

**Design Commission Meeting
Oregon Trail Conference Room
December 18, 2019, 6:30 p.m.**

I. Opening/Citizen Comment

A regular session of the Gresham Design Commission was called to order on the 18 of December 2019 at 6:30 pm in the Oregon Trail Conference Room of Gresham City Hall, located at 1333 NW Eastman Parkway, Gresham Oregon. The meeting was recorded and scribed by Noah Myhrum.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Camilla Cok
Pat Lando
Mike McKeel
Matthew Sugarbaker
Robert Hayden

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Rob Cook
Tom Orth

COUNCILOR PRESENT: David Widmark

STAFF: David Berniker, Urban Design & Planning
GianPaolo Mammone, Urban Design & Planning
Noah Myhrum, Urban Design & Planning
Jamie Thomes, Urban Design & Planning
Terra Wilcoxson, Urban Design & Planning
Josh Williams, Urban Design & Planning

Vice Chair Cok introduced staff and members of the Commission that were present as well as described how public comments could be provided.

II. Albertina Kerr Workforce Housing ODCC: 930 and 722-876 NE 162nd Avenue

Project Presentations

The applicant and staff provided presentations for the project, which is for 150-unit affordable or low-cost apartments within a 96,816 square-foot, four-story, double loaded corridor building with a mix of unit sizes. Thirty of the units will be for intellectually and developmentally disabled individuals. This project is proposed to be located along NE 162nd Avenue and NE Holladay Street. Applicant representatives included:

- Jeff Carr, CEO Albertina Kerr
- Warren Deloria from Ankrom Moisan Architects, Inc.
- Katherine Sheie from Lango Hansen Landscape Architects

Design Commission and Applicant Discussion

Question 1: Building Placement

A discretionary request is anticipated because the building exceeds the maximum building setback of 20 feet on NE Holliday Street. The standards call for at least 50 percent of the site's frontage (not including access driveways) on any street to be occupied by buildings oriented to the street. This would result in the building making a statement on the corner. The applicant meets the standard on NE 162nd Avenue but the building is situated south of the street corner where the bus stop is located. The closest point of the building is 75 feet from NE Holliday street.

The guideline requires that buildings are located with the principal façade oriented to the street or a street-facing open space such as a courtyard. The façade facing NE 162nd Avenue is clearly distinguished as the primary façade by the common and unit entrances. Situating the building away from NE Holliday Street facilitates tree preservation and distances the building from the low-density residential zone to the north.

Staff believes that the existing trees contribute to a sense of place and is comfortable with how the building is situated on the site. As the design develops staff would like to see the landscape architecture used to create a welcoming procession from the transit stop.

Commission Comments

- In general, the Commission had no issue with the building placement and was supportive of a proposal that would save some of the older trees on the site.
- The Commission recognized that the site had a minimal amount of space on the NE Holliday Street side of the building.
- The Commission suggested enhancing the landscaping on the site of the building that faces NE Holliday Street.

Question 2: Children's Play Area

Play area sizing is based off the entire site, which is considered the entire campus for this application, rather than just the redevelopment area. Therefore, 8,453 square feet of children's play area is required. The new play area is proposed to be 3,900 square feet. There is also 5,200 square feet of existing play area, divided into two locations. On-campus the required quantity is exceeded.

The play area is part of a 10,300 square-foot community plaza that is tucked between the new building and the existing Meyer Memorial Trust Empowerment Center.

The play area contains custom play features coordinated with the courtyard furnishings and rubberized surfacing. To meet the discretionary criteria the play area shall promote safety, creative play, and exercise adequate for the 150 units. The Code is not clear on the quantity of play area that should be located on the redevelopment area. The proposal the applicant presents does seem reasonable to the staff. Staff also thinks that customizing the play elements benefits the quality and cohesiveness of the plaza design.

Commission Comments

- The Commission requested additional details about the play areas, specifically concerning the two play areas that are already on the site. Furthermore, there was a consensus among the Commission for the applicant to provide more information pertaining to the proposed surface area of the play areas, including the materials that will be used and the reason why those particular materials were selected.
- The Commission also wanted the applicant to consider how to further incorporate adult areas into these spaces because this building is going to be rented and used by intellectually and developmentally disabled adults as well. However, the Commission stated that they are pleased that there are different spaces for different types of people.
- The Commission did think the plan was interesting, provides unique spaces, and that the play areas are significantly sized. They also stated they like how the north courtyard is set back from NE Holliday Street because it gives the space a function.

Question 3: Alternative Buffer

The applicant is proposing to deviate from the standard Type C Option 2 buffer, which requires:

- A 15-foot width
- One tree every 15 feet
- Fifty shrubs every 100 feet
- A 6-foot-high masonry wall

The alternative buffers shall meet the intent of the standard buffer including similar noise absorption or reflection properties. If the buffer width is reduced then the number, selection and placement of required materials shall be enhanced to compensate.

The applicant is proposing a 6-foot-high wood fence along the north property line instead of a 6-foot masonry wall to help preserve trees on the adjacent properties to the north. This will be evaluated in an upcoming arborist's report. Further, this area abuts detached single-family residences.

The project's design team is proposing a minimum 10-foot buffer width but is attempting to increase this width as the design develops. The current proposal indicates that the standard tree spacing will be met. A layer of large evergreen shrubs with a 5-foot outer circumference is being proposed as well as a layer of lower evergreen shrubs and groundcovers closer to the parking area. Staff concurs that a layered landscaping approach is desirable and would encourage a plan that exceeds the required number of plantings. It also seems possible to develop the masonry wall where tree protection is not needed.

Commission Comments

- The Commission generally agreed that they prefer the appearance of a wood fence rather than a CMU wall because it provides a good backdrop.

- However, the Commission also agreed they would like to see the buffer width wider than the proposed 10-foot width.

Question 4: Maximum Building Height Variance

The applicant would like to know if the Commission is amenable to a Minor Variance to the 45-foot maximum building height standard. The applicant is requesting flexibility for up to a 15 percent height increase or up to 51 feet, 8 inches. The most recent iteration of the design shows the highest ridge is set at 50 feet, 8 inches. The roof pitch is presently designed at 4½/12. The design team has expressed that this complements the design better than a lower sloped roof as it reflects the proportions and roof slopes found throughout the neighborhood to contextualize the project.

To remain under a maximum height of 45 feet, the roof pitch would be a 2½/12. This configuration also does not meet manufacturer’s specifications for an asphalt shingle roof system. There are multiple criteria for minor variances. However, relatively recently there have been minor variances for height approved which have given significant consideration to the aesthetics of the project. These have primarily been hotel projects clustered near Highway I-84.

Commission Comments

- The Commission was generally agreeable to a minor variance to increase the height of the building as proposed. The higher height helps with the context of the site and as well as with the residential area that surrounds the site.
- Further, landscaping would help offset the minimal extra height the applicant is requesting.

Question 5: Entry Weather Protection

The standard is for a 4-foot-deep overhang at common and unit entrances. Discretionary requests shall demonstrate pedestrian-friendly ground floor entries that include protection from rain and sun. The pre-application design did not include weather protection for ground level unit entrances. The applicant has updated the design to include 3.5-foot deep canopies on the street-facing entries. Canopies on other entrances are “To Be Determined.”

Commission Comments

- In general, the Commission was agreeable to the 3.5-foot deep canopies as proposed.
- However, the Commission strongly urged the applicant to consider protecting all the entries into the building.
- Furthermore, the Commission wanted the applicant to keep the entries and overhangs as big as possible due to the mobility and access issues of the residents.

Question 6: Outdoor Storage

There is a total of 84 storage spaces being proposed.

- Thirty-one in-unit storage spaces which are 10 square feet.

- Fifty-three storage lockers that are 24 square feet or larger.

These are in addition to bedroom closets and coat closets. The standard is 24 square feet of storage per unit dedicated for items used outdoors. These storage locations may be in-unit or easily accessible and able to be locked by each resident.

Commission Comments

- The Commission encouraged the applicant to reconsider the amount of storage proposed and to push for more storage space. More storage space that is small over less storage space that is larger would be better supported by the Commission.
- The applicant should determine creative solutions to get more storage into the project or provide something to offset the lack of storage space.

Question 7: Energy Conservation

The applicant has proposed energy modeling to exceed the energy performance outlined in the code by 10 to 15 percent with the intent to be a net zero project. The applicant was hoping this would be an alternative to providing sunshade.

The guideline calls for buildings to conserve energy by optimizing the collection of passive solar radiation through building orientation for winter. Typically, the appropriateness of sunshades has been evaluated in light of the façade composition and building orientation.

The following has been proposed:

- Walls:
 - State: R21 batt
 - Proposed: R23 blown-in fiberglass
- Roof:
 - State: R-38
 - Proposed: R49 blown-in
- Windows:
 - State: U-0.35
 - Proposed: U-0.29

Commission Comments

- The Commission urged the applicant to provide some amount of sunshade but was in favor of the proposal pursuing a Zero Net Project.
- Aspects to consider would be the prospective consumption of energy by the building, the importance of design, and to provide any amount of sunshade possible.

Question 8: Large, Uninterrupted, Monotonous Walls

The guideline is that buildings shall not include large, uninterrupted, monotonous walls. Each side of the building has several wall plane and material transitions. The building is roughly 250 feet in length north/south and 280 feet east/west. Therefore, the building exceeds the standard maximum of linear 160 feet.

The exact discretionary requests related to the building façade have been in flux, yet it seems likely that there will be a few discretionary requests that involve the façade composition and use of materials such as the building base.

Commission Comments

- The Commission, regarding the length of the building and the façade, thought that the building length is sufficient and appreciated the proposed diagram.
- The Commission encouraged the applicant to consider the proposed materials that will be used in project so that they conceptually make sense.

Other Commission Comments

- Some of the Commissioners felt that the diagram breaks down in a few places, especially in the central form. There was a consensus that the different colors on different sides of the building was confusing.
- Generally, the Commission wants the building to be something different, and desired a clearer understanding concerning the color choices.
- There were inconsistencies between the presentation and the elevation drawings.
- The transition to the façade should be simple.
- The Commission did agree that there was adequate parking for the building and were amenable to the building having fewer parking spots due to its purpose.
- The central hub lacks expression and almost seemed hidden. The applicant was encouraged to emphasize this feature.
- The ribbon idea around the building was not generally supported by the Commission, and the applicant was encouraged to replace it with a different element.
- The use of the proposed masts was supported as they fit nicely with the site.
- Better emphasize the entrance to draw visitors from the west side of the building.
- The Commission was concerned about the buffer on the right side of the play area. They thought that it was too thin especially for the adjacent units.

Summary

- The Commission was comfortable with the placement of the building and encouraged the applicant to use landscaping.

- Play areas for different groups is encouraged, and the Commission has requested additional information concerning the two existing play spaces.
- The applicant may want to consider play surfacing and the use of the open space.
- A wood fence is desirable for the alternative buffer, but the buffer width should be maximized if possible.
- The height of the building was supported.
- The Commissioners want all entries covered and to maximize the depth of the entry covers.
- The applicant must incorporate more storage for the residents.
- The potential for a net zero building was encouraged.
- The Commission thought the length of the building was appropriate, appreciated the diagram presented, but would like the applicant to further consider the proposed materials.
- The entrance south of the lobby may be mistaken for a common entrance.
- The buffer on the right side of the play area is too narrow.
- A reduction in parking was supported.

III. Holiday Inn Express ODCC: NE 178th Avenue, immediately south of 2323 NE 181st Avenue.

Project Presentations

The applicant and staff provided presentations for the project, which is for a four-story, 85-room Holiday Inn hotel totaling 52,907 square feet with associated parking. Applicant representatives included:

- Shane Fagen from Varitone Architecture
- Christina Larson from Varitone Architecture

Design Commission and Applicant Discussion

Question 1: Ground Floor Setback

As proposed, portions of the building on the ground floor exceed the maximum setback of 5 feet. However, the building is shown with projections on the second floor aligned with the 5-foot maximum setback. This will allow for the creation of a small 8-foot patio area where the hotel guests will be able to enjoy their complimentary breakfast. The maximum front or street side setback may be exceeded when enhanced pedestrian amenities are provided per Section 7.0603(A)(5)(D).

Commission Comments

- The Commission all generally agreed that the applicant's proposal makes sense and appears to be reasonable.

Question 2: Window Recess

The proposal depicts the ground floor with gray brick and the upper floor stucco areas will have a 4-inch window recess. The bump out areas of the building, consisting of orange hardie panels, is proposed to have a 1-inch window recess. The applicant has stated that, per manufacturer recommendation, windows will recess approximately 1-inch from the plane of the wall. The Standard 7.0603(B)(1)(D)(8) states that windows shall be recessed a minimum of 4 inches from the building plane. Furthermore, according to the Guideline 7.0603(B)(1)(D)(8) window recesses shall be enough to support façade articulation and provide surface relief, depth and shadow.

Commission Comments

- The Commission directed the applicant to investigate possible solutions or mitigation options to achieve the 4-inch recess minimum as the proposed 1-inch recesses is too small.

Question 3: Building Height Variance

The applicant has stated that: "the need to apply for a variance is bifold: to create a functional building and also to maintain visual interest." According to the applicant, the proposed design has required more floor to floor height to allow for more room for fresh air venting in the building. The proposed height is 49 feet, 4 inches versus the 45 feet maximum allowable height.

Commission Comments

- The Commission was agreeable to the height of the building as proposed by the applicant.
- However, the first-floor windows seem small and out of proportion with the rest of the building. Furthermore, window punches should be proportional as well.
- The Commission encouraged the applicant remove the white band on the top of the building because it seems out of place and awkward.

Question 4: Transparency

The applicant has proposed the use of spandrel glass in areas which function as "back of the house" However, the standard states: "To meet the clear glass requirement, windows shall have a visible transmittance value (VT) of no less than 60 percent. Where clear glass is required, the use of reflective, tinted or spandrel glass shall not be permitted." Further, the corresponding guideline states: "The use of reflective, tinted, or spandrel glass shall not be permitted to meet transparency requirements."

The applicant requested feedback from the Commission as to what other material, outside of glass, would be acceptable in this specific circumstance and that would also not compromise the integrity of the Code.

Commission Comments

- The Commission was in support of a translucent glazing, but not spandrel glass, to incorporate natural light into the building. Also, the size of the ground floor windows should be increased.
- The Commission agreed that the entrances will have sufficient transparency, but the applicant will need to consider alternative for transparency in the “back of the house” areas.

Discussion 1: Packaged Terminal Air Conditioners (PTAC)

The applicant requested feedback about the proposed use of PTAC in terms of allowed design and detail.

The PTAC standard states that Visible Packaged Terminal Air Conditioners (PTAC) and similar system with individual through-wall heating and cooling shall not be allowed. The PTAC corresponding guideline states “Mechanical equipment and individual through wall units shall not detract from the building architecture and facade composition and shall be designed to minimize their visibility. Equipment shall not project beyond the adjacent finished wall plane and shall be screened and integrated into the building’s overall architectural design, facade composition and detailing.” Generally, the Design Commission has required that PTACs be flush and integrated with the finished wall plane.

Commission Comments

- The Commission agreed that integrating the PTAC systems in the windows is preferred. Furthermore, the applicant should blend those systems into the color of the siding.

Discussion 2: Pedestrian Circulation

The applicant proposes 5 feet of sidewalk around the entirety of the building as well as a 7-foot wide sidewalk in front of the vehicles parking spaces. An accessible pedestrian circulation path is not currently provided through the parking area. This item must be met as there is not a discretionary option.

The Table for Minimum and Maximum Off-Street Parking in the Code requires that the 85-room hotel will need a minimum of 85 spaces and a maximum of 111 spaces. Per the applicant design, the Holiday Inn Express site is only able to house 61 parking spaces. In order to reach minimum compliance with parking, 24 more parking spaces will be “appropriated” from the adjacent lot.

Commission Comments

- The Commission encouraged the applicant to return with a different parking plan and, at minimum, adjust the proposal regarding deficiencies in stormwater compliance, resealing, stripping, and landscaping.

The recommendation was made for the applicant to decrease the drive isle and transfer gained space to the pedestrian zone.

Other Commission and Staff Comments

- The Commission was not supportive of the lack of windows along the side of the building.
- The Commission was supportive of the idea of wood in the pedestrian area.
- The applicant was encouraged to consider the use of vents, including where they will be located and how they will be applied.
- Clarify the material that will be used for the drive isle canopy as what is currently proposed feels out of context with the remainder of the building. The canopy should be considered as part of the overall building design.
 - The applicant noted the canopy was primary painted steel with a brick pillar, metal roof, and a wood underside.
- The applicant was encouraged to use northwest architectural elements.

Summary

- The setback of the building is reasonable and makes sense.
- Regarding the window recess, the Commission recommended investigating how to increase the proposed 1-inch recess and for the applicant to provide the rationale for any deviation from the standard.
- The applicant was encouraged to integrate the PTAC system into the windows.
- Regarding the building height, the consensus was that the proposed height of the building was satisfactory if it remained proportional to the rest of the building.
- The Commission recommended removing or changing the white band that is being proposed at the top of the building.
- The Commission encouraged the applicant to not use spandrel glass and instead use a translucent glazing that would introduce natural light into the north and south façade.
- Increase the size and height of the ground floor windows so that they are more proportional with the other windows in the building.
- Regarding the parking lot, create a central pedestrian walkway to meet design standards. Furthermore, incorporate a pathway through the parking lot and improve the parking design where feasible.

- The applicant was encouraged to research what rights, if any, they have on the adjacent parking lot that they do not own, and to bring the shared parking lot up to the same standards as the parking lot they own.

IV. Other Commission Business

Staff Check-in

The next Design Commission Meeting is scheduled for January 15, 2020. The agenda for the meeting at this time consists of one Optional Design Commission Consult for the Rockwood Building C project that entails the redesign of the previously approved Market Hall as well as an update from Councilor Widmark. The Development Code Policy Update discussion has been moved to February 2020.

December 4, 2019 Design Commission Minutes

Commissioner McKeel moved to approve the December 4, 2019 Design Commission minutes. Commissioner Lando seconded the motion. The motion passed.

V. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 9:04 pm.

Chair

Recording Secretary

Date

Date

For more information, please visit: www.GreshamOregon.gov/DesignCommission.