



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

FROM CONCEPT TO CONSTRUCTION

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MEMORANDUM

Date: July 10, 2014
To: KURT SCHULTZ, SERA DESIGN LLC
From: Mark Walhood, City Planner
503-823-7806, mark.walhood@portlandoregon.gov
Re: 14-138634 DA – Riverscape Lot 8
Design Advice Request Summary Memo: June 5, 2014 Session

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 June 5, 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 June 5, 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 June 5, 2014.

Commissioners in attendance on June 5, 2014: Gwen Millius, Ben Kaiser, David Wark, David Keltner, Jeff Simpson (absent: Tad Savinar, Jane Hansen).

Public Greenway Trail & Open Spaces

- **SUMMARY COMMENT: The trails and public open spaces need further refinement, especially at the northeast corner/trail terminus and in the open spaces east of the building before the trail.**
- The northeast edge of the site where the east-west and north-south trails come together (landward of the pier) feels like it wants to be special terminus place. Right now this still feels like a missed opportunity: how would you handle this space if the pier was removed?
- The open spaces still feel unresolved and a little disjointed: what's the common thread running through the public spaces?
- The triangular open area at the southeast corner needs further effort to enhance the space between the greenway trail/riverbank and the building.
- What is the landscape approach at the northeast corner? Could the greenway area be expanded at the location where the different trail segments merge? Marking this terminus point could be interesting.

Surface Parking/Courtyard/Piazza

- **SUMMARY COMMENT: The surface parking lot may work if it does not compromise the pedestrian environment. Consider a street-like extension into the site to respect the surrounding block structure, and use design approaches to humanize and beautify this space for both residents and visitors over the long-term.**
- The idea of treating the surface parking lot as a northward extension of Riverscape Street has potential as a design approach. It better reflects the surrounding block structure and creates a sense of order for the buildings along NW Front Ave. However, visual and functional impacts on pedestrians need further consideration.
- The parking area has an opportunity to be treated more like a piazza, or central community gathering space. Perhaps consider a more intentional co-mingling of surface parking and active pedestrian space. Might retail work well oriented to this piazza space?
- The shared parking/piazza space could also be used to strengthen the relationship between the building lobbies for residents and visitors.
- Raising floor levels of the units facing the surface parking might be another approach, providing for a stoop-like orientation of the units to the this space.
- A more street-like layout with parallel parking might work better than the current 90° stall/standard parking lot layout. Another Commissioner suggested that 90° parking might work better if the trade-off was another driveway connection back to Naito.
- A reduced width 'street' with fewer surface parking spaces and more landscaping & pedestrian spaces is another approach to consider.
- The ground floor units facing the parking lot are problematic for the future residents. Are there other configurations to better deal with parking in this location and create an active courtyard-like feel? What about townhouse units with enclosed garages below?

Material Quality

- **SUMMARY COMMENT: Stucco and sturdy/backed metal panel materials have the potential to make a refined, restrained building. Consider reducing or eliminating the trendy wood elements to distill the design even further.**
- Overall the project has good coherency, with a limited palette and strong order.
- Wood is an attractive, trendy material but there is already a lot of movement on the elevations. The wood could be edited down and reduced in scope. The design has lots of materials shifts and the wood feels a bit applied/forced vs. integral/coherent.

Other & General Comments

- **SUMMARY COMMENT: The massing is generally successful, but further explore the building stepping concept. Retail spaces should be glassier and distinct on the façade. Be comprehensive in the application of unique trapezoidal shapes on the**

balconies and elsewhere to unify the project. Continuous docks might help address grade concerns and knit the project into the surrounding neighborhood, especially along NW Front Ave.

- The overt stepping in the building mass is promising, but could bear further refinement and consideration.
- Expand upon the idea of broad horizontal volumes stepping in and up from the river. These measures go a good way towards making the project cohesive, but could perhaps be incorporated into the project even more.
- There is some concern about the size and viability of the retail space at the northwest corner, especially it’s size vis-à-vis the storage needs for watercraft. The idea of a watercraft center is brilliant and promising, but it might need more space.
- The retail spaces should be glassier and more distinct/identifiable in their design versus the residential spaces.
- The amount and location of retail should encourage pedestrian activity along Front Avenue and draw people into the site.
- Clarify the rhythm and logic of the projecting trapezoidal bays, explaining why they are found in some places but not in others (ie. rectangular bays, triangular bays).
- Docks along NW Front might be an approach that allows usable ground floor retail and housing space while responding to the unique flood plain/ground floor height issues. This was used along NW Front for the Riverscape Apartments just to the south, and if done right could help the project better respond to the surrounding context.
- Balancing the needs of visitors versus residents is important in the project design, especially with regards to parking vs. building layout vs. activated building edges at the street and greenway: please explore and describe the basic site planning logic when you return for the formal review.

Exhibit List

- A. Applicant’s Submittals
 - 1. Original drawing set
 - 2. First revised drawing set, received 4/21/14
 - 3. Second revised drawing set, received 5/20/14
- B. Zoning Map
- C. Drawings from final, 6/5/14 drawing set
 - 1. Aerial view from north
 - 2. Site location aerial
 - 3. Site constraints plan
 - 4. Context images
 - 5. Waterfront context images
 - 6. Precedent images
 - 7. Basement parking garage plan
 - 8. Level 1 plan
 - 9. Landscape plan
 - 10. Levels 2-3 plan
 - 11. Level 6 plan
 - 12. Building A west elevation
 - 13. Building B east elevation
 - 14. North Elevation
 - 15. View from northwest
 - 16. View from northeast
 - 17. View from north
- D. Notification
 - 1. Posting information and notice as sent to applicant
 - 2. Applicant’s statement certifying posting
- E. Service Bureau Comments
 - 1. E-mail comments from Allan Schmidt, Portland Parks and Recreation
 - 2. BES Response (referred applicant to Pre-App notes from EA 14-129586 PC)
 - 3. PBOT Response (referred applicant to Pre-App notes from EA 14-125986 PC)
- F. Public Testimony
 - 1. Comment letter from Steve Pinger, NWDA Planning Committee, dated 6/5/14

G. Other

1. Application form and receipt
2. Memo from staff to Design Commission, dated 5/27/14
3. “Cheat Sheet” from 6/5/14 DAR
4. Staff PowerPoint from 6/5/14 DAR