



City of Portland, Oregon
Bureau of Development Services
Land Use Services

FROM CONCEPT TO CONSTRUCTION

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MEMORANDUM

Date: January 28, 2014

To: Mike Cline, Ankrom Moisan Architects

From: Mark Walhood, City Planner
(503) 823-7806, mark.walhood@portlandoregon.gov

Re: 13-224797 DA – Goat Blocks Redevelopment
Design Advice Request Summary Memo from **January 9, 2014 session**

Thank you for taking advantage of the opportunity to hold a Design Advice Request (DAR) 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 first DAR on January 9, 2014. 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 January 9, 2014. 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.

At the end of the hearing, it was understood that you would return for a second Design Advice Request, currently scheduled for February 6, 2014. 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 January 9, 2014 DAR (arranged by the staff and applicant discussion topics, shown in bold text).

Belmont Edge/Enclosure/Building Orientation

- Explore ways to revise the project to have as much of the retail space accessed directly from the adjacent street grade as possible. A unanimous concern among Commissioners was that the raised retail above and removed from the public sidewalk is problematic from both urban design/approvability and functional/viability perspectives.
- Hidden retail that is not directly visible from a public street is especially problematic. Removal of some key retail entry spaces from the sidewalk level results in a weird, inactive feel today. Public access needs to be as dynamic as possible – people are not going to walk up those stairs and feel welcome.
- Could the grocery store be sunk down further into the ground? Could the grocery entries be located at-grade along 11th Avenue at both Belmont & Yamhill instead of one at-grade and one elevated/stair entry facing Belmont? The secondary entrance to the store is less visible on the lower/west end of Belmont. Maybe use the lower Belmont frontage for some of the smaller retail spaces?
- Could the Belmont frontage be re-designed to enclose the stairs/awkward NW corner entry/exposed parking garage wall within one or more buildings? This could create a stronger edge along Belmont, including better engagement with the pedestrianscape.
- The Belmont streetscape needs to be brilliant, pedestrian-oriented and urban to succeed: this is a critical focus area for the project team going forward.

East-West Superblock Connection

- The Yamhill east-west superblock connection needs to feel connected to the public realm (10th, 11th ROW). The elevated condition from both sidewalks is a very weak, impermeable connection, and needs strengthening to have this public path/easement area feel connected to the neighborhood.
- The Yamhill east-west superblock connection has real potential as a sloping, European-scale pedestrian/shopping street, many of the most charming of which are on an incline (Switzerland, Germany, Spain). Inclined streets with simple paving and shops on both sides can become a real pedestrian/shopping/tourism attractor.
- Maybe the internal shopping street activity moves to align east-west with Yamhill, instead of a privatized north-south mid-block axis elevated above the nearest sidewalk?
- The idea of creating a strong and extensive public realm is commendable, but this term relates to the public sidewalks at the project perimeter (curb to lot line) and the 6,000 sq. ft. superblock walkway/plaza area to be covered by the Public Access Easement. The private internal 'street' area is not the public realm, it is private space. The project needs to make a significant contribution to the public realm as stated in the project goals, but it does not feel particularly open or public in this first version.
- There is some concern that the Yamhill connection is not wide enough. Greater width and more retail along this street could help.
- The proportions of both internalized walkways could be increased in width, and the initial drawings do not appear to be accurate in terms of benches, walkways and the amount of circulation space. Section drawings would be helpful to present the scale and sense of enclosure on these spaces.
- Commissioners will not support an east-west connection that is elevated from both adjacent streets.
- It will be a challenge to make these internal streets work and feel connected, this is one of the major project hurdles/design issues.

Driveway/Loading Locations

- Bicycle, pedestrian, and vehicle conflicts related to the proposed driveway on Belmont make this a problematic Adjustment (Parking Access Restricted Street). Carefully consider re-locating the driveway for the parking onto 11th Avenue to improve the pedestrian/transit-user/bicycle environment on Belmont.

- Concept of doing on-street loading was generally acceptable to Design Commission, but continue to work with PBOT on specific issues related to loading (STAFF N.B. – Adjustments may be required if any building does not have the required on-site loading per 33.266.310 standards – loading is required per building).
- We did not get into extensive detail on this issue at the initial DAR on January 9th, 2014. Consider providing more tailored, clear specific sign details in future DAR submittals for feedback on this issue, coordinating with staff as necessary (info. on entries, building wall length facing streets, etc. is necessary to do a sign code plan check).

Open Air Retail @ 10th/Taylor

- No images have been provided for the south edge along Taylor, so feedback cannot be provided on this concept at this time. Consider including details in your packet for the next DAR session.

Material Palette/Quality

- No specifics or material samples were included with the initial DAR. Consider providing some specific details and material samples for the next DAR session.
- Generally speaking, Design Commission supports cement panel only as a secondary, accessory material on buildings. Metal panel should be at least 20 gauge, and be installed with either foam backing or stiffeners, as shown on enlarged detail sheets. Multiple building materials should be used sparingly but intentionally, and not as a primary graphic tool to manipulate massing, form, or design: the design concept should be strong architecturally to begin with, using quality materials carefully and with restraint to express a cohesive, integrated design.

Applicant Topics (Height Modifications, Sign Modifications)

- Modifications to the height standard to allow rooftop elevator overruns near the edge of the building as an intentional ‘tower’ element, instead of 15’-0” in from the edge of the roof as required by the standard, may be approvable if done well.
- The examples of unique signage are wonderful and interesting, but large new signs especially must have significant design quality in order to be approved. Standard corporate signage but made super-size is unlikely to be as successful as the examples you’ve shown. Do not come back with standard corporate signage only bigger.
- STAFF NOTE: We do not regulate content of signage, but we do regulate the size, materials, illumination type, and how the signs integrate with the building design and neighborhood context.
- Not enough information was presented in advance of the DAR to provide thorough feedback on the specifics of any sign-related Modifications. Rooftop signs that go more than 0’-6” above the building rooftop are prohibited. Consider providing more specific information in your drawing packet for the next DAR to get feedback if desired (staff needs time to evaluate the code standard). Information necessary to do a sign code plan check includes building footprints on a site plan with clear main entry locations shown, identification of any freestanding or monument signs on any frontage, and enlarged details showing sign materials/design.

Other/General Comments

- The project is incredibly exciting, and general support was heard for the building scale and massing, the eclectic architecture of the structures, and the unusual outdoor spaces: these really have the potential to add energy and dynamism to the district in a contextual and sensitive manner.
- This neighborhood has a good sense of what is authentic and what is not. How can you create the most accessible, fertile feel to the project as it interacts with the neighborhood (e.g. at pedestrian/street level)?
- You are walking a delicate balance between creating a petri dish for experimental retail and neighborhood gathering spaces and a big box shopping center raised up off and away from the street (petri dish vs. shopping center).
- Incubator and small-scale retail spaces especially need to be accessible from the street.

- The project makes a nice transition from the industrial/commercial activity on the central eastside to the residential areas east of 12th.
- Public sidewalks, especially along Belmont, should be improved to the full 12' city standard. This is a ground-breaking project for the Belmont/Morrison couplet west of SE 12th, and both adjacent and nearby redevelopment and pedestrian/bicycle/transit traffic is likely to increase around the site in the near future.
- The baseline street condition needs to be great at the entire perimeter of the project. The problem is made a little more difficult by choosing to elevate so much program/retail up from the street edges, especially in relation to Belmont, 10th Avenue, and the public east-west superblock connection.
- Overall, there appear to be significant conflicts between the program and the architecture that need resolution (large retail floor plates/grades vs. street-level accessibility, vibrant public vs. private streetscapes, generous/exposed parking vs. visual impacts of exposed parking structures, etc.)
- Could be helpful at future DAR sessions and for the Design Review to have your landscape architect attend to present/discuss specifics of the landscape plan. Landscaping has an important role to play in shaping the open spaces and overall character of this project.
- Many of the challenges in the project can be resolved with close coordination and involvement of a skilled landscape architect. Your landscape architect should be involved in the next DAR discussion(s).
- There were several areas of this large project which could not be covered in any level of detail at the first DAR on January 9, 2014. Please consider revising the project as presented today in line with Commission concerns, working with staff as necessary along the way.

Exhibit List

- A. Applicant Statements
 - 1. Original application package
 - 2. Cover memo with supplemental stormwater report information
 - 3. List of discussion topics provided by applicant at January 9, 2014 DAR
- B. Zoning Map
- C. Drawings
 - 1. December 17, 2013 drawing packet
- D. Notification Information
 - 1. Posting information as sent to applicant
 - 2. Applicant's statement certifying posting
- E. Public Testimony
 - 1. Comment letters from Portland Pedestrian Advisory Committee (1/2/14), Mary Ann Schwab (1/7/14) and Modification/Adjustment narratives from applicant
 - 2. Comment letter from Doug Klotz (1/9/14)
- F. Other
 - 1. Application form
 - 2. E-mail from staff to applicant identifying Modifications and Adjustments, sent 12/11/13
 - 3. Memo from staff to Design Commission with original drawings, 12/24/13
 - 4. Staff PowerPoint from 1/9/14 DAR
 - 5. Staff 'cheat sheet' from 1/9/14 DAR