

State of the City Report - March 13, 2024

The Portland Design Commission

2023 Portland Design Commission State of the City Report

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State of the City 2023

Design Commission - What We Do

*The Design Commission provides leadership and expertise on urban design and architecture and advances the purpose of the Design overlay zone. We meet 2-3 thursdays a month to review projects submitted for Design Advice Requests (**DAR**), Land Use Reviews (**LUR Hearings**) and design **Briefings** on major projects in the city.*

*The **Design Guidelines** and **Code** are our primary tools of review:*

- Response to the architectural **CONTEXT** surrounding the project
- Treatment of the **PUBLIC REALM** of the city
- Use of **QUALITY** materials that will support **RESILIENCE** and permanence in the city

*Our purpose is to maintain a **consistent quality of design** that ensures projects have a **positive impact on the life of the city**.*

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People - Volunteer Commissioners (4 year term)



Tina Bue
Public-at-Large Term 1



Joe Swank
Developer - Term 1



Jessica Molinar
Architect -Term 2



Samuel Rodriguez
Developer -Term 2



Zari Santner
RACC - Term 2



Chandra Robinson
Architect - Term 2



Brian McCarter
Landscape Architect - Term 2

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People - Volunteer Commissioners

Welcome to 2 new Design

Commissioners:

Tina Bue and Joe Swank



Thank you to Commissioner Molinar for her 8 years of service to the city.

She is one of our strongest advocates for the quality of the public realm; her 2nd term as Design Commissioner ends on March 15, 2024 and she will be missed!

Thank you to Commissioner Rodriguez for his 8 years of service to the city. His experience as a developer has kept the commission knowledgeable about market forces; his 2nd term ends on November 1, 2024 and he will be missed!



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People - BDS Staff

Staff that guide and support applicant teams through entitlements include Supervisors and Planners. These city stewards are experts in their fields of planning, architecture and landscape architecture.



Hillary Adam
Senior Planner



Hannah Bryant
City Planner II



Arthur Graves
City Planner II



Megan Walker - Sita
City Planner I

The city relies on their institutional knowledge and precise understanding of the code to guide projects to outcomes that maintain the vitality and safety of the city.



Kara Fiorivanti
Design & Historic
Resources Supervisor



Tim Heron
Senior City Planner Primary
Staff for DC



Tanya Paglia
City Planner II



Grace Jeffreys
City Planner II



Ben Nielsen
Senior Planner



Staci Monroe
Senior Planner

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Future of Portland - New Form of Governance

These staff members have been laid off or transferred to different departments in 2023.



Hillary Adam
Senior Planner



Hannah Bryant
City Planner II



Arthur Graves
City Planner II



Megan Walker-Sita
City Planner I

The current model for funding BDS relies on permit fees. As the construction industry fluctuates and permit fees decrease, we lose talented staff to balance the budget.

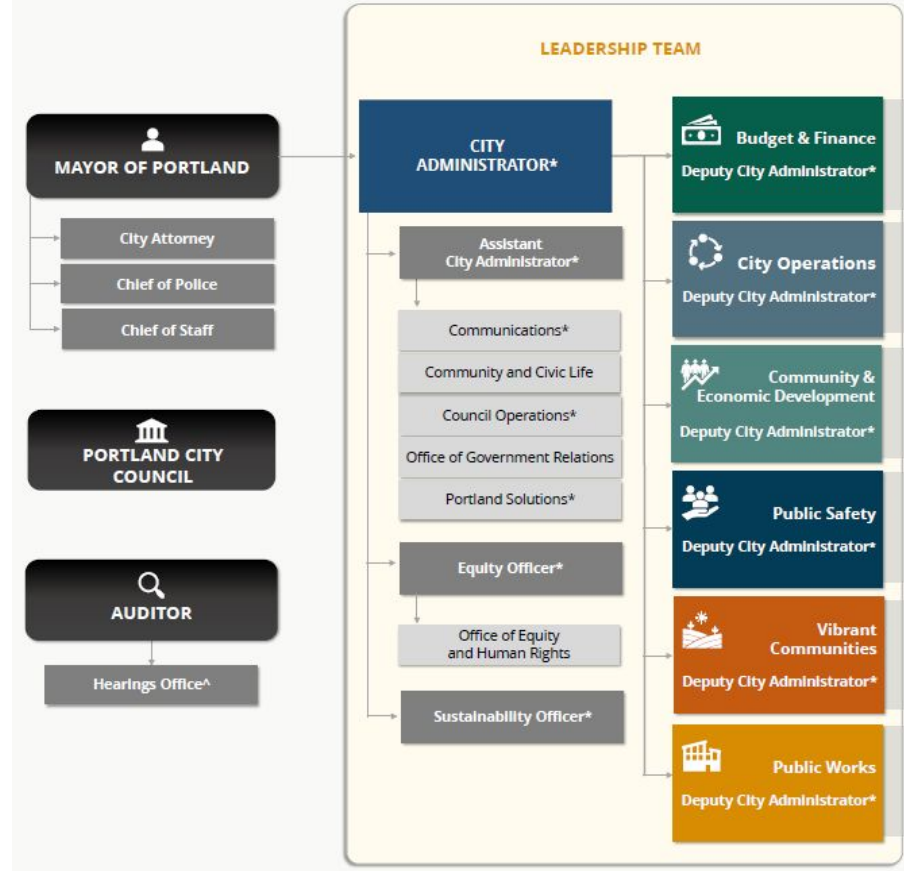
Losing talented staff now results in a loss of institutional knowledge. When construction picks up again, new staff will come onboard but it takes years to train new staff to the same level. The economic development of the city slows when developers and owners cannot predict permit timelines and entitlements processes.

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Future of Portland - new form of governance

Design Commission welcomes the city's new form of governance.

We look forward to a new model of funding for BDS that will maintain talented staff and help the city continue to grow.



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Future of Portland - Housing Regulatory Relief Project

- Development is essential to the prosperity of the city and we hope the HRRP revisions will result in achieving the goals of increased quality housing production.
- As these changes are significant, we think it will be important to track results of projects using the revised standards to evaluate outcomes from HRRP as a way to continue to improve processes.



Regulatory Improvement Code Amendment Package 10 (RICAP 10)

Proposed Draft

February 2024
portland.gov/ricap10

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2023 Report

The year in Review:

7 - LUR hearing/reviews heard at Design Commission

6 of 7 - LUR hearing/reviews were **Slam Dunks** - with only 1 hearing required to get to approval, using our DC discretionary powers

11 - **Design Advice Requests**, allowing early conceptual advice and public comment

11 - **Design briefings** for projects not requiring Design Commission review but asking for DC opinion and recommendations

24- **Type II Staff Level Land Use reviews**

25- **Type I Staff Level Land Use reviews**

In 2024 Design Commission will continue to refine the informal 'Guide to Design Review' in 2024 now that we have a clear direction on the HRR project. The quality of street-level residential design will be a focus going forward.

Our interest is in all Portland's design overlay zones

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Portland Progress - Exemplary Catalyst Projects

Exemplary projects that are bringing vitality to Portland: These projects are good examples of how the Design Commission can influence the design of projects in their response to context, public realm and quality and resilience. **These particular projects are contributing great design to different neighborhoods across the city and act as catalysts for other development.**



Downtown



Civic



Housing

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Portland Progress - A Vibrant Downtown

Alderway Storefront Improvement: DAR 2023 - Hennebery Eddy Architects

Historic condition of building over time. This building was not originally delivered with active use on the ground floor.



Different phases of ground floor architecture

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Portland Progress - A Vibrant Downtown

Alderway Storefront Improvement: DAR 2023

- The project is the renovation of the ground floor and storefront of the building at the corner of Broadway and Alder downtown.
- The existing building is opaque because low, squat awnings make storefronts dark.
- Ground floor materials don't reflect upper architecture
- Upper structural pilasters don't align at ground floor



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Portland Progress - A Vibrant Downtown

Alderway Storefront Improvement: DAR 2023

DC comments on the applicants presentation:

- Provide Continuity in Design Language
- Ensure that increasing the glazing aligns with datum lines on the original building
- Be consistent with surrounding building's use of ground floor and upper floor design differences
- Embrace the existing columns and articulate them in storefront modules to reveal the history and original construction of the building
- Touch up and fix broken/damaged parts of the upper floor facades



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Portland Progress - A Vibrant Downtown

Alderway Storefront Improvement:

The team returned with a design that made the ground floor look tall and open, which is fantastic for a busy retail street like Broadway. The building owners were not scared to create active transparent space here. **This is the kind of well-designed development that gives other retailers and owners confidence to come back downtown and to create ground floor spaces that attract people and activity.**



Broadway/Adler retail context

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Portland Progress - A Vibrant Downtown

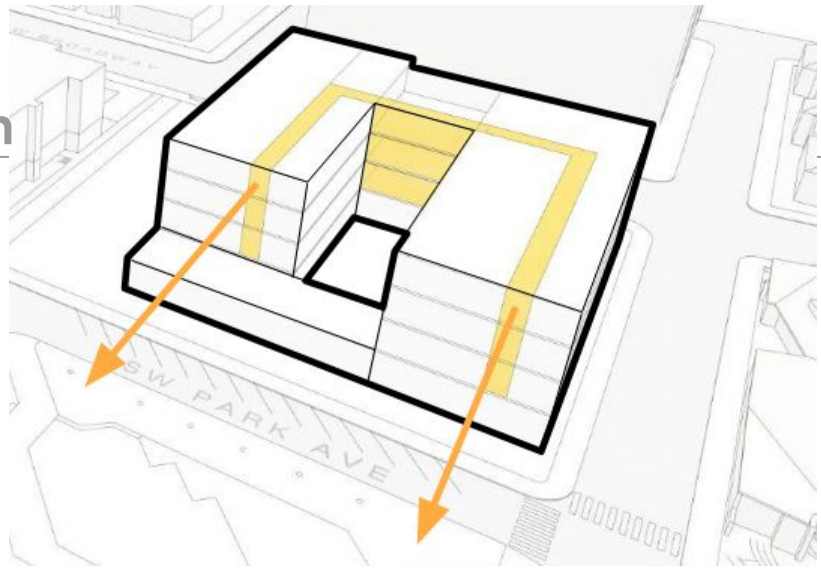


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Portland Progress - Civic Strength

PSU Art + Design building: DAR 2022 -
LEVER Architecture

The design presented at the DAR didn't have a clear main entry, closed/inactive spaces on the frontages and overshadowed the Native American center.



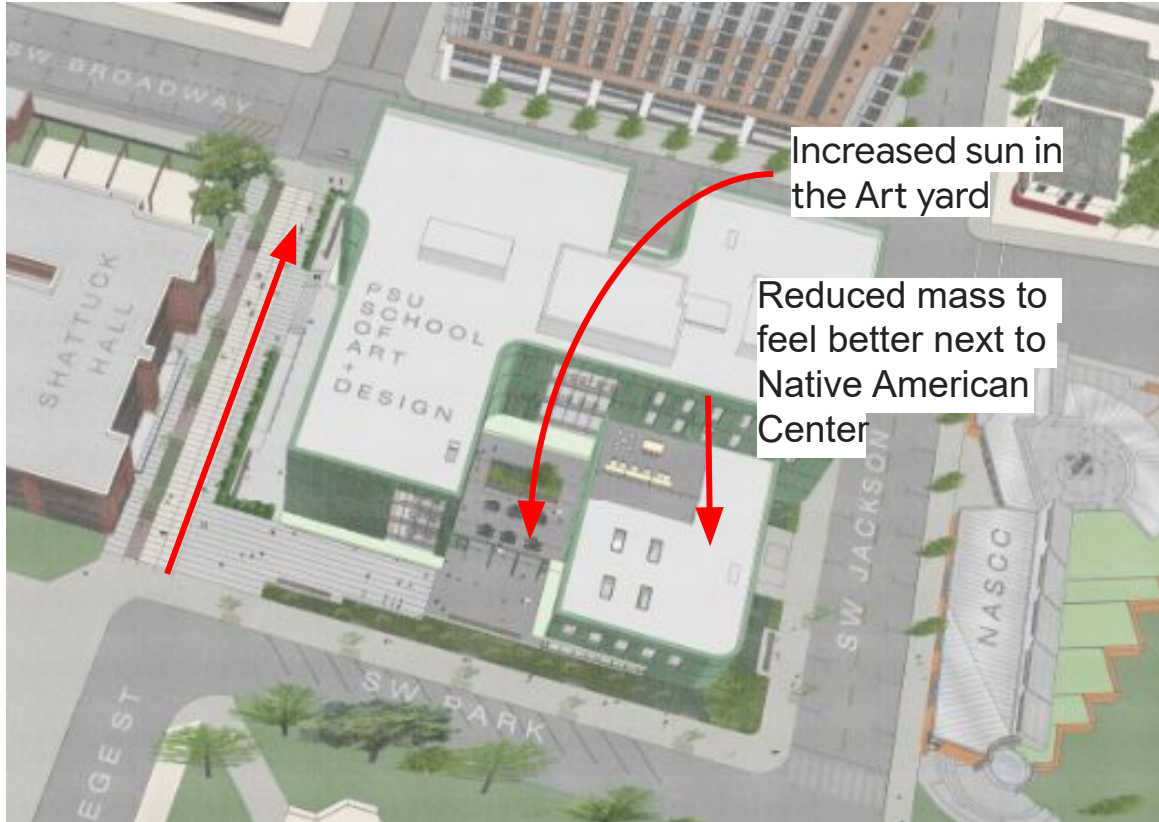
View from Park Blocks



View from Broadway

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Portland Progress - Civic Strength



PSU Art +Design: LU 2023

The applicant returned with an outstanding design.

While maintaining their desired program, they reconfigured the design to step down the mass to the south. This increased sunÁ exposure in the outdoor courtyard/Áworkyard and created terrace along College Street Greenway.

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Portland Progress - Civic Strength



Active uses at ground, high transparency into studios, classrooms and offices, inviting entries on all sides and beautiful metal skin - **all contribute to an outstanding new building for PSU and Downtown.**

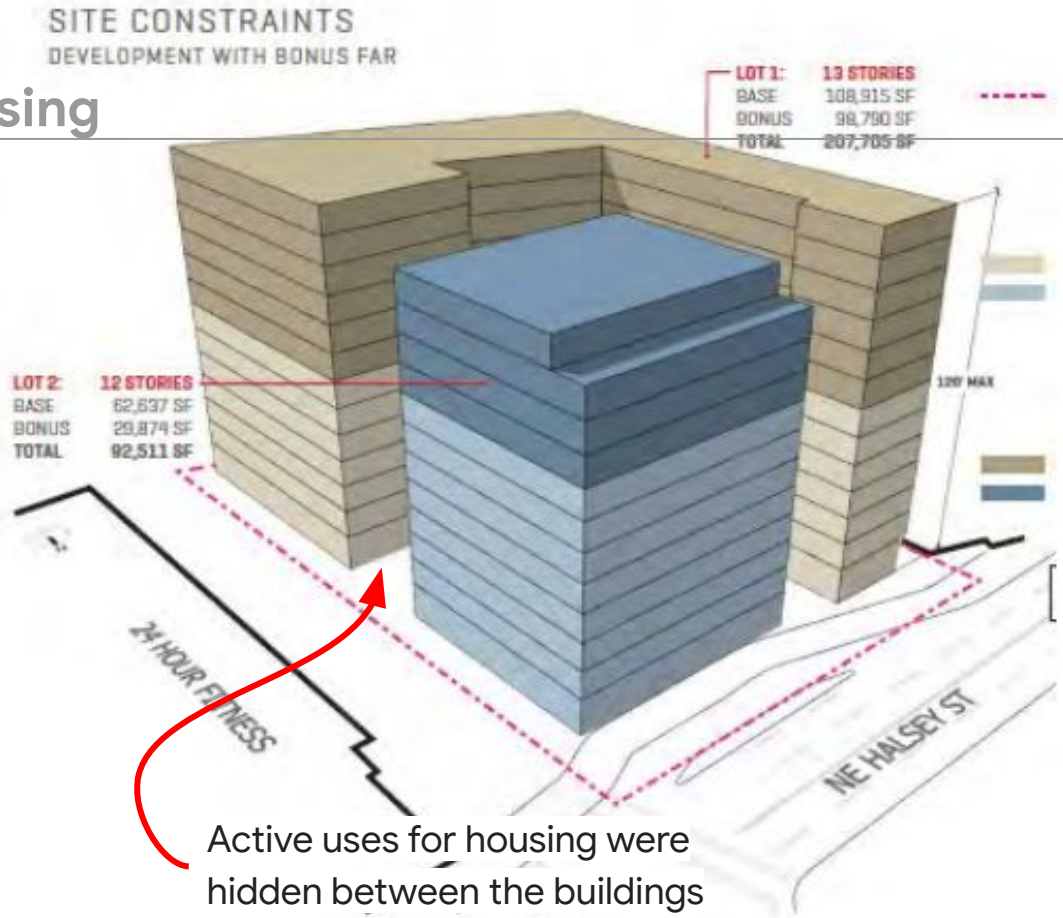
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Portland Progress - Great Housing

Hollywood Hub: December 2021 DAR -
Holst Architecture

This awkward, two-phase project had building shapes being determined by census tract lines, not real site conditions. Design Commission strongly encouraged the team to start over and find a way to eliminate the arbitrary constraints

The applicant enlisted the help of Sen. Ron Wyden's office to coordinate with Federal agencies and remove the constraint.



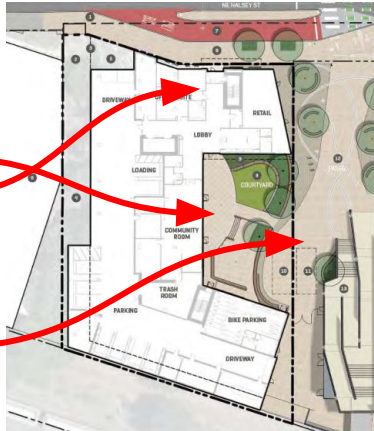
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Portland Progress - Great Housing

Hollywood Hub: 2023 LU

The applicant team returned with a complete redesign: The u-shaped building mass, facing a generous landscaped courtyard, highlighted the new stair/ramp “stramp” to the light rail.

The project blends the private and public spaces, creating a generous, safe and inviting public realm.



Active uses along Halsey and along courtyard

Blend of public and private realm

New massing and the single building fits into the Hollywood context beautifully.



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Winner DC Design Excellence Award - Hollywood HUB Housing



This project is so important because it addresses one of Portland's top concerns: Lack of affordable housing.

The changes in the project over its DARs resulted in a sense of place that is great for people who will live there and improves the way people and vehicles move through the space.

This busy site will now be safe, open and welcoming. The building form gracefully follows the path of the street and is a great complement to the district.

Thank you to the team for a great project!

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Invited Testimony

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