



**City of Portland, Oregon**  
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**Land Use Services**

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## MEMORANDUM

**Date:** June 11, 2015  
**To:** Portland Design Commission  
**From:** Staci Monroe, City Planner  
503-823-0624, [staci.monroe@portlandoregon.gov](mailto:staci.monroe@portlandoregon.gov)  
**Re:** June 18, 2015 Design Advice Request  
EA 14-220633 DA – 4<sup>th</sup> DA for SW 4<sup>th</sup> & Harrison Mixed-Use Development

Please find *revised* exhibits attached for the 4<sup>th</sup> Design Advice Request for a potential 15-story mixed use development at the northeast corner of SW 4<sup>th</sup> and Harrison in the South Auditorium and Central City plan districts. Three prior Design Advice Request (DAR) hearings occurred on December 11, 2014, February 19, 2015 and March 5, 2015 (attached).

At the most recent hearing on March 5<sup>th</sup>, the discussion and Commission's comments continued to focus on the challenges with the building's mass, form, compatibility with buildings in the South Auditorium Plan District, and its response to the different frontages, particularly along the adjacent pedestrian malls and Pettygrove Park (Halprin Open Space Sequence historic district). In response, the applicant has returned with an L-shaped building atop a full-block podium that concentrates the mass along the street frontages. In addition to this significant shifting of the mass, the façade design and materials have been further developed and site access for parking and loading is working towards resolution.

Staff has reviewed these changes and identifies the following items for discussion:

1. **Garage & Loading Access** - The applicant has been working with PBOT staff for the best location for the loading and garage entries given a number of challenges with both street frontages. The current proposal is for both the loading bay and two-way garage access ganged on Harrison. Additional on-street loading for the large ground floor tenant is also being considered along both Harrison and 4<sup>th</sup>. PBOT is generally supportive of this approach and is currently reviewing the revised plans in time for feedback at the June 18<sup>th</sup> hearing. BDS Staff is supportive of both access points on Harrison as it allows for a more active and pedestrian-oriented ground floor along 4<sup>th</sup>, which has a more urban character than Harrison.  
  
Given the comments at the last DAR which expressed support for garage and loading access on different frontages and a concern with loading on Harrison, does the Commission have any concerns with the proposed ganged access on Harrison?
2. **Massing** - The significant revision that focuses the mass along the street frontages was expressed in prior DARs by the Commission as an approach to pursue. Staff is looking for feedback on this change that also alters the building's response to the pedestrian mall and park.
  - a. Along street frontage - The L-shape mass at the southwest corner is one of two ideas Staff feels could be successful. As designed, the L-shape massing responds to this significant urban corner, the crossroads of two high priority streets and where the streetcar makes a turn. Two bars at this corner that read as individual objects on a podium is the second idea Staff feels may also work and more typical of forms in the sub district. Shifting the southern leg back along Harrison would be a way to break the "L" for the two bars. This approach may also begin to acknowledge and respond to the different characteristics of the two street frontages.
  - b. Along pedestrian mall and park -
    - At the north and east edges some of the mass atop the podium has been maintained in the form of two residential levels setback 10' from the podium edge. These additional floors would rise above the north bar of the Cyan building by about 21'. While the overall height exceeds that of podiums and comparable buildings fronting the park, the 10' setback comprised of outdoor and green spaces for the residential unit seems to be an appropriate response to this frontage and breaks down the scale of the podium along the public open space and Historic District.

- Shadow studies provided (pgs. 33-37) show the impacts from this new L-shape form on Pettygrove Park to be minimal in the late afternoon for the Solstice in June and December with the most impact (casting shadow across the entire park) in the late afternoon for the Equinox in March and September. It is not yet clear if this is all new shadow on the park or partially on top of existing shadows from surrounding buildings. The L-shape mass at the corner appears to be producing the shadow and not the two-story residential level atop the podium.

Does the Commission have any concerns with the revisions to the massing along both the street and open space frontages and are the shadow impacts from the revised massing acceptable?

### 3. Ground Level –

- At prior hearings, the Commission expressed the need for the ground level to be transparent and active. Active uses in the ground floor have been maintained with some shifting in the location (retail space and residential lobby have swapped the northwest and southeast corners). Additional information regarding the transparency along the building frontages has been provided: spandrel glass on SW 4<sup>th</sup> and on the pedestrian mall with spandrel glass (ground level) and metal panel (upper podium façade). Staff is looking for feedback from the Commission on these conditions along the street and open space frontages.
- The South Auditorium plan district has specific minimum building setback & landscape requirements. As they apply to this site: SW 4<sup>th</sup> & both pedestrian mall frontages require 6' deep landscaped building setbacks and SW Harrison requires a 15' deep landscaped building setback. The current design proposes the following modifications:
  - SW 4<sup>th</sup> – reduce setback depth from 6' to 0' and no landscaping
  - SW Montgomery – provide 6' depth & reduce amount of landscaping at each end
  - SW 3<sup>rd</sup> - provide 6' depth & reduce amount of landscaping at each end
  - SW Harrison - reduce setback depth from 15' to 5' and no landscaping

BDS Staff is supportive of the setback and landscape reductions along both street frontages given the urban character of the frontages and the site's location at the western edge of the South Auditorium plan district, so long as there is an assurance that street trees can be accommodated along both frontages. Other right-of-way elements, such as streetcar catenary poles, electrical vaults and stormwater facilities, have not been finalized and may impact the number and locations of street trees. The reduction in landscaping along the pedestrian mall frontages correlates with the location of the ground level active uses and entry at the northeast corner desired by the Commission in prior hearings. Staff is looking for feedback on these modifications as they attempt to balance the need for activity along the pedestrian trail and park and the desire to maintain the lush, green character of the open space sequence.

### 4. Material/Façade Design –

- The large projecting glass façade along the south and west upper elevations is responsive to the verticality and simplicity of the mid-century modern buildings in the sub district as well as the more modern Cyan building to the north. BDS Staff appreciates the design and how it emphasizes this important urban corner, however, it is considered a Major Encroachment into the right-of-way by PBOT. Until this is remedied by either seeking a Major Encroachment approval or shifting the building façade or footprint, it remains as an outstanding item. Any input from the Commission would be appreciated.
- The majority of the building's exterior, with the exception of the glass south and west upper facades, is metal with punched windows. The depth of the openings, comprised of metal panels and windows, are shown as a total of 2.5" (see detail on page 23). Staff feels that greater depth in the recess and/or an increase in glazing within these openings would help reduce the flat and patterned appearance of these very large facades.

Staff has received three letters from the public in response to the revised design from the Halprin Landscape Conservancy, an adjacent building and condo owner. In general, the responders are in support of the overall changes, particularly the massing. The primary focus of some will continue to be on the potential shadow impacts on Pettygrove Park and how the lower levels will address the SW 3<sup>rd</sup> and Montgomery frontages.

Please contact me at 503.823.0624 with any questions or concerns.

Attachments: 3<sup>rd</sup> DAR Summary dated 3/23/15  
Letters from Halprin Landscape Conservancy (5/11/15), John Russell (6/10/15) and Grant Higginson (6/18/15)