



**City of Portland, Oregon**  
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**Land Use Services**

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## MEMORANDUM

**Date:** June 5, 2013  
**To:** Kent Pottebaum, GBD Architects  
**From:** Chris Caruso, Development Review, 503-823-5747  
**Re:** EA 13-139300 DA – US Bancorp Tower Renovations & Additions  
Design Advice Request Summary Memo

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 May 23, 2013 Design Advice Request. This summary was generated from notes taken at the public meeting and a subsequent review of the public meeting recordings.

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 May 23, 2013. 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 if you would like to return for a 2<sup>nd</sup> DAR or as you prepare your formal Type III Design Review application.

### **Site & ROW**

- Staff pointed out to the Commission that right-of-way improvements that fall outside the property line will need review by the Bureau of Transportation as well as formal review as part of Design Review if the improvements are non-standard features.

### **Proposed South Addition**

- The commission stated that this is an iconic building and while not yet eligible for historic status, its character-defining features should be respected. Any intervention should be respectful of the existing elements but can interpret/reinterpret them with new materials and forms. The current proposal does not respect these character-defining items such as the diagonals that are present throughout the original design. The original entry wall diagonals should be maintained. One way to do this would be to insert a simple angled canopy with new doors in the center bay and infill the upper bays with flat glazing.
- Leverage and reinterpret the good parts of the building but do not erase every eccentric aspect of what makes it iconic.
- The Commission felt that the proposal was fighting against the evident angularity of the building throughout the design. The Commission strongly encouraged the design team to embrace the angles present on the building instead of fighting them.
- The proposed design was seen to be not as special or interesting as the Commission was hoping for and the dynamic nature of the site should be celebrated in any new additions.

- The Commission does agree that there should be a gesture of entry on this façade as well as a play of going inside and going outside. The vestibule should be the mediator between the inside and outside spaces, orthogonal on the inside facing the atrium and like a parallelogram on the outside facing the plaza.
- Specific ideas expressed about the vestibule design itself include that the upper roof deck seems awkward. It should be lowered and/or filled in for more lease space. How the glass hits the columns now (exposed columns) should be respected in the design of the addition. The columns should not be wrapped or covered or otherwise hidden from expression on the building's south façade. The current proposal takes all the meat off of the bones and makes the south façade look like flat infill.
- There was a majority support for filling in the breezeway with one Commissioner wanting it to remain open.

### **South Plaza**

- The Commission felt that the very fine-grained new paving and stacked planter banding could be quite beautiful but that the materials have to be of the highest quality and the detailing of all the little pieces of pavers around the scored stainless steel channels must be well detailed and executed.
- Another option put forth by the Commission was to remove the stainless steel scored curves and use that money on the south entry addition. The planters could also angle instead, reflecting the building walls, if the scored channels are removed.
- There was Commission consensus that the plaza configuration needed to be less restrained and orthogonal and more dynamic. Ideas for improvement included creating fewer but larger planters and having the planters be angled to bring the energy in from the plaza corners toward the new doors.
- The large solid walls at either side of the entry bays seemed to dwarf any possible plantings so perhaps having planters at those edges was not the right solution. Adding large-scale public art on the solid walls was an idea put forth by the majority of the Commission that might be a way to create a moment or identity for the plaza. There was no support for green screen walls and some concern about the hardiness of Italian cypress in our climate.
- The building is all about granite and the Commission is happy to see the reuse of some of the interior granite in the plaza.
- The banded pavers that connect back to a pattern found on the building exterior is a good interpretation as mentioned before but should also relate to the interior floor since this was part of the original design – the creation of a “street” through the building that connected to the outside pattern of the plaza.

### **Signs**

- The Commission said to sign the building, not the plaza or the planters. There was no support for the monument sign or the large sign on the planter. The planter sign was noted as being very overbearing in its commercial aspect along the pedestrian realm, and the low sign was deemed very suburban. There was a general concern that both signs would quickly be vandalized.

### **Link Entries**

- While the applicant stated that there may not be enough in the budget to replace the existing link tower glazing, they would like to add entry canopies and the Commission was supportive of that idea.

*Encl:*  
Summary Memo

*Cc:*      *Design Commission*

**Exhibit List**

- A. Applicant Information
  - 1. Cover Sheet, Narrative & Design Precedents
- B. Zoning Map
- C.
  - 1. Site Plan
  - 2. Before South Plaza Plan
  - 3. After South Plaza Plan
  - 4. Before & After South Plaza
  - 5. Before & After South Plaza
  - 6. Before and After East/West Tower Entry
  - 7. Before and After East Plaza Entry
  - 8. Before and After Atrium Interior
  - 9. Before and After Link Interior
  - 10. Section Cut
  - 11. Existing Ground Floor Plan
  - 12. Proposed Ground Floor Plan
- D.
  - 1. Posting Mailing
  - 2. Posted Notice
  - 3. Statement Certifying Posting
- E.
  - 1. Application form
  - 2. Staff memo
  - 3. Staff PowerPoint presentation
  - 4. Pre-Application Conference information