



City of Portland  
**Bureau of Development Services**  
Land Use Services Division

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## MEMORANDUM

**Date:** March 22, 2012  
**To:** Rachel Lehn, Bohlin Cywinski Jackson  
**From:** Kara Fioravanti, Land Use Review  
503-823-5892  
**Re:** 11-199879 DA – SW 5<sup>th</sup> & Yamhill  
Design Advice Request Summary Memo from March 15<sup>th</sup> meeting

Thank you for taking advantage of the opportunity to hold a Design Advice Request regarding your project. I hope you find it informative and valuable as you continue with your project development. Attached is a summary of the comments provided by the Design Commission at the March 15, 2012 Design Advice Request. This summary was generated from notes taken at the public meeting and a subsequent review of the public meeting recordings. For a small fee we can provide you with copies of those recordings; to request copies, please call 503-823-7814.

These Design Commission comments are intended to guide you in further design exploration of your project. These comments may also inform City staff when giving guidance over the course of future related land use reviews. It should be understood that these comments address the project as presented on March 15, 2012. As the project design evolves, the comments, too, may evolve or may no longer be pertinent.

Design Advice Requests are not intended to substitute for other Code-required land use or legislative procedures. Please keep in mind that the formal Type III land use review process [which includes a pre-application, a land use review application, public notification, a Staff Report and a public hearing] must be followed once the Design Advice Request meetings are complete, if formal approval for specific elements of your project is desired.

Please continue to coordinate with me as you prepare your formal Type III Design Review application.

*Encl:*  
Summary Memo

*Cc:* Design Commission  
Respondents

This memo summarizes Design Commission design direction provided at the March 15, 2012 Design Advice Request meeting. There was quite a disparity between Commission comments. Generally, 5 Commissioners favored the project with little or some change. Generally, 2 Commissioners were not favorable toward the project, with 1 of the 2 being more strongly opposed. As such, the comments below are organized by the 5 Commissioners in general support and the 2 Commissioners in varied levels of dissent.

### **Questions posed prior to Commission comment**

- How will people use these plazas?
- You are struggling with grades – why not transition inside the building?
- What is the stair tread and rise?
- How adaptable is this building for individual tenants? For instance, ADA is not straightforward for a small retailer at the east end of the building.
- Why not transform the existing structure?
- Why not incorporate an ecoroof?
- What is the construction and what are the connections of the glass panels?
- Colors of the stone? How do the two stones meet?
- What furnishings are included in the plaza?
- Lighting plans, inside and outside?
- What are the handrail requirements?
- How clear is the glass? How much will the interior layout/furniture cover up these very transparent walls?
- What are the details? (materials meeting each other, corners, finishes, joints, patterning, etc.)
- How did you settle on the 30' height for the stone wall?

### **General support from 5 Commissioners**

- Great improvement over the existing building.
- This is can be an iconic building for downtown.
- The building will serve the retail core well.
- This could feel like a jewel along Yamhill Street.
- The building is elegant. An elevated building could be nice.
- Details are critical to fulfill the high expectations for quality in this project. The Type III application needs to include adequate documentation of the details of both the plaza and the building. Materials samples, finishes, etc. were requested. The project wins or loses based on the details. Stone samples and stone patterning should be depicted next time.
- You created a park-like setting for the retailer – make the space between the sidewalk and the building great.
- Have you considered stadium steps? The steps look quite steep and more shallow steps would be preferable. Research a taller curb and making up a few critical inches of grade.
- Furnishings in the upper plaza would activate the project, which is important for this site.
- The project offers a lot to the public realm, especially if the plazas are furnished.
- Support for the encroachment, given existing conditions/challenges.
- Please research handrail requirements. There is strong support for no handrails. If handrails are required, it is a design challenge to carefully consider with regard to design and location.
- The roof is an elevation to this low building. Research the feasibility of an ecoroof. This low building and this important site are some reasons for the inclusion of an ecoroof. If an ecoroof is not proposed, come back with good reasons why.
- An ecoroof that would be mostly in the shade can work well. A simple ecoroof with one species (Mondo Grass was suggested) would relate to the aesthetic of the project and allow the roof profile to remain thin.
- One vote for the roof to remain as currently shown, given this dematerialized building.
- The elevation drawings make the building look small and out of scale. However, the pedestrian views, which will be peoples' experience, seem appropriate.
- Provide a sign strategy for the building next time. Design Review is required for exterior signs. This building should not be cluttered with signage.
- Further explore the relationship between the glass box, the stone wall, and the existing building to remain. Various viewpoints on this issue. Some view the current design as OK, and some view the stone wall as having a peculiar identity.
- The glass being completely clear is positive.
- Your proposal suggests removal and/or relocation of right-of-way street furnishings. Next time propose a thoughtful plan.

**General dissent from 2 Commissioners**

- Though this project meets straightforward Zoning Code requirements, it does not feel like a part of Portland's downtown identity. This could not be supported on every block.
- I look at this as a new building and it breaks a lot of Guidelines and Standards.
- This building is pulled back so far from the grain of the City and the spaces in between do not give back or do anything for the public.
- The SW corner is a problem, where the steps down lead into a dark forgotten corner – these are traditionally bad urban spaces.
- The SE corner needs more graceful stairs.
- What public benefit is offered by extending the private development into the public right-of-way?
- Create transition spaces that are useable and enjoyable. These “plazas” are not enjoyable.
- This can be remarkable with no steps and built to the property lines.
- The steps feel too tall, too vertical.
- The “plazas” do not feel like plazas because there is little width to their dimensions.
- Make sure the plan is not a wholesale removal of public amenities at this high-profile site. Public amenities have a purpose that the public expects and uses.
- The roof needs to be friendlier than shown.
- The stone does not relate to anything.
- Details are critical to the success of this project.
- Great that mechanical can be accommodated within the existing building and off of the roof and walls of this proposed building.
- Great that the skybridge is being removed.

**Exhibit List**

- A. Applicant's Submittals
  - 1. Original drawings
  - 2. Existing plans/elevations
  - 3. Photos of current site and vicinity
  - 4. Drawings Submitted prior to 3-15-12 meeting
  - 5. Drawings submitted at 3-15-12 meeting
- B. Zoning Map
- C. Drawings (not used, see “Applicant's Submittals”)
- D. Public Notification
  - 1. Mailing list
  - 2. Mailed notice
- E. Bureau Responses
  - 1. Bureau of Environmental Services
- F. Public Testimony (no written testimony received)
- G. Other
  - 1. Application form
  - 2. Memo to Commission, 3-8-12
  - 3. Staff presentation to Commission at 3-15-12 meeting
  - 4. Staff notes from 3-15-12 meeting