



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

FROM CONCEPT TO CONSTRUCTION

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MEMORANDUM

Date: February 6, 2014
To: Kevin Cavanaugh, Guerilla Development
From: Kara Fioravanti, Development Review
Phone number 503-823-5892
Re: 13-227219 DA – The Dumbbell
Design Advice Request Summary Memo January 23, 2014

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 January 23, 2014 Design Advice Request. This summary was generated from notes taken at the public meeting and a subsequent review of the public meeting recordings. To review those recordings, please visit:

http://efiles.portlandoregon.gov/webdrawer/search/rec?sm_class=uri_7547&count&rows=50

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 23, 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.

Please continue to coordinate with me as you decide on a return DAR date.

Encl:
Summary Memo

Cc: Design Commission
Respondents

This memo summarizes **Design Commission** design direction provided at the **January 23, 2014**.

Commissioners in attendance on January 23rd: Jeff Simpson, Ben Kaiser, David Wark (written comments provided), Gwen Milius, and Tad Savinar.

General Feedback

- The project team shows great optimism for this exciting project.
- An iconic design approach is supported.
- The site's constraints can be the motivator. Resolve the constraints for success in design. This building can be the building that comes out of its constraints. For example, the taper is the strongest idea right now, and is in direct response to the needs of a small island site.
- This project is clearly a symbol of gifts, but what is the project's gift to the City?
- The Design Guidelines are the guiding principles.
- All Commissioners encouraged more exploration. It is not a dead project. The ground level, composition, coherency, and parking are the fundamental issues to focus on. Though, there are still the: skin, quality, permanence, and details to tackle after the larger issues are resolved.
- Your next visit should include better floor plans and elevations. It would be helpful to have sections and details next time to understand the design intentions. Also, some additional plans and renderings need to show this site/project in the larger context.

Streetscape

- Embrace the site's urban context and provide an active streetscape in support of a positive pedestrian experience.
- This is a high pedestrian, transit rich neighborhood. The site sits at a Streetcar stop. Reinforce the neighborhood and the pedestrian experience.
- Is the ground floor great, welcoming, and creative?
- A main Design Review component is the urban design aesthetic, the base of this building is key to the project's success in adding to the vibrancy of the neighborhood.
- Skinny retail spaces could be dead. The concept of being self-sustaining on an island could inform the approach to ground level retail.
- The proposed ground level feels corporate – for the pedestrian realm and also the project design coherency, the base needs to be as equally elegant and musical as the top.
- A concrete base (painted or unpainted) is hard and harsh. The base needs to be elegant, like the top floors. The current needs to go up 4 notches.
- Concern about the blank wall, west elevation, between the 2 boxes.
- Main building entrance is deep, hidden and cramped. The angles make the space tight and dark. Because it is also open to the elements it could be a potentially unpleasant space. Consider adjusting the geometry to create a clear and comfortable entry that engages the sidewalk. Consider moving the main entrance to Burnside.
- Should the base be taller?
- Consider a permeable ground level, which could relieve many of the stated problems. And, it introduces an interesting concept of exposing the bottom of the gifts.
- The consensus for the sidewalk at Couch Court is that it has to be walkable because people will walk there. Little to no support for the current thinking of 7'-8'.
- Commission would consider oriel window exceptions if it helped with achieving a wider sidewalk at Couch Court.

Quality

- This site is expected to continue the very high level of design already established in the E Burnside area.
- Materials should be very high quality and permanent, especially because of the site and the iconic design approach.
- Open and exposed metal/galvanized stairs do not add to the expected high quality of this project and seem to be suburban in nature.
- The pattern on the boxes must be of a durable material, perhaps metal panel. Paint will not meet the guidelines.
- The base material needs to "sparkle". The upper floors do, too.

- Not only should the outside be of a high quality, but the spaces within the building should be of a high quality – think about the window proportions and how they’ll impact the experience of those working in the building (avoid the Portland Building’s interior problems). Your building’s interior spaces have to have a longevity, similar to warehouses where there interiors are malleable.

Composition

- Iconic emphasis is focused on 2 boxes, without consideration of the ground floor.
- Consider bringing the boxes and their facades down to the ground, where people can experience the gifts.
- Investigate a more integrated composition of massing, materials and pattern.
- The overall massing and plan geometry seem overly complicated for a small and already complicated site. Consider simplifying the composition plan, which could help with making things more efficient (reducing the wall perimeter, the number of stairs, and the number of cores).
- The podium and upper stories lack coherency. What is their relationship?
- The simplicity of the boxes counteracts the noise in the vicinity, but the ground floor clouds the simplicity.
- Be intentional about the pairing of the two boxes to think about the space in between.

Parking

- Parking is the fundamental issue to tackle first. The majority preference is for no parking.
- Surface parking at this site, especially, is hard to reconcile.
- Parking is causing most of the project’s design hardships.
- Consider shared parking. Bring your banker next time. Get information from Bureau of Planning and Sustainability about the viability of projects that are without parking.
- Burnside is not the right street for a parking access; it is where the most people will walk.
- The floor plan geometry and site are at odds. The parking in particular, broken into two sections, crowds the site and results in awkward and cramped edges.
- Storefront spaces lining the parking are so shallow as to question how they can be used. Parking would need to be eliminated or, at a minimum, reduced to create more useable 1st floor space.
- The safety and clarity of circulation of all modes (pedestrians, bicycles, and cars) have to work intellectually and functionally.

Exhibit List

- A. Applicant’s Information
 1. Original drawing set
 2. Final drawing set (1 of 2), reviewed for January 23, 2014 hearing
 3. Final drawing set (2 of 2), reviewed for January 23, 2014 hearing
- B. Zoning Map
- C. Drawings (see A series above)
- D. Notifications
 1. Posting instructions sent to applicant
 2. Applicant’s statement certifying posting
 3. Posting notice as sent to applicant
 4. General information on DAR process included with e-mailed posting/notice
- E. Public Testimony – *none received*
- F. Bureau Responses – *none received*
- G. Other
 1. Application form
 2. Transmittal, 1-13-14
 3. Staff cover memo for January 23, 2014 hearing
 4. Staff ‘cheat sheet’ for January 23, 2014 hearing
 5. Staff powerpoint for January 23, 2014 hearing
 6. Staff notes from January 23, 2014 hearing