



Planning & Development Services

Boise City Hall, 2nd Floor
150 N. Capitol Boulevard
P. O. Box 500
Boise, Idaho 83701-0500

Phone: 208/384-3830
Fax: 208/384-3753
TDD/TTY: 800/377-3529
Website: www.cityofboise.org/pds

Design Review Committee Worksession Minutes of May 9, 2012

Committee Members Present Rodney Evans, Chairman, Bruce Taylor, James Marsh and Tom Zabala

Staff Members Present Sarah Schafer, Josh Wilson, Rob Lockward and Nicki Heckenlively

DRH11-00240 / Eighth & Main, LLC – Tommy Ahlquist

Location: 800 W. Main Street

Review of elevations and site plans at 50% construction documents per conditions of approval.

SARAH SCHAFFER: The applicant has come in with their 50 percent CD's. I have the disc containing the entire CD pack so if you'd like to see any sections that I haven't included as part of your packets let me know. The applicant has also provided new elevations and perspective drawings for the discussion today which will be very helpful. There are a couple of items I saw as part of the 50 percent construction documents package I want to bring to your attention. They are not problems, but changes I'd like the Committee to take a look at and give your opinion.

Changes to Ground Floor

Initially on the elevations there was a lot of glass and very minor delineation between the first and second floors. As part of the 50 percent construction document package they brought in a design that was a little bit heavier between the first and the second floors. When I brought it up the applicant's architect agreed there has been a change there and they have modified that so you have new openings in the second floor. If you look at your memo you can see on Figure 2 it has windows that open as awning windows on the second floor opening space. They've changed those to be a sliding wall system so those will open up completely in those areas. You can also get more glass floor to ceiling. This is reflected in the elevations you see in front of you today. As part of this the other change they made on the 8th Street elevation is the initial entry space which was one-bay in width. What you see on the 8th Street elevation today is a two-bay width. This makes the entry more pronounced. It is an entry into a lobby and a tenant space. This does a lot for this overall elevation. Another change on the ground level is near the alley. At this location we had a wrought iron gate at the service area. They will actually construct an overhead door, but it will be recessed from the street frontage by an entire bay of columns. It won't be overly noticeable to the general public walking through and it has a lot of benefits that go along with it as far as maintaining the smells and noise levels that you'll get from that area. It will help with the overall screening of the service area.

Second Floor Balcony

Previously we had just balcony space which wasn't assigned to any one tenant. This has all been enclosed with glass so it can be parceled out per tenant and those walls will open up for those spaces. You're going to get a lot of the same effect and you'll be able to enclose it for the winter months. There might not be as much activity between the outdoors and the indoors year-long, but it will work just as well and the overall look of the building is very similar.

Garage Levels

Previously they had mesh screens going into the openings on the third, fourth and fifth levels of those parking structures. This has changed in order to accommodate the openings and offset the mechanical systems cost needed for the garage. This has changed to include glass at this location. The mesh has gone away and they have put a glass panel in between the third and fourth floors. However, the fifth floor design maintains the similarities you had previously. I don't see any overall concerns with this either.

Top of Building

There were comments at the previous hearing that this looked like there had been a cap sat on top of the building. The applicant went back and did a little bit of redesign and looked at the sizing of the mechanical units and what they'd need to do for mechanical screening. They've brought the glass all the way up to the top at the intersection of 8th and Main so this elongates the building at this corner. You can see the mechanical screening is a little bit larger up at the top of the building. Part of my comments for the initial application submittal for the 50 percent construction drawings was that the mechanical screen was all one color and it started to look heavy at the top sitting down on the building. The applicant has changed out the colors on some of the panels so it helps elongate and draw your eye up the side of the mechanical screens. That's a step in the right direction for what we're looking for on the structure.

COMMITTEE MEMBER TAYLOR: Are we looking at the streetscape today?

SARAH SCHAFER: There weren't any changes to the streetscape. It is pretty basic as far as what they're putting in along there.

COMMITTEE MEMBER TAYLOR: We asked them to match the existing a little better...across the street and adjacent.

SARAH SCHAFER: Correct. I'll look at that as part of the building submittal to make sure it meets our requirements. We just wanted them to come back with the 50 percent CD's for the building pieces because we knew there would probably be changes.

COMMITTEE MEMBER ZABALA: Is the spire an actual working antenna?

SARAH SCHAFER: I don't know if that is a working antenna.

T.J. WINGER (Babcock Design Group / Associate Architect): It is not.

SARAH SCHAFER: There were only four conditions that were part of the application approval. One of them was to provide plans showing truck turning movements for the trash area. Allied Waste has said they will not be pulling into the service space to unload the trash. The tenants will have to pull out the trash compactor with mechanical equipment and load it from the street so we no longer needed to meet this condition. They don't need to show the truck turning movements because no one will be pulling into this space. They are back meeting Condition 1.b. which is the 50 percent construction documents. Condition 1.c. was that E.I.F.S. is limited to the 20th floor as identified at the November hearing and this remains with this application process. They also comply with all the variance requirements.

COMMITTEE MEMBER TAYLOR: Does the trash get pulled all the way out to the curb?

SARAH SCHAFER: I'll let the applicant explain it further, but my understanding is they are actually going to purchase a piece of equipment to help move the compactor out from inside the building to the curb line so it can be loaded, emptied and brought back within the service area.

COMMITTEE MEMBER TAYLOR: I've seen those really gouge sidewalks and brick. It would be nice to avoid that kind of damage.

SARAH SCHAFER: Yes.

Tommy Ahlquist: When we had our meeting with the City and the garbage people they required and insisted that the garbage be brought out from the alley, out past the sidewalk and into the street to be dumped by my personnel. They will not come into the alley to dump it. That was something they required of us.

COMMITTEE MEMBER MARSH: Could you run us through the redesign of the top of the building.

T.J. WINGER: The first item is the transition between the first floor and the second floor. This is the original drawing. On the second floor in the 50 percent package you can see those awning windows. Those were a challenge. Sarah had a good observation about the weight of this right here. With this particular window type we had a tenant that was really excited about this. We are exploring that at this point of the project, but what that did was brought that seal up on level two so you have a little bit of curb wall inside the level two space. It did reduce the amount of glass here. We've gone back and pulled that window sill back down to the floor elevation and put in sliding windows so it does give a much more open feel which was the initial desire. That is a very good catch and a good call on Sarah's part with regard to that. That will help get us back to this feel and it will be a lot better.

Regarding the second balcony on the east elevation there are similar comments there in nature. Initially that space was to be non-leased or you could say a common space. There has been so much excitement about the building, which is really positive, that tenants have actually wanted to lease this space. The concept is still there in principal. It is open and it is operable for people to sit out there, but it will be space within a leased tenant space at this point. Tenants love the initial concept of the plaza and they want to control and take that up. It is still open and the concept is still the same with seating up against this great excitement level and people watching, but it is within tenant spaces at this point.

In regard to the iron gate versus the overhead door our initial design had the iron gate as you can see, but it was clear out at the front of the building along the main façade. As we looked at this with the trash and whatnot and started developing what was going to happen in this alley space with the grease, waste and garbage receptacles with restaurants specifically, the concern became very evident that smells were going to be very prominent there so we realized in closing this off that we needed to be sensitive to the initial concerns of the City so we pushed that back one whole bay so it is very recessed and we added some other architectural elements up above to help draw the eye away from that street area. What I like is this really neat space that will be a glass box that will pull people's eyes away from that door. This is out at the street level elevation, but it will be in essence a glass cube there which will be a very nice way to help turn the corner.

The garage level was quite an exercise. After we left the Design Review Committee we went into working drawings and started to run numbers. We tried to get this garage to vent naturally. Being above grade it made sense to try to naturally ventilate the garage. In looking at those numbers these openings didn't get us to where we needed to be to try to hit that number so we went back to the redesign that you see in the 50 percent package. It was very horizontally oriented and in discussions with Sarah this was not something that would be accepted or viewed in favor so we threw that out the window and decided to mechanically vent the garage. Now it is a mechanically vented garage which allows us to go back to this vertical emphasis which is, in my opinion, a much nicer design. We were also concerned about still seeing the cars through the mesh so we're putting a sandblasted or frosted glass at level four and leaving the rest open. We've been working diligently with Jason Butler of CTA (Architect) to make sure the underside of that structure will be treated in an appropriate manner so visually as you walk by you don't see the fire space on it in its paper form that flakes off. Antennas hit it and you have problems there so we've got that taken care of.

TOMMY AHLQUIST (Owner / Applicant): We also, in research with Sarah, have found a fireproofing system that is a higher density Monokote system that you can actually trowel so it doesn't look like the fibers. The Monokote system is a cementitious so we can trowel it on and then we'll paint the underside of the parking structure so if you do see a visual up there it will all be a painted smooth surface. We've moved the lights back a little bit so it doesn't light up against the outside perimeter so we've tried to draw as little attention to the parking area as we can from the streetscape.

T.J. Winger: We have some nice accent light fixtures up there that will help light the columns on the building at night so your eye is not drawn into the parking structure as much. We've tried to be very sensitive to that level. This is an important level.

SARAH SCHAFER: If you'd like more information regarding the fireproofing I've brought the information they've supplied me today so they can go through that if this is of interest to you as well.

COMMITTEE MEMBER MARSH: Did you switch the dark and lights so the columns are now light?

T.J. WINGER: We did actually. We wanted to do that to help bring some of the grounding back down. The board has been selected, but which colors go where is not 100 percent solidified, but it's getting very close. With the proportions we felt the continuity of the colors helps emphasize some of the height rather than breaking it up again the way it was before. Our initial design with the 20 stories...it worked okay to have this ground more because we had such a vertical emphasis here. When we lost the floors and went back down we felt the continuity in color helped with that. You can see here our concern was that it started to break it up and it pulled it down even more in a shorter fashion so we reversed the colors to help give that continuity of color and then emphasizing the columns to also go back to the vertical emphasis. The decision behind this is to give that height.

Regarding the roof and penthouse elevation we're trying to be sensitive to the comment regarding the corner of the building and looking at the height being brought down as you can see in this creative version here that Sarah had. The building looks proportionally very different than the drawings we see here when we cut the floors out. Our concern was to bring some of that verticality back in. Obviously in the downtown sitting with the environment that it is sitting in this is very important. We've being very sensitive to the comments we got from the Chair and the Committee last time we were here. This reflects that and it helps pull that vertical emphasis back in. The penthouse that Sarah mentioned at this early stage we had no input whatsoever from mechanical as far as the size of the penthouse or what all needed to go in there as far as equipment spacing, needs and those types of things. Once we got that this drove the penthouse that we have up there today. The cooling towers on top of this building are barely screened so this is not any taller than it needs to be. It is actually about six inches below the cooling tower. You'd have to be at a perfect horizontal to actually see them, but we thought that six inches was okay with the site lines. In response to Sarah's comments you can see that we've raised the parapet here on the top on our now current 17th floor two feet to help reduce a little of that presence on the top. In our color board we have three colors of E.I.F.S. so we're pulling one of those three colors up there in a panel form to help break up that top from what was shown in the initial observation here. What you can see here for example is that we had this as solid color before and now you can see that we're introducing that panel affect to soften and break that up.

COMMITTEE MEMBER MARSH: Bringing the glass up you brought just the corner up? You didn't want to bring all the glass up to the top?

T.J. WINGER: No. We drew it that way initially and it felt so overwhelming on that corner that architecturally it didn't seem appropriate to bring up the whole mass of it. We cut it back different and this is the one that worked proportionally. It didn't overwhelm the corner, but it gave emphasis to the corner. One of the nice things that you're going to see that is not shown here that will be a identifying element for the building is each one of these architectural fins that you see will have a recessed continuous LED light so it will be a nice landmark item at night. We wanted that to be able to emphasize and continue up to the top of the building and be a defining piece. It is a low voltage LED light and it will be a nice subtle light that will help set that corner off and bring a lot of people to the 8th Street experience.

COMMITTEE MEMBER MARSH: Exposed horizontal mullions on the glass portion?

T.J. WINGER: Correct. We have horizontal exposed. We felt there was enough strength in trying to go vertical here so we wanted this element to be set a little bit apart. It is a two-sided butt glazed system so the horizontals are captured in the curtain wall system.

COMMITTEE MEMBER MARSH: The termination of the glass at the very top and probably both of the notches...you're looking at more or less your horizontal mullion piece?

T.J. WINGER: At that height it is hard to tell but there is a parapet cover that comes down and finishes the profile and it would be more like six inches at the top where the normal mullion is two and a half inches so there will be a slight weight there, but it would be imperceptible to the pedestrians down here. The top panel here is a spandrel panel because of the framing and whatnot that is behind there. One of the nice things that Tom wanted to do was we did some light studies inside this space and really this is the highest occupied floor here and the top became very dark at night so we've framed a wall behind this upper most glass section back a little bit and put lights in there so it looks like it is an occupied floor and it will light nicely at night. CTA has done a great job of studying out this corner here and looking at what that will be at night as far as the internal illumination so you don't have this during the day and then at night you have this dark heavy top up here. We've taken special effort and this will turn out nice. It is this top most portion where we have actual structure where it wasn't feasible to get a wall back there but we do have it coming clear up to that mullion right there.

COMMITTEE MEMBER ZABALA: Do you have all the gremlins figured out?

T.J. WINGER: We have been working on this thing diligently and I think we do. We're great as far as drawing packages and detailing with concerns. I truthfully don't think you can find a more educated client than the gentleman sitting right there who knows what to study. As far as a client he is very good at making sure due diligence is well done.

TOMMY AHLQUIST: He's just being polite because I'm riding him to hard.

T.J. WINGER: No, I'm not. Seriously and wouldn't you agree Jason (Butler) that we've worked through a lot of...the middle is always easy it is where things come together. The alley has obviously been a huge item. We're trying to facilitate a lot of items in there and it has been a big exercise. The connection to Eastman has been very big and the interface with how to actually build this and the connection to Main and 8th Street. The tie into Mike Ferry and accommodate their needs there which has been negotiated between the two owners. We've looked at it long and hard and I feel good about the gremlins. Hopefully they are there. The contractor will let us know I'm sure in no uncertain terms, but we're very prepared.

CHAIRMAN EVANS: I'm excited to see this project move this far because personally I've seen two others fail on this committee.

COMMITTEE MEMBER ZABALA: When I first read this I had a certain amount of anxiety as we do on these projects because usually we'll approve something and as time goes on what you get is a Hampton Inn. I came with a little trepidation, but after hearing the explanation and looking through this the project remains true to what our intent was and as we say the gremlins that pop-up occur in the natural course of things. Mechanical engineers love to do things to your penthouses and other things like that. I don't have any concerns. The project appears to be moving along very well with the changes here and the quality of materials and the form.

CHAIRMAN EVANS: I just noticed the changes in the materials.

COMMITTEE MEMBER MARSH: Committee Member Garrett will be happy that there is not a hat on it anymore. The only other concern he had was in the hard edges at the top and whether it be glass or anything without some kind of a substantial band or a finish to it where the glass comes up and ends. That's a matter of opinion for a lot of people. This might be something that you still want to take a look at, but otherwise I'm fine with it. Having the setback box up there makes a different type of a termination to the top of the building in a larger element sense.

COMMITTEE MEMBER ZABALA MOVED TO APPROVE THE MODIFICATIONS OF THE 50 PERCENT DESIGN AS PROPOSED BY THE APPLICANT FOR APPLICATION DRH11-00240 / 8TH & MAIN STREET AS PROPOSED IN STAFF'S REVIEW.

COMMITTEE MEMBER MARSH SECONDED THE MOTION.

ROLL CALL 4:0. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Rodney Evan, Chairman
Design Review Committee

Date