

Planning and Urban Development Department

Planning Division



Subject: IOZ Design Review – 22 Bramhall (Maine Medical)
Written by: Caitlin Cameron, Urban Designer
Date of Review: Friday, March 16, 2018

This memo summarizes the applicable design guidelines and staff review for the projects at 22 Bramhall Street – East Tower and Visitor Garage expansion. These two projects are reviewed according to the adopted IOZ IDP and Regulatory Framework standards.

In the case of both proposals, the new construction is limited to vertical expansion of existing buildings. The proposals do not alter the footprints, plans, existing materials, or access points to each building. Therefore, the design evaluation is generally limited to the impact on the overall campus design, long views to the campus, and Congress Streetscape.

- **Planning Board comments and questions** from the February 27th meeting are summarized in **bold and underlined**.
- *Staff questions/comments and unmet guidelines in red*

Design Review Comments:

IDP Design Guidelines

1. New buildings will be designed to contribute to the campus vision and organizational goals identified in the Master Facility Plan and the Transportation Plan, and best practice design standards for healthcare.

East Tower: The stated MMC vision includes integrating inside and outside – achieved here through the internal circulation and window size and placement, as well as a “50 year palette” that selects materials based on cues from nature to create timeless environment. This vision includes Sky, Sea, and Land as concepts for material/color selection. The white metal panel and large curtain wall system intend to evoke the “sky” – light, recessive, neutral. The white material was also selected to tie into the existing metal panel as well as meet goal of a cohesive campus design. The design is largely informed by structural and constructability constraints.

Planning Board commented that they like the concept of bringing outside in but found that the outward expression of that idea was not strong enough.

Visitor Garage: The architectural character remains consistent by continuing the existing material palette and expression. In the case of Congress Street, the City’s priority is the building interface with the street – keeping the urban street wall edge, activating the ground floor, providing a sense of scale and enclosure for the pedestrian.

2. *The overall composition and experience of the campus will be considered for cohesive identity from approaches along Congress Street and I-295.*

East Tower: **Planning Board generally found that the proposal is cohesive with the future vision as presented in the 2/27 materials.** The applicant provided a view from I-295 that further demonstrates the intent for the East Tower expansion to visually contribute to the planned new character of the campus. The white material selection is intended to be a cohesive element throughout the campus moving forward.

Visitor Garage: The architectural character remains largely the same as the existing condition and is found to be consistent with the established character. The building addition increases the visibility of the campus from those long views. The applicant revised the screens to extend above the top deck, addressing the comments about the visual interest of the roofline.

3. *Building entrances will be oriented toward, located adjacent to, accessible from, a sidewalk in a public right-of-way to create a pedestrian-oriented environment.*

East Tower: Not applicable – entrances remain the same with existing ground floor.

Visitor Garage: The existing building has two retail entrances facing Congress Street to be activated with the construction field office. There are also steps with a door to access the circulation tower for the garage. From Crescent Street, there is a pedestrian path and doorway to the garage – **see CPTED comment below.**

4. *Building designs will relate to and be compatible with the existing, or – in areas of change – planned character of residential and commercial neighbors. Design elements and characteristics to consider include:*

- *Building placement and relationship to the street*
- *Overall massing and scale*
- *Roof forms*
- *Proportion, directional expression, and composition of facades*
- *Rhythm of solids to voids*
- *Rhythm and proportion of openings*
- *Rhythm of entries and projections*
- *Relationship of materials, texture, and color*

East Tower: **Some board members were concerned that the white panel will not achieve the desired effect of changing with the sky and natural light and therefore would not actually be recessive.** Staff, upon observation of the existing building, feel confident that the white panel will achieve the desired effect and will change in character related to the light and atmosphere. **There was additional comment on the white panel – members felt that the existing white elements in the campus design are not strong enough to take as inspiration for the new additions; why is a color that is a minor detail becoming a major design decision? White feels stark and while it may fit into a campus vision, there is concern about how this approach meets the guidelines regarding neighborhood integration/context.** The applicant selected

white panel to tie into the existing white details, but also for the purpose of relating to the future planned character of the campus. Taken in view of the campus as a whole, there is an argument to be made that the white will become a strong design element throughout the campus. When viewed together, the white of the East Tower will be cohesive with the other new buildings.

Finally, the board commented on the composition and proportion of the addition and commented that the design is lacking a base/middle/top which is a well-established approach to building design and façade composition. Staff continue to agree that the proportions of the façade composition as a whole are not ideal. However, given the limitations on the structure and construction for this addition, staff find that the solution is acceptable. The approach of a base/middle/top was difficult to achieve given the particulars of the existing building and the inability to make major modifications to the mechanical area of the building. The applicant showed staff previous iterations of the design and understand and agree with the rationale for the current proposal. Staff further find that the composition is more successful when viewed from long distances and in the context of the campus.

Visitor Garage: The massing, roof forms, rhythms, and material relationships remain mostly unchanged from the existing conditions. The screens will be extended up and around the sides of the building to further address the desire to for visually interesting roof lines.

5. Façade materials of buildings will be of high quality, and contribute to an attractive public realm.

East Tower: The applicant indicated the material choices are limited by construction constraints as well as the existing material palette. The proposal is simple white metal panel intended to visually blend with the existing white materials as well as provide a light, recessive quality to the increase in mass and height. Visual interest will be provided by material pattern, fenestration, and shadow lines created by angled windows on each façade. **Planning Board continues to be concerned about the choice of white panel – concern is not for the quality but for the contribution to the public realm and appropriateness, especially as it relates to the long views and neighboring context.** The applicant provided a view from I-295 to make the case that the white panel selection meets the intent to tie the East Tower expansion to the future character of the campus. The image shows how these buildings will be viewed together from certain vantage points.

Visitor Garage: The proposal maintains the existing material palette of brick, concrete, and metal screen. **Planning Board is concerned about the prominence of the garage on Congress Street and the lack of visual interest and contribution to the public realm by using the existing material palette.** In response to the Planning Board's comments, the applicant revised the elevation to extend the screens above the top deck adding visual interest to the roofline, screening the fall protection. There is a gap between the existing screen and the new screen to add some visual relief and to differentiate the existing from new façade. These screens will wrap around the corners of the building.

*6. The design process will **consider long views** of new buildings including roofs and associated structures to minimize visual impacts and **provide visual interest**. Rooftop appurtenances will be*

either screened from view or integrated into the building design, and will not be visible from adjacent streets, Western Promenade, or the Congress Street approach (helipad excluded).

East Tower: Planning Board commented that the simple roof form does not have enough visual interest for the long views.

Visitor Garage: **Congress Street is a major street and this building will become even more visible from long views as it grows in height. The garage proposal lacks visual interest from long views – articulation and visual interest are important for the garage in the forefront of the campus. Planning Board asks that the applicant re-evaluate the approach. The roofline is an element where visual interest could be added - Planning Board commented that the simple roof form does not have enough visual interest for the long views.** The applicant revised the screens in response to these comments. The screens will extend higher to provide a varied roofline that also screens the fall protection fence. The screening will wrap around the corners. There will be a reveal between the existing and new screens to give a visual break, as well as a literally break between the existing and new construction. These elements address the Board comments by adding some dynamic elements to the roofline in a way that is structurally feasible.

7. Vibrant, contributing and sustainable active ground floors will be provided to add activity and a sense of place to the priority node identified in the City's Comprehensive Plan.

East Tower: Not applicable

Visitor Garage: This has been addressed through the fit out and activation of the construction field office.

8. In areas where the occurrence of limited blank facades along public rights-of-way are unavoidable due to changes in topography or building use requirements, the following strategies will be used to mitigate visual impact:

- providing elements of visual interest along any blank walls facing public streets, and,*
- working with the City of Portland to ensure adequate lighting of public sidewalks to create a safe pedestrian experience.*

East Tower: Not applicable

Visitor Garage: Met - See comment 7. above.

9. Any parking structure within the IOZ will:

- screen views of cars from the public rights-of-way*
- provide elements of architectural interest on upper floors to contribute positively to long views and gateway approaches***
- for garage structures within 20' of the public right-of-way, meet street activation intent according to street type*

East Tower: Not applicable

Visitor Garage: Screening requirement is met - Screening methods will follow the established existing design – solid wall with metal mesh railing with a trellis accent – this current condition successfully screens cars/headlights from Congress and Crescent streets. **Planning Board commented on the lack of visual interest on upper floors and feel this guideline is not met – roofline, façade material, fall protection/screen design are possible architectural elements that can address this guideline.** The applicant has addressed these comments with changes to the screen elements – see staff comments 6. above.

Street activation guideline is met, see comments 7. above.

Building Relationship to Public Street

1. Urban Main Street (Congress Street)

MMC buildings abutting Congress St will be designed to:

- *Provide urban-levels of density*
- *Create an urban street wall that provides a sense of enclosure to the public realm*
- *Have their primary orientation towards Congress Street*
- *Activate the public sidewalk with building entrances, lobbies, etc.*
- *To the extent possible, given programmatic needs, provide visual interest and ensure pedestrian safety with views into and out of the building along the public sidewalk*
- *To the extent possible, given programmatic needs, provide space for community-oriented uses such as services or retail that can be shared between MMC users, neighbors, and the broader Portland community*
- *Support the existence of neighborhood amenities such as restaurants and other retail uses providing services to local residents and employees both during the day and evening hours.*

In addition to the guidelines listed above, buildings that have frontage on Congress Street and that include parking components will activate portions of or place liner buildings along the ground floor facing Congress Street.

East Tower: Not applicable

Visitor Garage: The building addition maintains the urban street wall already established. The existing building's primary orientation is towards Congress Street. Entrances are not proposed to be changed – there are several existing entrances oriented to Congress Street. For activation, see comment 7. above.

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)

MMC will incorporate the following design strategies that have been demonstrated to deter crime:

- *Providing a clean and aesthetically pleasing campus environment that is designed with vandal-resistant materials*
- *Providing clear and properly-sized signs in safe locations to ensure safe wayfinding*
- *Ensuring that paths from transit stops, bike storage areas, and parking areas to main pedestrian entrances are well-lit, with clear sight lines*
- *Designing street-level elevations to minimize potential hideouts*
- *To the extent possible, given clinical program demands, providing views in and out of building ground floors populated by users to serve as “eyes on the street”*
- *Generating foot traffic on public sidewalks with pedestrian entrances*

East Tower: No changes to the site lighting or ground level building interface are proposed. Staff are not concerned about the CPTED in this location due to the level of activity, visibility, and lighting present in the ground floor design.

Visitor Garage: No changes proposed to lighting. **The applicant has confirmed there are some current safety concerns with the circulation tower. The lighting levels and visibility on the Congress Street sidewalk and steps are fine. However, the hidden corners inside the stairs have created nuisance problems. The application does not currently include a plan to address this issue. Staff recommend that a condition of approval include a proposal here.**

Mitigating Impacts Through Design

Minimizing Shadow Impacts - Shadow impacts were evaluated as part of the IDP process. Both projects increase building height and will inevitably have some shadow impact – the garage height will increase the shadow cast across Congress Street but, as the applicant has argued, shadows on Congress Street are unavoidable due to the terrain, orientation, and street position. Refer to Plan 13 for shadow analysis of the approved IDP building heights – a couple of residential buildings are impacted in the winter by the increased height.

Context-Sensitive Lighting Design – No changes to site lighting proposed.

Mitigating Wind Impact – No information was provided to evaluate this item.

Preserving and Enhancing Viewsheds – The building expansions do not impact Western Promenade viewsheds. Each of these expansions will increase the visibility of the campus from multiple long views (see application materials). The applicant hopes that the long view impact will strengthen the cohesiveness of the campus.

Regulatory Framework

- 1. Mixed Uses:*** . . . *healthcare facility development fronting onto Congress Street and St. John Street shall activate the public realm, to the extent able, with uses such as service and retail/restaurant, landscaping, active building entrances, pocket parks, etc., on the ground or other publicly accessible level, consistent with the design intent contained in the approved IDP. . . .*

East Tower: Not applicable

Visitor Garage: Met - See comment 7. above.