



Holist Architecture

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## SUMMARY NOTES

### RESOURCE ACCESS CENTER CAC/COMMUNITY DESIGN WORKSHOP #1



5/19/2008

**The following questions and comments were recorded during the workshop. Some of these comments are general and some address a specific building scheme (noted).**

1. Will there be a place where visitors to the RAC can keep their pets? Will pets be allowed inside the RAC? Will pets be allowed in the housing units?  
*(A: A place for animals will be incorporated into the design of the RAC; HAP policy on pets in the housing is undetermined; typically, residents are allowed to have companion pets.)*
2. What time of day will the RAC open?  
*(A: Exact hours of operation have not been determined; a good working assumption is 7 AM to 7 PM.)*
3. There will be conflicts between the RAC courtyard and the housing units that overlook it.  
*(A: Agreed. Some of the schemes presented today do a better job of minimizing and mitigating conflicts than others.)*
4. Will the public toilets be open 24 hours per day? Will they have 24 hour supervision?  
*(A: Yes; the toilets are located near the entrance to the shelter, which will be staffed 24 hours per day. Shelter staff will be responsible for monitoring the public toilets.)*
5. People using the public restrooms need a place to store their belongings while they're in the restrooms.  
*(A: The design team and TPI are considering the best, safest way to address this need.)*
6. Will people be allowed to smoke in the RAC? In the shelter? In the housing units?  
*(A: The RAC and the shelter will be non-smoking facilities, although smoking will probably be permitted in outdoor areas; smoking policy in the housing units has not been determined.)*
7. Is there enough parking in the neighborhood to accommodate retail space on the ground floor of this building? Station Place parking garage is 3 blocks away.  
*(A: This retail space will function similarly to retail spaces downtown or in the Pearl District that have no designated off-street parking and are adjacent to transit.)*
8. What will future development on Block R look like? What will the Greyhound Station look like?  
*(A: Given current development standards, development on Block R has a height limit of 350 feet and a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 9:1. The Greyhound Station has a height limit of 75 feet and an FAR of 6:1 on the north half of the block and a*

- height limit of 350 feet and an FAR of 9:1 on the south half of the block. The Portland Development Commission is planning to begin a "Broadway Corridor Redevelopment Study" in late 2008. The results of the study could change development standards on these and other nearby properties.)*
9. Retail on the ground floor of this building will support the redevelopment of both Block R and the Greyhound Station.  
*(A: It may also directly benefit the 511 Building, Union Station, and the Post Office.)*
  10. The Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of the post office blocks may change; it's possible taller buildings may be developed on the post office site.  
*(A: See comment #8, above.)*
  11. The design of the building needs to consider the fact that this is a noisy neighborhood. The site is adjacent to trains, busses, and light rail.  
*(A: This can be somewhat addressed through building form, but special consideration will be given to the exterior envelope—walls, windows, etc.—as the design team moves through the design process.)*
  12. Will there be a place for people to drop off donations to TPI?  
*(A: Yes. This space will likely be close to the shelter entrance because the shelter will be staffed 24 hours per day.)*
  13. The plaza that serves the shelter needs to be carefully considered. It has the potential to be used as a "campground".  
*(A: This space will be fully programmed during the schematic design phase. The open space seen today is a placeholder. Its size and form will be revised as appropriate.)*
  14. The plaza that serves the shelter needs to be sized for bicycle parking.  
*(A: The plaza space in front of the entrance to the shelter is a placeholder and will be fully programmed during the schematic design phase. Its size and form will be revised as appropriate.)*
  15. Is there a reason for combining the courtyards that serve the three separate functions of the building (RAC, shelter, housing) to be combined into a single courtyard?  
*(A: The courtyards serve different purposes and populations—RAC, shelter, housing—and combining them may create conflict between users, raise issues of safety and security between different program elements, or cause the space to not be used.)*
  16. Which population group will spend the most time in the courtyard? All three functions (RAC, shelter, housing) should have access to good outdoor space.  
*(A: The development team's goal is well-functioning, attractive outdoor spaces to serve each population group.)*
  17. The RAC courtyard should be designed so that it can be used year-round. There needs to be some weather protection.  
*(A: There will be some type of weather protection and landscaping.)*
  18. If the RAC has its own courtyard it could expand to provide more services in the future without impacting the functionality of the shelter or the housing.

*(A: Agreed. However, the courtyard is an important element of the RAC program.)*

19. Will there be a community garden? Who will have access to it?

*(A: There is room on the site for a community garden. Where it will be located and who will have access to it remains to be determined. It's possible there could be more than one garden.)*

20. If there is an eco-roof, can it be used for agricultural purposes?

*(A: This would be difficult; soil is very heavy and a lot of soil is necessary for agriculture. An eco-roof doesn't require very much soil.)*

21. Can there be greenhouses? If yes, can the heat they generated be captured and re-used?

*(A: This could be very expensive. The design team will discuss this with the mechanical engineer and contractor to get a better picture of costs and the amount of heat that could be recaptured.)*

22. Do any of the schemes represent better-than-average energy performance?

*(A: All schemes have the potential to be good energy performers. The mid-rise scheme has the least amount of interior corridor and common space to heat, and would presumably cost less to operate.)*

23. Could HAP develop a partnership with PGE for photovoltaics (PVs)?

*(A: The development team will be investigating photovoltaics and will have conversations with PGE, the Energy Trust of Oregon, and the Oregon Department of Energy about financing options.)*

24. All schemes should consider the amounts of both direct and indirect light received in the housing units, and technologies for boosting the amount of light received.

*(A: Agreed. Natural daylight in the housing units is important.)*

25. Could the building include a cycle station for bicycle commuters? It could be located in a retail space, and could be combined with a bicycle-related social enterprise. Showers would be necessary; the water could be heated with solar power to cut operating costs.

*(A: This is a great idea for a social enterprise.)*

26. Could shipping containers be used to create housing units? They are widely available and inexpensive.

*(A: The costs of providing a seismically stable structure, punching windows and insulating units may be so high that the cost benefit wouldn't be fully realized; containers may be a better solution for one-story development. There may be stigma attached to their use here.)*

27. If there are fewer than 200 units in the building (note: initial projection was for 200, current projection is for 150), the number of very-low income units needs to be held steady. This will increase the percentage of very low income units in the building.

*(A: Agreed. The mission of the housing that will be located in this building is to serve low income households.)*

28. (L scheme) This is an intriguing building form and it seems flexible.

29. (Bars scheme) This is similar to Tanner Creek, which works well in terms of urban form and has a beautiful courtyard garden. The interior units that face the courtyard don't suffer due to the proximity of the building on the other side of the courtyard.
30. (Mid-Rise scheme) The community room that serves the housing units has a great location overlooking Union station, and is also well connected to the housing courtyard.
- (A: Locating the community room in the NE corner of the building also reduces the number of housing units that are immediately adjacent to the RAC courtyard.)*
31. (Mid-Rise scheme) This scheme is more structurally efficient and has better views for more units than the other schemes.
- (A: Agreed. However, this scheme can only be built from concrete, which will have a higher up-front construction cost than wood.)*
32. (Mid-Rise scheme) If we plan for future growth in the number of housing units, is the "mid-rise" scheme able to expand to become either the "L" or the "Bars" scheme?
- (A: The mid-rise scheme could potentially expand into the "L" or "Bars" scheme.)*
33. (Mid-Rise scheme) In this scheme, the elevator core and housing lobby are close to the ground floor services (waste and recycling room, loading dock, parking). This scheme is very functional.
- (A: This is the only scheme that is able to maintain equitable travel distances between the elevators and the apartments while keeping the core service functions—lobby, waste management, parking—adjacent to each other.)*
34. (Mid-Rise scheme) This scheme gives both TPI and HAP their own identities. The massing of a tall block and a low block is attractive.

**The following questions and comments were received on comment cards.**

- Q1. After viewing and discussing all of the conceptual design options, **what do you think about the placement of ground floor activities?** How could the Queuing Courtyard function more effectively? How could the distribution of entrances to the major program elements (RAC, shelter, housing) be improved?
- A1. Good concepts with room for functional access to resource center and shelter entrances, courtyards, and parking.
- A2. This question may blend better to conversations around interior design & services that involve people with experience of homelessness at a more in-depth level.
- A3. Street Level: (1) Move popular food carts to this location? (2) The bike-stop and shower space sounds great, add Stumptown Coffee. (3) Internet Café. (4) This is kind of random, but courtyard performance space? (Work to connect populations—the DIY hipsters + people making life-changing transitions.)
- Q2. After viewing and discussing all of the conceptual design options, **which building massing (shape and volume) do you think will best accomplish the wide variety of project goals, and why?** Is there an option that you think has the potential to be a strong architectural statement in this very visible location?

- A1. I think the mid-rise shape is by far the most viable practical design and has access to Resource Center and serves all from inside. Mid-rise option is also viable because it separates housing and RAC.
  - A2. So far, the "L" seems preferable in that it accomplishes many design benefits of the mid-rise but allows flexibility for more housing or future development.
  - A3. Mid-rise: This option seems to offer most diversity of positive options, especially with another piece added at ground level for more housing.
  - A4. "L" and "Parallel Bars" and "Mid-Rise" more testing. Courtyard can be beneficial = quiet at night. Reflective surface makes more light in dwellings.
- Q3. The long term sustainability of both the social service programs and the building are important elements of this development. **Do you have specific ideas about sustainability that you would like to share with the development team?**
- A1. Include flexibility for change to programs as needs arise in the future.
  - A2. There should be real clarity around the goals of the retail space before they are committed to the final design. They could be a real benefit, but if they end up not working out well, it would just be space lost for shelter beds or other uses.
  - A3. Community garden; rooftop garden (see Rocket restaurant on East Burnside—another connection to young creative crowd).
  - A4. Secondary to function and durability of materials.
- Q4. Do you have other thoughts about the design work that you'd like to share?
- A1. A community garden would be a significant asset on many levels. Please pursue that fully! Thank you for your great work in presenting the info in a participant-friendly way, and for listening to everyone well.
  - A2. Will there be water, as in a fountain or something aesthetically pleasing?
  - A3. Consider potential income generation of social enterprise (after initial start up years). Emphasize lots of natural light in communal spaces. Strongly advocate with City to change 75 foot height limit if doing "Mid-Rise" scheme (doesn't impact any site views; makes building cost-effective). Consider very active, 24-hour eyes on street retail activities. Idea—bike center for commuters, bike repair, showers, lockers, rental parking all day.
  - A4. Important to keep 24-hour restrooms in the building—even if Randy Leonard wants street RRs in the area. More is even better!