



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

FROM CONCEPT TO CONSTRUCTION

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## MEMORANDUM

**Date:** March 28, 2014

**To:** Mike Cline, Ankrom Moisan Architects

**From:** Mark Walhood, City Planner  
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**Re:** 13-224797 DA – Goat Blocks Redevelopment  
Design Advice Request Summary Memo from **February 27, 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 second 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 February 27, 2014, and are in addition to those contained in the summary from the January 9, 2014 session.** 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 not return for a third Design Advice Request. Please continue to coordinate with me on your formal Type III Design Review.

*Encl:*  
Summary Memo

*Cc:* Design Commission  
Respondents

This memo summarizes Design Commission design direction provided at the February 27, 2014 DAR. Commissioners present included David Keltner, David Wark, Ben Kaiser, Gwen Milius, Tad Savinar, and Jane Hansen.

### **Belmont Edge/Modifications**

- **SUMMARY: The Belmont edge still needs further work to activate and engage the public street pedestrian experience. The public streets, especially along both SE Belmont and SE 11<sup>th</sup>, should offer the most dynamic, fine-grained, active pedestrian and urban experience of all the project pedestrian edges, in a hierarchy that descends from the public street perimeter (A) to Yamhill (B) to other internal connections if provided (C).**
- The quirky treatment of the smaller building at the 10<sup>th</sup> & Belmont corner is compelling, and the variation in scale and exterior material treatment for the retail bar building does help reinforce the central eastside/SE neighborhood character you are seeking. Timber might not be the most appropriate or durable material, but holding this corner with a distinct architectural moment/idea is a promising approach.
- The elevator access point needs to be carefully considered to relate in a welcoming way to pedestrian activity at the street. This connection feels odd in its placement and orientation to the street. You want eyes on the street, safety and clear access, and the micro retail needs to move further out from the interior core of the project (e.g. perhaps internalize the garage access off the street?).
- The little NW corner building is the most interesting. Two Commissioners suggested that wood might be approvable as a primary exterior material if detailed well.
- Belmont is the most important streetscape to activate and engage with this project, and needs further work.
- The seating space on 10<sup>th</sup> & Belmont is unlikely to work for a hang-out space as imagined. This is a gritty, loud location with lots of bus, car and truck traffic on the street. You need to hold that corner better with an urban edge, bringing the interior building energy out to activate the streetscape.
- The big 'windows' on the grocery along Belmont likely not to end up offering much in the way of views into the store, and could instead become big inserts with images or art which would enliven the streetscape more.
- (Staff Note: Few if any specific comments were made on the Modifications at the second DAR covered in these notes. However, most standards in question relate to the pedestrian edge on the public streets, which is covered extensively in these notes elsewhere.)

### **Belmont Driveway**

- Continue working with PBOT staff on this access issue. Design Commission still has concern with potential bike, pedestrian, transit user/bus stop activity conflicts, so the final design solution and any use or access limitations (e.g. residential-only) for a driveway onto Belmont will need to be carefully mitigate those potential impacts.

### **Yamhill 'Alley' and North-South 'Market Walk'**

- **SUMMARY: A consensus began to emerge from the discussions that the Market Walk could be eliminated by expanding the grocery to the west and north, with possible changes to Yamhill to more pedestrian access closer to grade level in the east-west direction. A difference of opinion was heard regarding changing the alignment of Yamhill to achieve this, but concerns about prioritizing an internal walkway at the expense of activity on the public perimeter remain.**
- Why not just skip the north-south 'Market Walk'? Its raised location and loading area 'hump' are problematic, and the fine-grained retail activity in that location could be more appropriately used on the public streets.
- The revised version with the absence of stairs and lower uppermost grade level for the Yamhill 'Alley' is an improvement over the original version with stairs at both ends.
- The exterior grade changes created in the 'Market Walk' by the grocery loading bay are troublesome from a physical access and urban design perspective, and needs further consideration and refinement. Would it be possible to move the loading internally

somehow to contain the taller ceiling somewhere it does not express itself in such a significant grade change in the walkway network?

- If you can make the alley(s) as nice as the precedent images, and if the exterior streets are similarly successful, the two internalized walkways could theoretically be approved. However, the grading and program elements as presented are still problematic, especially in terms of access and creating activity/attention behind the windows on the public/exterior streetscapes.
- The scale and placement of micro retail on the Yamhill Alley is really successful, but the mid-block locations on Belmont and 11<sup>th</sup> need similar activation.
- It is awkward to have the sensation of going up in elevation on the Yamhill Alley heading west. It also makes no sense to have to go into an elevator to pass through the alley from both sides. The steps, slopes and elevators need to be rectified and refined: can they come in mid-block and avoid the elevator altogether?

### Open Air Retail @ 10<sup>th</sup>/Taylor

- **SUMMARY: The garden center structure at the SW corner of the large block needs significant re-working to better integrate with the overall project, whether it be as more of a piece with the south ‘building’, or as an independent ‘bar’ in keeping with the similar volume at 10<sup>th</sup> & Belmont.**
- The gable-roofed garden center structure needs to be more architecturally integrated with the architectural forms used elsewhere for that building.
- Could this function be incorporated as a deep arcade or some other such approach? It has a leftover feeling, needs to connect better with the south building.
- The garden center is the least architecturally successful of the buildings. It does not fit with the rest of the project. It should be more of an expression of the larger building and less ‘countri-fied’.
- Is the south building one or two buildings? Right now the intention is unclear.

### Materials/Architecture

- **SUMMARY: Extensive CMU and exposed wood at the street level are problematic, metal panel can work if the details and durability are well-considered beforehand, and cement panel should remain a secondary, lightly-used exterior siding. Each building needs to succeed on it’s own, but with intentional unifying elements that bring the buildings together as a whole.**
- The diversity of building designs is helpful in giving the project identity, and generally you appear to be on the right track.
- There is concern about the extensive use of CMU block on the ground floor of the grocery store building. Significantly reduce the extent of this material or lose it entirely, and consider another approach (brick, cast-in-place concrete, stone, etc.).
- There is concern about the extensive use of at-grade wood siding on the project, especially in terms of durability and quality over time. Consider a more durable skin material in ground-level facades accessible to vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists. Typically buildings in the district have wood interior structures, often visible through exterior windows, but a more durable, long-lasting exterior (concrete, brick, stucco, etc.).
- If exterior wood is proposed above the ground floor, pay careful attention to thinking through flashing details, etc. to ensure durability, longevity, and avoid the appearance of a temporary building.
- One Commissioner expressed concern about the tapered storefront header panel on the east building. Consider regularizing and/or eliminating this procedure.
- Simple brick buildings are often the most successful when going into a mixed industrial/commercial area as found at this site (and in the early Pearl – e.g. McKenzie Lofts). Greater use of brick with simple punched window openings, perhaps with industrial sash-like windows, is a fitting, simple approach to meshing with the surroundings in this central eastside location.
- The bright yellow building is a nice counterpoint to the other buildings, but make sure the exterior details of the skin are handled carefully. A single orientation to the corrugation/panel lines in the metal panel might be a better approach. The movable screens on the west elevation also will need careful attention to their appearance and material quality/durability.

- The east façade of the south building needs refinement and clarification, especially if materials are to vary on the main façade. Why not just do a simple all-brick building? For cement panel to work it needs to be a well-integrated, secondary material on the exterior, but all-brick might be more successful.
- The east building is restrained and is heading in a good direction of being a more restrained, backdrop/counterpoint building to the large yellow building.
- There is a wide range of success and quality to buildings clad in metal panel, ranging from the very good (Arthouse, Cyan) to the less successful (ActivSpace in NW). Reflectivity, shadow, and durability (rigid foam backing and/or 18 gauge or better) should all be carefully considered with details prevented. Oil-canning and warping should be avoided as they compromise the otherwise sleek, sturdy potential of metal panel skin systems: you are aiming for elegance.
- Each building needs to work on it's own, and we have not gotten into specific detailing concerns or issues in this DAR. Each building needs to be approvable on it's own, as if it were a single project or review and the only building on the site.
- Galvanized metal can work for portions of the exterior skin if handled and detailed well.
- The entire suite of vertical and horizontal sections, material samples, and other information should be presented during the formal review showing tight, elegant detailing, well-considered material intersections/flashing/etc. for staff and Commission consideration.
- What's the connective tissue between the various buildings? Right now it's disassociated as a collage might be, with leftover bits here and there. Think about a genuine unifying concept that relates materially and contextually with the district. Is this a modern interpretation of the industrial building forms and materials in the district? Is it brick background buildings framing the singular yellow metal panel building design? The buildings don't have to be the same, but they need more of a conversation between each other.

#### **Ground Level/Pedestrianscape**

- **SUMMARY: The project still feels internally-focused from a pedestrian and public realm perspective, with too much activity and focus on the two internalized walkways at the expense of engaging the exterior public sidewalk frontages. More attention needs to be paid to activating and engaging the exterior pedestrian environment, especially along SE Belmont, SE 11<sup>th</sup> and SE 10<sup>th</sup>.**
- More retail activity and entries, not just windows, needs to be focused along the public streets, versus raised up from the street and internalized into off-street pathways. Belmont and 11<sup>th</sup> especially need more continuous retail activity.
- Ground floor materials should be durable, attractive and permanent. Metal panel, wood, and other easily-marred or damaged materials can be problematic and are more difficult to approve unless they are placed in locations protected from pedestrian or vehicle traffic (which is not typically the desired layout where storefront-like activity is desirable).
- The project needs more dignity and presence at the exterior public streets, responding to what is and will be happening where the project faces the surrounding neighborhood.
- Some concern was raised about needing to avoid 'Disney-fication' (over-branding or theming the project, internalized faux private streets with inactive public sidewalks, disconnected 'country' design/temple form of the garden center, etc.). You want to make something new here, not themed, and a little more abstracted from the current imagery. This project will be a catalyst for the neighborhood and lead to other development nearby – let's set a high bar for quality and clear/legible/durable architecture that responds to it's setting.
- The stair entry on Belmont still feels tortured, as do the cage-like appearance of the garden center and the transitions from sidewalk grades up into the project.
- The grocery entry feels a little suburban with too much concrete, and wants to breathe more – it feels a little crowded.
- The most critical issue is how to avoid the going up and down situation with any internalized major circulation routes, and how to get neighborhood users into the public east-west superblock connection 'core' without killing activity and interest on the perimeter of public street frontages. In terms of a hierarchy of importance it should be:
  1. Doing well by the streets we already have;

2. Getting the superblock/Yamhill alley to align and function well with the surroundings; and
3. Providing the Market Walk should be the bottom priority. The images show great energy here, but Commission is skeptical it will work well as shown.

### **Other/General Comments**

- Commission appreciated the efforts made to revise the project following the first DAR, although additional refinements are needed to gain approval. The full 12' sidewalk in Belmont and beginning moves towards a better Belmont frontage are heading in the right direction. The overall massing is generally good for the buildings.
- Be wary of falling into an 'authenticity trap': efforts to tie into the neighborhood and site history are important, but these should be subtle and abstract. A key feature of the best buildings in the district is their dignity and simplicity of form and materials from the best of the pre-WWII structures. The intervening patchwork of alterations and smaller/more temporary buildings in recent decades should be less of a guide than the older, prouder context of inner SE.
- There is an opportunity to share a special dialogue between the two smaller 'buildings' on the project (10<sup>th</sup> Ave retail bar and garden center). The earlier modernist/Eames images presented for the bar building, with exposed steel frames and infill/color panels for walls, was very promising as a potential design path for these smaller structures. Are these two perhaps sister buildings? Similar buildings that are an inversion of each other but related in material/form? Simple industrial shed-roofed forms might be more appropriate than the gable-roofed rural shed form.
- It will be helpful to have a single plan exhibit demonstrating the grade/elevation changes on the site, specifically the finished sidewalk grades at the outside corners of the lots and at both ends of the Yamhill walkway. Sections, details and axonometric diagrams may also be helpful in showing how the various components and uses in the project relate to adjacent grades, esp. in terms of any raised internal walkways, stairs, etc.
- Pay careful attention to the design and location of the public access elevators. There is some concern these could become magnets for vandalism or other undesirable behaviors.
- The scale and diversity of the project is laudable, but it feels like a few too many different things are being incorporated from the neighborhood, like a bit too much is being jammed in. The project needs to be a distinct place in and of the neighborhood, not just a collection of smaller places.
- Finding authenticity is the key to fitting in to the neighborhood.
- Exposed parking decks on the eastern block should be avoided, providing a cover or framing element to reduce their visual/functional impact.
- Obviously the program is driving the exterior finished grades. The idea of going up and down over the loading dock at the market walk needs resolution. We appreciate the work you've done in response to the first DAR, and look forward to this project coming to the neighborhood, but to meet Portland's design guidelines the public pedestrian realm on the ground floor outside edges, where the project meets the neighborhood, need more attention.
- Commissioners expressed concern that these DAR comments be taken to heart by the project team, especially since it still looks like some 'big move' changes are needed, and the scale of the project means we could not cover everything with as much detail as we would have liked.

### **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. 12/17/13 drawing packet
  2. 1/22/14 drawing packet
  3. 2/27/14 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 presentation from 1/9/14 DAR
5. Staff 'cheat sheet' from 1/9/14 DAR
6. Staff memo to Design Commission with summary notes from 1/9/14 DAR
7. Applicant powerpoint presentation from 2/27/14 DAR
8. Staff powerpoint presentation from 2/27/14 DAR
9. Staff 'cheat sheet' from 2/27/14 DAR