



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

FROM CONCEPT TO CONSTRUCTION

Dan Saltzman, Commissioner  
Paul L. Scarlett, Director  
Phone: (503) 823-7300  
Fax: (503) 823-5630  
TTY: (503) 823-6868  
[www.portlandoregon.gov/bds](http://www.portlandoregon.gov/bds)

## MEMORANDUM

**Date:** December 2, 2015  
**To:** ANKROM MOISAN ARCHITECTS \*CAROLYN FORSYTH\*  
**From:** Hillary Adam, Land Use Services  
503-823-3581  
**Re:** 15-229299 DA – SW 3<sup>rd</sup> & Taylor  
Design Advice Request Summary Memo November 19, 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 November 19, 2015 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](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 November 19, 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 November 19, 2015.

Commissioners in attendance on November 19, 2015: David Wark, Tad Savinar, Jeff Simpson, and Don Vallaster

### **Existing Buildings.**

- All Commissioners present advocated for preservation of at least one, but preferably both, of the historic buildings on site.
- A couple Commissioners noted that if the applicant is going to tear down these historic buildings, which have a lot of support in the community, then they will have come back with some good architecture, noting that there will be public outcry at the loss of these buildings so there has to be something substantive to replace them.
- One Commissioner stated that when you're trying to make a point, it's good to say it three times. He stated that he would absolutely 100% prefer preservation over demolition, adding that it would be to the applicant's advantage to go that way because of the unique qualities, character, and draw that they would have, resulting from preservation. He stated that if you want to revitalize this area, retention of the AOUW Building would be a cornerstone to hold down the fort on the whole project.
- Another Commissioner stated that he would support any effort the applicant can make to move forward with a plan to retain the existing buildings. He stated that it would be precedent setting and would put the project on the map to come up with a solution that preserves the AOUW Building.
- Another Commissioner noted that this is a pretty forlorn part of town which has been neglected for years. He noted that there is some pretty nice stuff on the inside of the AOUW Building that might be reusable in the future. He stated a preference for saving the Lotus which may be more serviceable of a building than the AOUW, noting that, as opposed to the AOUW, it's had a long-tenured tenant. He also noted that the Lotus gives you two classic buildings (including the Auditorium) facing SW 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue and that with new buildings on either side, the Auditorium Building is starting to look like an orphan and it needs a little help, adding that saving the Lotus would do that. He didn't think that losing the AOUW would be a big loss, noting that it had been empty for some time and nobody has found a use for it.
- One Commissioner with extensive experience in historic preservation, noted that just because a building hasn't been used in a while does not mean its significance is reduced. He stated that time does not diminish the historic character of a building unless it starts to fall apart. He noted that the significance of the AOUW Building is that it is a one-of-a-kind building without any similar buildings in town. Whereas, the Lotus has a lot of buildings that are similar to it but the AOUW Building is very unique. He noted that it seems like there are some pretty distinctive interior spaces too. He stated that these things basically come down to money and an understanding where the tipping point is, and where are the sources of financing or income or additional funds to make preservation work. He suggested that the applicant leave no stone unturned in trying to figure out how to save the building, noting that then the applicant have something in conjunction with the new building that no one else in the city would have. He added that, from a marketing standpoint alone, goodwill goes so far when you're talking about development and money, but there are people and sources and organizations out there that would be willing to help to research and locate and secure potential funding sources to try to save this building. He stated that regardless of the design, just saving the AOUW building would catapult this project into a different level of development. He noted that he is 100% convinced that you cannot capture the character and sense of place or history with a new building; it just doesn't work.
- Another Commissioner stated that the AOUW Building is quite a remarkable building and his first wish would be to save the AOUW building. He stated that if that is not possible, it was an interesting point made about saving the Lotus because of its relationship with the Auditorium Building, stating that it might be a better neighbor to the Auditorium rather than something new on 3<sup>rd</sup>.
- One Commissioner noted that the applicant was attempting to maintain the relationship between the Lotus and the Auditorium by having the smaller portion of the building in the location of the Lotus.

- One Commissioner noted that the prior design did such a good job of selling the concept of something cool marrying the old and the new that it is the right thing to do and the preferable option.
- One Commissioner noted that a scheme involving retention of the AOUW would be like nothing else like it in town and eventually that building would be used as a precedent.
- One Commissioner noted that the precedent images shown on the lower left of page 6 of the presentation, showing new additions set back from the edges of the historic buildings, were more successful than those on page 5.

**Proposed Design.**

- One Commissioner suggested that you flip the program to have the hotel tower on the NW corner, rehabilitate the AOUW Building to house all the functions currently proposed within the SW corner, noting that it's almost the same massing. He noted that the Hotel Monaco had a big floor plate to work with, suggesting that hotel rooms could be accommodated in the AOUW Building.
- One commissioner stated that it might make for an interesting urban space if you can shift the building at the SE corner a little bit east to create a courtyard and have a little more light and air for the Auditorium Building.
- One commissioner noted that the preferred precedent images have the new building set back from the edge of the historic buildings, which is relatively in line with what the Code allows on the north half of the block.
- One commissioner noted that if the program was flipped, the setback at higher heights wouldn't be an issue because the hotel is envisioned as a point tower which could be accommodated entirely on the NW corner; therefore, you'd have a clean historic building (without a cantilever) adjacent to a new tower which could be interesting.
- A couple of Commissioners expressed an appreciation for the glassy ground level, stating that it should be maintained as the design evolves, and noting that it seemed to break down on the east side.
- One Commissioner stated that he didn't know if right next to the garage is the right place for a speakeasy entrance.
- One Commissioner noted that there is a preponderance lately for architecture to be more than one thing. He noted that the hotel tower is only a quarter block and suggested that with that small a footprint, it should be designed as a simpler singular building rather than two things wrapping around each other.
- One Commissioner noted that the twisted forms on the hotel seem a little forced and overwrought, especially where they come down and form this alternating canopy. He stated that there is a lot going on and it seems more piecemeal rather than a continuous gesture; it seems to break down a lot when it gets down to that first level.
- One commissioner noted that it is a little hard to get into the architecture until the applicant decides what to do with the historic buildings.

**General Comments.**

- One Commissioner noted that the package was insufficient to give the proposal serious consideration. He noted that every rendering faded out at the top, thus obscuring the proposed design. He appreciated the applicant's concerns to not delay the process despite the change in course; however, he noted that, the Commissioners are volunteers and spend many hours prior to and at multiple hearings a month, noting that an organized and easily understandable package would be appreciated. Another Commissioner noted that there was not a lot of information or detail in the packet and, therefore, he had a hard time following the storytelling of the proposal.

**Public Comments.**

- Brandon Spencer-Hartle, Restore Oregon, spoke in opposition to the proposed demolition of the Lotus and AOUW Buildings. He noted that Restore Oregon gave testimony to City Council the day prior regarding the City's policy of allowing same-day removals of buildings on the Historic Resources Inventory (HRI), noting that the only protection the HRI provides for listed buildings is the 120-day demolition delay and that their removal from the HRI implies intent to demolish. He noted that the 120-day delay is intended to provide the opportunity for alternatives to demolition to be researched. He noted that he was interested in seeing the documentation on the building studies performed since June. He noted concerns with the prior design with the cantilevered portion above the AOUW

and how much of the interior of the AOUW was proposed to remain in that version. He noted that in any other state the AOUW Building would be listed as a landmark, however Oregon state laws do not allow listing against the owner's wishes; therefore he asked for the Commission to strongly consider how the project can preserve at least one of the buildings, does it well, and also allows for new development to occur. He noted that Restore Oregon's preference is for both buildings to be preserved, in particular the AOUW Building, and noted that if both are demolished there will most likely be a significant amount of public outcry. He noted that these are big buildings and downtown Portland has not seen a demolition of a building of this size and era in quite some time.

- Philip Bradford, on December 1, 2015, provided written testimony, stating that the proposal did appear to be worthy of its site and noted that Guidelines C2, C4, and C5 did not appear to be met. He suggested lighter color building materials, use of brick on SW 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, continuation of the street wall in line with the Auditorium Building rather than recessing the ground plane at the newer buildings. He also suggested preservation of the AOUW Building and greater utilization of allowable heights. He also suggested that the City needs greater protections for historic buildings as too many have been lost.

### **Exhibit List**

- A. Applicant's Submittals
  - 1. Original drawing set, dated September 1, 2015
  - 2. Revised Drawing Set, dated October 14, 2015
  - 3. Revised Drawing set, dated October 20, 2015
- B. Zoning Map
- C. Drawings
  - 1. Drawing Set for November 19, 2015, dated November 4, 2015
- D. Notification
  - 1. Posting instructions sent to applicant
  - 2. Posting notice as sent to applicant
  - 4. Applicant's statement certifying posting
  - 5. General information on DAR process included with e-mailed posting/notice
- E. Service Bureau Comments: none
- F. Public Testimony: see "G" below
- G. Other
  - 1. Application form
  - 2. Staff memo, dated November 9, 2015
  - 3. Historic Landmarks Commission letter, dated November 17, 2015
  - 4. Testifier Sign-Up Sheet for November 19, 2015 hearing
  - 5. Staff Presentation, dated November 19, 2015
  - 6. Applicant Presentation, dated November 19, 2015
  - 7. Philip Bradford, on December 1, 2015, provided written testimony with concerns.