

**CITY OF OLYMPIA
DESIGN REVIEW BOARD**

**COMBINED CONCEPTUAL & DETAIL DESIGN REVIEW STAFF REPORT
June 13, 2024**

Project Name/Number:	Legion & Jefferson, 24-1901
Applicant:	Thomas Architecture Studios
Location:	411 Legion Way SE
Project Description:	5-story mixed use apartment building with 87 residential units over 1 story of retail and parking.
Zoning District:	Downtown Business (DB)
Design District:	Downtown
Comprehensive Plan Designations:	Central Business District with High Density Neighborhood Overlay
City Staff:	Casey Mauck, Assistant Planner Phone: 360.753.8048 E-mail: cmauck@ci.olympia.wa.us
Public Notification:	In accordance with OMC 18.70, notice of the application, neighborhood meeting, and Design Review Board meeting was posted on the site and mailed to adjacent property owners on April 11, 2024.

The Design Review Board meeting is a public meeting and the public is welcome to attend. The meeting is not a public hearing and public testimony, or comments, are not taken at the meeting. Written comments for the Board may be submitted to staff prior to the start of the meeting. To allow for processing and distribution, please submit written comments to staff by 4:00 p.m. on the day of the meeting.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Existing Site Conditions

The site includes 0.67 acres southwest of the corner of Legion Way and Jefferson Street. The project proposal includes a lot consolidation to combine four parcels into one and an alley vacation to vacate an alley running east-west through the site. The site has been used as surface parking since the mid-2000s.

Surrounding the site, there are small restaurants to the north, a surface parking lot and two single family homes to the west, railroad tracks to the south, and a mixed-use apartment and commercial building to the east that is currently in construction ("Malt House").

Public Comments

Staff have received no written or oral comments to date specific to the design of the project.

Land Use Review

The land use review is currently underway. In addition to design review the project proposal must meet building, fire, engineering, urban forestry, and other requirements. The Site Plan Review Committee is finalizing the first round of review and has not noted any site-changing revisions.

DESIGN REVIEW

Please note that this is a Combined Conceptual and Detail Design Review.

Conceptual review involves the major design elements of a project which include site analysis and contextual response, site development, and architectural and landscape concepts as they relate to the general Citywide design criteria and the specific design criteria of the design district. Detail review involves all the detailed design elements of a project including materials, colors, final architectural elevations, and final landscape design and lighting.

The section called “How to Use Design Criteria (OMC 18.100.100)” in the Olympia Municipal Code provides instructions for meeting the City’s design criteria. Compliance with each requirement is necessary; the guidelines provide methods to achieve compliance with the requirements. Applicable guidelines must be incorporated into the project design except in cases where the proposed design solutions are considered by the Board and/or staff to be equal to or better than the guidelines and meet the intent of the requirement.

Review of Design Criteria

Staff evaluated the project proposal based on:

- A checklist prepared by the applicant indicating how compliance with the Downtown Design Criteria has been achieved (Attachment 2); and
- A design review packet prepared by the applicant with a project narrative and architectural plans (Attachment 3).

Staff found that the proposal generally addresses the criteria within the code, though some items may merit further review by the Board. These items are discussed below and included in recommended conditions of approval.

Areas Suggested for Board Review

Blank walls (OMC 18.120.480.B.1): Blank walls of 400 square feet or larger, without a window, door, or building modulation or other architectural feature that face a public street, are prohibited unless treated. The southern façade includes a blank wall along the lower half of the building that is currently proposed to be surfaced with Hardieplank panels in the color “Fairfax Brown” (see yellow box in Figure 1 below). While the panels do add visual interest at a pedestrian scale, it does not use a variety of surfaces. Staff suggest requiring that part of this façade, east of the exterior door, has additional elements to treat blank walls such as a grate with irrigated vegetation or artwork. This condition could be assessed at the time of building permit by staff.

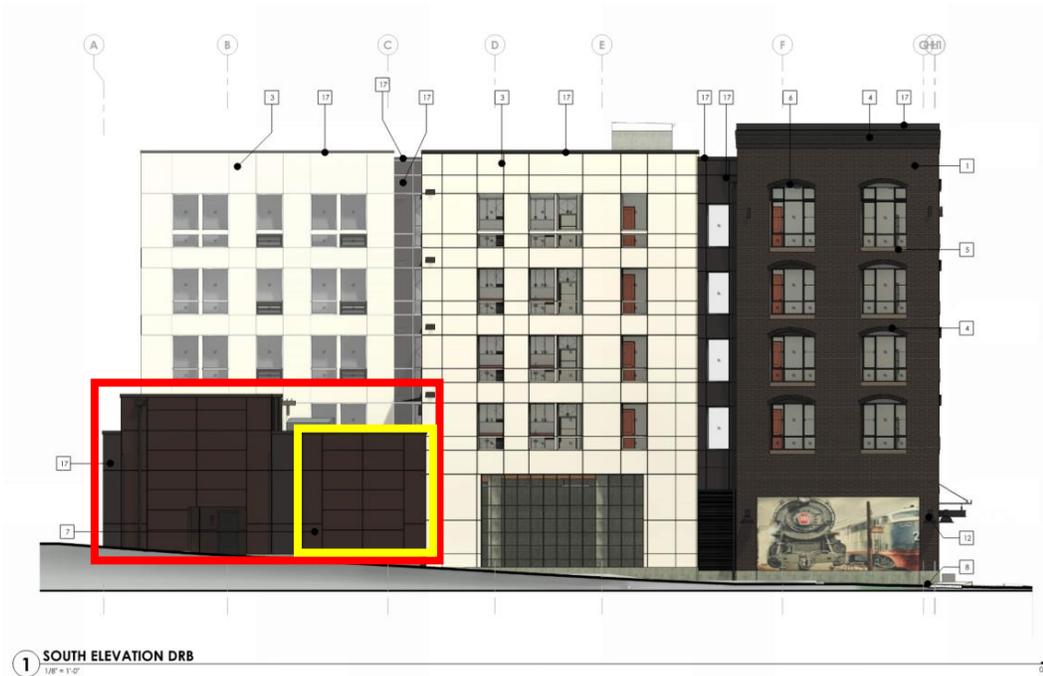


Figure 1. Southern façade of the building with areas highlighted for Board review. Staff suggests requiring brick in the red area and additional blank wall treatment in the yellow area.

Multiple sided buildings (OMC 18.120.440.B.9): Multiple sided buildings must have consistent visual identity from all sides visible to the general public, except building walls adjacent to alleys and walls immediately abutting neighboring properties. A building must have a comparable level of quality of materials, detailing, color schemes, and fenestration on all sides visible to the general public. This requirement applies to all façades except for the west, which abuts neighboring properties. The south façade uses fiber cement siding on the western two-thirds of the building, while the other façades use brick in darker areas. Staff suggest requiring that brick is used in the area currently proposed to be Hardieplank in the color “Fairfax Brown” (see area in figure 1 below), excluding the portion covered by blank wall treatments. This condition could be assessed at the time of building permit by staff.

Building entries (OMC 18.120.450.B.2): Primary building entries must be covered with weather protection at least 6 feet wide and 5 feet deep. The awning over the primary building entry protrudes 3 feet out rather than 5 feet. Staff suggest requiring that the awning is extended to meet the minimum of 5 feet deep. This condition could be assessed at the time of building permit by staff.

Above-grade structured parking (OMC 18.120.490.B.1): Above-grade structured parking must have a combination of artwork, grillwork, special building material, design, or other treatments to enhance the pedestrian environment and obscure the view of cars parked inside. The project proposes grates with vine plantings to screen views inside the garage. Staff suggest requiring irrigation to ensure plants survive, or requiring that a different screening technique is used if irrigation is not feasible (such as artwork or decorative grillwork). This condition could be assessed at the time of engineering and building permits by staff.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Design Review Board recommend to the Director approval of the conceptual and detail design review plans for the Legion and Jefferson project (24-1901), subject to the following conditions:

1. The blank wall on the southern façade, currently proposed to be Hardieplank in the color “Fairfax Brown” east of the exterior door, must include additional blank wall treatments pursuant to OMC 18.120.480.B.1 such as a grate with irrigated vegetation or artwork. This condition will be assessed at the time of building permit by staff.
2. Areas currently proposed to be Hardieplank in the color “Fairfax Brown” on the southern façade must be replaced with brick, excluding areas with additional blank wall treatment. This condition will be assessed at the time of building permit by staff.
3. The awning over the building entry must extend 5 feet out horizontally from the front entry. This condition will be assessed at the time of building permit by staff.
4. Plantings along the grates screening the parking area must be irrigated, or a different screening technique pursuant to OMC 18.120.490.B.1.b must be used. This condition will be assessed at the time of engineering and building permits by staff.

Submitted By: Casey Mauck, Assistant Planner

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1: Combined Design Staff Report
- Attachment 2: Applicant Design Checklist
- Attachment 3: Applicant Design Packet