



City of Portland, Oregon
Bureau of Development Services
Land Use Services
FROM CONCEPT TO CONSTRUCTION

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MEMO

Date: July 11, 2022
To: Brandon Spencer-Hartle, Bureau of Planning and Sustainability
CC: Historic Landmarks Commission & Design Commission
From: Hillary Adam, Design / Historic Review Team
Hillary.Adam@portlandoregon.gov / 503-823-8953
Re: South Portland Historic District Design Guidelines
Memo – July 11, 2022

Staff from the Design and Historic Review team from the Bureau of Development Services have the following comments on the proposed South Portland Historic District Design Guidelines, to be entered into the record for your consideration.

Firstly, we thank all of the volunteers and staff that provided hours of thoughtful discussion and collaboration over the several months (years) of this project.

Our comments are as follows:

- Generally, the guidelines provide better guidance for implementers in that the language is subjective and does not appear to conflict with Zoning Code standards.
- Regarding Guideline 3.4 - Because there are so very few mixed-use buildings from the historic period, staff has concerns about new mixed-use buildings being required by these guidelines to be clad in “horizontally-oriented wood siding or siding that visually appears as wood”. Such a material expression may not be appropriate for new buildings that are larger in scale than the historic mixed-use structures. For larger new mixed-use buildings, a more contextually-appropriate response may be one that refers to the larger historic buildings in the district, regardless of their historic use. These buildings were primarily clad in brick and have a blocky massing. Staff therefore suggests that scale, not use, should be the determining factor is a building’s architectural expression. This would allow larger mixed-use buildings to be masonry while smaller mixed-use buildings could be wood clad.
- Regarding Guideline 3.4 – Staff has concerns with the phrase “siding that visually appears as wood”, noting that wood-printed metal has been proposed as an exterior cladding material in certain parts of the City but would be wholly incompatible as a primary material in this historic district.
- Regarding Guideline 3.5 – Staff supports this guideline, provided the comments above related to scale vs. use for Guideline 3.4 are incorporated.
- Regarding Guideline 3.3 – For the first section of this guideline, there should be a caveat that additions and alterations should “relate to the design, proportions, and materials of the existing building” as long as they are compatible with the district. Without such a caveat, staff may, for instance, be required to approve new vinyl windows in this historic district if the building in question already has vinyl windows.

Please contact me with any questions or concerns.