



City of Portland Historic Landmarks Commission

Design Advice Request

SUMMARY MEMO

Date: November 21, 2022
To: Jeff Hawthorne, City of Portland, OMF
From: Hillary Adam, Design & Historic Review Team
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Re: EA 22-188130 DAR – Thompson Elk Fountain
Design Advice Request Commission Summary Memo – November 7, 2022

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. Following, is a summary of the comments provided by the Historic Landmarks Commission at the November 7, 2022 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: <https://efiles.portlandoregon.gov/Record/15567987/>.

These Historic Landmarks 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 November 7, 2022. 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 3 land use review process [which includes a land use review application, public notification and a Final Decision] 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 Type 3 Land Use Review Application.

Encl:
Summary Memo

Cc: Historic Landmarks Commission
Respondents

Executive Summary. The Commission expressed appreciation and support for restoration of the fountain. The Commission noted that the consultant team hired by the applicant is an excellent team with significant expertise and expressed trust in that expertise but also wanting a better understanding of decision making. The Commission encouraged additional investigation into the merits of repair through reuse of historic stone vs. reconstruction with new stone pieces, based on a deeper understanding of the damage suffered and its structural integrity as it relates to its ability to hold water. The Commission supported the idea of separating the restoration of the fountain from the envisioned street improvements so that restoration could proceed as soon as possible without unnecessary delays. The Commission offered its support in advocating for a speedy restoration of the fountain.

Commissioners Present. Present – Minor, Smith, Moreland, Moretti; Absent – Roman; Recused – Foty.

Summary of Comments. Following is a general summary of Commission comments by design tenet.

CONTEXT

- **Policy.**
 - The Commission expressed appreciation for the decision to restore the Elk Fountain to its historic location, stating that it met several of the City's Comprehensive Plan goals.
 - The Commission asked the applicant how they can advocate for returning the fountain as quickly as possible. They offered support in expediting the restoration, noting that the City needs this to happen as quickly as possible.
- **Historical Context**
 - One Commissioner expressed appreciation for the additional historic context of the fountain that was presented. She noted that the City is blessed to have so many passionate historians in the community and she hoped the process allows the opportunity for their expertise to be incorporated.
 - Commissioners adamantly opposed the idea of preserving some of the graffiti and other damage from 2020. One Commissioner noted that there may be argument for revealing some of the repair work, and another noted that some visible cracks tell some of the story of the fountain. Another Commissioner noted that we need to remember what happened in 2020 and we need the ability for people to interpret what happened but stated that it is not appropriate to put significantly broken pieces back; more subtle cues such as repairs on spalled pieces may be a more appropriate way to retain historic material while also telling the story of what happened. Other Commissioners noted that a nearby interpretation panel could provide some historical context for the fountain.
- **Street Improvements.**
 - The Commission expressed support for the proposed street improvements but noted that any proposed street improvements should not result in delaying the restoration of the fountain, and should therefore proceed separately, in order to not cause any additional delays.
 - One Commissioner noted appreciation for the texture of the street improvements and raised elements to protect pedestrians.
 - One Commissioner encouraged all bureaus to work together to celebrate this important work of public art. She noted that she would like to see a fitting context that brings

dignity back to the fountain and noted that ideally, the street improvements would be considered in a public process where all voices can come together.

PUBLIC REALM

- **Accessibility.**

- The Commission expressed appreciation for the improved access envisioned for the fountain, via the proposed street improvements, noting that this will provide new and additional opportunities for the public to engage and enjoy the fountain.
- One Commissioner noted that this is an opportunity to improve on the situation and build on what came before rather than just returning what was and will allow the public to enjoy the fountain in a different way than before.
- One Commissioner noted that the presence of the fountain in the middle of the road is a traffic calming device but suggested that maintaining a consistent width bikeway and giving the pedestrian area on the north side of the fountain a little more breathing room might be more comfortable for visitors to the fountain. He suggested that the texture proposed around the fountain could be expanded out to the curbs to further slow traffic. He noted that radial lines may offer additional opportunities to access the fountain since and could play off the octagonal shape. Another Commissioner agreed and supported further differentiation between the north and south sides of the street through paving.

- **Other.**

- One Commissioner noted that new lighting would be a great benefit and would help improve security. Another Commissioner suggested that lighting should also be considered as part of the streetscape improvements.

QUALITY & PERMANENCE

- **Restoration/Reconstruction.**

- The Commission noted that the Commissioners present did not have the expertise to speak to the matter of the damage sustained by the historic stone elements and if that damage would impact the fountain's ability to function; on this they deferred to the expertise of the applicant's consultant who possesses such expert knowledge.
- One Commissioner suggested that the applicant team could come up with a method for decision making, such as a matrix, that would allow the Commission to easily understand how certain pieces of original material were determined to be able or unable to be repaired.
- The Commission expressed a desire for retention of as much historic material as possible, but with the understanding that the ability of the fountain to function as a fountain was paramount. One Commissioner stated that she would not want the City to sacrifice functionality in order to retain historic material, noting that we need confidence in the functionality and the durability of the restoration.

- **Water Tightness.**

- With regard to a potential liner, one commissioner deferred to the expertise of the applicant's consultant.
- A couple Commissioners noted that even though the basins will be empty for periods of time, we should take precaution in controlling the water. They noted that it would have

been ideal to see a few different options for waterproofing in the DAR packet so that they could speak to the visual impacts of each.

- The Commission advised that different waterproofing methods should be presented in the land use application materials so that the Commission can understand the options studied and ultimately selected.
- **Recirculating Pump.**
 - One Commissioner noted that the addition of a recirculating pump will make the fountain more sustainable than before.

Public Comments. The following individuals provided comments to the Commission:

- Bill Hawkins spoke in support of the restoration, highlighting criterion #4, noting that additional damage occurred during or after the removal of the fountain, and suggesting that cracked pieces should be further studied to fully understand the extent of damage and whether or not they can be restored. Asked whether waterproofing materials would be visible; suggesting water escaping through granite would be minimal.
- Brooke Best spoke on behalf of the Architectural Heritage Center in support of restoration, suggesting all steps necessary to restore should be taken in order to honor Council's resolution. She commended ARG's work on the restoration feasibility study. She encouraged that the fountain should be protected from further damage.
- Fred Leeson spoke on behalf of the Architectural Heritage Center, noting that restoration of the fountain needs to be the priority with street improvements being a lower priority.
- Henry Kunowski spoke in support of preservation and noted concerns about program creep and the potential for ROW improvements to delay restoration of the fountain. He noted criterion #4.
- Wendy Rahm spoke on behalf of the Downtown Neighborhood Association in support of restoration and suggesting that the fountain should proceed ahead of any potential street improvements to not delay restoration of the fountain. She encouraged using as much historic stone as possible, as well as the addition of lighting and security cameras.
- Walter Weyler spoke on behalf of the Downtown Neighborhood Association in support of the restoration and noted that restoration should proceed without the ROW improvements.
- John Russell spoke in support of restoration, noting that the street improvements are important context but should be kept separate.

Exhibit List

- A. Applicant's Submittals
 - 1. Narrative
 - 2. Drawing Packet
- B. Zoning Map
- C. Drawings
 - 1. Drawing Packet for November 7, 2022 DAR
- D. Notification
 - 1. Mailing list
 - 2. Mailed notice

3. Posting instructions sent to applicant
 4. Posting notice as sent to applicant
 5. Applicant's statement certifying posting
- E. Service Bureau Comments
1. Portland Bureau of Transportation Engineering
- F. Public Testimony
1. Cindy Thomas, wrote on October 7, 2022, in support of restoration in time
 2. Leslie Hutchinson, wrote on October 21, 2022, in support of restoration
 3. Denyse McGriff and Stephanie Whitlock of Architectural Heritage Center, wrote on October 27, 2022, in support of restoration
 4. Henry Kunowski, on October 31, 2022, wrote in support of restoration
- G. Other
1. Application form
 2. Staff memo to Historic Landmarks Commission, dated October 31, 2022
 3. Matrix of approval criteria
 4. Summary of September 27, 2021 Briefing
 5. Staff Presentation, dated November 7, 2022