



Design Advice Request

DISCUSSION MEMO

Date: 8/21/2024
To: Historic Landmarks Commission
From: Tanya Paglia, Design & Historic Review Team
503-865-6518 | Tanya.Paglia@portandoregon.gov
Re: EA 24-056451 DA – 118 SW Porter St Demolition & Addition to Adjacent Building
Design Advice Request Memo – Monday, August 26, 2024

This memo is regarding the upcoming DAR on August 26, 2024 for the proposed 118 SW Porter St Demolition & Addition to Adjacent Building. The following supporting documents are available as follows:

- Drawings – accessed here: <https://efiles.portlandoregon.gov/Record/16947533/>
Note, Commissioners who requested hard copies will receive the drawing set by courier.

I. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Design Advice Request (DAR) meeting for a proposal to demolish a contributing structure in the South Portland Historic District and to replace it with an addition to the adjacent non-contributing building. The structure proposed to be demolished is located at 118 SW Porter St. The proposed addition is two-stories with a primary pedestrian entrance located on SW 1st Ave with a garage and secondary access on SW Porter St. The combined site is located at the intersection of SW 1st Ave and SW Porter St.

II. DEVELOPMENT TEAM BIO

Architect Ian Roll | Gensler
Owner's Representative Jason Hickox | Ukandu
Project Valuation \$1,050,150

III. FUTURE HISTORIC RESOURCE REVIEW APPROVAL CRITERIA:

- Demolition: 33.846.080.C Approval Criteria
- New structure: South Portland Historic District Design Guidelines (2022)
- Potential Modifications: 33.846.070 Modifications Considered During Historic Resource Review

IV. POTENTIAL MODIFICATION

Subject to the following approval criteria:

33.846.070 Modifications Considered During Historic Resource Review

- A. Better meets historic resource review approval criteria. The resulting development will better meet the approval criteria for historic resource review than would a design that meets the standard being modified; and
- B. Purpose of the standard.
 - 1. The resulting development will meet the purpose of the standard being modified; or
 - 2. The preservation of the character of the historic resource is more important than meeting the purpose of the standard for which a modification has been requested.

Potential Modification identified:

- 1. Minimum Building Setbacks (33.130.215.B): to allow a reduction in the setback along the western lot line from the required 10' to 0' for portions of the lot line.

Staff would like input from the commission on the proposed Modification. Refer to the staff discussion on the Modification under "Topic #2: Replacement Structure Compatibility".

V. STAFF ANALYSIS & RECOMMENDED DAR DISCUSSION TOPICS

Staff advise you consider the following among your discussion items on August 26, 2024, which are broken down into two primary conversation topics: Demolition Review and Proposed Replacement

Topic #1: Demolition Review

Introductory Information:

Site

- The *Lucretia Nasts House* is a contributing structure in the South Portland Historic District that was built in 1908.
- It is an approximately 930 SF one-and-a-half-story bungalow style house.
- The period of significance for the South Portland Historic District spans from 1876 to 1926.
- The current zoning for the site is commercial (CM2), and there is a swath of CM2 through the area around the house.

South Portland Historic District

- The district is a 31 block, 49-acre area.
- At the time it was designated in 1998, the South Portland Historic District had 186 Contributing buildings and 60 Non-Contributing. It currently has 182 Contributing buildings and 93 Non-Contributing. Thus, the district has lost 4 Contributing buildings since 1998, and approximately 30 new buildings have been built (note: the numbers are the best count we have and could be slightly off, but not significantly).
- Per the National Register nomination, it is significant under Criterion A for its historic associations, and Criterion C for its architectural merit.
- Per the South Portland Historic District Design Guidelines, "The neighborhood presently contains an array of residential, commercial, and institutional uses divided by several major transportation corridors including Interstate 405, Interstate 5, SW Naito Parkway, and SW Barbur Boulevard, as well as Highway 26 and the Ross Island

Bridge ramps. South Portland was historically organized into the Lair Hill, Corbett, and Terwilliger sub-neighborhoods, all of which developed as primarily residential suburbs in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The South Portland Historic District represents the most complete, cohesive subset of this development remaining in South Portland today. The irregularly shaped district comprises 31 blocks in the Lair Hill and Corbett sub-neighborhoods, roughly bounded by SW Arthur and SW Meade Streets to the north, SW Barbur Boulevard to the west, SW Pennoyer and S Curry Streets to the south, and Naito Parkway and S Hood Avenue to the east. Through its extant historic fabric, including period vernacular architecture and a street pattern dating to the 1860s, the South Portland Historic District maintains the setting and feeling of the area as it existed around the turn of the 20th century.”

Demolition Review Process: The total demolition of a contributing primary structure in a Historic District is subject to demolition review (33.445.200.E.1). Demolition review ensures their historic value is considered and that there is an opportunity for the owner and community to consider alternatives to demolition.

The Type IV demolition review process (33.846.080.B.3) will involve:

- *The Historic Landmarks Commission – advisory role*
 - The Historic Landmarks Commission will review the proposal at a public meeting where members of the public may comment. Comments or suggestions, in the form of a letter or testimony, may be offered by the HLC to City Council. (33.730.031.E)
- *City Council – review body*
 - Staff will prepare a staff report with recommendations for City Council, and they may adopt, modify, or reject it based on the information presented at the hearing. (33.720.020.F)

Demolition Review Approval Criteria: Proposals to demolish a historic resource will be approved if the review body finds that *one* of the four approval criteria listed under 33.846.080.C is met. This proposal could only fall under *criteria #1* so that is the only one listed below.

Criteria 1: Demolition of the resource has been evaluated against and, on balance, demolition has been found to be equally or more supportive of relevant goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan, and any relevant area plans, than preservation, rehabilitation, or reuse of the resource. The evaluation must consider:

- a. The resource’s age, condition, historic integrity, historic significance, design or construction rarity, value to the community, and association with historically marginalized individuals or communities;
- b. The economic consequences for the owner and the community;
- c. The merits of demolition;
- d. The merits of development that could replace the demolished resource, either as specifically proposed for the site or as allowed under the existing zoning;
- e. The merits of preserving the resource, taking into consideration the purposes described in Subsection A; and
- f. Any proposed mitigation for the demolition.

Discussion:

Alternatives to demolition. The applicant has been advised that the demolition of a contributing resource in a Historic District should not be the first option. The following alternatives must be fully vetted before pursuing demolition:

- *Adaptive reuse.* Adaptive reuse including any necessary addition(s) to the interior of the site is the preferred alternative, even if significant alterations to the building were required.
- *Relocation.* Relocation is preferable to demolition if adaptive reuse/interior addition are not feasible. Relocation of a contributing resource in a Historic District is a Type III review and the approvable criteria are Portland Zoning Code section 33.846.060.I.

Staff would like Commission feedback on the information the applicant has laid out in their submittal about their exploration of these alternatives. For adaptive reuse, their exploration of whether their program (pages 18/19) can be worked into the existing structures is diagrammed through the site feasibility studies they show on pages 20-35. They discuss their exploration of relocation on page 37.

Approvability of demolition.

- There is a high bar for demolition review which focuses on the importance of preservation, rehabilitation, or reuse of the resource above development alternatives. The Landmarks Commission recommendation to City Council will be an important factor in the whether the project eventually receives approval.
- The Purpose Statement for Demolition Review states: demolition review protects landmarks and contributing resources in districts. Demolition review recognizes that historic resources are irreplaceable assets significant to the region's architectural, cultural, and historical identity and their preservation promotes economic and community vitality, resilience, and memory. In the event that demolition of a historic resource is approved, demolition review also addresses the potential for mitigation of the loss.
- To be considered approvable, the demolition must meet Demolition Review Criterion 33.846.080.C.1 which evaluates the demolition against the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan, and any relevant area plans. The relevant plans along with their respective goals and polices include:

[The Comprehensive Plan 2035 adopted in 2020](#)

- Community Involvement
- Urban Form
- Design and Development
- Housing
- Economic Development
- Environment and Watershed Health
- Public Facilities and Services
- Transportation
- Land Use Designations and Zoning

[Southwest Community Plan adopted in 2000](#)

- Land Use and Urban Form
- Public Facilities
- Citizen Involvement

- Economic Development
- Housing
- Parks, Recreation and Open Space
- Public Safety
- Transportation
- Watershed

[Corbett, Terwilliger, Lair Hill Policy Plan adopted in 1977](#)

Policies:

- A. Preserve the existing residential neighborhoods by maintaining the existing dwellings and stimulating compatible housing development and supporting services.
- B. Reduce vehicular traffic through residential neighborhoods.
- C. Control development and improvements in the Macadam Corridor.

Lair Hill Goals:

1. Encourage the maintenance of the present broad mix of people in terms of income, age, life styles, and race.
2. Preserve light and air by limiting building height to three stories.
3. Improve pedestrian and bicycle linkages with Corbett and the Central Business District.
4. Create sidewalks along both sides of Barbur Blvd and pedestrian access across Barbur to Duniway Park and the YMCA.
5. Encourage mixed use residential, including the possibility of public housing, and commercial uses in the area north of Lair Hill Park and along First Street between Hooker and Porter Streets.

Corbett Goals:

1. Preserve the mixed balance of predominantly residential uses and businesses and offices now existing.
2. Retain the existing number of low- and medium-income housing units through tax incentives and government assistance as it becomes available.
3. Ensure pedestrian and bicycle accessibility to public transit and the Central Business District.
4. Encourage the retention and rehabilitation of existing dwellings.
5. Change the zoning in accordance with Planning Commission recommendations.
6. Adopt recommend capital improvements.

Does the Commission find that, on balance, the project supports more goals than it contradicts? Staff would like commission feedback on this approval criteria. Staff notes:

- Replacing a small house that is not in residential use with a community service use supports many goals and policies within the applicable plans. For instance, it supports the Comp Plan's guiding principles of human health, and equity.
- On the other hand, it is more contrary to historic and cultural resource preservation and housing goals. In theory, the building could be turned back into housing. In addition, its

demolition and replacement could put pressure on other upzoned structures that are also residential in form.

- The Comp Plan Goal 4.B: *Historic and cultural resources* states “Historic and cultural resources are identified, protected, and rehabilitated as integral parts of an urban environment that continues to evolve.”
- The Corbett, Terwilliger, Lair Hill Policy Plan adopted in 1977 laid out this perspective from that time period:
- “Lair Hill is now a small area which was once part of what is now the South Auditorium Urban Renewal Area. Urban renewal coupled with construction of the freeway and the Marquam Bridge not only eradicated over 100 acres of older residential land, but also isolated the neighborhood from the downtown, other neighborhoods and the river. Residents developed bitter feelings over the destruction of their neighborhood. In 1970, faced with the prospect of extended urban renewal, they organized themselves and convinced the City to limit further urban renewal activity. There exists a strong spirit of wanting to preserve and improve what is left.”

Salvage of Materials. If demolition is considered approvable, ***staff suggests that a plan for the salvage of the historic materials be a condition of approval.***

Topic #2: Replacement Structure Compatibility

Introductory Information:

- The replacement structure will be an addition to the adjacent brick building located at 3015 SW 1st Ave.
- This non-contributing building was constructed in 1978.
- It is an approximately 4,405 SF, two-story brick building.

Historic Resource Review Process: A review for the proposed addition/replacement building would be processed through a Type III procedure where the Historic Landmarks Commission will be the review body.

Historic Resource Review Approval Criteria: A review for the proposed addition/replacement building would be evaluated against the *South Portland Historic District Design Guidelines*.

Discussion:

Demolition Mitigation. In addition to needing to meet the approval criteria for the Type III review, the compatibility of the new building with the district is part of the mitigation being evaluated for the Type IV demolition review.

Compatibility. The applicant’s proposed replacement would be the final design shown in their alternatives analysis and is fleshed out in pages 44-48 of the plan set.

The existing brick building was built outside of the district’s 1876-1926 period of significance. The *South Portland Historic District Design Guidelines* give clear direction for additions to buildings built outside the period of significance in *Guideline 3.3 Additions and Alterations to Buildings Built Outside of the Period of Significance*, including the following,

“For buildings built outside of the period of significance, additions of floor area that are equal to or greater than the floor area of the existing building should meet *Guideline 3.4 Architectural Features and Materials in New Buildings*.

Guideline 3.4 Architectural Features and Materials in New Buildings states:

“New buildings should exhibit fine-grained texture and depth in cladding, doors, windows, and architectural features...New buildings expressing an institutional building typology should predominately be clad in brick, stucco, or wood siding or siding with the appearance, texture, and dimension of wood. Windows, doors, and storefront systems in new buildings should be recessed from the exterior cladding and be made of wood or a material with the appearance, texture, profile, and durability of wood.

Horizontally-oriented wood lap or drop siding, often complemented with shingles or other accents made of wood, was almost exclusively employed as the cladding for residential and mixed-use buildings during the period of significance. Brick and stucco were employed as the primary cladding for some institutional buildings, but was otherwise used only sparingly as a cladding material during the period of significance.”

Potential issues related to compatibility with the district:

- **Roof Design.** The proposed design includes a pitched roof element facing SW Porter as an acknowledgment of the house which would be demolished. This breaks up what would be a long frontage and adds a place-making element. ***Staff would like feedback on whether the roof design would be appropriate/compatible to the historic district.***

Per the *South Portland Historic District Design Guidelines*, “Institutional buildings frequently feature a flat or steeply-pitched roof, are often perfectly symmetrical with repeating patterns of openings and details, and have varied setbacks from the sidewalk. Institutional buildings tend to be the largest and tallest buildings found in the district. They are frequently constructed in late 19th- and early 20th-century revival styles including the Colonial Revival, Georgian Revival, and Mediterranean Revival style.”

- **Street-facing ground floor activation.** The proposal lacks ground floor glazing with active uses behind it on the north elevation along SW Porter St. A more activated street-facing façade would be more characteristic of an institutional building in the district. ***Staff would like feedback on whether more glazing and activation are appropriate.***
- **Lack of prominent entrance and too great prominence of garage entrance.** While the existing east side of the building features a prominent entrance along SW 1st Ave, the new wing of the building includes only a small pedestrian entrance far off to the side on the north façade along SW Porter St.

Meanwhile, the garage entrance along SW Porter is extremely prominent. This does not accord with *Guideline 2.4 Parking and Loading* which states, “New vehicular parking and loading, if proposed, must prioritize the pedestrian experience and be deferential to the characteristics typical of the building’s typology.” In addition, *Guideline 1.1 Building Typology* notes that institutional buildings typically feature a prominent front entrance. *Guideline 2.2 Porches and Entries* notes, “the height of the primary entry and the prominence of porches and entries should correspond to both the patterns present on the block face and the characteristics typical of the building’s typology.”

On the plus side, *Guideline 1.2 District Patterns*, notes that institutional buildings in the district were often located on corners, and the new expanded building will be a large institutional corner building spanning what was once two sites. Thus the presence of only one prominent entrance may be appropriate for a corner building where only one façade may need to signal main entry. **Staff would like feedback on whether the north side of the building needs a more prominent pedestrian entrance and whether the garage entrance needs to be better integrated into the façade.**

- **Materials.** Traditional options for a non-residential structure in the district include brick and stucco. The applicant also includes other potential cladding options in the plan set on page 49. These include composite wood fiber and cement panel, cedar shingle cladding, terracotta shingle cladding, corrugated metal siding, and terracotta tile rain screen. **Staff would like feedback on which of these materials, if any, are appropriate for an addition to a brick building, and also looking for feedback on window materials options.**

While Guideline 3.4 Architectural Features and Materials in New Buildings gives the following direction related to materials, staff would like feedback on whether is there room for other options.

“New buildings should exhibit fine-grained texture and depth in cladding, doors, windows, and architectural features...New buildings expressing an institutional building typology should predominately be clad in brick, stucco, or wood siding or siding with the appearance, texture, and dimension of wood. Windows, doors, and storefront systems in new buildings should be recessed from the exterior cladding and be made of wood or a material with the appearance, texture, profile, and durability of wood.

Horizontally-oriented wood lap or drop siding, often complemented with shingles or other accents made of wood, was almost exclusively employed as the cladding for residential and mixed-use buildings during the period of significance. Brick and stucco were employed as the primary cladding for some institutional buildings, but was otherwise used only sparingly as a cladding material during the period of significance.”

- **Scale and placement.** The scale and placement of the proposed addition is compatible with the existing brick building as well as the neighboring school which is in accord with *Guideline 2.3 Building Massing and Rhythm* which states, “the proportions and articulation of street-facing facades should respond to both the patterns present on the block face and the characteristics typical of the building’s typology.”

In addition, *Guideline 2.1 Site Planning* notes that building additions should maintain a contextual relationship of front setbacks by relating either to an adjacent contributing resource or to the setbacks of the building’s typology. The proposed placement of the addition up to the street lot line along SW Porter is compatible with the building masses on either side. The placement of the addition up to the western lot line is discussed under “Modification” below. **Staff would like feedback on whether the scale and placement of the building are appropriate/compatible with the existing building, block and district.**

- **Modification.** **Staff would like feedback on the approvability of the Modification to setback requested: reduce the setback along the western lot line from 10’ to 0’.** Because the abutting site to the west is zoned RM1 (a multi-dwelling residential zone), the requirement is for a 10’ setback along that lot line. The setback requirement is due

to the abutting site being zoned as multi-dwelling use (RM1); however, it is not actually in that use. The site to the west has long been a school (the Cedarwood School) rather than in multi-dwelling residential use. It operates under a conditional use review. The school includes a historic building that sits directly along a portion of the property line that abuts the subject site (1926 annex to the 1910 Neighborhood House).

The applicant would like to build a zero-lot line building right up to that building and would step the new building back where there is glazing on the adjacent building. While this appears to be a reasonable request given the adjacent development, Modifications have a high bar for approval. In this case, the Modification would need to meet the purpose statement (see below) and better meet the approval criteria which are the South Portland Historic District Design Guidelines.

Purpose Statement: The required building setbacks promote streetscapes that are consistent with the desired character of the different commercial/mixed use zones. The setbacks promote buildings close to the sidewalk to reinforce a pedestrian orientation and built-up streetscape. The setback requirements for areas that abut residential zones promote commercial/mixed use development that will maintain light, air, and the potential for privacy for adjacent residential zones.

Attached:

- Comp Plan 2035 already mailed (and linked below).
- Precedent Type IV demolition review cases:
 - Type IV demolition approval:
 - Kiernan Building/Dirty Duck City Council Approval (LU 09-171258 DM - 421-439 NW 3rd Avenue): Demolition of contributing 1-story commercial building in New Chinatown/Japantown Historic District to be replaced with new 4-story Blanchet House of Hospitality on the same footprint.
 - Type IV demolition denial:
 - Buck Prager City Council Denial (LU 14-210073 DM - 1727 NW Hoyt): Demolition of the Buck-Prager Building, a contributing resource in the Alphabet Historic District, built in 1918 to be replaced by a 6-story apartment building with below-grade parking on the west half of the block. A one-story non-contributing resource and two 1/8-block surface parking lots, not subject to Demolition Review, would have also been removed.
- Links to resources:
 - [The Comprehensive Plan 2035 adopted in 2020](#)
 - [Southwest Community Plan adopted in 2000](#)
 - [Corbett, Terwilliger, Lair Hill Policy Plan adopted in 1977](#)