



City of Portland, Oregon
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Land Use Services

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MEMORANDUM

Date: September 21, 2009
To: Jon DeLeonardo, SERA Architects
From: Tim Heron, Development Review
Phone number 503-823-7726
Re: 09-143556 DA – Keirnan Building Demolition/New Blanchet House
August 24, 2009 Landmarks Commission Summary Memo

Thank you for taking advantage of the opportunity to hold a Design Advice Request regarding your project. I hope you find it informative and valuable as you continue with your project development. Attached is a summary of the comments provided by the Commission at the August 24, 2009 Historic Design Advice Request. This summary was generated from notes taken at the public meeting and a subsequent review of the public meeting recordings. For a small fee we can provide you with copies of those recordings; to request copies, please call 503-823-7814.

These Commission comments are intended to guide you in further design exploration of your project. These comments may also inform City staff when giving guidance over the course of future related land use reviews. It should be understood that these comments address the project as presented on August 24, 2009. As the project design evolves, the comments, too, may evolve or may no longer be pertinent.

Design Advice Requests are not intended to substitute for other Code-required land use or legislative procedures. Please keep in mind that the formal Type IV and Type III land use review processes [which includes a pre-application, a land use review application, public notification, a Staff Report and a public hearings] must be followed once the Design Advice Request meetings are complete, if formal approval for specific elements of your project is desired.

At the end of the hearing, it was encouraged that you return for a second Design Advice Request. Please continue to coordinate with me as you prepare for those this potential additional DAR, as well as your formal Type IV Demolition Review and Type III Historic Review applications.

Encl: Summary Memo

Cc: Respondents

This memo summarizes Commission historic design advice provided at the August 24, 2009 Design Advice Request hearing.

1) Demolition of the historic Kiernan Building [Dirty Duck Tavern]

The Blanchet House mission is highly revered and provides an extremely valuable service to the community. The Commission concedes that the current facility does indeed need improvements, expansion and that development of internal queuing would be desirable for the neighborhood. However, the Commission cannot adjust its design review perspective because of the worthiness of the applicant's mission. The recommendation will be based upon the approval criteria.

The Portland Development Commission arguably plays an atypically large role in property ownership than many other Historic Districts and therefore has the increased opportunity and responsibility to maintain the integrity of the Chinatown/Japantown Historic District.

Does the District have enough resources left to be worth saving? Is it too far gone considering other City-owned parcels? Considering the already numerous vacant parcels within the district, demolishing the Kiernan Building appears to head the District's goals in the opposite direction of preservation of historic resources.

The burden of proof that removing the Kiernan Building does not harm the integrity of the District is on the Applicant. Applicant may opt for one of two possible arguments:

- a) The Chinatown/Japantown District has lost too many contributing resources and has too many vacant parcels to be a viable and recognizable historic district and therefore the loss of the Kiernan Building would have minimal negative impact upon this failing district; or
- b) The Chinatown/Japantown District is substantially intact with many contributing historic resources in key locations within the District. Therefore, the loss of the Kiernan Building would have minimal negative impact upon this district and its wealth of historic resources.

It may help the Applicant to reach a conclusion by reviewing the factors expected to impact this District and its character for the next ten years.

- a) Projects planned or under consideration
- b) Current zoning/FAR allowances
- c) Identification of contributing structures
- d) Planned infrastructure changes that will impact the District

There are few Nationally Registered Historic Districts in the county. The applicant is asking the Commission to make a precedent setting decision by looking at just one site. The charge of the Landmarks Commission is not looking at just the subject site, but also the whole block and the integrity of the Chinatown/Japantown Historic District.

It is disappointing that the ½ block of parking for NW Natural Gas could not be considered in a redevelopment agreement that would save the historic resource while providing parking; all options should be explored. Please clarify the strategy for the leased parking agreement on the remaining Block 25 (99 year lease terms including options, early terminations, exception clauses, etc.) and what other city owned sites were considered for this proposal.

Please provide responses from the Neighborhood Association on the demolition proposal.

The location of the project site "on the edge" of the district does not lessen its importance, especially in such a small District. In fact, it can be argued that the project site occupies a "gateway" location in the District. The removal of the existing one-story building would remove not only a contributing building and character-defining low-level commercial structure from the 1910s, but potentially erode the entire Block 25 —10% of the this District. The fate of the Yamaguchi Hotel [current Blanchet House location] is also of concern.

Some arguments advanced in the DAR by the Applicant that the Historic Landmarks Commission did not find persuasive are:

- a) The building's disrepair is so extreme that it renders redevelopment unfeasible;
Its condition appears to not be atypical for a modest building of this vintage.
- b) The alterations to the building are not easily reversible;
The alterations to the building over time are common occurrences in historic buildings and present common challenges to reputable historic renovation firms.
- c) Seismic upgrade requirements to the building are too burdensome to justify;
This appears to be a typical URM building. As a single-story commercial building with a prior high-occupancy use as a restaurant/tavern, it may actually have minimal seismic code upgrade requirements.
- d) The proposed use is incompatible with the building;
It is the responsibility of the Applicant to identify a use compatible with a historic resource.
- e) The replacement of this un-redeveloped building with highly energy-efficient new construction is the most sustainable next step for this property;
The energy efficiency of the most efficient new construction takes decades to compensate for the embodied energy lost by the demolition of existing buildings.

Given the Applicant's recent purchase of this site at fair market value, willingness and ability to subsidize this property's development, the Applicant's experience at historic redevelopment and the tax credit subsidies available, this project seems eminently feasible.

Please clarify where in the Old Town/Chinatown Vision Plan adopted by Council in 1999 that the intention of removing the Kiernan Building in order to relocate the Blanchet House is discussed. Please note this Old Town/Chinatown Vision Plan also specifically promotes incentives for historic use and preservation since historic preservation is one of the goals of this plan.

Finally and most importantly, the formal application will need to directly address the approval criteria that will be used to justify this request.

2) Mass and scale of new Blanchet House proposal.

Consider the option to re-use the existing façade of the original building and adding a new building and structure on top of, or within the existing building. Note the preservation of the A&B Automotive building façade that was saved and a taller mixed-use development incorporated behind [Brewery Block 1 - Whole Foods grocery, other retail and offices at NW Couch Street and NW 12th Avenue].

A proposal that is "less modern" and "more historically literal" in design, that more closely resembles the exteriors of the district, could be an appropriate response considering the potential removal of an original resource.

The overall scale on the site is comfortable, especially the 3-story version. Most buildings in the district are generic/multi-purpose and this massing would fit. A fourth floor version may need to respond more contextually.

3) Contextual response to Historic District – corner condition, materials & details.

Masonry is a good fitting material for the district, durable and contextual.

The floating glass corner is not a good fit in the district as a more traditional storefront design. Similarly, the wide open balconies and glass corner conditions appear out of character with the district pattern.

The punched window reveals are appropriate and work with the original district fabric. Note that materiality of the windows will also be considered – some window manufacturers cannot produce quality window profiles in some materials.

Consider including a trim line between the 1st and 2nd floors and at the cornice to recall the vernacular of the historic district fabric.

Try to better match the window typology to district character – the vertical contemporary style of the upper stories appears to contradict the double hung and more prominent multi-light patterning evident in the district. Window patterning is a key component the design and successful approval.

Ground floor aluminum storefront systems can be challenging to find the appropriate scale detailing for a historic district application. Consider alternatives.

As the back side of the building will be exposed to the parking lot and likely visible from the adjacent streets for some time, it should reflect more than just an end/fire wall design.

Lighting – much of the lighting comes from the interior; subtle lighting details at the storefront would be desirable.

4) Accessible green roof.

Rooftop plantings should be kept below the parapet and not visible from adjacent street sightlines.

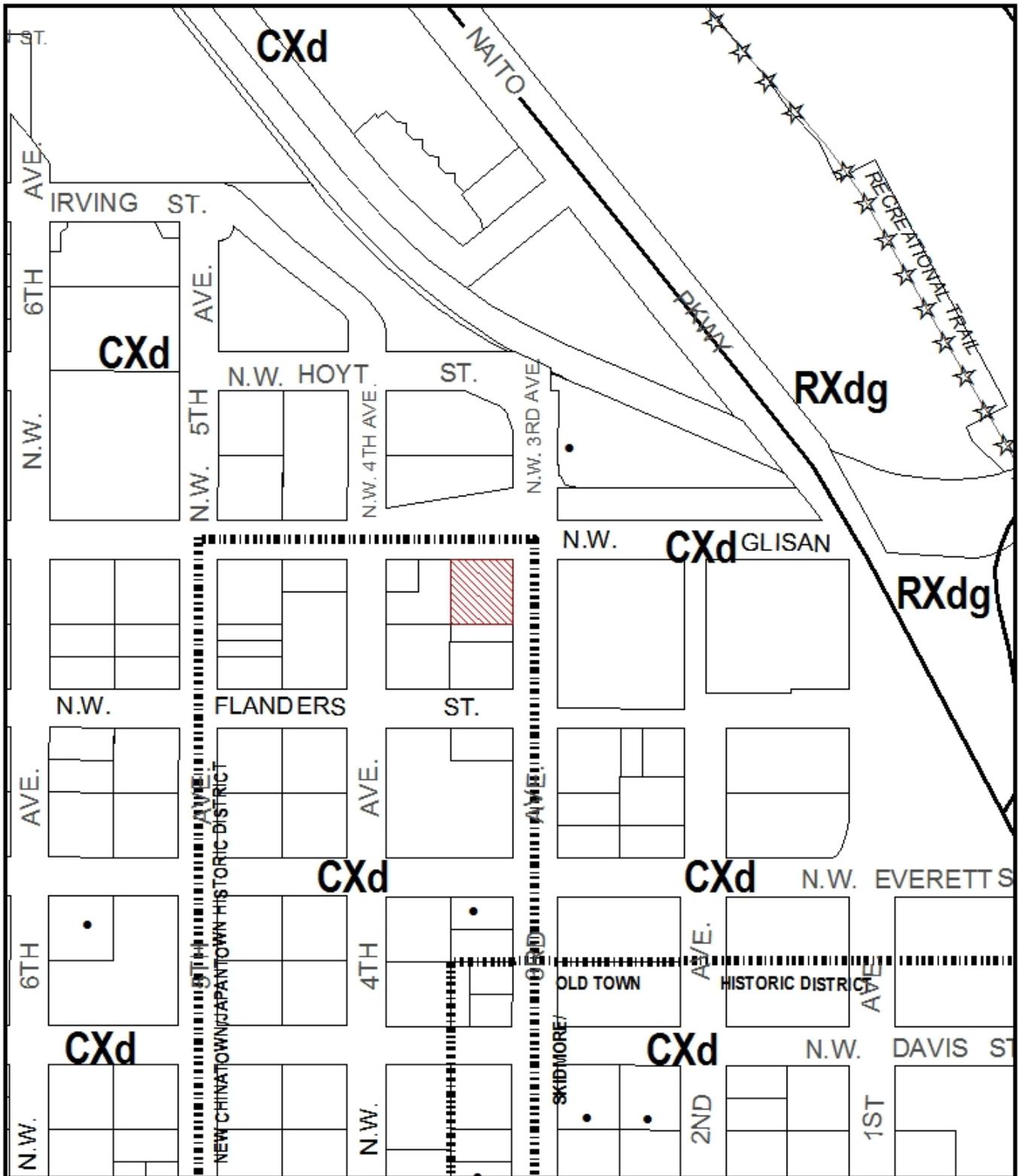
5) Miscellaneous

Please provide more information and background discussion about the landscaping strip proposed in NW in Glisan Street. Possible location for additional gateway elements such as signage and culturally appropriate landscaping.

Please clarify if the existing building has a basement. If not, or only partial, there is a greater likelihood of archeological objects in place. Please have an archeologist on site should demolition take place in the future.

Exhibit List

- A. Application submittal and drawings
- B. Zoning Map
- C. Drawings
 - 1.-15. Submission for August 24 hearing [15 pages – some attached]
- D. Notification
 - 1. Mailing list
 - 2. Mailed notice
- E. Bureau Responses [none]
- F. Neighborhood Responses [None]
- G. Miscellaneous
 - 1. Application form
 - 2. Land use history
 - 3. August 17, 2009 Landmarks Commission Memo
 - 4. August 24, 2009 Staff PowerPoint presentation for DAR Hearing



ZONING

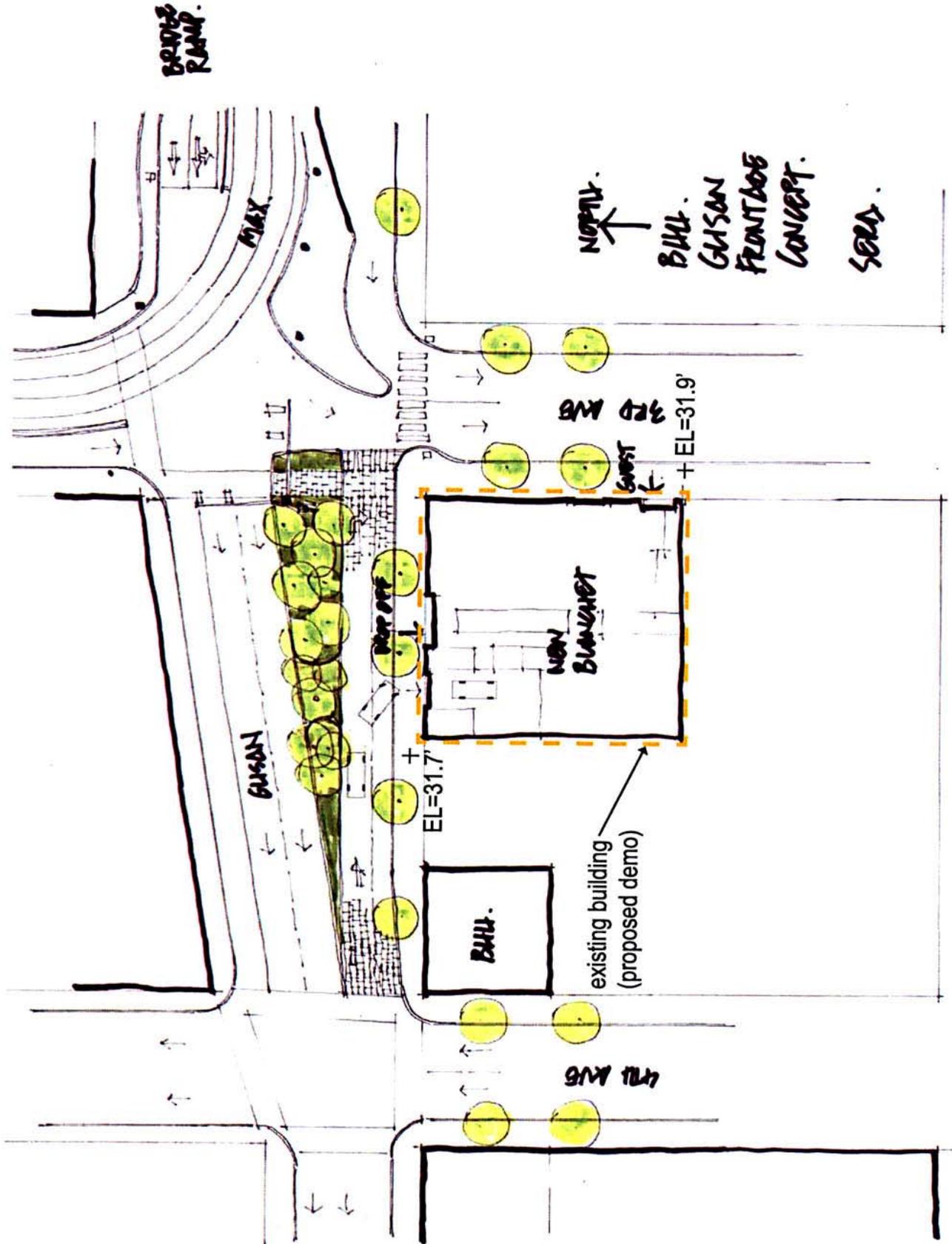
 Site

 Historic Landmark

This site lies within the:
 NEW CHINATOWN / JAPANTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT
 CENTRAL CITY PLAN DISTRICT



File No.	EA 09-143556 DAR
1/4 Section	2929,3029
Scale	1 inch = 200 feet
State_Id	1N1E34CA 300
Exhibit	B (Jul 15,2009)





BLANCHET HOUSE OF HOSPITALITY

6.13.2009

EXISTING SITE PHOTOGRAPH

