



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

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## MEMORANDUM

**Date:** October 14, 2013  
**To:** Design Commission  
**From:** Hillary Adam, City Planner II – Urban Design  
503-823-3581, [Hillary.Adam@portlandoregon.gov](mailto:Hillary.Adam@portlandoregon.gov)  
**Re:** October 24, 2013 3<sup>rd</sup> Appeal Hearing  
LU 13-131079 DZM – 115 N Cook

Dear Design Commissioners:

Please find exhibits attached for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Appeal hearing for 115 N Cook Street. Staff has worked with the applicant since the initial August 15<sup>th</sup> hearing, and the subsequent September 19<sup>th</sup> hearing, and believes the design is responsive to the concerns previously stated by staff and the Commission and is again 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 July 19, 2013 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, though a complete drawing package was not received in time to prepare a revised Decision for distribution. Staff will attempt to provide a revised Decision by October 18<sup>th</sup> for your review prior to the October 24<sup>th</sup> hearing. A revised Decision would essentially be a revision of the findings in these three guidelines, as well as the conclusion. Having a revised Decision for Approval on October 24<sup>th</sup> will allow the potential for conditions of approval for issues identified by staff as well as issues not identified by staff if the Commission determines conditions will facilitate an approval. If approval cannot be reached on October 24<sup>th</sup>, we will need to schedule a 4<sup>th</sup> appeal hearing.

### **Transformers**

Since the September 19<sup>th</sup> hearing, planning and PBOT staff have been in communication with representatives of the utility who have educated staff as to the difficulties, unknown before now, with locating the vault below grade at this site. Staff has requested that representatives for Pacificorp attend the October 24<sup>th</sup> hearing and it is our understanding that several representatives will be present to further educate us on these challenges. As such, the applicant has provided two site plans, one showing transformers above grade in the central court (as previously seen) and one with them absent, presumably in an alternate below-grade location. If transformers are not able to be located in the right-of-way, does the Commission believe that the central court location is the right location, or is there a preferable alternative? *The applicant has requested that final location of the transformers be a condition of approval item, if necessary.*

### **Applicant's Response to Commission Direction**

Below staff addresses each of the design issues provided at the September 19<sup>th</sup> hearing and listed in the applicant's attached memo.

- Design Issue #1: Transformers. Staff addressed this comment above and acknowledges that the problem with locating the transformers below grade may be a larger problem than can be solved with this one land use application. Staff recognizes that additional work, in

partnership with the utility companies, may be necessary to ensure that transformers for future developments are located below grade.

- Design Issue #2: Trellis. The applicant has increased the length of the trellis to cover more of the vehicle area and is of a steel and green screen design. Staff notes that, in the event that the transformers must be located as shown on sheet 2.2, symmetry could be sacrificed in order to continue the trellis over the four parking spaces on the north end of the eastern drive aisle. *Such a continuation of the trellis could be incorporated as a condition of approval.*
- Design Issue #3: Interior Court Covered Walkways. Staff notes that the applicant has incorporated benches, planters, tenant signage, relocated lighting, and a scoring pattern in the walkway, though the only evidence of this is the rendering on sheet 1.1. Planters and benches are not shown on the site plan, landscape plan, or elevations. In addition, the zoning code requires that the pedestrian path must be “at least 6 feet wide”. Introduction of planters and benches reduces this width; luckily, the applicant has provided very generous drive aisle widths. Zoning Code requires that the parking stall depth must be no less than 16 feet long with a 20-foot minimum drive aisle width. Therefore, staff suggests that the parking stalls can be reduced in length by 2 feet (from 18’ to 16’) and the 28-foot drive aisle also reduced, and for the pedestrian paths to be widened several more feet. It seems the current dimensions are driven by the turning radius around the loading space, which can also be significantly reduced in length. In addition staff notes that no additional treatments have been proposed for the walls beyond the previously seen scoring patterns and that it may be difficult to condition an approvable wall treatment. *Staff notes these path dimensions could be modified through a condition of approval that also included a total number of benches and planters per linear foot of walkway.*
- Design Issue #4: Rainscreen. The applicant has noted a ½” gap behind the Nichiha provide by the manufacturer’s fasteners and has also proposed a flashing joint at every floor level for drainage. *Staff accepts this solution provided that a condition of approval be attached requiring the flashing be painted to match the Nichiha and be rigid to ensure warping will be kept to a minimum over longer distances.*
- Design Issue #5: Green Screen. The applicant has revised the green screen under the building at the end of the parking aisles to match the green screens at the end of the trellis. Staff accepts this change.
- Design Issue #6 Wall Sconces. The applicant has revised the exterior wall sconces so that they are differentiated from the New Seasons wall sconces. Staff accepts this change.
- Design Issue #7: Nichiha Panel Seams. The applicant has realigned much of the Nichiha panels to reduce the appearance of seams between the panels, including shifting the fields of metal panel to the edges of the windows and aligning seams with mullions. The applicant has also removed the pre-manufactured Nichiha corner piece and proposed a mitered corner joint which allows for installers to only align two seams rather than three as in the previous proposal. Staff believes this is a step forward but notes that some of the field areas seem to have extraneous seams and hopes the applicant can clarify this at the hearing.
- Design Issue #8: Corner Courtyards. The applicant has hired a landscape designer to address these courtyards and they have significantly improved in terms of softening and providing a welcoming atmosphere to those who will make a home here. Staff notes that the Commission clarified on September 19<sup>th</sup> that their initial comments to simplify the courtyards did not mean to eliminate the residential entry at the southeast corner and was directed to provide more presence to the residential entrances. *Staff notes that the southeast entrance is still rather underwhelming and would suggest a condition of approval to return this entrance canopy to one of the earlier designs which was essentially a smaller version of the southwest entrance steel and glass canopy. There may be additional design considerations for this important entry.*
- Design Issue #9: Color. At the September 19<sup>th</sup> hearing, the Commission noted their difficulty with being able to “see” how the building would work as a whole with regard to color. This was of particular concern because the proposed louver vents are a major element of the façade, not well integrated, and are of a different color than the field in which they are located, making them even more prominent. Ultimately there was no consensus on the right direction with regard to the colors of the building except to try to make the vents disappear and aim for the majority vote on the color combination. The applicant is proposing to keep the “Green Shimmer” ribbed metal panel and the “Mocha”

Nichiha fiber cement panel, and is now proposing clear anodized aluminum vents, which it is believed will pick up the hues of the adjacent green shimmer metal and will be not so noticeable. The concept behind the color scheme makes sense as the green shimmer adds interest and richness to the metal while the mocha Nichiha adds warmth; however, staff, like the Commission, understands the importance of seeing a full scale sample board on October 24<sup>th</sup>. Staff notes that the relationship of the vent treatment and the metal field are critical to the overall success of the project. *The applicant has indicated that they can suggest additional color/treatment options at the October 10<sup>th</sup> hearing and will accept changes as a condition of approval.*

Please contact me with any questions or concerns.