S·M·I·L·E

SELLWOOD MORELAND IMPROVEMENT LEAGUE
8210 SE 13th AVENUE, PORTLAND, OR 97202
STATION 503-234-3570 • CHURCH 503-233-1497

May 10, 2017

Dear Mr. Graves:

The Sellwood-Moreland Improvement League (SMILE) is providing the following comments on for design review of 1944 SE Tacoma (LU 17-140448 DZ). The architects presented plans at the May 3 SMILE Land Use Committee neighborhood; the mixed reaction comments are described in the attached minutes of that meeting. We thank the architects for presenting their design and we are willing to continue working with them and you. Our goal is to allow architectural creativity while satisfying the Community Design Guidelines, especially those related to gateways, pedestrian emphasis, and project design. Below we identify 6 elements of the design that do not meet the Community Design Guidelines and we propose that at a minimum the building facades on Tacoma Street incorporate at least 4 of the 6 elements.

The following Community Design Guidelines are applicable to this project:

PORTLAND PERSONALITY

- **P3. Gateways**. Develop or strengthen the transitional role of gateways identified in adopted community and neighborhood plans**.**

PEDESTRIAN EMPHASIS

- **E3. The Sidewalk-Level of Building.** Create sense of enclosure and visual interest to buildings along sidewalks and pedestrian areas by incorporating small scale building design features, creating effective gathering places and differentiating street level façades.

PROJECT DESIGN

- **D2. Main Entrances.** Make the main entrances to houses and buildings prominent, interesting, pedestrian accessible and transit-oriented.
- **D5. Crime Prevention.** Use site design and building orientation to reduce the likelihood of crime through the design and placement of windows, entries, active ground level uses and outdoor areas.

- **D7. Blending into the Neighborhood**. Reduce the impact of new development on established neighborhoods by incorporating elements of nearby, quality buildings such as building details, massing, proportions, and materials.
- **D8. Interest, Quality and Composition**. All parts of a building should be interesting to view, of long lasting quality, and designed to form a cohesive composition.

Design elements that do not satisfy the Community Design Guidelines are:

1) Eaves: The buildings have no eaves which are a common feature in our neighborhood that provide visual interest and articulation. Does not satisfy D7 (blending into the neighborhood) or D8 (Interest, Quality, and Composition).

2) Windows: The building have only a few narrow windows. Larger windows are more typical of buildings in the neighborhood, would provide more visual connection between the building and street. Does not satisfy E3 (Sidewalk Level of Building), D5 (Crime Prevention), D7 (blending into the neighborhood) or D8 (Interest, Quality, and Composition). Although using small windows as an energy conservation measure is important, small, tall windows located in the front of the buildings detract from a balanced appearance of the façade from Tacoma Street. Consider adding clerestory windows to the front, or better insulated larger windows.

3) Trim: The buildings have no trim, which is a common feature in the neighborhood that helps makes buildings visually interesting. Does not satisfy E3 (Sidewalk Level of Building), D7 (blending into the neighborhood) or D8 (Interest, Quality, and Composition). Consider trim at corners, below the roof line, and around windows and doors. Also consider a belly band and skirt board.

4) Color: The building is a single monotone color, including the roof. Typical buildings in the neighborhood have different roof, body, and trim colors which makes buildings visually interesting. Does not satisfy E3 (Sidewalk Level of Building), D7 (blending into the neighborhood) or D8 (Interest, Quality, and Composition). Consider making the roof a different color, making one or more floors different colors, and making the base of the building a different color.

5) Articulation: The building walls and roofs are extremely planar and have little articulation even compared to new boxy apartment buildings. The two-dimensional planes are featureless. Does not satisfy E3 (Sidewalk Level of Building), D7 (blending into the neighborhood) or D8 (Interest, Quality, and Composition).

6) Main Entrances: The entrances facing Tacoma Street are plain doors that are not inviting, prominent, or interesting and thus do not satisfy D2 (Main entrances), E3 (Sidewalk Level of Building), D7 (blending into the neighborhood) or D8 (Interest, Quality, and Composition).

The project is located on SE Tacoma Street which connects the neighborhood to McLoughlin Boulevard, Southeast Portland, the Tacoma Street light rail station, and the Sellwood Bridge.

Thus, SE Tacoma Street serves as a gateway to our neighborhood so the project will be highly visible. Adopting some of the design element listed above on the Tacoma Street facades will help maintain and enhance Tacoma Street as a welcoming gateway that expresses community identity and satisfy Community Design Guideline P3, Gateways.

To satisfy the Community Design Guidelines and allow architectural creativity, we recommend that 4 of the 6 design elements listed above be improved on the Tacoma Street facing facades of the front buildings. Whether the additional elements are incorporated into the other facades of the front buildings and the back buildings for consistency is best decided by the architect.

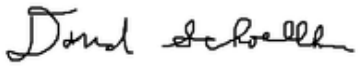
In addition, two entrances in the southeast building are located on the south side of the structure and will be not visible from the street. This location does not meet the Crime Prevention guideline (D5) which states that entries that are "directly accessible and visible from the street are the safest" or the Main Entrance guideline (D2) that they be “prominent, interesting, and pedestrian accessible.” The Land Use Committee recommends that, if feasible, this building be designed to place the entrances on the east side of the building where they would be visible from the street. This modified layout also appears to allow the 2nd story balcony to be changed to the east side of the building instead of being in the current location on the south side where it would directly overlook the backyard of the adjoining property.

Project elements that we would like to see retained are:

- four separate buildings instead of a single box-like building
- solar panels
- individual entrances
- use of energy conserving features
- owner's willingness to communicate with neighbors
- owner's commitment to deconstruction

Please contact us if you have any questions or would like to discuss the project.

Sincerely,



David Schoellhamer
Chair, Sellwood-Moreland Improvement League Land Use Committee
chair.landuse.smile@gmail.com

attached: Minutes of May 3, 2017, SMILE Land Use Committee meeting

SMILE Land Use Committee Meeting Minutes

SMILE Station, 8210 SE 13th Ave

Wednesday May 3, 2017, 600-715PM

600-605PM: Introductions
Land use committee members present – David Schoellhamer, Miriam Erb, Rocky Johnson, Shari Gilevich, Vikki DeGaa, and Krista Jones. About 17 other people were present at the start of the meeting, including presenters.

605-640PM: 5434 SE Milwaukie: Neighborhood contact meeting for a proposed 4-story 29-unit apartment building per the Community Design Standards and Design Overlay requirements. The project will follow the community design standards. The architect Ralph Tahran presented plans which are posted on the Land Use Committee web page at sellwood.org.

Site is narrow - 36 feet wide and 100-ish feet depth.

<u>Feedback and questions</u>

- Resident liked the color scheme.
- What are the exterior materials? Mostly horizontal siding with some corrugated metal and a second type of siding.
- Units are all studios (about 250 sq ft).
- They have to meet the affordable unit standards, which is 4-5 affordable units (15% of the 29 units). But, they are trying to provide make all apartments affordable (about $750-770) because of extra incentives for Inclusionary and Affordable Housing such as tax abatements and reduced System Development Charges (fees) that make the project possible.
- Developers are trying to find ways to meet the community needs.
- The first level will have a common kitchen and laundry (units will also have small kitchettes).
- Maximum occupants per units - unknown/unspecified.
- Residents expressed frustration with the lack of parking with higher density, increased traffic on narrow streets, and increased density and squeezing people into a small spaces.
- What about landscaping? They have an expanded sidewalk and 15% landscaping standard (but going to 20%). They are required to have some property screening.
- Have they met with the neighbors? No. They have not.
- Construction schedule - hoping to have permits into the City early July.
- Construction will be staged off of Milwaukie.

640-715PM: 1944 / 2006 SE Tacoma: Michelle Shaheen and Jennifer Dzienis of Works Progress Architecture presented plans for a 3-story 12 unit development. The units will be organized into four structures (3 units per structure), with tuck under parking and common on-grade storage, utility and trash rooms. All units have separate entries. Nine standard parking spaces and 31 bicycle parking spaces are provided. Solar arrays are proposed for south facing roof slopes. The project is subject to a type II design review. Details are available at https://www.portlandoregon.gov/BDS/article/636681 . The deadline for public comments is May 10.

Project is making use of the amenity bonus b/c building 12 units on 10,000 sq ft (zone allows 1 unit per 1000 sq ft).

Feedback and questions

- Owner is looking into relocating the existing two SF homes, but will deconstruct if they are unable to relocate.
- Units include 1 BDs (500 sq ft), 2 BDs, and 3 BDs.
- They will have a common outdoor space in the back center of the lot.
- Each second floor unit will have a small balcony.
- Few windows because of energy design standards.
- Buildings will have path lighting that point down (no flood lights).
- Siding and roofing are shingles of similar colors but different materials.
- The south side fence is 6 ft. There's an existing fence that a resident would like them to consider keeping.
- Construction work times are still TBD. They are willing to set up a Good Neighbor Agreement. SMILE LU needs to help set this up. Also setting up a neighborhood contact person has provided effective communication during construction.
- Why are there no eaves? - modern interpretation
- Another resident warned about mildew because of the lack of eaves.
- Multiple residents expressed frustration about the lack of consistency with the existing neighborhood character.
- Others think it is an interesting departure and design.
- Residents can submit comments to the City on these designs per the Community Design Guidelines until May 10. The designs will be posted at sellwood.org Land Use Committee webpage.