

Planning and Urban Development Department

Planning Division



Subject: B7 Design Review – 20 Marginal Way

Written by: Caitlin Cameron, Urban Designer

Date of Review: Wednesday, July 8, 2015

On Wednesday, July 8, a design review according to the *City of Portland Design Manual* Standards was performed for the new construction proposal for redevelopment at 20 Marginal Way. The revisions were reviewed by Caitlin Cameron, Urban Designer, and Jean Fraser, Planner, Planning Division of the Department of Planning & Urban Development. The project was reviewed against the *B-7 Mixed Use Urban District Zone Design Principles & Standards* (Appendix 4 of the Design Manual).

Design Review Criteria:

The project must meet all *B-7 Design Principles & Standards*.

Findings of the Design Review:

Overall the proposal meets the B-7 Design Guidelines with the exception of the signage guidelines for which the applicant is seeking waivers. The building is of a scale and orientation conducive to an urban, multi-modal, and on-peninsula site. The ground level provides an active frontage with storefront and street-facing entries. The project also provides a sustainable design employing solar panels.

The proposed design currently **does not pass** all of the criteria of the *B7 Design Guidelines*. Refer to comments below regarding **waiver requests** and design elements which do not meet the standards - Staff recommends **condition of approval** wherein the window design issues including transparency, color, and size, be resolved with City staff including the Urban Designer to meet the intent of the B-7 Design Principles and Standards.

Principle A: Urban Design

A-5: Pedestrian Environment – *Development on public streets or public spaces shall . . . enhance the pedestrian environment through the use of elements at the first floor such as fully functioning entries oriented to the street; active windows and storefronts; awnings and weather protection; appropriately scaled streetlights; trees and landscaping; . . .*

- The project places an **active door and storefront** facing Marginal Way and **contributes to the street wall**. **The sidewalk is placed adjacent to the building** as recommended by staff. The applicant recessed the entries in order to accommodate the outward door swing into the public right-of-way. **A canopy is used to emphasize the entry points** of the building.

A-7: Building Orientation – *The primary facades and entrances of buildings shall be oriented to streets, major pedestrian routes, or open spaces in order enhance the pedestrian-oriented environment. The primary facades and entrances of buildings shall not be oriented toward parking lots.*

- The project is **oriented towards the street creating a street wall** and includes **street-facing entries** at the sidewalk.

Principle C: Parking, Loading and Service Areas

C-6: Surface Lots – *Areas devoted to surface parking shall be screened from public rights of way and significant views through the use of design elements such as plantings, fencing, grade changes, and/or walls. A landscaped border shall be created around all surface parking lots. Any parking lot containing ten (10) or more parking spaces shall include one (1) or more landscaped islands within the interior of the lot. There shall be at least one (1) island for every twenty (20) spaces.*

- Staff suggests landscaping choices that are tall enough to **provide adequate screening from neighboring properties and views of parking from the street. Staff does not support a waiver request** from the landscaping requirement from an urban design standpoint.

Principle E: Architectural Design

E-12: Materials – *Facades visible from public rights of way shall use natural and authentic building materials that are expected to last at least 50 years. Predominant materials shall be brick, stone, precast concrete and other masonry products, wood, glass, and high quality metals such as steel, titanium and copper. . . . Materials such as thin gauge metal panels, exterior insulation and finish systems (EIFS), panelized “thin brick,” vinyl siding, or stucco on Styrofoam or a similar backing shall not be used on facades visible from the public rights of way. Fiber-cement clapboard and shingles may be used. Fiber cement panels shall only be used on portions of the building not visible from public rights of way. Public spaces shall be constructed of permanent, durable materials such as concrete, brick or stone.*

- **The building material palette** is similar to the recent commercial buildings on Marginal Way and **meets the design standard** – brick, composite panels, and storefront.

E-7: Windows – *The first floor transparency (minimum visible transmittance (VT) of .7 or greater) along public streets and the trail shall be equal to at least 50% of the wall area between the height of 2 and 9 feet. The first floor windows and storefronts shall be transparent with active uses visible behind them. Opaque glass shall not be allowed at the first floor level [See Standard E-13 Transparency]. Upper floors of all new buildings shall have at least 15% to 40% transparency of wall surface requirements. If it can be demonstrated that the building program precludes windows along first floor street frontages, then other surface details shall be used in accordance with Standard E-4 Articulation.*

- **Proposed glass has a VLT of .56 which is lower than the allowed .7. A sample is required** before staff can assess whether the transparency is adequate.
- **Spandrel glass (opaque) is proposed** for the upper portion of the ground floor storefront which is **not allowed by the Standard. See comments below.**

E-8: Storefronts - *Storefront glass shall be transparent in accordance with Standard E-13: Transparency, and shall not be blocked with opaque glass, or other means.*

- **Proposed transparency does not meet the Standard.**
- **Spandrel glass (opaque) is proposed** for the upper portion of the ground floor storefront **which is not allowed by the Standard. Staff does not support the use of spandrel glass in this project. Staff recommends that the ground floor windows be reduced in height** (and the canopy subsequently lowered) and the area where spandrel glass is proposed be eliminated. Reducing the amount of glazing will also reduce the solar gain in the façade.

E-13: Transparency – *Windows that have daylighting application on all levels of the façade shall use glass with a visible transmittance (VT) value of .7 or greater, which looks clear. . . . Opaque, heavily tinted or reflective glass shall not be used at the pedestrian level unless it can be demonstrated that the building program precludes the use of transparent glass.*

- **Proposed glass has a VLT of .56 which is lower than the allowed .7. A sample is required** before staff can assess whether the transparency is adequate.
- **Proposed glass has a green tint** which is not allowed by the Standard. **Glazing should look clear. A sample is required** before staff can assess whether the color is adequate.
- **Spandrel glass (opaque) is proposed** for the upper portion of the ground floor storefront which is **not allowed by the Standard. See comments above.**

E-16: Signage – *A master signage plan shall be required for all new construction as part of the site plan review process. Signage on new buildings shall be related to, and an integral part of, the design of the building. The master sign plan shall allow adaptability for changing tenants and uses over time. See Appendix 4 for additional signage standards.*

- **Applicant is proposing a signage master plan that does not meet the Design Standards and will require waivers for the following:**
 - **Illuminated plastic sign letters** - Given the precedent of waivers granted in B-7 for plastic illuminated letters, **staff supports the waiver request** for allowing this sign design.
 - **Number of upper level signs** - The guidelines limit the number of upper story signs to two (2) and the applicant is requesting three (3). **Staff defers to the Planning Board** on the appropriateness of additional signs. If the Planning Board does not support the waiver request, staff recommends the two upper level signs on the building's short faces which will be visible to vehicular traffic.
 - **Number of pedestrian level signs** – The guidelines limit the number of pedestrian level signs to one (1) and the applicant is requesting two (2). **Staff defers to the Planning Board** on the appropriateness of additional signs. If the Planning Board does not support the waiver request, staff recommends the pedestrian level sign facing Marginal Way.