



City of Portland, Oregon
Bureau of Development Services
Inspection Services - Land Use Services
FROM CONCEPT TO CONSTRUCTION

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MEMORANDUM

Date: September 9, 2015
To: YBA ARCHITECTS PC *ALEX YALE*
From: Hillary Adam, Land Use Services
503-823-3581 / hillary.adam@portlandoregon.com
Re: 15-125245 DA – Block 290
Design Advice Request Summary Memo August 20, 2015

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 August 20, 2015 (3rd) 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 August 20, 2015. 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 August 20, 2015.

Commissioners in attendance on August 20, 2015: David Wark, Julie Livingston, Tad Savinar, and Don Vallaster

General Comments and Project Massing.

- One Commissioner noted that the Master Plan envisioned this block to be developed in concert with the block to the north; he stated that, when the Commission approved the Master Plan that was the only way that development of this block could work. This block is so demanding of open space, it would compromise any private development, noting that if you were putting a public entity on here, that might work, but now that Con-way has agreed to sell this property without its other essential half, he couldn't see how this could work unless the pro forma changes.
- One Commissioner noted that Con-way should rethink their decision to not sell Block 291, as the proposal is not doing justice to anything – the park, the square, the circulation, or the architecture. He noted that he did not know how the open spaces – the pedway, Quimby, and the plaza – work together. He noted that the only thing of significance that's a variable is the pro forma but that pro forma is absorbing everything, which is why Block 291 is so critical to the success of this project. He noted that everything is being compromised; not one thing here that shines like it should; there's nothing right about any one piece of it. He noted that this is THE public space for the Con-way Master Plan and everything is compromised as a result of this single site having to bear the burden of all the public spaces and investment for public use with a very small amount of return potential relative to the pro forma. He said that he could not see how it would get to where it needs to be without Block 291 and stated that the applicant needs to impress upon Con-way how important these two sites are together as a two-block development so that the development pressure on this block can be released on the block to the north.
- One Commissioner noted that one of the great faults of this proposal is that it is one block (rather than two blocks) – so all the pressure is on this one development to balance three public open areas – the park, the square, and the festival street – while trying to wedge in a private development. He noted that it doesn't seem realistic, unless the Commission says that it's okay for the development to expand beyond the 200' x 200' block and into the public realm. He recognized that it was private land, but through the Master Plan process, it was agreed that it would be public access and a public park. He noted that it seems pretty aggressive, to me, that the development is proposing to take half of the 60 feet, and then more at upper levels.
- One Commissioner noted that he understood that the square is pushing out so that it can be designed to be successful, as there is no sense in compromising the square – so by virtue of that and the proposed four-sided enclosure, it has to push out, adding that the site is not big enough. Still he was not supportive of the extent of the encroachments into the open areas (Quimby and the Park).
- Another Commissioner agreed that the block is so overburdened with its open space demands that it creates a really difficult situation. She noted that there is no win-win, there is not even a win; everybody loses – some more, some less. She also noted that if the Commission allows this proposal to expand eastward into the park, that they can assume that other developments to the north will expect the same kind of leniency to expand into the pedestrian accessways.
- One Commissioner noted that the community either gets the square or they get a bigger park, but he didn't think they could have both, as he doubted that the developer is willing to give up more buildable area than he already has. He questioned which was more important, the square or the green edge and the continuity going north. He noted that the public gets a square, paid for by the developer, and in his opinion, the only compromise is to the park.
- A couple of Commissioners noted that the reduction of the width of Quimby is too much, stating that a little bit might be okay but it is not working with the narrow dimensions currently proposed, particularly with the narrower width at the upper floors.
- One Commissioner cautioned the applicant to not expect that the proposed alternate – the U-shaped building – meets the standards by right. He noted that it might fit within the 200' x 200' square but it may not fit the parameters for providing good public space and

access, which is what is necessary to obtain approval. He noted that, as a diagram on the plan, it doesn't really work.

Garage Access.

- All Commissioners present stated a preference for locating the garage access on Pettygrove. They noted that it doesn't make sense to locate the garage access on Quimby if Quimby is to be a festival street, as they could not co-exist, and they could not see a good reason why you would not want to put access on Pettygrove. One Commissioner stated that parking access on the festival street is a non-starter. Therefore, all Commissioners present indicated support for a Master Plan Amendment to remove the garage access restriction from NW Pettygrove in order to allow parking garage access on that street, and to preserve Quimby as a festival street.

Amendments.

Reduction of Open Areas

- One Commissioner noted that every project in Conway has requested reductions in the open space. Another noted that the Commission allowed a pretty serious compromise to the pedway at New Seasons in the very first project which was a pretty dubious start.
- The majority of the Commission present noted that reducing Quimby some may be okay, but not as much as is currently proposed.
- A couple of Commissioners could not confirm support for the encroachment into the park, stating that it is entirely dependent on the quality of the design and the space. One Commissioner noted significant concerns with the proposed amount of overhang, with the nature of the space, and with the ground plane and where the building comes down.
- One Commissioner noted that she still holds her position from the previous DAR on June 11th regarding the development's proposed expansion into the park, but noted that the success of that space at the eastern edge depends upon the design of the park, adding that it is difficult to assess without a concurrent or preceding design for the park to set the context. However, she stated that if the Design Commission allows Block 290 to encroach into the park, it is tacit approval for additional encroachment on the block(s) to the north.
- One Commissioner stated that he felt like the eastern edge could be great but it was difficult to say because the drawings did not show anything. He said it did not help the situation that all the other ground level planes are angled to enhance permeability and the east façade is just straight, stating that it feels like a back of house area. He could not offer an opinion of whether or not the encroachment into the park was acceptable because he would like to see what it can really be. He stated that it is a matter of quality – how it hits the ground, what's on the ground, what is the landscape – the whole thing. He noted that the overhang is detrimental. He stated that it has to be a great neighborhood space and not feel like a back of house area and that the space has to be designed for humans whether or not the design of park catches up.
- One Commissioner noted that the building type is narrow retail with as much cantilever as you can get to get to a point where the building begins to work, adding that there are four buildings like that and, because of that, there is a lack of richness. He noted that it's a means to get to a pro forma that works but he wasn't convinced it produces a great set of architectural buildings because they're all the same. He noted that if sunlight and flexibility and porosity are important, then sunlight is mitigated by the size and height of a 5-over-1 building but it's still not as great as it could be if you could take some of that program and put it on the block to the north.

Heights

- A couple Commissioners noted that they would be okay with amending maximum building heights to allow up to an 8-story building on the north in order to allow narrower buildings that do not encroach into the open areas.

Modifications.

- All Commissioners present indicated support for Modifications to the depth of the ground floor retail spaces, particularly if it will help maintain the size of the square and help pull the buildings out of the other designated open areas.
- There did not appear to be much concern over proposed reductions to retail height.

Architecture.

- One Commissioner noted that he liked the differences between the buildings with regard to scale in the city.
- One Commissioner noted that adding height on the north side would add more variety to the group. He also noted that the skybridges connecting the buildings are weak and suggested that if the buildings were L-shaped and you entered the square under the buildings, it might help simplify things. He also noted that all the angles at the upper levels are the same and they're not really talking to what's happening below.
- Another Commissioner noted that if the skybridges remain, the Commission will need to see detailed conceptual drawings about what those bridges look like.
- One Commissioner noted that the architecture has the potential for being very nice urban buildings as they take shape and affirmed that the Commission is relying on the design team to develop a really great scheme along the eastern edge to resolve the perceived right-of-way issues.
- One Commissioner noted concerns with the through retail spaces, stating that they may not all work.
- A couple of Commissioners stated that, in light of the park design trailing the design of Block 290, the eastern edge should be so great that the park design has to react to it.

Public Comments.

- Tavo Cruz, NWDA, provided oral testimony, providing background on how NWDA came to their current position, as described in Exhibit F-9, a position which is evolving as the design evolves. Mr. Cruz noted that the Master Plan envisioned concurrent development on Block 291.
- Don Genasci, NWDA, provided oral testimony in support of the enclosed square and expansion of the project site, and made suggestions for obtaining minimum areas for the square at the ground and upper levels.
- Suzanne Lennard, NWDA Square Subcommittee, provided oral testimony in support of the NWDA position and suggesting a reduction in building heights.
- Steve Pinger, NWDA, provided oral testimony, noting a need for the neighborhood and the NWDA to be in agreement, and noted that Block 290 has a significant burden to provide both a square and development within its footprint. He noted that he did not believe the Quimby festival street could coexist with parking access on Quimby.
- Ron Walters, provided oral testimony in opposition, encouraging preservation of designated open space and suggested that Block 290 and 291 need to be developed in concert.
- Tonya Nichols, provided oral testimony in opposition to the removal of designated open space in exchange for the public square.
- Noel Johnson, provided oral testimony in support of the development but in opposition to the removal of open space without providing compensation in other areas of the Con-way Master Plan area.

Exhibit List

- A. Applicant's Submittals
 1. Original drawing set (39 pages)
- B. Zoning Map
- C. Drawings
 1. Drawing set for April 23, 2015 DAR (39 pages)
 2. Drawing set Volume 2 for April 23, 2015 DAR (40 pages)
 3. Drawing set #3, dated June 2015 (40 pages)
 4. Drawing Set #4, dated August 2015 (52 sheets)
- D. Notification
 1. Posting instructions sent to applicant
 2. Posting notice as sent to applicant
 3. Applicant's statement certifying posting
 5. General information on DAR process included with e-mailed posting/notice
- E. Service Bureau Comments
 1. Portland Bureau of Transportation

2. Bob Haley, PBOT, dated August 20, 2015

F. Public Testimony

1. Suzanne Lennard, on April 22, 2015, provided written testimony in support, dated April 23, 2015.
2. Steve Pinger, on behalf of the Northwest District Association Planning Committee, on April 22, 2015, provided written testimony in support.
3. Ron Walters, on April 23, 2015, provided oral testimony testified in opposition.
4. Suzanne Lennard, on April 23, 2015, provided oral testimony in support, and provided written testimony amending her previous written testimony.
5. Steve Pinger (NWDA), on April 23, 2015, provided oral testimony in support.
6. Sharon Genasci, on behalf of Don Genasci (NWDA), on April 23, 2015, provided oral and written testimony neither in support or against.
7. Mary Ann Pastene, on August 19, 2015, wrote in opposition to the proposed garage access on Quimby and to the proposed Amendments and Modifications, specifically the reduction of the square.
8. Ron Walters, on August 20, 2015, wrote in opposition to the proposed development in public open spaces and reduction in open areas.
9. John Bradley, NWDA, on August 19, 2015 (dated August 20, 2015), wrote in support of the concept of a closed square, expansion of the project site beyond the 200' x 200' block as currently designed, and a minimum square size of 16,000sf at ground and 13,000sf above. NWDA noted that the Master Plan needs to be amended prior approval of development. NWDA noted that additional discussion is needed regarding building heights, overall FAR on the site, and the architectural design. NWDA does not support service access on Pettygrove, but supports access on Quimby, suggesting parking access ultimately needs to be provided off of Raleigh, one block to the north. Two drawings of a design alternative were also provided.
10. Ron Walters, on August 19, 2015, wrote providing the results of an independently initiated survey on aspects of the proposed development.
11. Gustavo Cruz, NWDA, on August 19, 2015, provided supplement information to the NWDA letter (F-9), including two additional drawings of design alternatives, as well as the survey questions initiated by Ron Walters.
12. Tonya Nichols, on August 20, 2015, wrote in opposition to the reduction of the size of designated open areas.
13. August 20, 2015 Testimony Sign-In Sheet
14. Suzanne Lennard, on August 20, provided oral and written testimony in support of the NWDA testimony and suggesting a reduction in height.
15. Alex McDonald, on August 20, 2015, wrote in opposition to the reduction of designated open areas

G. Other

1. Application form
2. Staff memo to Design Commission, dated April 13, 2015
3. Community Design Guidelines
4. Con-way Master Plan Section 5
5. Staff memo to Design Commission, dated April 17, 2015
6. Staff Presentation to Design Commission, April 23, 2015
7. Applicant Presentation to Design Commission, April 23, 2015
8. DAR Summary, dated May 11, 2015
9. Staff Memo to Design Commission, dated June 1, 2015
10. Staff Presentation to Design Commission, dated June 11, 2015
11. Applicant Presentation to Design Commission, dated June 11, 2015
12. 2nd DAR Summary, dated July 6, 2015
13. Staff Memo to Design Commission, dated August 10, 2015
14. Staff Presentation to Design Commission, dated August 20, 2015
15. Applicant Presentation to Design Commission, dated August 20, 2015