



Design Advice Request

DISCUSSION MEMO

Date: October 12, 2023
To: Portland Design Commission
From: Hillary Adam, Design & Historic Review Team
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Re: EA 23-075072 DA – Pepsi Blocks, Building B
Design Advice Request Memo – October 19, 2023

This memo is regarding the upcoming DAR on October 19, 2023 for Pepsi Blocks, Building B. The following supporting documents are available as follows:

- Drawings – accessed here <https://efiles.portlandoregon.gov/record/16343891>. Note, Commissioners who requested hard copies will receive the drawing set by courier.
- Guideline matrix and other documents – (attached)

I. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The proposal is for an 8-story residential building with approximately 173,000sf of floor area with two levels of below grade parking. The proposal includes some deviations from the approved Planned Development including relocation of the garage entry to the southeast corner, introduction of residential units at the west and north ground levels, the elimination of ground level retail, and an increase in floor area of 4.8% of previously approved maximum. Two Type B loading spaces are proposed in the woonerf on NE Pacific Street. No modifications or adjustments have been identified.

II. DEVELOPMENT TEAM BIO

Architect	Jason Jones Ankrom Moisan Architects
Owner's Representative	Gus Baum Security Properties
Project Valuation	\$45 million

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

IV. STAFF ANALYSIS & RECOMMENDED DAR DISCUSSION TOPICS

Staff advise you consider the following among your discussion items on October 19, 2023:

(cont.)

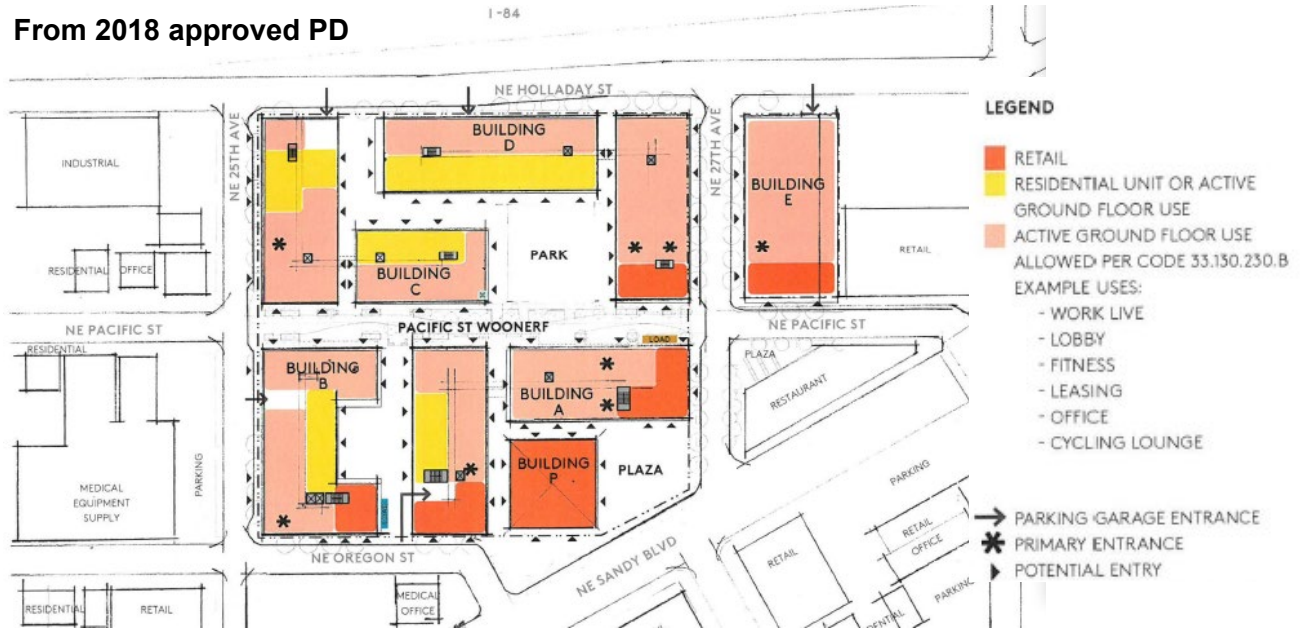
CONTEXT

1. **Policy.** The following summarizes key policy context as it applies to the subject site.
 - a. **2018 Pepsi Blocks Planned Development.** In 2018, LU 18-248691 PDBM approved a framework of development for this site and the surrounding area between NE Sandy, NE Oregon, NE 25th, NE Holladay, and NE 27th, with one half-block across NE 27th. The Planned Development (PD) established certain development standards and design characteristics for buildings, open spaces, and streets with the PD boundary. This included minimum and maximum allowed floor area and heights for each block within the PD, and the ability to exceed those maximums through certain processes when exceeding 5%. The current proposal exceeds the maximum floor area (161,710sf) established for Block B by 4.8% (169,585sf), which does not require additional land use process.
 - b. **Development Standards – Base Zone (CM3).** Standards established in the PD supersede base zone standards; however, where silent in the PD, the base zone standards apply.
 - c. **Streets – TSP Designations.** All streets are local service, and thus there is no established hierarchy of streets around this block. However, NE Pacific Street to the north is a private street, designed as a woonerf to prioritize pedestrian and bicycle safety by discouraging through traffic.
2. **Natural.** There are no natural features on the site. However, a portion of the site at the northeast corner is to be designed as a publicly accessible play area/pocket park. The design and development of this park were required by the PD to be in conjunction with the design and development of Block B. The design framework for Pacific Park, as established in the 2018 PD, is outlined under Public Realm, below.
3. **Built.** Design and development of Block A, which includes the pavilion at Sandy Boulevard was approved in 2019 and is currently under construction. Images of these buildings are included in the packet. Other built context around the site includes a surface parking lot to the south servicing a one-story brick and fiber cement panel medical office building, a one-story concrete Moderne building to the southwest housing an automotive equipment supply office, a surface parking lot to the west servicing a one-story concrete office warehouse building and 4-story concrete block and lap fiber cement medical manufacturing facility, and a 3-story shingled mixed-use building to the northwest.

PUBLIC REALM

1. **Ground Level Uses.** The 2018 PD envisioned ground level residential at the interior courtyard (only) with more active uses such as work/live, lobby, fitness, leasing, office, or cycling lounge on the frontages on NE 25th, NE Pacific, and retail at the southeast corner. Additionally, the below-grade parking entrance was, at that time, shown to be accessed from NE 25th. The current proposal shows the garage entrance to now be located at the southeast corner, utilizing the vehicle area already approved and under construction for the building to the east. The remaining area is now shown to be a co-working amenity area instead of retail. The areas previously shown to be designated as active use areas are now mostly shown to be residential units with stoops accessed from the adjacent sidewalk. Therefore, the proposed plan deviates from the approved PD Active Ground Floor Plan, which is presented on the following page.

From 2018 approved PD



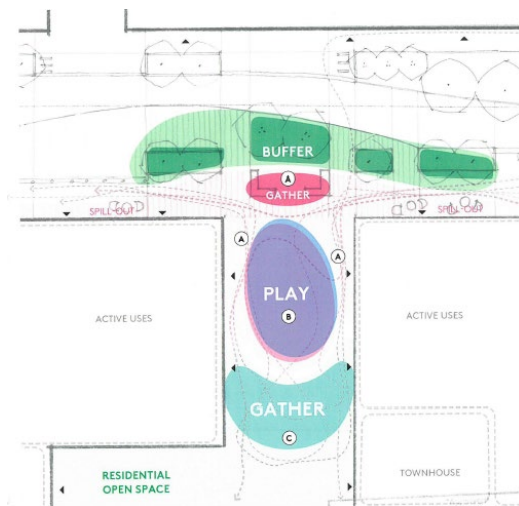
No Planned Development amendment is required for the proposed changes to the ground floor uses, but the building program/design are still subject to Design Review. With regard to the proposed residential units occupying nearly 60% of the ground level floor area, including the outward-facing frontages of NE 25th and NE Pacific, staff notes that the 2019 approved design for Block A to the east matches what was envisioned in the approved 2018 PD, thus having been the first development approved within the PD area, established a certain expectation for adherence to the PD as well as design quality for the area.

Townhouses on Block A are limited to the yellow area above the garage entry (in the diagram above) with work/live spaces along Pacific and facing the pavilion (Building P on the above plan). Notably, the townhouses on Block A were designed at 20'+ tall and include elevated stoops that are about 6' deep by about 16' wide with a 3' deep planter in front of the stoop for privacy. The current proposal shows 20' tall townhouse units with elevated stoops about 5' deep by about 5' wide with no landscape buffer between the stoop and the sidewalk. Staff believes that townhouses at the ground level frontages could be a successful alternative to work/live provided the stoops are further recessed into the site so that a landscape buffer, and therefore additional privacy, could be provided at these transitional areas. It has not yet been demonstrated that the proposed design would be activated by the residents, though there does appear to be enough space for small outdoor furnishings.

With the understanding that 2018 was a very different time than today, staff believes that residential amenity space could be acceptable at the southeast corner provided it was designed to be convertible and accessible from the exterior in the future. While the depth of this space has not been provided, certain retail establishments could someday thrive in a unique linear space such as that shown. The relocation of the garage entry to the already-established vehicle area accessed from NE Oregon allows the NE 25th Avenue frontage to be strengthened through a repetition of similarly designed spaces, uninterrupted by a large vehicular entry. PBOT has indicated support for the relocated garage entry.

2. **Pacific Park.** The design framework established by the 2018 PD for Pacific Park and the parti plan from the approved PD are below:
 - a. Create a smaller, more intimate pocket park, away from the noise of Sandy Boulevard, with some of the family focused amenities of the Park.

- b. Create an environment that is safe day and night: encourage “eyes on the street” from adjacent ground floor uses; do not create visual barriers, provide pedestrian level lighting.
- c. Create a multi-generational space that considers the needs of residents of all ages.
- d. Continue paving treatment from pedestrian spaces of woonerf to create a seamless flow of spaces. Keep the spaces on the same general elevation as the woonerf.
- e. Provide a minimum 5' width at building frontages to accommodate active edges. Allow for site furnishings, street signage, movable carts, furnishings and short-term bike parking.
- f. Create a gradient of spaces, to semi-private. Use the edge to the residential open space as a place for more landscape buffer.
- g. For “A” Gather (Public):
 - i. Provide generous circulation space near entrances, with benches or other seating, to allow people to linger and gather in small groups.
 - ii. Locate smaller gathering spaces to encourage pedestrian flow into the central park space.
- h. For “B” Play:
 - i. Create a unique and safe play area that is welcoming to the neighborhood.
- i. For “C” Gather (Semi-Public):
 - i. Provide landscaped open space that creates a visual screen to residential space beyond, but also allows for small gatherings, incorporate pockets for trees with adequate soil depth.
 - ii. Design to accommodate movable furnishings.



The proposed park design shows a general adherence to the 2018 parti diagram though it is not entirely clear if there is a gathering space at the north end (area A) with benches as is suggested by “g.i” above or if movable furnishings can be accommodated in area “C” as is suggested by “i.ii”. Staff notes that the parti diagram and the design framework for Pacific Park are a framework and not objective criteria.

QUALITY & PERMANENCE

1. **Exterior materials.** The 2018 PD established the following architectural principles for the site:
 - a. Predominantly simple singular forms
 - b. Predominantly singular in materiality
 - c. Stucco/cementitious, brick, metal
 - d. Wood as accent
 - e. Predominantly punched windows in solid body
 - f. Glazed, punched, or operable at base
 - g. Predominantly additive decks & elements
 - h. Pavilion is the folly.

The proposal appears to both meet and not meet these architectural principles. Generally, the building features a relatively simple form in that it is an articulated C-shaped box with alternating columns of recessed balconies and punched and operable windows. At the southwest corner, where both the ground level entry and 8th floor amenity room are located, this pattern changes to a brick frame element surrounding storefront at the double-height lower two levels and at the upper two levels around a 7th floor residential unit and the 8th floor amenity, with metal panel and punched windows at levels 3-6. A similar brick frame element appears at the northwest corner around residential units. The frame element could be a successful way of marking the entry and common area corners, however, it is less successful at the northwest corner and at the 7th level.

The brick frames logically extend to the ground where most of the exterior cladding is wood in a two-story expression at the townhouses and one-story at the south façade co-working space with some concrete at the base and southeast corner. Notably, it also appears that wood is proposed across the eastern interior courtyard façade at all levels. The introduction of brick as a framing element in only some areas deviates from the first design principle and the proposed application of materials appears to deviate from the second and fourth design principles.

2. **Coherency.** The proposed design is relatively coherent in that the basic form is a C-shaped box with regularized openings and alternating columns of balconies at the upper levels. However, the brick frame element is less coherent in its deployment at two distinctly different corners and in its capture of private residential space as well as communal space. The use of wood at the first two levels and particularly at the townhouse units is coherent and appears to be relatively well protected beneath upper-level overhangs; however, the use of wood at all 8 levels of the eastern courtyard façade leaves the wood susceptible to water damage and results in an incoherent expression. The use of light color metal panel as a grounding element across the majority of the facades is coherent and helps tie the overall expression together, however this material should be used at the eastern courtyard wall as well.