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CITY OF ASTORIA

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BUILDING CODES

MEMORANDUM

project: 17035 – Astoria Hotel **date:** 10.05.2018

to: **Nancy Ferber** **cc:**
City of Astoria
1095 Duane St.
Astoria, Oregon 97103

from: Craig Riegelnegg

On June 25, 2018, the City of Astoria Design Review Commission (DRC) and Historic Landmarks Commission (HLC) held hearings for Design Review and Historic Design Review of the Astoria Fairfield Hotel project, proposed by Hollander Hospitality with Carleton Hart Architecture. On July 11 the DLC and HLC issued decisions denying the proposed design for both reviews. Hollander Hospitality appealed the decisions and the City Council held hearings on the appeals on August 23, 2018. The City Council remanded the Design Review back to the Design Review Committee to evaluate a revised proposal submitted to the City Council. The City Council overturned the HLC decision, concluding that there were no criteria available, per the requirements of the code, against which the proposed project can be reviewed. Reversal of the HLC decision was tentatively adopted by the City Council, with final written approval to follow pending the decision by the DRC on the applicant's revised proposal.

The second hearing of the Design Review Committee is scheduled for October 9, 2018. Below are responses issued by the Applicant, to Staff Findings sent on October 2, 2018. Responses are being issued in preparation for the hearing and will be elaborated on further at the time of the hearing. We have addressed the (9) items listed in Part VIII: Conclusion, as areas of clarification or review to be ruled on by the DRC. The Responses below focus exclusively on these (9) items, although the Applicant's presentation will address these and other areas of the Findings in greater detail.

DESIGN REVIEW STAFF FINDINGS

1. *Section 3.075*

City of Astoria Staff:

The applicant should address requirements for building height limitations in Section 3.075 to confirm that the area included in the screened area is necessary to screen equipment allowed for in the code.

Applicant:

The proposed design relies on Exceptions 1 and 2 from this code section, to allow portions of the roof to extend above listed height limitations. Exception 2 allows elevator penthouses to overrun beyond the height limit, which applies to the top of the elevator shaft in the southeast corner of the small elevated

roof “tower” in question. Exception 1 allows rooftop mechanical units and associated screening, here provided as a raised parapet wall, to exceed the height limit as well.

It should be noted that the Development Code does not state or suggest that the roof parapet to which Exception 1 is applied should be the smallest section possible to allow adequate screening—only that mechanical equipment and appurtenances together with their screening elements are exempt within the other listed requirements. Regardless, the proposed design endeavors to minimize the horizontal dimensions of this tower, creating a rectangle in plan that provides the minimum space necessary for the mechanical unit, roof access and elevator overrun to all fit within one mass. The intent is to create an economy of massing that provides one raised component instead of two or three, as would be allowed under these code exceptions.

The clearances surrounding the RTU are designed as the industry standard minimum of 3’-0” on the north and west. On the south side clearances are increased to allow roof access through the hatch by maintenance personnel and to permit a roof drain to be installed and maintained. On the east side the clearance is approximately 12’-0”. Besides allowing extra tolerance for the clear possibility that the equipment requirements at the time of installation may exceed the 3’-0” standard, this dimension is a by-product of squaring the corner of the north parapet with the east parapet/elevator shaft wall. There is no other effective way to properly screen the subject equipment and maintain the consistency of the parapet wall with the underlying structure.

2. Section 14.115 (B) 2a

City of Astoria Staff:

To meet criteria for 14.115 (B) 2a, the applicant should address how the design is maintaining characteristics of scale, massing and material along street facades.

Applicant:

The cited Development Code section reads as follows: “Buildings should retain significant original characteristics of scale, massing, and building material along street facades.” This code section only applies to the east side of the building where it fronts on Second Street. Inasmuch as the building references “original characteristics”, which would require a specific antecedent to which the originality refers, the technical application of this criterion seems difficult to define. However, the Staff Findings elaborate on the intent of this section as “retaining the character of the area”.

Regardless of whether this criterion technically applies, the proposed design does a great deal to retain characteristics of scale, massing and material, with connection to both the Ship Inn which previously fronted Second Street, and to the working waterfront precedents deeper in the City’s history.

The project Narrative (Part 1 of the Design Review submittal) details the applicable precedents for the project in terms of scale, massing and material among historical canneries, fisheries and other waterfront industrial buildings. Numerous historical buildings were of comparable size and form, with large wall planes, high roofs and simple geometric shapes. Part 2 contains drawings, photos, and other research data substantiating this.

However, inasmuch as this specific code section deals with the Second Street frontage, the proposed design adapts those qualities to the single-story Lobby/Entry form at this frontage. The Ship Inn, that currently occupies and previously operated on this site, had its entry on the south side and used the east façade primarily for a utility point-of-entry shed attached to the building. The new design improves in this configuration by extending 36 feet of glazing across 45’-6” of frontage to maximize transparency

and engagement of this elevation with the terminus of Second Street. Each window bay includes an operable awning sash to allow sound and air to drift between lobby and the street.

Since the street dead-ends at this location, it is not possible to couple a vehicle turnaround and entry on this elevation as the hotel use will require, so the entry is situated just around the corner to the south elevation. The patio for the dining area is situated directly north of this form, so that this short east elevation features transparency bookended by exterior activity. Bicycle racks and benches are also situated along this frontage to engage passersby and guests. Given the north frontage along the Riverwalk, the specific nature of the Second Street terminus, and the resulting not-quite-urban nature of the pedestrian experience along this frontage, the approach taken by the proposed design is both referential to the historic precedents of the site and appropriate for the shape this location will take in the future.

Additionally of note, part of Finding C for Section 14.113 (C)1c includes a note that appears to allow eave overhang projections within the view corridor. It was the Applicant's assumption that the view corridor was not a "yard" per 3.070, but if it is in fact qualified this way then we would prefer to allow the roof to overhang on this frontage. This would also benefit the intent of Section 14.115.B 2a.

3. Section 14.115 (B) 2c

City of Astoria Staff:

The specific aspects of the design should be outlined as to how they address sensitivity and craftsmanship at the site and development as a product of the time.

Applicant:

The cited Development Code section reads as follows: "Distinctive stylistic features or examples of skilled craftsmanship should be treated with sensitivity. All buildings should be respected and recognized as products of their time." The previous section, 14.115 (B) 2b, specifically addresses additions, and this section appears to do the same, which makes its technical application in this case somewhat unclear. However, the Staff Findings state that "the Development Code does not limit its applicability."

To the extent that this code standard applies to new building, the Applicant has been directed by the City, on many occasions, to adopt the "working waterfront" industrial building stock of the late 19th century as its primary aesthetic reference for the design of the proposed project. A large part of the Design Review materials indicate how specific features and details of precedents that were studied have been translated into the current design. This has been done in most cases by referencing the aesthetic qualities of form, color, texture, scale, composition, proportion, and other architectural qualities as they are presented in the historic designs, but doing so with modern materials and building technologies that adhere to contemporary requirements for fire resistance, weatherproofing, insulation, condensation control, and a host of other considerations that have developed greatly since the construction of the old canneries.

Craftmanship, represented by product selection and the detailing of transitions, bridges the gap between the old look and the new construction. Trim detailing at the floor lines and windows, siding selection, specification of high-quality windows and glazing assemblies, subtle modulation of the roof form and implementation of steel grates and board-formed concrete are just a few of the elements that accomplish this, as detailing in the Design Review submittal. As such the building is a product of its time, even as it looks back on another time and references the history of the site and area.

4. Section 14.115 (B) 2e

City of Astoria Staff:

The applicant should confirm the access to the trash enclosure will not block either adjacent parking spaces.

Applicant:

The trash enclosure is still able to be accessed with any and all parking spaces on site occupied. The strike side of the gate is just over 9' from the curb to the west, while the compact space indicated is 8.5' in width. The door swings out and to the east. It is impossible for the door to hit a car parked in the space to the south, and the door would have to swing more than 180 degrees to hit a vehicle in the space to the east. If required, a stop can be added to make this physically impossible as well.

Per the design intent, access to the *transformer* enclosure will require the adjacent parking spot to be vacated. Since access to the transformer is only required in exceptional cases, and not regularly as in solid waste pick-up, we consider this to be acceptable and have taken a similar approach in other jurisdictions in the past. If this is not acceptable we can also specify hinges that allow the gates to be picked up and moved from their locations as well as swung open.

5. Section 14.115 (B) 2f

City of Astoria Staff:

The DRC should determine if the building form meets the intent of the code.

Applicant:

This code section reads, in full, "Building forms should be simple single geometric shapes, e.g. square, rectangular, triangular." The Narrative response to this item and the relevant representation in Part 2 describe the primary and secondary forms composing the project, and prove that they both meet the intent of the code and appropriately reference the historical precedents. The first sentence of the Staff Findings for this item reads, "The proposed new construction of the building is a simple rectangle."

Although the staff report indicates that a "modulated design would be encouraged to provide a more attractive façade" the relevant code language imposes no such standard. The code is clear: "building forms should be simple geometric shapes[.]" The applicant's design meets this standard by providing a rectangular shape.

6. Section 14.115 (C) 3 and Section 14.115 (C) 7

City of Astoria Staff:

The DRC should determine if the clerestory meets the single gable requirement to satisfy 14.115C.3 and if the clerestory is a compliant design feature and appropriate roof form.

Applicant:

It is the opinion of the Applicant that the roof design of the east Lobby/Entry form meets the single gable requirement, and additionally creates a more visually interesting and attractive exterior appearance for this public frontage of the project. This detail references an architectural solution to

lighting from a time when electrical light was scarce or nonexistent, and meets the intent of the code by recreating and utilizing a historically functional and beautiful form-defining feature of an industrial roof. As a feature that accomplishes the same objective as a skylight, it seems very close to technically satisfying the outright allowance in Section 14.115 (C) 7. We would argue that this feature accomplishes the intent of the code.

7. Section 14.115 (G)

City of Astoria Staff:

The applicant should clarify the depth of this synthetic wood awning and the DRC should determine if it meets criteria for (c) properly sized for the building/entry/window.

Applicant:

It is assumed that this item refers to the narrow continuous awning on the south side of the building, which is also detailed in the Narrative response to this item and in Part 2. The awning is 2' in depth as it projects out from the concrete wall at the ground floor. Note that the awning is not in fact synthetic wood, but a framed profile with standing seam metal roofing and a plywood soffit to match the eave projection on the roof. The dimension is the maximum possible per discussions with the City of Astoria Fire Department, based on their clearance requirements for ladder access from the drive. The 2' projection provides a measured amount of covered walkway for visitors approaching the main entry from the west, and breaks up the flat south wall plane in a way that is appropriate to the context references. Given that there is no way to enlarge the awning, and an awning of smaller dimensions would both be aesthetically inferior and provide less coverage from the elements, the awning should be found to be properly sized.

8. Section 14.115 (G)

City of Astoria Staff:

The DRC should determine if awnings meet criteria for (c) properly sized for the building/entry/window.

Applicant:

It is assumed that this item refers to the deep timber-framed awning at the southeast entry which is also detailed in the Narrative response to this item and in Part 2. In that it is supported on one side by independent structure (two columns), this element may be more precisely described as a canopy. However, we feel that its presence and design are justified even if the awning designation is applied. The depth and span of the awning are proportional and appropriate to its attachment to the building's entry and to its use for cover of guests entering and exiting the building and waiting for pickup. Enough space is provided for ancillary luggage and carts, hotel personnel, and even public congregation of small groups. The design is compatible with the standing-seam roof at the rest of the project, and the trimmed-out timber beam and columns recalls the functional exterior additions to the working waterfront precedents.

9. 14.115 (H) 1

City of Astoria Staff:

Lighting type "F" noted on page 37 (lighting plan) should be down cast and not include an up-lighting design.

Applicant:

Lighting type "F" is to be used at the monument sign only, and we specified it as a substitute to the ground-mounted up-light which was previously rejected. Page 62 in Part 2 shows it installation at the top of the sign. Although the light itself can be set in various positions, in this case it will be directed downward and at a slight angle toward the face of the sign, such that no glare is visible from the height of a pedestrian or driver.