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MEMORANDUM

Date: September 9, 2013
To: Design Commission
From: Hillary Adam, City Planner II – Urban Design
503-823-3581, Hillary.Adam@portlandoregon.gov
Re: August 15, 2013 2nd Appeal Hearing
LU 13-131079 DZM – 115 N Cook

Dear Design Commissioners:

Please find exhibits attached for the 2nd Appeal hearing for 115 N Cook Street. Staff has worked with the applicant since the initial August 15th hearing, and believes the design is responsive to the concerns previously stated by staff and the Commission and has significantly improved from the previous rendition. This memo is to briefly discuss areas of improvement and identify areas still of concern.

Staff notes that the decision of Denial cited three guidelines that were not met: Community Design Guidelines P2, D7 and D8. Based on the revised drawing package, staff intends to write a revised decision, as staff believes that the outstanding approval criteria are now met, pending verification of the durability of the proposed metal panels and associated flashing which now constitute the majority of the exterior materials. The applicant intends to demonstrate the durability of these materials with a mock-up at the September 19th hearing. A revised decision would essentially be a revision of the findings in these three guidelines, as well as the conclusion, and will allow the potential for conditions of approval for issues identified by staff as well as issues not identified by staff.

Areas of Improvement

- Simplification of materials. Primary exterior materials now include cast-in-place concrete, vertically-oriented fluted metal panel, and Nichiha fiber cement panels. The metal panel now acts as a frame at all portions of the building, extruded 4½” from the face of the building, establishing layers, with Nichiha now reserved as a background for the windows and recessed balconies. While the windows are still mounted flush with the Nichiha, the extruded metal frame provides a level of textural interest that staff finds an acceptable alternative to recessing each individual window.
- Simplification of windows. At the ground level, the storefront windows have been simplified to provide a cohesive one-over-one vocabulary on all sides of the building. At the upper levels, 81 windows were re-oriented from horizontal to vertical, thereby providing more consistency with regard to header and sill heights, as well as pattern. Horizontally-oriented windows are now limited to recessed balconies, 40 punched windows in the metal panel, and 3 at the 6th floor common lounge.
- Overall composition. While there is still a significant amount of cement fiber panel, the overall composition of the building and its expression of each material are much improved from the previous rendition. The building is now more ordered and logical, and staff believes that the fiber cement panels add a bit of warmth to the building which is otherwise primarily concrete and metal. Staff welcomes the Commission’s perspective on the relative success of this revision.
- Ground level friendliness. The applicant has relocated louver vents at the ground level from the street-facing façades to the interior parking court façades. Additional storefront

windows have also been added to the interior parking court façades and a scoring pattern has been introduced at the ground level concrete to provide additional texture.

- Courtyards. Bicycle parking has been separated from the courtyards so that the spaces are accessed from the street, thereby reducing conflicts with users of the courtyard. Staff welcomes the Commission's feedback on the simplification of the SE and SW courtyards.

Areas Requiring Additional Development of Detail

- Flashing and Trim. Staff believes that the applicant's decision to treat the metal panel as a frame for the secondary fiber cement panel is an interesting response to the Commission's desire for added texture, but notes that its success lies in the quality of the materials chosen and the execution of their construction, as this design detail is now a major element of the building. The applicant has been instructed to bring a mock-up to the hearing in order to prove that this design will be successful. Staff also notes that while the design details show a 4" flashing, the applicant has indicated that a 1-½" flashing may be possible. This will also be demonstrated at the hearing.
- Overhead Doors. New overhead doors are proposed at either end of the Williams wing to provide direct access to the outdoors from each adjacent commercial space. Staff supports the introduction of the overhead doors but notes that the detailing of these doors may require additional consideration, particularly at the north end, where the overhead door appears to abut the storefront windows.
- Drawing Discrepancies. Staff notes there are some areas that appear to be errors in the drawing, rather than an intentional design discrepancy. The applicant is aware of these discrepancies and has indicated they will be fixed by the September 19th hearing.
- Transformers. As the applicant has indicated in their memo, two transformers have been introduced at the north end of the parking area based on PP&L feedback after the August 15th hearing, resulting in a loss of the proposed landscaped trellis. PBOT has indicated that these transformers may be located in the right-of-way; however staff was not able to relay that information in time for the current drawing package. Staff would encourage a condition of approval that the transformers be located in the right-of-way with the trellis extended N Ivy and additional landscaping provided as discussed at the previous hearing.

Staff believes that the proposal is much improved, but that its ability to meet the guidelines is dependent on the detailing of the metal panels and flashing, which at the time of this memo, remains to be demonstrated. Staff welcomes the Commission's thoughts on the revised proposal.

Please contact me with any questions or concerns.