



Outlook

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**LU23-093048: 1806 Schuyler 4-Plex Development Proposal**

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**From** nathan corser <nathanclark.corser@gmail.com>**Date** Sun 2/23/2025 5:23 PM**To** Nielsen, Benjamin <Benjamin.Nielsen@portlandoregon.gov> 4 attachments (660 KB)

1206 Schuyler\_bar building alternate study\_062624.pdf; 12th\_Schuyler\_massing\_siting study\_120523.pdf; 1206 Schuyler\_proposed massing analysis\_062624.pdf; 1206 Schuyler\_reduced massing study\_062424.pdf;

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Dear Ben

It is my understanding that you inherited (congratulations!) the case noted in the subject line above. I am a decades long member of the Irvington Community Association (ICA) Board and the Land Use Committee. Having served both prior and subsequent to the Historic District designation I have seen and participated in the review, advisory and (most frequently) providing support to applicants in their quests to renovate or build new within the neighborhood. As you likely already know, the pursuit of the Historic District designation was specifically in response to and combat ever increasing instances of infill projects that were allowed through the base zoning but were otherwise completely unresponsive in siting, size, scale and massing within the context and character of the neighborhood. I should note that we had several quite successful larger development projects, similar in size and scale to this proposal, both before and after the Historic District designation.

This project as proposed is not equal to even the least of those projects.

I am writing to you now as it has been over a year since we last shared our committee's "strongest" thoughts with Tanya and the applicant. Tanya of course is gone now and the current proposed iteration continues to demonstrate a lack of interest in trying to be responsive and net beneficial contributor to that particular site, context and the character of the neighborhood as a whole.

As we put a lot of material out there for ourselves, the applicant and Tanya, I wanted to make sure you also had all those efforts in hand as representative of the multiples of alternate approaches our committee encouraged the applicant to consider and test out.

Those suggestions seem to have gone not very far and, of course, we are NOT the Owners or the designers of this project so.....

Among the committee commentary (complimenting the attached diagrams) are the following from a year ago:

1. The siting and massing of this particular design concept relative to the context (adjoining contributing structures and the District as a whole) is both overwhelming and "unresponsive" to those adjoining properties (north and east). Those are the first measures of "compatibility".
2. With the "primary" facade (fronting Schuyler) sitting only 2'-0" off of the lot line and the oriel windows ("bay window structures) above coming to the lot line and rising for over three stories does not support the scale and proportion of the specific context and largely (though not throughout) character of the district as a whole.
3. On-site parking, though both something we CAN support and definitely "better" (in terms of an approach) is still "unfortunate" as compared to an example like at 17th & Schuyler, where access to garages along the lot line is both more obscured from the street AND provides "relief" of that structure from adjoining (Brad Perkin's) property to the east.
4. Driveway relief, more open area or the stepping down of massing along the east and the north would go very far in terms of helping this proposed structure be responsive and respectful to those adjoining contributing structures (like the duplex at 15th & Fremont did)....a worthy goal.
5. Though prior to the establishment of Historic District, Tanzamook did a couple of things really well. Those were, a) it both broke up and stepped down its' massing facing historic structures across the street and abutting property to the south. Although a four story high building, it never appears more than three stories and the putting forward the two-story "bays" along Tillamook, really helps the larger massing seem less overwhelming and of a significantly smaller scale.
6. Again, though built well before the establishment of the Historic District, "The Irvington" complex (cater corner to the site) DOES break down its' massing quite successfully with a predominant reading of being a three story building with significant "breaks" in the Schuyler elevation for entrances and prominent entry canopies.
7. Worth noting, and mentioned multiple times by BDS, the "townhouse" typology is NOT one that was historically employed in the district. Jim's history slides and again as mentioned by BDS, the manner in which multi-family housing was often expressed and built was more similar to the adjoining properties and as exhibited at 17th & Schuyler.
8. Note that neither the Tanzamook property or The Irvington are "contributing" structures and (The Irvington) DOES provide context....but it is NOT the primary context: adjacency is.
9. It is incumbent upon the applicant to demonstrate (to BDS) how this proposed design is compatible within its' direct context, how it meets the Federal design criteria and how the typology, scale, proportion, materiality, etc. support the character of the district as a whole. I am hoping he brings the sort of evaluation and analysis for our information and understanding.
10. I concur with Caleb and would emphasize that we are listening and advising (first) what BDS may say and be looking for. We are advisory....though, alas, I would note that we somewhat shoot ourselves in the foot by putting forward a quite specific solution and with it, the notion that if he just did "that" we would totally support him/it. Did he take that (Tanzamook) scenario and transform a fairly modest and thoughtful non-historic row-house typology (not "style") solution and transform it into a megalodon? I would say, pretty much.
11. I am sure I have already said too much. I wish he had done what other applicants have done (I think of, specifically, 15th & Fremont and 17th & Schuyler) and come back to BDS and/or us with "possible" alternate solutions before he laid into a singular fully-formed next solution.
12. I did note that he identified FAR and potential bonuses that he expected (?) to try and exercise on this site. Just no. We have been here before. This highlights a lack of awareness that, at least historically, what may be allowed in general in a particular zone, in a Historic District, context and character supersede the overall City zoning code allowances and potential area increase bonuses. With a fully occupiable basement (whose area is not calculated by code but is clearly saleable habitable area) we are looking at an overall over five story high building....and that is before we

account for the elevation of the actual roof ridgeline....

13. For those of you newer to this particular game it was overscaled projects such as this that were a major catalyst for the seeking out and acquiring the Historic District designation.

Obviously, I appreciate your efforts and the work of your team and I look forward to seeing (or maybe not so much) what this applicant brings to the table next.

With Regards,

Nathan Corser, ICA Board & Land Use Committee