



## Design Advice Request

### DISCUSSION MEMO

**Date:** Novmeber 25, 2024  
**To:** Portland Historic Landmarks Commission  
**From:** Benjamin Nielsen, Design & Historic Review Team  
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**Re:** EA 24-094383 DA – Jefferson High School Modernization  
Design Advice Request Memo for December 2, 2024

This memo is regarding the upcoming DAR on December 2, 2024, for the Jefferson High School Modernization project. The following supporting documents are available as follows:

- Drawings – accessed here <https://efiles.portlandoregon.gov/record/17068105/>. Note, Commissioners who requested hard copies will receive the drawing set by courier.
- Guideline matrix attached.
- Summary notes from the 9/9/2024 DAR are available here: <https://efiles.portlandoregon.gov/record/16995293/>.

Some text below is highlighted in **yellow** for emphasis.

#### I. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Jefferson High School (JHS) Modernization project proposes to construct a new building at the north end of the JHS site, within the Piedmont Conservation District. The school will be designed for an average student capacity of 1,700 students. As a focus school, additional space will be provided to support dance and theater programs, as well as expanded Community Partner programs supporting JHS's Middle College focus. Total anticipated gross square footage for the new facility will be approximately 320,000 GSF. Discussion topics include location of entries, the building's character along N Killingsworth, and materiality. Possible Modifications to the transit street main entrance, maximum setback, ground floor windows, and entrances standards may be requested.

#### II. DEVELOPMENT TEAM BIO

<b>Architect</b>	Doug Miller, Lever Architects
<b>Owner's Representative</b>	Stephen Effros, Portland Public Schools Office of Modernization
<b>Project Valuation</b>	Not Provided

#### III. FUTURE HISTORIC RESOURCE REVIEW APPROVAL CRITERIA: Community Design Guidelines (see attached matrix).

#### IV. STAFF ANALYSIS & RECOMMENDED DAR DISCUSSION TOPICS

Staff advise you consider the following among your discussion items on December 2, 2024:

##### MACRO

1. **Policy.** The following summarizes key policy context as it applies to the subject site.
  - a. **Plan – 2035 Comprehensive Plan / Albina Community Plan.**
  - b. **Piedmont Conservation District.** The northern portion of the Jefferson High School site remains within the Piedmont Conservation District, though the entire site is now listed as noncontributing. A boundary change to the district was approved earlier this summer, as represented on page 5 of the applicants' presentation package.
  - c. **Development Standards – IR (Institutional Residential) Base Zone and m (Centers Main Street) Overlay.** Though early in the design process, the proposal appears generally compliant with zoning code standards, except as noted in the Potential Modifications section of this memo, above.
  - d. **Streets – TSP Designations.**
    - N Killingsworth St: District Collector Street, Major Transit Priority Street, City Bikeway, Major City Walkway, Truck Access Freight Street, Neighborhood Main Street.
    - N Commercial Ave: City Bikeway, Neighborhood Walkway, Local Service for all other modes.
    - N Kerby Ave: Local Service all modes.
2. **Natural or Built Context.** The context is primarily urban. N Killingsworth has a mixture of streetcar era commercial development, some mixed-use development, and the PCC Cascade campus. The historic (contributing) North Portland Library, landmark Wilson-Chambers Mortuary building (now McMenamins), and landmark Mount Hood Masonic Temple building comprise the primary civic institution-type architecture in the conservation district. Of these, only the first two have frontage along N Killingsworth St. Neighborhoods to the south, west, and east are comprised of a mixture of single- and multi-dwelling development.
3. **Compatibility.** The proposed location for the new school building complements the most prevalent pattern of historic development along N Killingsworth St by placing the building close to the street, rather than setting it back by several hundred feet (*Guideline P2 – Historic and Conservation Districts*).

##### MID

1. **Site organization.** The proposal places the new school at the north end of the site. The proposed building will lie mostly within the Piedmont Conservation District, though the southern edge of the building will lie outside the district. A new east-west, cross-block connection is proposed for the south side of the school, outside of the Piedmont Conservation District. New sports fields lie to the south of this proposed connection—again these are outside of the District.
2. **Entrances:** (*Guidelines P2 – Historic and Conservation Districts, E4 – Corners that Build Active Intersections, and D2 – Main Entrances*).

Two of the three main entrances to the building continue to be located on the west side of the site, facing N Kerby Ave. The third entrance is on the south side of the building, facing the proposed cross-block pathway. **No entrances face N Killingsworth St, a designated Transit Street and Main Street.** The applicants' presentation package cites increased student security

and avoiding congestion on N Killingsworth as reasons for placing the main entries on the N Kerby Ave frontage; however both the zoning code and historic pattern of development—both for civic institutions and mixed-use and retail structures—have main entrances oriented toward N Killingsworth St. Furthermore, the civic institutions generally have their more formal, ceremonial entrances facing N Killingsworth, though both the library and the mortuary building also have entries facing N Commercial Ave, both of which are frequently used.

At the 9/9/24 DAR, staff had recommended that the design team explore shifting the “arts entry” (which can be access-limited to comply with needed safety and queuing measures) north to the corner of N Killingsworth and Kerby could help the new school building meet Zoning Code regulations and better complement the pattern of historic development in the Conservation District, even if the entrance is not the “main” entrance into the building.

Commissioners at the 9/9/24 DAR agreed that “an” entrance needed to be located on the N Killingsworth façade and also recommended shifting the “arts entry” to the north. Two public comments echoed the Commissioners comments.

The current proposal appears to introduce the concept of unified landscaping and “story landmarks” on both N Killingsworth St and N Kerby Ave that could act as signifiers pointing the way to the main entrance off N Kerby Ave. It is also worth noting that the library/media center is proposed to be open from 7pm-9pm every school day, which will help to activate the prominent northwest corner of the building. However, staff still believes that some form of entrance should be provided, if not directly facing N Killingsworth, then at least at the corner of N Killingsworth & N Kerby Ave to best meet the approval criteria.

3. **Coherency.** The overall composition of the building appears to use a cohesive design language with proportions and rhythms of openings and building articulation that appear to complement the conservation district. Building massing and scale are well proportioned and complementary to the conservation district and surrounding neighborhoods (*Guidelines P2 – Historic and Conservation Districts, D7 – Blending Into the Neighborhood, and D8 – Interest, Quality, and Composition*).
4. **Exterior Materials.** Proposed materials include a combination of regular and angular brick and flat and folded metal panels. As seen in the renderings and color elevations, the application of the materials gives the proposed school building a civic character and convey a presence of permanence. The color choices in the brick and metal tie the proposed building into the context of the Piedmont Conservation District and directly reference the historic Jefferson High School building without mimicking historical styles (*Guidelines P2 – Historic and Conservation Districts, D7 – Blending into the Neighborhood, and D8 – Interest, Quality, and Composition*).
5. **North Killingsworth Façade Detailing.** As a reminder from the 9/9/2024 DAR, commissioners cautioned against allowing the N Killingsworth façade to read as a side wall and recommended additional articulation and perforation, particularly at the sidewalk level. While the overall massing of this façade is still rather flat, the application of dimensional materials (particularly at the second floor) and rhythm of openings helps to bring life to this façade. Additional depth could be provided with strategic placement of canopies or other projecting elements if pushing and pulling the massing is too difficult because of the program within. Please advise as to whether the Commission believes that additional articulation in the massing is required (*Guidelines E2 – Stopping Places, E3 – The Sidewalk Level of Buildings, and D8 – Interest, Quality, and Composition*).

6. **Setbacks:** (*Guidelines P2 – Historic and Conservation Districts, E3 – The Sidewalk Level of Buildings, Outdoor Areas, D3 – Landscape Features, and D7 – Blending into the Neighborhood*). Setbacks in this iteration of the design remain largely the same as was seen at the 9/9/24 DAR, which the Commission generally found to be supportable (see the 9/9/24 DAR summary notes for detail and some caveats). The development of the proposal appears to be progressing in the direction given by the Commission to **make sure that the N Killingsworth façade look like the front of the building and not appear too much like a side wall.**
7. **Service/Utilities:** (*Guidelines P2 – Historic and Conservation Districts, E3 – The Sidewalk Level of Buildings, D7 – Blending Into the Neighborhood, and D8 – Interest, Quality, and Composition*). The service and utility areas for the new school are proposed to be located at the northeast corner of the new building, adjacent to the North Portland Library. **The transition from the library to this service area is still unclear. The area would benefit from additional landscaping a mural or other intervention at least add visual interest along the N Commercial streetscape.**

## MICRO

1. **Weather Protection.** **The proposed school building has little in the way of protection from rain, wind, and glare.** There is a hint of a canopy at the northwest corner of the building. The main entrance has a large canopy area, and the arts entrance is recessed and appears to have cover from the floor above. Additional canopies or other forms of rain protection should be provided along N Killingsworth St, N Kerby Ave, and N Commercial Ave to best meet *Guideline E5 – Light, Wind, and Rain*. **Please provide guidance on how this weather protection can be best provided while balancing the setbacks and landscaping that are typical of civic institutions in the District.**

## V. POTENTIAL MODIFICATIONS

Subject to the following approval criteria:

- 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 Modifications identified:

1. 33.150.215, Setback – Minimum. The minimum required setback from all lot lines is 1 foot for every 2 feet of building height, but not less than 10 feet.
  - Although the drawings are not scaled, this standard will not be met at the N Killingsworth lot line, the N Commercial Ave lot line, the N Kerby Ave lot line, and possibly at lot lines abutting the North Portland Library.
  - At the 9/9/24 DAR, Commissioners generally believed that the setbacks shown were compatible with the context of the Piedmont Conservation District and development along N Killingsworth Street.

- Regarding the Killingsworth façade, commissioners said that the addition of articulation, relief, and perforation were needed to avoid appearing like a side wall. They reiterated that it should be a “front” to the building.
  - See the notes about the North Killingsworth façade, above, for some comments made relating to the need for additional articulation on this façade to ensure the setback here is best integrated into the historic N Killingsworth streetscape.
  - (*Modification approval criteria A. and B.1. and Guidelines P2, E3 – The Sidewalk Level of Buildings, D1 – Outdoor Areas, D3 – Landscape Features, and D7 – Blending into the Neighborhood*).
2. 33.150.260, Screening. The standard requires either L3 or F2 screening at exterior garbage and recycling areas and of exterior mechanical equipment.
- It is not yet clear if this standard is met at the service and utility area at the northeast corner of the site.
  - Staff believes, and the Commission agreed at the 9/9/24 DAR, that it is important to buffer these uses from the North Portland Library site and that these standards should be met (*Modification approval criteria A. and B.1. and Guidelines P2 – Historic and Conservation Districts and D7 – Blending into the Neighborhood*).
3. 33.150.265, Transit Street Main Entrance. N Killingsworth Street is designated as a transit street. For portions of a building within the maximum building setback, at least one main entrance for each nonresidential tenant space on the ground floor. The main entrance must be within 25 feet of the transit street, face the transit street or be at an angle of up to 45 degrees from the transit street, and allow pedestrians to both enter and exit the building. A minimum of one entrance is required for every 200 feet of building length.
- No entrances appear to meet the full requirements of the standard along N Killingsworth St, as was the case at the 9/9/24 DAR.
  - The Commission argued, and staff continues to believe, that at least one entrance should either face or be located adjacent to N Killingsworth St, which is a designated transit street in the Interstate/Killingsworth Town Center, to best meet *Modification approval criteria A. and B.1. and Guidelines P2 – Historic and Conservation Districts, E4 – Corners that Build Active Intersections, and D2 – Main Entrances*.
4. 33.415.340, Ground Floor Windows. Because the northern portion of the site lies within the “m” overlay and N Killingsworth Street is a transit street, the percentage of ground floor windows facing N Killingsworth St must be 60% or more of the ground floor exterior wall area (measured from 2 to 10 feet above the finished grade).
- The applicants request to reduce the amount of glazing along N Killingsworth to 40%, which is the minimum requirement for the base (IR) zone.
  - Staff believes the request seems reasonable given the school use, and the design of proposed openings along N Killingsworth is well spaced along the façade, but that the amount of glazing could potentially come closer to meeting the standard if there is a main entrance facing N Killingsworth St and certainly come closer to meeting *Modification approval criteria (Modification approval criteria A and B.1. and Guidelines P2 – Historic and Conservation Districts, E3 The Sidewalk Level of Buildings, D7 – Blending into the Neighborhood, and D8 – Interest, Quality, and Composition)*.
5. 33.415.350, Entrances. On transit streets, at least one entrance is required for every 100 feet of building length for portions of buildings subject to the maximum street setback. Required

entrances must be designed to meet the requirements of 33.130.242 Transit Street Main Entrance.

- Currently no entrances facing N Killingsworth St (which is a transit street) appear to meet this standard.
- As noted above under 33.130.242, Transit Street Main Entrance, staff believes that at least one main entrance should either face or be located adjacent to N Killingsworth St, which is a transit street, to best meet Modification approval criteria A. and B.1. and *Guidelines P2 – Historic and Conservation Districts, E4 – Corners That Build Active Intersections, and D2 – Main Entrances.*