



Design Advice Request

FOLLOW-UP MEMO

Date: 8/15/2023
To: Portland Design Commission
From: Tanya Paglia, Design & Historic Review Team
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Re: EA 23-050424 DA – Con-way Block 292 East
Height Modification
Design Advice Request– August 17, 2023, Meeting

This memo is to provide additional information ahead of the upcoming DAR on 8/17/2023 regarding the requested height Modification for the Con-way Block 292 East Project. Please see the previous memo for the full list of discussion topics.

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 have already received the primary plan set and additional drawings and information will be online only at the above URL.

I. HEIGHT MODIFICATION OVERVIEW

Con-way Master Plan Development Standard 1 – Height Modification is requested to allow a 19' increase in building height, which is an increase in the height limit from the allowed 67' to a building height of 86'.

This is a larger-than-usual height Modification request and thus requires extra information.

II. MODIFICATION 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.

- Block 291 East - Freewell

- Modification to allow an increase in the height limit by 13' from the allowed 67' to a building height of 80'.
- The extra height was supported because of the variation in massing that it allowed on the site.
 - The site massing was arranged to step down to the future public park and the pedestrian accessway leading to the park.
 - It also allowed for the creation of a small podium building to break up the uniformity of building massing near the park.
 - The primary building was a tall "L" and the Modification allowed for a small amenity pavilion building which added architectural variety to the streetscape, including the Quimby Festival Street which abuts the future park.

Freewell (Block 291 East)

- Abuts Quimby Festival St & across from future park
- 2-story amenity pavilion steps down to Festival St & park with taller L-shaped building wrapping it
- Follow-up Review to design portion of Festival St & potential design changes when park is designed

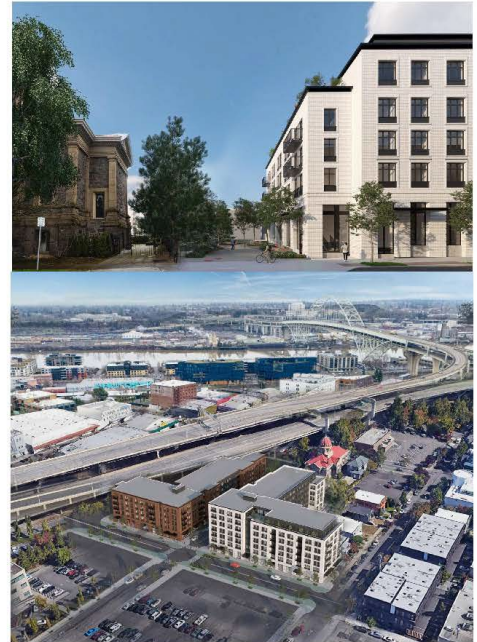


- Block 262 – Slabtown South

- Modification to allow an increase in the height limit of Block 262 by 16' from the allowed 67' to a building height of 83'.
- The extra height was supported as it allowed the massing to be arranged to step down towards a historic cathedral and to step back from it, widening an adjacent park.
- The added height created a taller building at NW 20th Ave where it better fit the context.

Slabtown Savier North & South (261 & 262)

- St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church, individually listed National Register historic landmark built in 1891, abuts Block 262
- Conway Master Plan Design Guideline 7.F required Block 262 to provide land for a small pocket park west of the church
- Mod to height on Block 262 to allow taller expression on west side of site so building could step down towards the church
- More height & density located on southern block (262) - opposite of Master Plan's vision of northern block (261) as tall office building buffering the elevated highway to the north



- Block 290W

- Modification to increase the maximum height from 47' to 57'.
- The height Modification allowed for a penthouse amenity space on the lower portion of the building adjacent to the public square. The findings concluded the additional height did not add additional solar impact to the public square.

Block 290W – Public Square + Apts

- Encroached into Future Park & line of pedway
- Garage access located on Festival Street (no access allowed on 21st or pedway + Pettygrove is a green street)



For the current Modification request at Block 292 East, staff and the applicant offer the following arguments in favor of the additional 19' of height. (Staff concerns raised in the original memo, related to the design cohesion of the penthouse levels, still apply.)

Notes:

Modification Approval Criteria A is that a Modification, "better meets design guidelines" and Design Guidelines are listed below each bullet point.

Modification Approval Criteria B is: "On balance, the proposal will be consistent with the purpose of the standard for which a modification is requested," which in the case of height is to "balance desired densities with livability and positive urban qualities, with a strong emphasis on the quality of the pedestrian realm."

- The Modification request is in the service of providing architectural and skyline variety in the Con-way area where there are many large new buildings of a similar scale and massing to one another. The design commission has been concerned in the past about all the buildings in the Conway master plan area being similar in height and massing.

(Con-way Master Plan Design Guidelines: 2–Develop urban edge variety adjacent to parks, pedestrian accessways and greenstreets; 4 – Develop buildings that are appropriately scaled to the neighborhood. Façades should be well articulated and offer diversity in volume and form along the street edge; and Community Design Guidelines: P1 – Plan Area Character; D7 – Blending into the Neighborhood; D8 – Interest, Quality, and Composition)

- The 7-story building, as proposed, is the same total gross square footage as a 6-story building, it is just shaped differently – it is moving the volume around to create interest and upper-level setbacks.

(Con-way Master Plan Design Guidelines: 2–Develop urban edge variety adjacent to parks, pedestrian accessways and greenstreets; 4 – Develop buildings that are appropriately scaled to the neighborhood. Façades should be well articulated and offer diversity in volume and form along the street edge; and Community Design Guidelines: P1 – Plan Area Character; D8 – Interest, Quality, and Composition)

- The Master Plan allocated height limits up to 150' on all sites north of Savier to act as a buffer to the freeway. The majority of those sites have been built far below that height limit, or have not been developed, including the sites directly north of the subject site, thus the subject site could be said to be adding buffering through extra height.

(Con-way Master Plan Design Guidelines: 4 – Develop buildings that are appropriately scaled to the neighborhood. Façades should be well articulated and offer diversity in volume and form along the street edge)

- The project could be redesigned as a more traditional 6-story building that meets the height limit with no setbacks towards the top of the building. The project team took roughly the same gross square footage that would be achievable in a sixth level and put it into two much smaller floorplates on levels 6 and 7 (note: the taller building would technically have more SF because they aren't counting the lofted areas of the 7th floor which would count towards FAR).

(Con-way Master Plan Design Guidelines: 2–Develop urban edge variety adjacent to parks, pedestrian accessways and greenstreets; 4 – Develop buildings that are appropriately scaled to the neighborhood. Façades should be well articulated and offer diversity in volume and form along the street edge; and Community Design Guidelines: D8 – Interest, Quality, and Composition)

- The gabled roof form creates interest and variety but adds height. If the building were designed with a 2-level penthouse with a flat roof, the height Modification request would be less (for gabled roofs, height is measured to the mid-point of the gable).

(Con-way Master Plan Design Guidelines: 4 – Develop buildings that are appropriately scaled to the neighborhood. Façades should be well articulated and offer diversity in volume and form along the street edge; and Community Design Guidelines: P1 – Plan Area Character; D7 – Blending into the Neighborhood; D8 – Interest, Quality, and Composition)

- The height Modification allows for the setback of upper-story building massing that may allow for more light and air at the sidewalk levels.

(Con-way 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. Façades should be well articulated and offer diversity in volume and form along the street edge; and Community Design Guidelines: P1 – Plan Area Character)

- This Modification allows more height variation in the master plan area, creating a less monolithic sensibility.

(Con-way Master Plan Design Guidelines: 2–Develop urban edge variety adjacent to parks, pedestrian accessways and greenstreets; 4 – Develop buildings that are appropriately scaled to the neighborhood. Façades should be well articulated and offer diversity in volume and form along the street edge; and Community Design Guidelines: P1 – Plan Area Character; D7 – Blending into the Neighborhood; D8 – Interest, Quality, and Composition)

- The unique penthouse arrangement also serves as a mechanical screen to hide the rooftop condenser farm.

(Community Design Guidelines: D8 – Interest, Quality, and Composition)

Notes

- The applicant provided the following breakdown of the requested 19' height modification:
 - 6' of the modification is from the top of eave to the mid-point of the gable
 - 13' of the modification is from the 67' max height to the top of the eave
 - Without the gable roof, the height modification would be in exactly the same range as Blocks 291E (13') and 262 (16')

Comparison of proposal with and without additional height:

The applicant provided the following side-by-side comparisons to help understand their reasoning for seeking a Modification to height. Each has a version of the building with a height Modification and one that meets zoning code for height (including ground floor height).



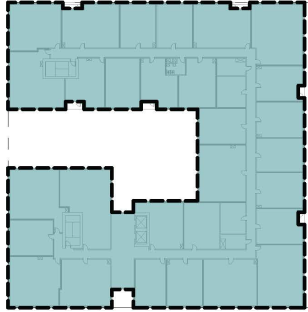
PROPOSED DESIGN



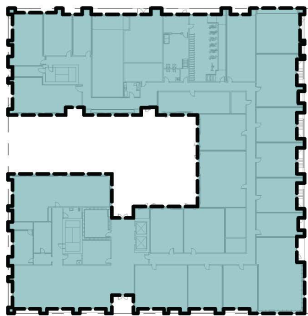
MEETS HEIGHT LIMIT

MEETS HEIGHT LIMIT

GROUND FLOOR	32,379 SF
LEVEL 2	32,379 SF
LEVEL 3	32,379 SF
LEVEL 4	32,379 SF
LEVEL 5	32,379 SF
LEVEL 6	32,379 SF
TOTAL	194,274 SF



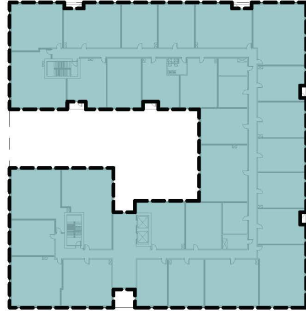
LEVEL 2-6



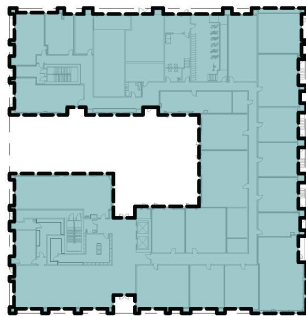
GROUND FLOOR

PROPOSED DESIGN

GROUND FLOOR	30,347 SF
LEVEL 2	32,272 SF
LEVEL 3	32,272 SF
LEVEL 4	32,272 SF
LEVEL 5	32,272 SF
LEVEL 6	18,409 SF
LEVEL 7	12,447 SF
TOTAL	194,277 SF



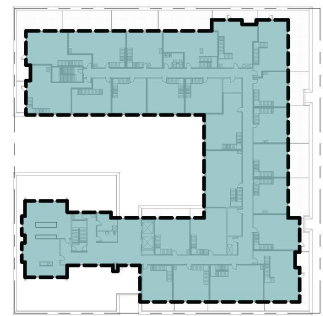
LEVEL 2-6



GROUND FLOOR



LEVEL 7

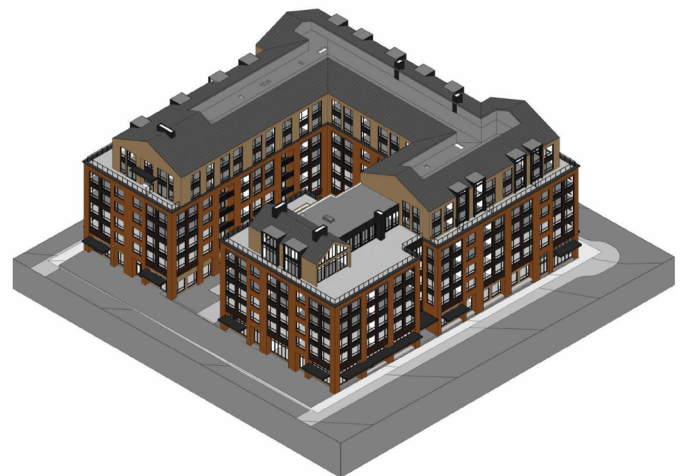


LEVEL 6



MEETS HEIGHT LIMIT

- 6 STORY BUILDING
- 67' HEIGHT
- 195,000 SF FAR



HEIGHT MODIFICATION REQUESTED

- 7 STORY BUILDING
- 86' HEIGHT TO MID POINT OF GABLE
- 195,000 SF FAR