

**Design Commission Meeting  
Gresham City Hall, Oregon Trail Room  
January 15, 2020, 6:30 p.m.**

**I. Opening**

A regular session of the Gresham Design Commission was called to order on the 15 of January, 2020 at 6:30 pm in the Oregon Trail Room of Gresham City Hall, located at 1333 NW Eastman Parkway, Gresham Oregon. The meeting was recorded and scribed by Jamie Thomes.

**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:** Camilla Cok  
Rob Cook  
Pat Lando  
Mike McKeel  
Tom Orth  
Matthew Sugarbaker

**COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:** Robert Hayden

**COUNCILOR PRESENT:** David Widmark

**STAFF:** John Heili, Urban Design & Planning  
Jamie Thomes, Urban Design & Planning  
Jim Wheeler, Urban Design & Planning  
Josh Williams, Urban Design & Planning

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

**II. Rockwood Building C Optional Design Commission Consult: 458 SE 185th Ave.**

**Presentations**

Staff and the applicant provided presentations to the Commission concerning the proposed modification of the design of the Building C - Market Hall on the Rockwood Rising site. The original proposal was approved through City of Gresham file DRE/VAR 16-26000409.

Applicant representatives included:

- Matt Brown, YBA Architects
- Tim Schneider, YBA
- Robert Foster, Robert H. Foster Consultants
- Jeff Oberst, RKM

## **Design Commission and Applicant Discussion**

Discussion Topic 1: 7.0503(A)(3)(d)(1) and (d)(3) - Building Placement and Frontage, 7.0503(A)(3)(d)(2) - Location of Parking/Loading, 7.0503(A)(6)(d)(1) - Location of Parking/Loading, 7.0503(A)(9)(d)(1) - Screening of Loading Facilities

In terms of how the building addresses the SE 185th Avenue frontage, the plans show that the building façade is set back 26 feet from the right of way, exceeding the 15-foot maximum setback. The rear of the building will be utilized for loading.

The design standards generally prohibit parking, loading, and vehicle circulation between the building and the street. However, for the SE 185th Avenue frontage, the Rockwood Design District specifically allows loading to take place when a 30-inch hedge or decorative wall buffers the area. As proposed, there will be two curb cuts on the SE 185th Avenue frontage allowing trucks to either back into or park in the loading area. A portion of the loading area will be buffered from the street by a low wall.

Further, the applicant must ensure that the functional rear of the building addresses the goal of creating pedestrian orientated streets in the Rockwood district. This also includes looking at how that loading area can be used during non-delivery times, making it more of a functional plaza area with enhanced paving and a facade that presents the appearance of storefronts with views into the kitchens or other spaces, where appropriate.

Does this design positively define the street, and does it support pedestrian oriented activities, meeting the intent of the guideline?

Commission comments included:

- Consider how the loading areas can be utilized during non-delivery hours so that the areas are more friendly to pedestrians both within and walking adjacent to the building.
- Pedestrian enhancements were encouraged, including weather protection, enhanced landscaping at the corner of SE 185th Avenue and the private driveway (near the southwest corner of Building C), and permeable paving.
- The suggestion was made to narrow the two driveways as well as the loading area.
- Additional buffering (including the width of the landscape and wall screening) between the loading area and the public sidewalk was encouraged.

Discussion Topic 2: 7.0503(B)(1)(d)(5) - Building Massing, 7.0503(B)(3)(d)(3-4) - Building Base

Two building design topics have been identified following the pre-application meeting with the applicant:

- Placement of the tallest building mass; and
- Building base.

For building mass, the standard states that the tallest mass should be oriented to the abutting street. In this instance, the tallest mass is facing the central plaza.

Regarding building base, because of the atypical design, with portions of the building being one and three stories in height, the standards for the base, which requires a base height of between 5 percent and 20 percent of the façade height, becomes difficult to meet in a coherent design. For massing, the guideline states that buildings shall utilize masses to frame and define streets and public spaces. In this instance, the tallest mass will help frame the plaza similar to the previous design but will step down toward the street.

The base treatment for the building primarily relies on the horizontal datums created by the transom windows and material changes across the first floor façade. The base standard states that bases shall consist of a visible change in the building façade including either a change in material; texture; pattern; ornamentation; or a change in depth of at least 4 inches. The guideline states that the base shall be proportional to the building and shall be visually pleasing.

Does the Commission feel that the massing and base treatment meets the intent of the guidelines?

Commission comments included:

- The Commission supported the design that creates a hierarchy with the tallest building mass adjacent to the public plaza, stepping down to a single story building adjacent to SE 185th Avenue.
  - The Commission also supported the sloping parapet to SE 185th Avenue as the movement creates a dynamic design element.
- Concern was expressed that the focus of the site will be the office building rather than the market place, which creates a less cohesive design overall.
- The new design is missing the entry experience that should draw people into the market hall.
- The Commission was supportive of the design elements that created a base on the building and expressed no issue with the deviation from the base height standard.
- The Commission supported the use of unpainted cedar wood in the canopy soffit and on the ground level façade.
  - However, the Commission felt the base could be strengthened if these accent elements were incorporated around the entire building.
- The applicant was encouraged to consider extending the canopy around the entire building for both design cohesion as well as weather protection.
  - Further, this would reintroduce the pedestrian-friendly design elements that were present in the original design, creating the east-west covered corridors that brought pedestrians into the site from SE 185th Avenue and SE Stark Street.
- The building design should be simple so that it may contrast with the active rhythm of the interior.

- The suggestion was made to explore other uses for the artwork panels shown on the renderings, but in a transparent or translucent application to bring light into the spaces as well as increase transparency on the ground floor.
- The applicant was encouraged to consider the durability of the materials that will be used.

### Discussion Topic 3: Parking Variance

Similar to the Civic Northwest project, the applicant is seeking a Minor Variance to modify the parking space dimension standards, creating a consistent stall width of 8 feet, 9 inches for all spaces in lieu of the previous design which included standard stalls with a width of 10 feet and compact stalls with a width of 8 feet. The applicant's argument includes data from ULI which was also submitted with the Civic Northwest review and approval demonstrating that a consistent width of 8 feet, 9 inches is sufficient for maneuvering and parking for present day vehicle sizes.

The change would eliminate compact parking on the site and would provide four additional parking stalls.

The Commission was generally amenable to the variance as requested by the applicant.

### Discussion Item 4: Overall Design Discussion

In terms of overall design, Commission comments included:

- The two larger upper story balconies weaken the building form.
  - Providing cover over the balconies will assist in maintaining the form with the building roof extending over the areas, allowing year-round use of the balconies and refocusing the attention to the market hall entry.
- In lieu of a direct pedestrian connection (walkway) from SE Stark Street to the market hall entry on the south façade, it was suggested that by providing the continuous canopy coverage around the building exterior, pedestrians will be better directed to the building entry, making a more inviting pedestrian experience.
- The applicant was also encouraged to look at how the large mass will potentially create shadows over other areas of the building, thereby reducing natural light penetration.

## **III. Other Commission Business**

### **Commission Selection Procedure Update**

Councilor David Widmark provided an update about the Council Advisory Committee selection process. The standard term of a Design Commissioner is three years. An upcoming update to the Gresham Revised Code states that, when a Commission member has been appointed for two terms, at the expiration of the second term, the Commission member will need to submit an application for the Design Commission position and go through an application process with other possible applicants. It was noted that Design Commission recruitment will maintain the

focus of incorporating different design and building disciplines. Another change to the Code will be that, if a Committee cannot determine a chair, Gresham City Council will appoint a chair.

The suggestion was made to consider updating the website to include all Commission members, their term expiration, and their focus to aid possible applicants applying for a position with the Commission.

**Staff Check-in**

Staff reviewed the Design Commission schedule for February 2020 and noted that the February 19 meeting will include a policy discussion about the Development Code and Process Updates project.

**March 27, 2019, April 17, 2019, July 17, 2019, and December 18, 2019 Design Commission Minutes**

Commissioner McKeel moved to approve the March 27, 2019, April 17, 2019, July 17, 2019, and December 18, 2019 Design Commission Minutes. Commissioner Orth seconded the motion. The motion passed.

**IV. Adjourn**

**The meeting adjourned at 8:04 pm.**

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Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Recording Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

For more information, please visit: [www.GreshamOregon.gov/DesignCommission](http://www.GreshamOregon.gov/DesignCommission).