



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

1900 SW 4th Avenue, Suite 5000
Portland, Oregon 97201
503-823-7300
Fax 503-823-5630
TTY 503-823-6868
www.portlandonline.com/bds

September 19, 2014

RE: Type III Design Review Hearing Summary Notes
LU 14-162150 DZM GW – Riverplace Hyatt House
Chris Caruso, City Planner II, 503-823-5747, Chris.Caruso@portlandoregon.gov

The following notes are a DRAFT summary of Design Commission comments at the September 4, 2014 hearing for Riverplace Hyatt House. This was Hearing #1. Please send me any corrections or comments by the morning of Thursday September 18th so I may include them in the notes sent to the applicant.

Commissioners present: Gwen Millius, David Wark, Tad Savinar, Ben Kaiser, Jeff Simpson.

The Commission made the following comments at this first hearing:

1. Building Concept & Massing

- a) It is difficult to really understand how the defined concept matches the materials used on the building. There is a disconnect between the concept and the materials.
- b) One Commissioner stated that he is unsure how a white box will fit into this area. The building feels too utilitarian. Another Commissioner echoed this sentiment that the building is a bit too restrained with no poetic conclusion. The current building could be on any corner of the city. A third Commissioner likes the overall simplification as the building feels very reserved and quiet, but has moved toward being too institutional.
- c) One Commissioner pointed out that The Strand is a great development that this project needs to work with.
- d) Several Commissioners agreed that the building is generally going in a good direction, the changes being requested are small, and that the project is almost there. Generally, the design needs more entry, tower, and landscaping excitement.
- e) Guidelines A8 Contribute to a Vibrant Streetscape, A9 Strengthen Gateways & C2 Promote Quality and Permanence in Development are not quite working yet for one Commissioner.
- f) There was general agreement that the openness of the ground floor around three facades with all the windows is really good.
- g) Locating the employee break room on the outside wall and providing windows is appreciated for its humaneness.
- h) Looking for some type of relationship between the upper and lower floors. There does not seem to be a rhythm between the two. It is possible to align the slots above or groups of windows above with the solid materials below.
- i) There is not yet a consistent approach around the building with the zinc slots and frames, particularly in the courtyard facades.
- j) The design needs a really dynamic connection between the top and bottom. It seems a bit disjointed right now and not quite clear in its concept.
- k) The fenestration on the upper floors is very repetitive. It could seem uninteresting and monolithic when constructed. Look at creating more differences around the upper floors.
- l) The corner is a holdover from the original corporate design and feels very timid, not like the gateway we would expect at this location which is the entrance to South Waterfront. Make this corner element stronger. Look at stretching the glass from slot to slot, make it more transparent and a larger scale piece.

- m) One Commissioner did not think that the corner needed to go from slot to slot, that it was a much better response to the corporate architecture seen at the Design Advice Request.
- n) One Commissioner suggested that the building talk about the river by perhaps using giant text or integrated text on the ground level. **(Staff Note: Text on the building will trigger Title 32 Sign Code unless this feature was public art, approved by RACC.)**

2. Materials

- a) Where the slate meets the zinc is not making sense. There needs to be something besides a dropped zinc head at the slate.
- b) Perhaps the zinc band below the brick should be removed since the places where zinc and slate meet may be visually odd and a problem to detail well. One Commissioner did not agree that the zinc head should be removed and that it does allow the brick to float above the ground level, making for a nice layering effect, also ties the materials together better than if the zinc did not drop below the brick.
- c) Another idea is to remove the slate and let the zinc come all the way to the ground or only have slate on the taller portion of the east façade with zinc in the other ground level areas as it will be protected by planters.
- d) The diamond pattern of the zinc needs to work with the openings and slots so there are minimal small pieces of panels.
- e) Work the materials together in a more refined way. Use the materials in a way that connects with the architecture.
- f) Strengthen the idea of where materials are located around the building
- g) The concrete column should be finished in something other than smooth concrete, something special if it has to stay exposed at the entry. Tile or perhaps an etched in poem would be of interest.

3. East Façade

- a) This façade has continuity issues and seems very fractured and frenetic in an otherwise restrained and quiet ground level. Better integrate this façade.
- b) The solution to the planter wall and the design of this area of pedestrian experience should not be an architectural solution. It should create a pleasant quality along the sidewalk, something of a human scale.
- c) The solution should be more opulent, less controlled. Let the plants be the stars, not the screens or the lights. Don't create a sense of false drama.
- d) The screen should be more integrated into the façade design, should occur at more places to pull the base together compositionally. It could be places to mimic the building massing of the zinc slots.
- e) The screen could also be the design for the railing above.
- f) The plants should cascade down from above as well to knit the upper plantings to the lower plantings.
- g) A water feature would be a nice way to integrate the river.
- h) Make sure the slots along the sidewalk are not odd shapes that feel unsafe or unfriendly.

4. South Façade

- a) The south elevation feels relentless with the high planters. Design how these surfaces are treated. Maybe the planters step down more often.

4. Entries

- a) The valet entry is not expressed enough to make it read like a main entry. It is confusing right now as to which entry is the main one. There may be a way to align the valet entry with a vertical slot so it has more emphasis. This entry is kind of lost and

needs more consistent definition. There should be a building element above that punctuates this entry. Creating a recess here may also help.

- b) Both entries need work to do real placemaking. They should be visible, generous, and obvious.
- c) One suggestion is to pull the corner entry glazing out to the sidewalk, encasing the column, and sloping the floor inside instead of blocking part of the outside entry area with a planter.
- d) The planter at the corner entry is not the best element to have at a place that is designed to be a generous entry area.
- e) Simplify the entry lobby.
- f) The canopy along the west façade should extend along the entire building length to provide additional pedestrian weather protection.
- g) The canopy at the corner could burst off of the building.

5. Landscaping

- a) The cypress trees are actually accentuating the starkness of the building, not helping it.
- b) How does this building interact with the river? Looking for lushness in plantings and materials that extend the greenway experience in this area.