

MEMORANDUM
DAR HEARING - 051514

TO: Design Review Commission
FROM: Burton Francis and Preserve the Pearl
CC: Kara Fioravanti, BDS
RE: EA 14-134106 DA - Proposed Development of Pearl Block 136
Date: May 12, 2014

I am a resident of the Edge Condominiums located at the intersection of NW 14th and NW Kearny. In addition, I am one of the founding members of Preserve the Pearl, a neighborhood organization whose mission is to preserve the quality of life for residents of the Pearl, particularly with respect to proper administration of the design review guidelines for new development.

This memorandum provides early comments regarding the design advice request of Security Properties to construct a 150 foot high building at NW 12th Avenue and NW Kearney Street (the PNCA building).

The Central City Plan declares in both letters and graphics: The whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Rather than adding to the unique quality that makes our neighborhood better than the sum of its current parts, the proposal submitted by Security Properties seeks to create its own 'whole' in complete disregard for the uniquely Portland neighborhood that is the Pearl south of Lovejoy to Hoyt.

The plan calls for a 150 foot high tower wall to run the entire block of 12th Avenue from north to south. Such a wall bears no rational relation to the unique, low-slung character of this area of the Pearl. With a jarringly thoughtless singularity it seeks to tower over its neighbors, literally about 2.5 times the height of the 6-story residential neighbor across the street to the east (which it will condemn to permanent afternoon shadow), and 7 to 8 times higher than the rest of the immediately adjacent, surrounding 2-story structures.

By its enormity and by running on the wrong geographic axis (See River District Design Guidelines, p. 10, and as more fully discussed in the Attachment), it cuts off our neighborhood from any relationship with the river, Union Station, and Mt. Hood. For this reason and many others, the proposal cannot conform to the design standards that make Portland a unique and livable city.

Attached hereto is a preliminary analysis of the proposal measured against the applicable design guidelines that shows the applicant cannot meet the code requirements to allow height bonuses for the project. Please consider this information clearly and advise the applicant to rethink the design in conjunction with the following recommendations:

That a new design be submitted that includes:

- extreme reduction in height and bulk to better fit the size, scale, dimension, and overall rhythm of this unique area of the Pearl;
- enhancement of the area's connectedness to the Willamette River, in part by reorienting the design to run perpendicular to the river rather than north to south, and also by adhering to the "step-down" in building heights to the river as mandated by 33.510.200.A via 33.510.210.E.4.f;
- preservation of the focal point and centrality of the Union Station Tower as a precious feature of the neighborhood consistent with existing design considerations RDDG A5-1-4 and the specific language of the zoning code at 33.510.210.D;
- advise against a request for any bonus height in order to preserve the public resources of sunlight, air, and view corridors to ensure that shadows from this new development do not fall on the public open space of Jamison Park or the residential neighborhoods in the area, and in particular the Riverstone Condominiums directly across the street to the east;
- enhancement of the street vibrancy found on historic 13th Avenue both to the north and to the south of the proposed development area, and better connecting the two with design elements and sidewalk/loading dock-style enhancements.

Respectfully submitted,

Preserve The Pearl



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