



City of Portland Historic Landmarks Commission

Type IV Land Use

MEMORANDUM

Date: 11/18/2024
To: Historic Landmarks Commission
From: Tanya Paglia, Design / Historic Review Team
 503-865-6518 | Tanya.Paglia@portandoregon.gov
Re: LU 24-077225 DM – South Portland Historic District Demo of Contributing House
 Type IV Demolition Review – November 25, 2024

This memo is regarding the upcoming Type IV Demolition Review for 118 SW Porter St to be presented before the Landmarks Commission on November 25, 2024, and then to City Council on January 16, 2025. The following supporting documents are available as follows:

- Drawings & Narrative accessed here: <https://efiles.portlandoregon.gov/record/17060982/>
Note, Commissioners who requested hard copies will receive the drawing set by courier.

Please contact me with any questions or concerns.

I. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Advisory meeting for a proposal to demolish a contributing structure in the South Portland Historic District and to replace it with an addition to the adjacent non-contributing building. The structure proposed to be demolished is located at 118 SW Porter St. It is a one-and-a-half story bungalow, currently in office use. The proposed addition is two-stories with a primary pedestrian entrance located on SW 1st Ave with a garage and secondary access on SW Porter St. The combined site is located at the intersection of SW 1st Ave and SW Porter St.

II. PROCEDURE

Type IV Demolition Review. Following a public advisory meeting before the Historic Landmarks Commission there will be a hearing before City Council. The Historic Landmarks Commission may offer comments or suggestions, in the form of a letter or testimony, to City Council. City Council makes the final decision on this matter.

III. DEVELOPMENT TEAM BIO

Architect	Ian Roll Gensler
Owner’s Representative	Jason Hickox Ukandu
Project Valuation	\$1,689,838

IV. DEMOLITION REVIEW APPROVAL CRITERIA

- **33.846.080.C Approval Criteria** – One of the four approval criteria listed under 33.846.080.C must be met for a Type IV demolition to be approved. Of the four, only *criteria #1* is applicable to this project.

Criteria 1: Demolition of the resource has been evaluated against and, on balance, demolition has been found to be equally or more supportive of relevant goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan, and any relevant area plans, than preservation, rehabilitation, or reuse of the resource. The evaluation must consider:

- a. The resource's age, condition, historic integrity, historic significance, design or construction rarity, value to the community, and association with historically marginalized individuals or communities;
- b. The economic consequences for the owner and the community;
- c. The merits of demolition;
- d. The merits of development that could replace the demolished resource, either as specifically proposed for the site or as allowed under the existing zoning;
- e. The merits of preserving the resource, taking into consideration the purposes described in Subsection A; and
- f. Any proposed mitigation for the demolition.

Links to the Comprehensive Plan, and relevant area plans (note: Comp Plan 2035 already mailed if paper copy preferred):

[The Comprehensive Plan 2035 adopted in 2020](#)

Goal and Policy Areas:

- Community Involvement
- Urban Form
- Design and Development
- Housing
- Economic Development
- Environment and Watershed Health
- Public Facilities and Services
- Transportation
- Land Use Designations and Zoning

[Southwest Community Plan adopted in 2000](#)

Goal and Policy Areas:

- Land Use and Urban Form
- Public Facilities
- Citizen Involvement
- Economic Development

- Housing
- Parks, Recreation and Open Space
- Public Safety
- Transportation
- Watershed

[Corbett, Terwilliger, Lair Hill Policy Plan adopted in 1977](#)

Policies:

- A. Preserve the existing residential neighborhoods by maintaining the existing dwellings and stimulating compatible housing development and supporting services.
- B. Reduce vehicular traffic through residential neighborhoods.
- C. Control development and improvements in the Macadam Corridor.

Lair Hill Goals:

1. Encourage the maintenance of the present broad mix of people in terms of income, age, life styles, and race.
2. Preserve light and air by limiting building height to three stories.
3. Improve pedestrian and bicycle linkages with Corbett and the Central Business District.
4. Create sidewalks along both sides of Barbur Blvd and pedestrian access across Barbur to Duniway Park and the YMCA.
5. Encourage mixed use residential, including the possibility of public housing, and commercial uses in the area north of Lair Hill Park and along First Street between Hooker and Porter Streets.

Corbett Goals:

1. Preserve the mixed balance of predominantly residential uses and businesses and offices now existing.
2. Retain the existing number of low- and medium-income housing units through tax incentives and government assistance as it becomes available.
3. Ensure pedestrian and bicycle accessibility to public transit and the Central Business District.
4. Encourage the retention and rehabilitation of existing dwellings.
5. Change the zoning in accordance with Planning Commission recommendations.
6. Adopt recommend capital improvements.

Note: The new structure is not the primary subject of this advisory meeting, but the new structure should be used as a component in determining whether Criteria “d” and “f” are sufficiently met. Full approval of the proposed new structure will come before the Historic Landmarks Commission in the future (if the project value is greater than \$561,650) and will be subject to the following approval criteria:

- New structure: South Portland Historic District Design Guidelines (2022)

- Potential Modifications: 33.846.070 Modifications Considered During Historic Resource Review

V. INTRODUCTORY INFORMATION

Site

- *The Karl & Minnie Schmidt House* (misidentified as *the Lucretia Nasts House*) is a contributing structure in the South Portland Historic District that was built in 1908.
- It is an approximately 930 SF one-and-a-half-story bungalow style house.
- The period of significance for the South Portland Historic District spans from 1876 to 1926.
- The current zoning for the site is commercial (CM2), and there is a swath of CM2 through the area around the house.

South Portland Historic District

As the surviving piece of a district that was greatly diminished by the construction of the I-5 and I-405 freeways, and by large scale clearance under the auspices of Urban Renewal, during the 1960s and 1970s, the South Portland Historic District is significant as the remnant of an early, originally much larger, working class and immigrant neighborhood. The area was originally home to concentrations of ethnic and religious minorities from southern and eastern Europe, especially Italian Catholics and Jews from Poland, the Baltic States, and the Russian Empire. The majority of the district's remaining historic resources were built as residences, but with supporting commercial buildings, religious and social institutions, and small-scale industrial structures scattered throughout the neighborhood fabric. Originally associated with workers at the shipping, manufacturing, and processing enterprises dependent on the nearby Willamette River, the area today is among the best remaining examples of a late Nineteenth Century working class residential neighborhood in Portland.

- The district is a 31 block, 49-acre area.
- At the time it was designated in 1998, the South Portland Historic District had 186 Contributing buildings and 60 Non-Contributing. It currently has 182 Contributing buildings and 93 Non-Contributing. Thus, the district has lost 4 Contributing buildings since 1998, and approximately 30 new buildings have been built (note: the numbers are the best count we have and could be slightly off, but not significantly).
- Per the National Register nomination, it is significant under Criterion A for its historic associations, and Criterion C for its architectural merit.
- Per the South Portland Historic District Design Guidelines, "The neighborhood presently contains an array of residential, commercial, and institutional uses divided by several major transportation corridors including Interstate 405, Interstate 5, SW Naito Parkway, and SW Barbur Boulevard, as well as Highway 26 and the Ross Island Bridge ramps. South Portland was historically organized into the Lair Hill, Corbett, and Terwilliger sub-neighborhoods, all of which developed as primarily residential suburbs in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The South Portland Historic District represents the most complete, cohesive subset of this development remaining in South Portland today. The irregularly shaped district comprises 31 blocks in the Lair Hill and Corbett sub-neighborhoods, roughly bounded by SW Arthur and SW Meade Streets to the north, SW Barbur Boulevard to the west, SW Pennoyer and S Curry Streets to the south, and Naito Parkway and S Hood Avenue to the east. Through its extant historic fabric, including period vernacular architecture and a street pattern dating to the

1860s, the South Portland Historic District maintains the setting and feeling of the area as it existed around the turn of the 20th century.”

- The Corbett, Terwilliger, Lair Hill Policy Plan adopted in 1977 laid out this perspective from that time period: “Lair Hill is now a small area which was once part of what is now the South Auditorium Urban Renewal Area. Urban renewal coupled with construction of the freeway and the Marquam Bridge not only eradicated over 100 acres of older residential land, but also isolated the neighborhood from the downtown, other neighborhoods and the river. Residents developed bitter feelings over the destruction of their neighborhood. In 1970, faced with the prospect of extended urban renewal, they organized themselves and convinced the City to limit further urban renewal activity. There exists a strong spirit of wanting to preserve and improve what is left.”

Demolition Review

- There is a high bar for demolition review which focuses on the importance of preservation, rehabilitation, or reuse of the resource above development alternatives.
- The Purpose Statement for Demolition Review states: demolition review protects landmarks and contributing resources in districts. Demolition review recognizes that historic resources are irreplaceable assets significant to the region’s architectural, cultural, and historical identity and their preservation promotes economic and community vitality, resilience, and memory. In the event that demolition of a historic resource is approved, demolition review also addresses the potential for mitigation of the loss.

VI. DISCUSSION TOPICS

- **Support for demolition.**
 - At the Design Advice Request, four commissioners were present, another two commissioners were absent, and one recused themselves. Three of the four commissioners present indicated that with further information they could likely support demolition of the house. However, one of the four commissioners present did not find that the case for demolition had been successfully demonstrated. Concerns included:
 - The area that eventually became this historic district was tremendously impacted by urban renewal in the 50s and 60s. Large portions of the neighborhood were decimated, and people fought to get this district listed and preserve what was left. The 1977 Corbett, Terwilliger, Lair Hill Policy Plan and some of some of the Comprehensive Plan Goals and policies emphasize preserving and rehabilitating existing buildings/neighborhoods and fostering compatible development around them, while others speak to livability and sustainable growth with multi-modal transportation options. Relevant goals and policies include:
 - Corbett, Terwilliger, Lair Hill Policy Plan: *Policy A. Preserve the existing residential neighborhoods by maintaining the existing dwellings and stimulating compatible housing development and supporting services; Policy B. Reduce vehicular traffic through residential neighborhoods.*
 - Comprehensive Plan: *Policy 3.11 Significant places; Goals 4.B Historic and cultural resources; 4.A: Context-sensitive design and development; 9.C: Great places; 3.B: A climate and hazard resilient urban form; 3.C: Focused growth; 3.E: Connected public realm and open spaces; 7.A:*

Climate; 9.B: Multiple goals; 9.D: Environmentally sustainable; 9.E: Equitable transportation.

- To meet the demolition review approval, the proposal would need to clearly demonstrate that all other options for fitting the program on the site without demolishing the resource were exhausted before demolition was pursued.
- The commissioner was not yet convinced that the program can't be placed on the site without necessitating demolition or relocation. One example, putting the extra program as a vertical addition on the Loft building still appears to be a viable alternative.
- Contributing buildings are important enough that all alternatives need to be thoroughly investigated before supporting a demolition. These have not yet been sufficiently vetted by the applicant to prove this necessary argument.
- It was noted that in order to gain support for demolition, a thorough investigation of all demolition alternatives for fitting the program on the site, including an addition on the existing adjacent Loft building was required. The applicant's studies of Loft building expansion are included on pages 38-43 of the plan set. Also, the project narrative (page 3) and the plan set (page 24) both include sections on "Design for Accessibility & Inclusion" that discuss the primary driver for the proposed design. The applicant believes the accessibility sought is not achievable by the alternative designs.
- Other notes:
 - Replacing a small house that is not in residential use with a community service use supports the Comprehensive Plan's guiding principles of human health, and equity and supports many goals and policies within the applicable plans such as Comprehensive Plan Goals 6.A: *Prosperity*; 3.A: *A city designed for people*; and 10.A: *Land use designations and zoning*.
 - On the other hand, it is contrary to some historic and cultural resource preservation and housing goals such as Comprehensive Plan Goals 4.B *Historic and cultural resources*; 9.C: *Great places*; Goal 5.A: *Housing diversity*; Policy 5.1 *Housing supply*; and Policy 3.11 *Significant places*. In theory, the building could be turned back into housing. In addition, its demolition and replacement could put pressure on other upzoned structures that are also residential in form.
- **House history.**
 - Demolition approval criteria 33.846.080.C.1.a notes that the evaluation must consider the resource's "association with historically marginalized individuals or communities." DAR feedback included the need for further exploration of the house's history to understand the historical importance of the people who lived there and the house.
 - Research into the history of the home's occupants has been complicated by the fact that the Oregon Historic Site Record for the building was erroneously tied to an individual, Lucretia Nasts, that did not live there. The applicant's research of the property found that Carl (or Karl) and Minnie Schmidt and their children lived at the 118 SW Porter for a couple years followed by a succession of other tenants. Per the applicant, the naming of the residence was most likely a clerical mistake confusing 262 Porter St. for 226 Porter St. (118 SW Porter St) and the Schmidt name was incorrectly tied to the concrete building directly to the west of 118 SW Porter Street (part of the Cedarwood School).

- The applicant’s research into the building’s history is laid out on pages 5-6 of the project narrative and page 19-21 of the plan set.
- **Relocation.**
 - While on-site preservation of a resource is the goal, relocation as an alternative to demolition is a means of preserving, rehabilitating, and reusing the building, albeit in a new context.
 - Demolition approval criteria 33.846.080.C.1.f notes that the evaluation must consider the “any proposed mitigation for the demolition” and relocation would be one possible form of mitigation.
 - Also relevant, demolition approval criteria 33.846.080.C.1.b notes that the evaluation must consider “the economic consequences for the owner and the community” and relocation does have economic consequences.
 - DAR feedback included the need for additional efforts in exploring relocation of the house before demolition is pursued. In particular, additional coordination with the Neighborhood Association was requested.
 - The applicant’s relocation exploration is laid out on pages 55-56 of the plan set and pages 3-4 of the narrative.
- **Merits of development that replaces the demolished resource.**
 - The replacement structure will be reviewed in a Type III review; however, the preliminary design is presented as part of the Type IV due to its relevancy to the Type IV approval criteria “d” and “f”.
 - The applicant’s proposed replacement is included on pages 47-54 of the plan set.
 - Demolition approval criteria 33.846.080.C.1.d notes that the evaluation must consider the “merits of development that could replace the demolished resource, either as specifically proposed for the site or as allowed under the existing zoning.” The new building would support many relevant plan goals and policies in its new program which furthers equitable access to public health, and its more intensive use of the site with a larger building. Relevant goals include Comprehensive Plan Goals 3.A: *A city designed for people*; 3.C: *Focused growth*; 6.A: *Prosperity*; 10.A: *Land use designations and zoning*, and Comprehensive Plan Policy 6.59 *Community amenities and services*.
 - Demolition approval criteria 33.846.080.C.1.f notes that the evaluation must consider “any proposed mitigation for the demolition” and the new building could be seen as a form of mitigation if it is highly compatible with the Historic District and contributes to the public realm. Notes on compatibility:
 - The existing brick building was built outside of the district’s 1876-1926 period of significance.
 - The *South Portland Historic District Design Guidelines* give clear direction for additions to buildings built outside the period of significance in *Guideline 3.3 Additions and Alterations to Buildings Built Outside of the Period of Significance*, including the following,

“For buildings built outside of the period of significance, additions of floor area that are equal to or greater than the floor area of the existing building should meet *Guideline 3.4 Architectural Features and Materials in New Buildings*.”

- Per the *South Portland Historic District Design Guidelines*, “Institutional buildings frequently feature a flat or steeply-pitched roof, are often perfectly symmetrical with repeating patterns of openings and details, and have varied setbacks from the sidewalk. Institutional buildings tend to be the largest and tallest buildings found in the district. They are frequently constructed in late 19th- and early 20th-century revival styles including the Colonial Revival, Georgian Revival, and Mediterranean Revival style.”
- Some relevant guidelines from the *South Portland Historic District Design Guidelines*:
 - *Guideline 3.4 Architectural Features and Materials in New Buildings* states:

“New buildings should exhibit fine-grained texture and depth in cladding, doors, windows, and architectural features...New buildings expressing an institutional building typology should predominately be clad in brick, stucco, or wood siding or siding with the appearance, texture, and dimension of wood. Windows, doors, and storefront systems in new buildings should be recessed from the exterior cladding and be made of wood or a material with the appearance, texture, profile, and durability of wood.

Horizontally-oriented wood lap or drop siding, often complemented with shingles or other accents made of wood, was almost exclusively employed as the cladding for residential and mixed-use buildings during the period of significance. Brick and stucco were employed as the primary cladding for some institutional buildings, but was otherwise used only sparingly as a cladding material during the period of significance.”
 - *Guideline 2.4 Parking and Loading* states, “new vehicular parking and loading, if proposed, must prioritize the pedestrian experience and be deferential to the characteristics typical of the building’s typology.”
 - *Guideline 1.1 Building Typology* notes that institutional buildings typically feature a prominent front entrance.
 - *Guideline 2.2 Porches and Entries* notes, “the height of the primary entry and the prominence of porches and entries should correspond to both the patterns present on the block face and the characteristics typical of the building’s typology.”
 - *Guideline 1.2 District Patterns*, notes that institutional buildings in the district were often located on corners.
 - *Guideline 2.1 Site Planning* notes that building additions should maintain a contextual relationship of front setbacks by relating either to and adjacent contributing resource or to the setbacks of the building’s typology.
 - *Guideline 2.3 Building Massing and Rhythm* states, “the proportions and articulation of street-facing facades should respond to both the patterns

present on the block face and the characteristics typical of the building's typology.”

- Minimal detail was provided at the DAR. However, based on the information presented, the following feedback was provided:
 - Generally, there are no issues with the proposed scale and placement.
 - Design for the replacement needs work in order to meet the expectations for a favorable vote for demolition.
 - The current schematic design tries too hard to fade into the background, the top of the building needs articulation, and the ground level needs a more active frontage.
 - For the proposed materials, there was a preference for something that has longevity to it such as brick, stucco, terracotta, etc. Given that the proposal is a commercial use and the justification for demolition, in part, may be due to the fact that it is not a residential use, there was not support for fiber cement board or shingles, which convey a residential style.
 - The replacement design needs to be more intentional about reflecting the historic district and responding to the district's approval criteria. Consider some of the craft found in the district such as brick detailing, especially around windows.
 - After the demolition, this becomes a commercial block, and architecturally, the proposed building should not try to draw any token remnants of the bungalow.
 - The proposed building needs to bring more activation to the streetscape and contribute more to the public realm. Because of the large change in grade along Porter Street, the proposal is presenting a blank wall along the sidewalk level of the building.
 - There is too great an emphasis placed on the proposed garage. Recessing the section of the building at the garage entry would create a relief in the façade and help with the material change between old and new building volumes. Create a stronger header above the garage door and add decorative elements around the garage to create some pedestrian interest.
 - Generally, there are no issues with scale and placement. Keep the abutting Waldorf school building in mind to maintain that building's access to light where it has windows on the lot line.
 - Support was expressed for a modification to the 10' minimum setback along the western lot line so long as improvements are made to the building's ground level. Activating the building along the streetscape and making it architecturally more interesting for pedestrians are critical to meet the approval criteria.

Modification Information. The proposed design will require the following Modification to setback: reduce the setback along the western lot line from 10' to 0'. At the DAR, commissioners indicated support for the Modification.

The applicant would like to build a zero-lot line building right up to that building and would step the new building back where there is glazing on the adjacent building. Because the abutting site to the west is zoned RM1 (a multi-dwelling residential zone), the requirement is for a 10' setback along that lot line.

While the setback requirement is due to the abutting site being zoned as multi-dwelling use (RM1), it is not actually in that use. The site to the west has long been a school (the Cedarwood School) rather than in multi-dwelling residential use. It operates under a conditional use review. The school includes a historic building that sits directly along a portion of the property line that abuts the subject site (1926 annex to the 1910 Neighborhood House).

The Modification would need to meet the purpose statement (see below) and better meet the approval criteria which are the South Portland Historic District Design Guidelines.

Purpose Statement: The required building setbacks promote streetscapes that are consistent with the desired character of the different commercial/mixed use zones. The setbacks promote buildings close to the sidewalk to reinforce a pedestrian orientation and built-up streetscape. The setback requirements for areas that abut residential zones promote commercial/mixed use development that will maintain light, air, and the potential for privacy for adjacent residential zones.

VII. PROCEDURAL NOTES

- The subject proposal was presented before at a voluntary Design Advice Requests (DAR) meeting, held on August 26, 2024 (4 commissioners present, 2 absent and 1 recused). See the attached summary of Commission comments.
- The application was deemed complete on 10/8/2024.
- The proposed demolition is scheduled for a hearing with the Portland City Council on January 16, 2025.

Reference Materials:

- [Drawing Set](#)
- [Narrative](#)
- [Summary Notes from the DAR held on August 26, 2024 \(EA 24-056451 DA\)](#)
- [South Portland Historic District National Register Nomination](#) *
- [The Comprehensive Plan 2035 adopted in 2020](#) *
- [Southwest Community Plan adopted in 2000](#) *
- [Corbett, Terwilliger, Lair Hill Policy Plan](#) *

Notes:

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

* Items marked with an asterisk (*) are too large to include in printed package. Therefore, links are provided to provide access to the online versions of these documents.