garages, D5 – Crime Prevention.*

- **North Elevation Ground Floor Opacity.** The NW Savier Street frontage has a number of *back-of-house uses and is highly opaque with the exception of the highly glazed live-work unit in the northeast corner.* The project should reduce the opacity or otherwise generate a sense of activity.

Con-way NW Master Plan *Design Guidelines: 1 – Provide human scale to buildings and edges along sidewalks, squares and pedestrian accessways, 5 – Provide transitions between the public and private realms when residential structures abut streets, parks and pedestrian accessways;* Community Design Guidelines: *P1 – Plan Area Character, E1 – The Pedestrian Network, E2 – Stopping Places, E3 – The Sidewalk Level of Buildings, D7 – Blending into the Neighborhood, D8 – Interest, Quality, and Composition.*

- **Balconies.** The addition of more balconies would help break down the large façades better and provide activation. 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.”

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;* and Community Design Guidelines: *P1 – Plan Area Character, E1 – The Pedestrian Network, D7 – Blending into the Neighborhood, D8 – Interest, Quality, and Composition.*

QUALITY & PERMANENCE

- **Materials.** The Con-way NW Master Plan Design Guidelines plan gets fairly specific about preferred and discouraged materials while noting that cladding materials are constantly being developed so there might be allowances for these if they are consistent with the high-quality characteristics of the preferred materials. The material being considered for the penthouse level is currently a wood look siding product called Knotwood (<https://knotwood.com/>). Other material options like metal siding, stucco, and Cembrit are also being considered. To date, Design Review staff have not had experience with this product and would appreciate feedback from Commissioners who have had experience with this product.

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. ”

Con-way NW Master Plan Design Guidelines: *6 – Integrate high-quality materials and design details;* and Community Design Guidelines: *P1 – Plan Area Character, E3 – The Sidewalk Level of Buildings, D7 – Blending into the Neighborhood, D8 – Interest, Quality, and Composition.*

- **Color Composition.** The building features a large amount of red brick. It is the primary cladding for the building's five-story massing and wraps to all four sides of the building. Staff is looking for feedback from the commission on whether the consistency of color across the full block is supported, or if other colors should be introduced to help break down the scale of the full block building. Would a lighter color palette be more successful given the darker adjacent buildings?

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; Community Design Guidelines: P1 – Plan Area Character, D6 – Architectural Integrity, D8 – Interest, Quality, and Composition.