

McClymont, Keelan

From: Dave Otte <dotte@holstarc.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 2, 2019 10:29 AM
To: Council Clerk – Testimony
Cc: Kristin Solomon
Subject: Testimony for Item 391 - Historic Landmarks Commission
Attachments: 2019-05-02 Otte Testimony.pdf

Greetings,

Please find the attached written copy of testimony for today's council agenda item #391 regarding the Historic Landmarks Commission.

Thank you,

Dave Otte, AIA
www.holstarc.com

May 2, 2019

RE: Otte/Solomon Testimony to Portland City Council about Historic Design Review

Greetings Mayor and Commissioners,

My name is Kristin Solomon and I am an associate at Holst Architecture at 110 SE 8th Avenue. I am representing Holst owner Dave Otte today to offer our support for the important role Historic Design Review plays in our city, and I offer a current Holst project as an example of how the process is working.

Currently we are designing the transformation of the Medallion Apartments, 90 deeply affordable housing units reserved for seniors and persons with disabilities. It is owned by Home Forward and is in the Historic Alphabet District of Northwest Portland. The distinct challenge of renovating the exterior of this building in a historic district is that the building was constructed in the 1960's, well after the period of significance for the district, so transforming the appearance of an existing 60's apartment building in an authentic way precludes using many materials, patterns, and scale typically associated with pre-war buildings that characterize the district.

Because we had a unique problem, we took our initial thoughts and ideas as soon as possible to the Landmarks Commission for a Design Advice Request (DAR). This venue allowed our team and the City to get on the same page with what the expectations are for renovating "modern" buildings in "historic" districts. Without the DAR, we would have had much more uncertainty early in our process, as a binding design review hearing requires more preparation, effort, and risk. Additionally, the DAR gave the community the opportunity to weigh-in early which resulted in a collaborative effort to repair the eastern edge of our property to provide an enclosed trash room as opposed to open-air dumpsters that have been visible to the neighbors. The DAR also streamlined our process, allowing us to obtain design review approval in only one land use hearing. I am happy to report we are beginning construction this spring.

We found both the Commission and Staff (shout out to Grace Jeffries) to be reasonable, timely, and united in our goal of ensuring these homes remain intact and are as healthy and beautiful as possible for generations to come. Thank you for your continued support of Historic Design Review and the Historic Landmarks Commission – they are doing important work.

Thank you.