



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

FROM CONCEPT TO CONSTRUCTION

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## MEMORANDUM

**Date:** April 14, 2014  
**To:** YBA ARCHITECTS PC \*ALEX YALE\*  
**From:** Hillary Adam, Development Review  
**Re:** 14-112390 DA – Q21  
Design Advice Request Summary Memo April 3, 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 April 3, 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](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 April 3, 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 prepare your formal land use application, or if you desire another Design Advice Request meeting with the Commission.

*Encl:*  
Summary Memo

*Cc:* Design Commission  
Respondents

This memo summarizes **Design Commission** design direction provided on April 3, 2014.

Commissioners in attendance on April 3, 2014: Guinevere Millius, David Wark, David Keltner, & Tad Savinar.

### **Warehouse Retention vs. Setback/ROW Requirements**

- All Commissioners present recognized the desire to retain the building for environmental and sentimental reasons, and that a lot of hard work has already been invested in the proposed design, but stated that retention of the building footprint creates an undesirable urban character with regard to the north setback and the east side's encroachment into the desired additional right-of-way. Generally, they were in agreement that retention of the warehouse, particularly with the extent that the building was to be carved away, was a not a strong enough reason to maintain the existing footprint.
- One Commissioner noted that given the scope of the project, retention of the warehouse doesn't merit a rejection of the City's intention for this right-of-way; another Commissioner stated that gaining the full width right-of-way along 21<sup>st</sup> was his number one priority.
- One Commissioner commented that the primary thing that this development has to do for the long term health of the site and its position in the city is to develop really active streets, make the sidewalks conform to the City's master plan, and do the right things to create a positive urban environment; this responsibility trumps the desire to preserve the existing form. He noted that the existing warehouse creates awful urban conditions and does not meet any guidelines for new construction. He further added that tilt-up concrete doesn't have any historic or aesthetic value, only environmental value with preserving embodied energy.
- Several Commissioners noted that the existing building is creating a lot of challenges, such as the overall length, the setback from Quimby, and the extension into the desired right-of-way along 21<sup>st</sup>, and questioned whether enough of the building was being saved to validate retention of the building, adding that if the site were not constrained by the existing building, and the development was designed from scratch, the footprint would be very different programmatically. Specifically, they noted that a new boardwalk would not be located on the north side of a 5-story building facing a parking lot.

### **Additional comments about Quimby**

- All of the Commissioners stated that this development should be closer to Quimby. One Commissioner stated that he felt very strongly that it should meet Quimby, being recessed no further than the plane of the adjacent residence; another suggested that perhaps it could be the same width as the boardwalk in the Pearl. There was discussion that perhaps a boardwalk could work at a narrower dimension if it was not a single plane but incorporated ins and outs with more animation and engagement with the sidewalk. The Commission agreed with landscape Steve Koch that any open spaces should be designed to reach capacity faster and more often than the current design allows.
- One Commissioner stated that he appreciated the desire to have a variety of experience in the neighborhood, but was concerned that it's sort of New Urbanism, noting there are plenty of plaza buildings that are completely dead except for people walking in and out of them, adding that they can't support retail because people have to make the choice to leave the sidewalk. He added that the treatment of the sidewalk is ultimately more important than the dimension but the experience is weakened by pulling the building back from the sidewalk where everybody is already walking.
- The Commissioners noted that, combined with the existing sidewalk, the open area on the south side of Quimby is almost 50 feet wide. One Commissioner commented that the activity across the street was not a supportive retail edge and that the openness across the street was compounded by the proposed openness of the boardwalk, adding that the presence of the New Seasons will help activate the space but the further away it is, the harder it will be.
- The Commission noted that the boardwalk results in activity being removed from the street, both horizontally and vertically, adding that successful retail depends on continuity along the street, adding that there is no guarantee the plaza on the eastern block across 21<sup>st</sup> will be at the northwest corner.
- Two of the Commissioners suggested the building should be brought out to meet Quimby, (with the exception of near the west side next to your neighbor), adding that this extension

provides the opportunity to add residences along the north edge of the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor (rather than having exposed parking as in the current condition), and it allows the interior courtyard to be wider and have more access to sunlight.

### **Modifications/Adjustment**

- One Commissioner noted that all of the potential modifications are related to retention of the existing building.
- With regard to the 35' setback on Quimby, all of the Commissioners stated that they were very uncomfortable with the proposed depth.
- One Commissioner stated that the retail experience could be better on 21<sup>st</sup>. If the existing building goes away, it can't be used as justification to reduce the required length of ground floor windows.
- One Commissioner stated that if the building goes away, then the standards should be met.

### **Additional Design Comments**

- All commissioners agree the building is too long along Quimby and Pettygrove.
- There was support for the overhanging element, with several Commissioners stating that it could use some refinement with regard to how it is supported. One Commissioner suggested it would be great if it could cantilever. One Commissioner suggested that the supports should be as exciting and dynamic as the overhang itself. One Commissioner noted that the visible structural elements on the underside of the overhang make it feel less delicate and a clear representation of the structural requirements would be required.
- One Commissioner acknowledged that the overhang would lose value if the rest of the building were moved forward as they are strongly suggesting.
- One Commissioner noted that the existing building is so fractured, it's not recognizable as a contiguous building anymore. Two Commissioners suggested there is more honesty in the remnants of the tilt-up concrete warehouse when the cuts are continued all the way up rather than expressed as an arcade.
- One Commissioner expressed some confusion about the relationship between the massing and the plan diagrams, noting shifts between the plans and elevations. As an example he noted that the parking entrance seems to have more significance in plan than what is articulated in elevation. To clarify, cuts in the plan diagrams should carry through the massing of the proposed building so that there are distinct volumes and the program is clear.
- One Commissioner commented that if the intention is to have one big podium with blocks on top, maybe there are ways to break down the scale of the podium.

### **Materials**

- One Commissioner noted that the proposed materials were generally of high quality, clarifying that the metal has to be heavy enough to not oilcan. Staff understood the other commissioners' silence on the subject to mean that they were in agreement.
- All of the Commissioners expressed concern that intumescent paint isn't really desirable.

### **Western Edge**

- The Commission expressed an expectation that the existing access to light and air for the adjacent property owner should be maintained, or improved upon.
- There was discussion on the potential to continue the accessway from the northern blocks through this site, noting that it wouldn't have to be 60 feet wide, but could be nice for residents above as well as users and pedestrians on the ground. One commissioner noted that with the Master Plan, the purpose of the accessways was to ensure development would be comparable to the scale of the rest of the city by limiting the size (and overall length) of buildings.
- It was eventually determined that this project should tackle the problem of terminating the northern greenway, rather than continuing it through to Pettygrove because this block has the opportunity to connect to the Conway plaza, whereas the next block south does not.
- One Commissioner noted that if you pull the building back on the west side, it doesn't have to be accessible to the public, clarifying that it would be nice if it was accessible and stating there should be some kind of connection to the accessway.

- One Commissioner noted a three-fold advantage to pulling the building away from the western edge: it would be an advantage to the neighbor, it would reduce the length of the building, and it would reinforce the position of the buildings along the greenway. Commenting on the issue of the increased setback, the Commissioner stated that if there is one point for the building to recess from the street, he could see it happening along the western edge.

**Strengths**

- One Commissioner noted that the concepts are solid, it’s just the locations of walls that are problematic.
- One Commissioner commented that the way that you are addressing changes in program and scale with townhouses on south and retail on north and east is really good, adding that the program creates very clear diagrams about how to chop up the building according to that program.
- One Commissioner stated a preference for the upper floor treatment on the previous rendering, noting that the planes of opaque and transparent materials played off each on both top and bottom, further stating that even though one was new and one was old, they spoke to each other. In contrast, the more recent shifty pattern isn’t working as well. He stated that the simple vertical panels on the upper level have a finer grain, adding that the concrete panels seem stronger when there is no lintel.

**Future Expectations**

- One Commissioner noted that it would be nice to know where the house is on the plans (windows too) so that we can see the relationship between the proposed development and the existing adjacent residence.
- The Commission noted that we do know one part of the Conway Master Plan, and it’s not the edge that’s shown in the master plan, it’s a parking lot, and the proposal for across the street should be accurately reflected in your plans in order to understand those relationships across Quimby.
- The Commission suggested that you really consider how people are going to travel across this block and take the New Season edge into consideration.
- One Commissioner agreed that this could become a destination because there are things that are working, but if you’re going to argue for a deeper setback then you have to explain why there are a unique set of conditions why this would be successful here; As in, you have to identify a set of parameters that would make something like that work in this location and then show that those parameters are there.
- One Commissioner noted it will take some convincing on your part, with pictures and drawings, to show that an increased setback will work, suggesting that when you come back, have options with different schemes and identify the merits of each approach, and explain how you got there.
- One Commissioner noted that there was an understanding that shifting the 35’ setback and the 3 feet on 21<sup>st</sup> will change the building, stating that you can’t come back with the same building.

**Exhibit List**

- A. Applicant’s Submittals
  - 1. Applicant Narrative
  - 2. Original drawing set
- B. Zoning Map
- C. Drawings
  - 1. Site Plan
  - 2. Project Description
  - 3. Vicinity Aerial
  - 4. Context Aerials
  - 5. Site Photos
  - 6. Conway Master Plan Edge context
  - 7. Program Diagram
  - 8. Conway Build-Out context

9. Movement Diagram
  10. Street-level context
  11. Background Images
  12. Ground Level Plan
  13. Level 02 Plan
  14. Level 03 Plan
  15. Levels 04 and 05 Plan
  16. Levels 06 and 07 Plan
  17. Perspective: Looking at NE Corner
  18. Solids and Voids Diagram
  19. Section Cut: Looking at NE Corner
  20. Perspective: Looking WSW
  21. Tectonics and Massing Description
  22. East and West Elevations
  23. Perspective: Looking at the North boardwalk
  24. South and North Elevations
  25. Perspective: Looking at East façade
  26. Architectural Description
  27. Perspective: Looking at the SE Corner
  28. Solar Studies
  29. Proposed Materials
  30. Proposed Materials
- D. Notification
1. Posting instructions sent to applicant for March 6 hearing
  2. Posting notice as sent to applicant for March 6 hearing
  3. Posting instructions sent to applicant for April 3 hearing
  4. Posting notice as sent to applicant for April 3 hearing
  5. Applicant's statement certifying posting
  6. General information on DAR process included with e-mailed posting/notice
- E. Service Bureau Comments
1. Bureau of Transportation Comments from EA-13-223748-PC
  2. Bureau of Environmental Services Comments from EA-13-223748-PC
- F. Public Testimony
1. Paul Gustavson, 2154 NW Quimby, stated that he has concerns about the development, though is not opposed to development. Mr. Gustavson stated that he was not opposed to the proposed use and that he preferred maintenance of the existing setback to preserve his access to light and air along the west property line adjacent to his house.
- G. Other
1. Application form
  2. Staff Memo to Design Commission, dated March 18, 2014
  3. DA Summary