

Planning and Urban Development Department

Planning Division



Subject: IOZ Design Review – 22 Bramhall (Maine Medical)
Written by: Caitlin Cameron, Urban Designer
Date of Review: Wednesday, January 17 2018

The projects at 22 Bramhall Street – East Tower and Visitor Garage expansion - were reviewed according to the adopted IOZ IDP and Regulatory Framework standards by Caitlin Cameron, Urban Designer, Jean Fraser, Planner, and Nell Donaldson, Senior Planner.

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.

Design Review Comments: *(questions and unmet standards in red)*

- Please provide a **rendering** showing the visitor garage project in context on Congress Street.
- **More information** is requested regarding materials – label materials on elevations.
- **More information** is requested regarding site lighting.

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 East Tower expansion seeks to introduce a contemporary tower that prioritizes the patient experience while also taking advantage of its visual prominence by creating a simple but strong contemporary statement that knits together some of the varying design components of the existing surrounding buildings. 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. **Planning Board may want to consider if this East Tower design meets this vision for timelessness, integration of inside/outside, and a reflection of modern delivery of healthcare – these design decisions will likely inform future choices for other parts of the campus.**

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. The MMC vision includes creating a sense of place while allowing new design reflect its location in Portland and Maine, as well as

the historic context of the hospital and surrounding neighborhoods. In this case – those goals are met or at least existing conditions are improved upon.

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: The addition introduces a new design aesthetic to the MMC campus. The applicant proposes this as the first of several phases that incorporate the vision for the campus as described above and in the applicant’s submittal. Staff think this design creates a more visible and contemporary identity to the campus – **if approved, future designs should be evaluated for cohesiveness with this new direction.**

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.

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 and steps with a door to access the circulation tower for the garage. The garage currently only has vehicle entrances facing Congress Street which pedestrians can use but there is not a designated pedestrian path/door. From Crescent Street, there is a pedestrian path and doorway.

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: The addition is simple in its massing, roof form, and material palette. These two additional floors also change the overall proportion of the building’s massing and façade composition. Staff support the direction given the constructability constraints and the limitations of the existing façade character. The window openings are placed and scaled to reflect the long views and tower scale of the building. They establish a rhythm consistent with existing building and campus design. The white metal in contrast with the red brick make the proportions top-heavy, but the applicant makes the case that brick is not a viable option for the

building addition and that white color palette was selected to integrate with the existing materials and details without introducing yet another element.

Visitor Garage: The massing, roof forms, rhythms, and material relationships remain mostly unchanged from the existing conditions. **Scale is the most significant change to this building – staff have requested street view renderings to understand how that scale change will be experienced on the street.**

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.

Visitor Garage: The proposal maintains the existing material palette of brick, concrete, and metal screen. Staff agree this is a logical selection to provide consistency to the building. **However, staff are concerned about the loss of the canopy on the stair tower as an architectural feature.**

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: The rooftop mechanicals are screened in a way that minimizes their impact and appearance and are visible only from a few directions.

Visitor Garage: **Rooftop appurtenances have not been adequately screened or integrated into the building design - this is especially of concern for the long views.**

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: **Staff request the applicant provide more information regarding the ground floor activation facing Congress Street.** The building includes storefront, doors oriented to Congress Street, canopies, and adequate site lighting, however, the space is currently vacant and has a translucent film covering the windows and impeding the visual connection and activity from the sidewalk.

8. In areas where the occurrence of limited blank facades along public right-of-ways 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: 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 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. The current design includes a curtain wall stair tower with an accentuated canopy feature – **this roof element appears to be removed from the new addition and rooftop mechanicals are shown without screening or design integration. Staff suggest keeping an element like the canopy will help screen the rooftop mechanicals and meet the guideline of providing architectural interest on upper floors – especially considering with the increased height, these elements will become even more visible from long views.** For street activation, 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: **Please indicate any changes to the site lighting or ground level building interface.**

Visitor Garage: **Please indicate any changes to the site lighting or ground level building interface.**

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 – **More information is requested regarding site lighting for both projects.**

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.

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: **See comment 7. above.**