



City of Portland, Oregon
Bureau of Development Services
Land Use Services

FROM CONCEPT TO CONSTRUCTION

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MEMORANDUM

Date: May 19, 2014
To: Kurt Schultz, SERA Design LLC
From: Staci Monroe, Development Review
503-823-0624
Re: 14-126549 DA – Riverscape Lot 1 Apartments
Design Advice Request Summary Memo May 1, 2014

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. Attached is a summary of the comments provided by the Design Commission at the May 1, 2014 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: http://efiles.portlandoregon.gov/webdrawer/search/rec?sm_class=uri_7547&count&rows=50

These Design 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 May 1, 2014. 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 III land use review process [which includes a pre-application, a land use review application, public notification, a Staff Report and a public hearing] 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 formal land use application, or if you desire another Design Advice Request meeting with the Commission.

Encl:
Summary Memo

Cc: Design Commission
Respondents

This memo summarizes **Design Commission** design direction provided on May 1, 2014.

Commissioners in attendance on May 1, 2014:

Jane Hansen
David Wark
David Keltner
Gwen Millius
Jeff Simpson
Ben Kaiser

General Comments:

1. The majority of the Commission stated that the parking and its access should be consolidated and screened to provide better places for people. Supportive comments included:
 - a. The parking and access to the below-grade parking proposed in the courtyard should be shifted and incorporated into the surface parking area at the southeast end of the site.
 - b. Surface parking area is not a great occupiable space, it should be heavily screened.
 - c. Explore shortening or turning the drive aisle down to the below grade parking level to reduce the amount of ramping needed.
 - d. Reduce the amount of exposed ramping to the underground parking or cover it.
 - e. No need for three not-so-good pedestrian walkways. They could be consolidated to be more generous and appealing.
 - f. Explore relocating the required 20' wide easement accessway at the southeast end of the site to the northwest side of the surface parking area. This would allow for a wider, more welcoming walkway that aligns with the intersection at NW 15th where people will likely enter the site.
2. There was a lot of discussion of the location, size and quality of the courtyard. Comments included:
 - a. The courtyard location proposed may exacerbate the noise impacts from the bridge.
 - b. The courtyard doesn't have to be big to be successful.
 - c. Residents would benefit more from private outdoor spaces like patios or balconies and the courtyard is secondary.
 - d. Perhaps this isn't the ideal place for a south-facing courtyard.
 - e. Consider a larger community gathering space along the river in the deep setback along the greenway.
 - f. A darker courtyard on the north isn't necessarily better than a sunny, loud south-facing courtyard.
 - g. The courtyard could face south or north, it just needs to be well-designed for people.
3. The majority of the Commission felt the driveway at the intersection of Front and 15th could be treated like a street and building could align along its north side. This approach would remove the cantilever and the residential floors above and reduce amount of building frontage along Front. Under this concept the following comments were provided:
 - a. The edge of the building along the street and driveway would need to be treated as a corner frontage and designed accordingly.
 - b. The cantilever design detracts more than it adds, especially at the ground level.
 - c. Getting the drive aisle out from under the building would improve the deep dark space under the cantilever.
 - d. Additional mass and density could be considered along the river frontage to offset the loss along the street frontage.

- e. The building could be c-shaped with the courtyard in the middle.
4. Several of the Commissioners stated that if the warehouse aesthetic is desired it should be strong and truthful. Additional supportive comments included:
 - a. The box rib metal, porte-cochere, and stepped terraces along the river are awkward for the building vocabulary.
 - b. Under this design, the building should be all brick.
 - c. Rather than a cantilever to a concrete column, it could be designed to be more integrated into the face of the building similar to typical openings in this type of architecture.
5. Numerous comments about the general design of the building were provided, including:
 - a. The front of the building (along the street) wants to be a larger mass in one vernacular and the wing would be different in an aesthetic that works with the stepping so the language on the front isn't pulled through the entire building.
 - b. Make it all consistent or really make the wing distinct.
 - c. On the riverside there is a reason to make the design completely different and anomalous.
 - d. Not so married to the warehouse aesthetic and would not be opposed if the design went in another direction.
 - e. Inspiration should not be drawn from the adjacent townhouses as they are too suburban.
 - f. A marine aesthetic would tie really strongly with the bridge and could be very interesting.
 - g. This site's unique location in the River District, with actual river frontage and adjacent to the bridge, and the site constraints, could support a departure from the typical warehouse style of the district and be an opportunity for something different.
 - h. It is not a polite site and doesn't have to have a polite building.
 - i. Scale of the townhouse outbuilding is appreciated.
6. Support was expressed for the modification to the building wall length along the northwest elevation since it is not a street frontage and the block sizes are rather large in this area. Bumping out the lower level could vary the façade and break down the mass.

Exhibit List

- A. Applicant's Submittals
 1. Original drawing set
- B. Zoning Map
- C. Drawings
 1. through 16.
- D. Notification
 1. Posting instructions sent to applicant
 2. Posting notice as sent to applicant
 2. Applicant's statement certifying posting
 3. General information on DAR process included with e-mailed posting/notice
- E. Service Bureau Comments - none
- F. Public Testimony
 1. Steve Pinger, May 1, 2014, encourages the Commission to recommend the applicant revisit their proposal.
- G. Other
 1. Application form
 2. Staff Memo to Commission dated April 21, 2014
 3. Copy of Staff's PowerPoint Presentation