

2257 NW RALEIGH ST.
PORTLAND, OR 97210



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June 20, 2019

To: Art Graves, BDS and Portland Design Commission, PBOT

RE: LU 19-145295 DZM Hyatt Place/Allison Residences

The PDNA Planning and Transportation Committee reviewed the Hyatt Place Design Review submission on May 21st. The development team opted not to present to the Committee for this latest version of the proposal, however they did provide updated materials for our review. It should be noted they presented twice before earlier in the process. Please find our original letter submitted to you from those previous presentations following the text of this letter.

The Committee unanimously voted to not support the proposal in its current form. As stated in our original letter, the Committee strongly supports increased density and aligns with Portland's efforts to reduce auto use in the Central City. Given its density of housing, employment and amenities, the Pearl District is an ideal location to live car-free and we encourage more diversity in the composition of residential units and amenities to better serve the needs of a more diverse population, including the provision of family-sized and affordable units. We see our fundamental role as helping to elevate the form and function of new buildings, creating dynamic spaces that support the growth and evolution of the Pearl District as a mixed-use and mixed-income urban neighborhood. Unfortunately, we simply cannot support the proposal's design and response to context. This is a precedent-setting project and it must exhibit exceptional design and sensitivity to context, as it ultimately creates a new context given the new code under Central City 2035.

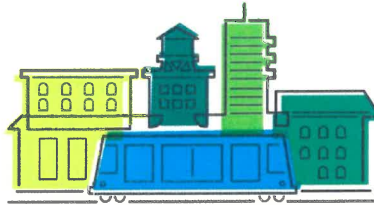
While we recognize that it is considered beyond the scope of Design Review, the Committee has significant concerns about the intensity of use on such a small floor plate adjacent to the Flanders Greenway. We are concerned that there are not adequate valet/drop-off/pick-up facilities provided to prevent the Flanders Greenway from being adversely impacted by vehicular activity (i.e. double parking and circling the block), such as reduced visibility when crossing the street. The safety of Greenway users must be considered.

The proposal is able to reach the new maximum height only by transferring substantial FAR to this site. Central City 2035 clearly implemented this provision as a mechanism to counter market forces from replacing existing buildings of significance threatened by demolition. Unfortunately, the Committee has not been provided the site(s) of FAR transfer in order to determine if the potential public benefit would help to offset some of our challenges with the proposal.

Below is a list of our design observations and recommendations:

- The facade is not coherent. There are too many variations of panels and colors and too few windows. The design is not elegant
- The mass needs to be sculpted--not simply a facade play. The offset panels and ribs create visual confusion rather than suggesting sculpting. The site is the same distance from the 13th Avenue Historic District as both The Rodney and the Modera Glisan. The Commission required those projects to step their mass down towards 13th Avenue. This proposal should be held to the same standard. If the building was appropriately sculpted, the set-backs would allow for more windows on the lower half of the building. The program is being stuffed to the maximum at the expense of the public realm.
- Why is the facade emphasizing the vertical given it's substantially taller than current context? Given the precedent-setting height, the building needs to get "lighter" as it gets taller. The facade variation calls out height and mass rather than being corrective.

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- The corner is still not being celebrated. The lower hotel portion is still an end-wall treatment and is closest to the pedestrian realm so it is the most important portion to activate. The southeast interior facade has more activation than the public sides of the building. The Commission required both The Hampton Inn and Canopy hotels to remove end-wall treatments from their corner facades. This standard should continue here.
- The base needs a stronger, simpler and more consistent articulation. The two strong corner columns need to be better-integrated into that overall composition of the base.
- The "crown" is incoherent and not effective. It should be articulated on all sides in a more symmetric fashion given the prominence it will hold.
- The materials are not consistent with context as it is one block from Historic District and no buildings nearby use metal panels. The Commission did indicate that metal panels were acceptable but they emphasized quality. We disagree. Given the bulk and height of the proposal, it would be more effective contextually if the materials were in keeping to its surroundings. Context is a key part of Design Review. The proposal is simply not contextual by any reasonable definition.

We strongly urge the Commission to require the proposal to address these challenges in a meaningful way.

Respectfully,

David Dysert
Planning & Transportation Co-Chair
Pearl District Neighborhood Association

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September 28, 2018

To: Jill DeCoursey, BDS and Portland Design Commission

Re: EA 18-210300 DA – 12th and Flanders Hotel/Residential

The developer and design team for this project came before our committee on August 7th for an initial introduction of the proposed program and massing. We appreciate their efforts to involve the committee so early in the process. Given this preliminary stage, it is too early to form conclusions but the committee wanted to provide the Design Commission with some initial thoughts and concerns on this proposal for the October 4th Design Advice Request.

This proposal presents challenges for the committee, as it is the first project we have seen under the new Central City 2035 code. The additional height and Floor Area Ratio transfer allowance have allowed a proposal with a new level of intensity of use for the Pearl, and in particular the South Pearl, which has a context of more traditional blocky warehouse massing. This proposal at the intersection of 12th Avenue and Flanders Street contrasts not only in its new taller height, but also in its point tower massing. Moreover, its program--that of part hotel, part residence solely served by valet--while not new in other cities, is a first for Portland and the Pearl.

How do we appropriately discuss context of a new building when, with a new code, it establishes a new context? Looking at the early development of the Pearl, buildings such as the Gregory did not have immediate buildings to support the height and mass but they used a vocabulary that was contextual, if too faux-historic for some. What might 12th & Flanders use to provide context? Some in the Pearl see a clear distinction between the original south Pearl and the blank slate North Pearl with unlimited height and glassy towers. Should the South Pearl have tall glassy and/or point towers too? These individuals do not believe so but prefer to uphold a distinct context between the two areas. Unfortunately, the code does not recognize this distinction despite its precedence. The blank slate that was present north of Lovejoy Street is by definition a different context. It should be noted that this site is one block from the NW 13th Historic District.

The committee has long supported greater density which takes advantage of the location, live/work access and existing public transportation infrastructure. The Pearl is an ideal location to live and work car-free, especially at this particular site where numerous amenities and tens of thousands of jobs are located in reasonable walking distance. Moreover, parking garages are the most expensive part of new developments and we support increasing housing affordability and providing more options for renters that do not own vehicles (nearly half of all household renters in the River District do not have access to a vehicle, compared to 10 percent of household owners). In this sense, the proposal meets many of Portland's long term goals outlined in the CC2035 and the Transportation System Plan. In theory, we support the idea of the proposal but we are concerned the intensity of use at this location may present challenges. Below are a few:

1. The proposal will be setting a new precedent. Given this significance, the architecture must be exceptional. The small site will prove challenging to set back or carve out the massing to prevent a 23- story wall facing the street. How this building transitions from the tower down to the pedestrian realm is critical.
2. Given the allowable height and FAR are being taken to the maximum, what is this building giving back? We would expect to see a significant amount of the FAR being transferred to this site to not simply be from Sector 1, but from within the Pearl itself. Ideally, the transfer would be from a building or buildings of character not currently protected, but which nonetheless contribute to historic context.
3. The intensity of use on such a small floor plate may also present challenges to access and circulation, as the site abuts the proposed Flanders Greenway. The loading and proposed valet drop off/pick up functions must be carefully considered as they relate to the greenway. This route will be a key connection for non-auto commuting from Northwest to the Eastside, finally bridging I-405 and Naito Parkway. Given this location, the proposal must provide ample bike storage facilities. Will there be enough room?

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In sum, we are very supportive of adding car-free density to the Pearl, however, the initial proposal seen thus far presents challenges that will need to be addressed. We look forward to working with the development team to address these challenges.

We want to acknowledge the attendance and stated concerns of the neighbors who live near the site. Several adjacent residents have submitted written letters in opposition with concerns centering around the height of the proposal being out of context with the neighborhood, lack of off-street parking, loss of existing public parking, potential congestion impacts on 12th Avenue, and various traffic safety concerns. In addition, some want the existing tree to be preserved given its size, age and type. It is our understanding that these comments and letters will be addressed to the Design Commission as well.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David Dysert", is written over a horizontal line.

David Dysert
Planning & Transportation Co-Chair
Pearl District Neighborhood Association