



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

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## MEMORANDUM

**Date:** March 7, 2014  
**To:** Rachel Brand & Kevin Volk, HOLST Architecture  
**From:** Chris Caruso, Development Review, 503-823-5747  
**Re:** EA 13-232583 DA – Red Lion Hotel Renovation  
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 February 27, 2014 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 February 27, 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 if you would like to return for a 2<sup>nd</sup> DAR or as you prepare your formal Type II Design Review application.

### **Parking Court Edges & Potential Modifications**

Staff explained to the Commission that the project could fall into the Major Remodel category due to its valuation. If so, then the project must meet the following three Central City Plan District zoning code development standards, or request Modifications to them. Modifications must equally meet the purpose of the code standard and better meet the applicable design guidelines through some sort of mitigation strategies. The code section purpose statements are listed below:

**33.510.215 Required Building Lines.** Required building lines are intended to enhance the urban quality of the Central City plan district.

**33.510.220 Ground-Floor Windows.** In the Central City, blank walls on the ground level of buildings are limited to: Provide a pleasant, rich, diverse pedestrian experience by connecting activities occurring within a structure to adjacent sidewalk areas; Encourage continuity of retail and service uses; Encourage surveillance opportunities by restricting fortress-like facades at street level; and Avoid a monotonous pedestrian environment.

**33.510.225 Ground Floor Active Use Areas.** The ground floor active use standards are intended to reinforce the continuity of pedestrian-active ground-level building uses. The standards are also to help maintain a healthy urban district through the interrelationship of ground-floor building occupancy and street level accessible public uses and activities. Active uses include but are not limited to: lobbies, retail, residential, commercial, and office.

Commission comments were as follows:

1. This remodel needs to give back to the neighborhood in some way that has not done since being built in the car-oriented 1960's. The current development was estimated by the Commission to have Holladay & MLK as 100% non-active facades at street level, Grand at 90% non-active, and Hassalo at 50% non-active.
2. The surrounding area is afflicted with several buildings with similar parking courts against the sidewalks. A lot of investment has been put into developing transit infrastructure in this area, and this remodel should respond to the city's desire for more active streetscapes.
3. This remodel should set the stage for future improvements to the surrounding buildings that really activate and enhance the pedestrian realm.
4. While the remodel does improve the look of the building and the entries, these are things that help the building owners and customers, not the neighborhood. It seems to be a selfish position to not improve the street edges along the parking walls with some sort of active space. The public edge should be embraced and improved in addition to the building improvements. The gesture at the street is as important as the building improvements themselves.
5. The solution to the parking walls needs to be an urban design solution. The current proposal does not add positively to the experience of walking along the street and its urbanistic effect at the pedestrian level is not being considered with the screening proposal.
6. Look at more design opportunities for any screening that is done. It could move, be a RACC project, have music?, etc. All three Commissioners present said that they could not accept 100% screening at this corner.
7. Ideas for corner activation at MLK and Holladay included creating a floating white box at that corner that could hold a micro-retailer like the flower shop at Pioneer Square, something that can open out onto the sidewalk. Another idea is to create an area with seating, lighting, landscaping, utility hookups, special paving, etc. that would make an inviting and supportive environment for a food cart and service. Having a strong feature at that corner would really help.
8. The valet parking should be fully utilized to get as many spaces compacted into as small a footprint as possible in order to open up space for active uses along the street edge. There may be a way to relocated or even close the MLK garage exit drive to allow more active space to be developed at the corner.
9. The Modera Hotel's NE corner with the raised parking deck and thin wooden slats was discussed as the least successful part of the project. The Commission does not want to have that repeated on this hotel site. PSU's parking garage on SW 5<sup>th</sup> and Broadway was held up as a potential design solution with a small protected court that hosts several food carts. It provides some active uses along the sidewalk at what would normally be parking garage wall.
10. Modifications to the Major Remodel standards could be granted if the project gave something back to the street at the SE corner of the site, what the Commission is calling the 100% corner, the corner where the work really does need to happen to create a new, active pedestrian experience. The Commission is not comfortable setting the stage for Modifications that require nothing at corners like this one as there are a number of other buildings with a similar condition along the sidewalks. Coming development around this site will only enhance the needs for active space at the parking deck edge.
11. The Commissioners do not want to trigger a lesser building design in order to avoid granting Modifications to these standards.

### **Rooftop & Fins/Canopies**

1. The side walls of the fins need some more thought as to why they are located where they are and why they are shaped the way they are. They are successful at the top and bottom portions of the building where they act as a cornice and a canopy but are not yet as successful as side pieces.
2. The terrace could have the best outdoor dining in the city with the available views.
3. The trellis and windscreen need to be delineated somehow from the window wall. The massing could be dropped down in height as it approaches the stair tower.

### **Motor Court & Entries**

1. The new entry off of Hassalo and the wider entry plaza off of Grand help improve the pedestrian experience at these two areas of the building.

2. Turning the motor court into a green space or garden area with seating like the Modera would be great.
3. Look for a way to screen the cars on the upper deck so their ends are not visible.

**Materials**

1. One Commissioner indicated that the mix of types and sizes of metal panels around the building (fins, soffits, ground level walls, plus the metal screening was not cohesive.
2. The screening design is not really connected to the concrete edge of the upper parking level. The screening is too fussy and is not as graceful as the rest of the building. It is really another sharp element in an already sharp environment. The Commission was not unanimous in support or non-support of the stair screening. Once Commissioner stated that if the stairs are screened, the design should be appropriate for the screening.
3. It seems that the original patterned brick is being ignored by the remodeled portions. The brick is just left hanging on at the ends of the building, particularly when the extending canopy elements that cross into the brick walls are removed. The design should add the old brick pattern to the renovated facades. Knit the brick deeper into the building fabric.
4. The architecture in general is really elegant and would be quite attractive.

**Future DAR**

The development team is welcome to return for one additional Design Advice Request within the year to review revised design proposals. Please let staff know if you would like to schedule another meeting with the Design Commission.

*Encl:*  
Summary Memo

*Cc: Design Commission  
Respondents*

**Exhibit List**

- A. Applicant Information
  - 1. Narrative
- B. Zoning Map
- C.
  - 1. Site Plan
  - 2. 11" x 17" Drawings
- D.
  - 1. Mailing list
  - 2. Mailed notice
- E.
  - 1. Application form
  - 2. Staff memo
  - 3. Staff PowerPoint presentation
  - 4. Site images
  - 5. Early Assistance information