



Architectural Review Board

Staff Report (ID # 14241)

Report Type: Approval of Minutes **Meeting Date:** 4/7/2022

Summary Title: Minutes of March 3, 2022

Title: Draft Architectural Review Board Meeting Minutes for March 3, 2022

From: Jonathan Lait

Recommendation

Staff recommends the Architectural Review Board (ARB) adopt the attached meeting minutes.

Background

Draft minutes from the March 3, 2022 Architectural Review Board (ARB) are available in Attachment A.

Draft and Approved Minutes are made available on the ARB webpage at bit.ly/paloaltoARB

Attachments:

- Attachment A: Minutes of March 3, 2022 (DOCX)



ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD DRAFT MINUTES: March 3, 2022

Council Chamber & Virtual Meeting
8:30 AM

Call to Order / Roll Call

The Architectural Review Board (ARB) of the City of Palo Alto met on this date in Council Chamber and virtual teleconference at 8:30 a.m.

Present: Chair Osma Thompson, Vice Chair David Hirsch, Boardmember Peter Baltay

Absent: None.

Oral Communications

None.

Agenda Changes, Additions and Deletions

None.

City Official Reports

1. Transmittal of 1) the ARB Meeting Schedule and Attendance Record, 2) Tentative Future Agenda items and 3) Recent Project Decisions

Jodie Gerhardt, Manager of Current Planning, shared the ARB 2022 Meeting Schedule and noted that all future meetings are currently scheduled to be held in hybrid format. The next hearing is scheduled for March 17, 2022 and has 2609 Alma and Castilleja School on the Agenda.

Study Session

2. 901 South California Avenue [21PLN-00274]: Request for Preliminary Architectural Review to allow the demolition of an existing building and construction of an approximately 55,583 square foot Office/R&D Building. Environmental Assessment: Not a Project. The Formal Application Will be Subject to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Review. Zoning District: RP(L)(Research Park). For More Information Contact the Project Planner Garrett Sauls at Garret.Sauls@CityofPaloAlto.org.

Chair Thompson called for the staff report.

Garrett Sauls, Assistant Planner, shared his screen with his presentation on 901 South California Avenue. The applicant is attending the meeting virtually and also has a presentation to give. The project proposal is to replace the two-story building with a new two-story building. It will maximize floor area allowances and will be 55,583 square feet (sf) with a 2,476 sf amenity space at the ground floor. The site will also be

updated for parking requirements, canopy requirements, and a true driveway. As a Preliminary Architectural Review a future application would require formal submittal. The central tower element does exceed the 35 foot height allowance and so the applicant will require a variance or Design Enhancement Exception (DEE). The applicant has requested the ARB to provide comment and direction on five items: 1) site circulation, 2) architectural appeal, 3) the California Avenue entrance, 4) the Floor Area Ratio (FAR), size, and parking, and 5) landscape concepts. He showed images of the renderings provided by the applicant as well as the material board. The ARB does not need to provide recommendations on the application but are requested to provide comments and direction related to critical issues they have identified with the project.

Chair Thompson called for the applicant's presentation.

Stan Lew, Principal, RMW Architecture & Interiors, explained that his partner, Steve Worthington, would give the presentation. He thanked the ARB for its time and comments.

Steve Worthington, RMW Architecture & Interiors, explained he would review the site plan, the amenity area, the materiality, and the renderings. He showed a slide of the site plan which conforms to the setbacks where the existing building did not. They are improving the vehicular circulation on site with a road to the south for services. The project will meet the parking requirement where the existing building did not. The main entrance and lobby are on the northern edge and feature an arcade walk. This allows a covered walk from the parking lot or the street. The amenity space is a fitness center and he pointed out its location and layout. The materiality is fairly simple and includes terra cotta, wood panels, clear glazing, metal, and mullions. Materials were selected for their natural and sustainable characteristics. The materials help to bridge the scale of the residential community along California Avenue. He provided additional information on each of the materials and noted that they are of high quality. The wood and terra cotta palette are complimentary of the palette, scale, and varied architecture of the street. He showed a slide illustrating where the renderings were located for reference and then showed the renderings of the façades from those points noting the various entries, recesses, the outdoor deck, and various architectural details. He concluded by showing a slide of the garden space for use by tenants between the parking area and the building. The materiality of the sunscreens is highlighted in the garden slide. He then showed evening views from California Avenue, the north side, and the arcade. He indicated that concluded his presentation.

Chair Thompson called for the public comment.

Madina Klicheva, Administrative Assistant, explained that there was a member of the public, Andrew, who had comments. She believed that he was having technical difficulties. There were no other members of the public with comments.

Chair Thompson confirmed that they had lost the public speaker.

Ms. Klicheva indicated that he might be attempting to rejoin.

Chair Thompson instructed Ms. Klicheva to notify the ARB if the public speaker rejoined so that he could be provided an opportunity to speak. She called for ARB disclosures.

Vice Chair Hirsch indicated that he visited the site.

Boardmember Baltay disclosed that he had also visited the site.

Chair Thompson disclosed that she visited the site as well. She called for ARB questions of the applicant or staff.

Boardmember Baltay asked the applicant if they had provided a schematic planting plan.

Mr. Sauls indicated that it was on Page 6 of the plans. He offered to share his screen but noted that the plans were not to the depth of what was required in a formal application.

Boardmember Baltay indicated he had seen that, and it referenced a planting plan. He asked if the planting plan was provided. Secondly, he asked staff to discuss why the DEE would be necessary.

Mr. Sauls said that the Research Park allowed buildings to be 35 feet tall. The proposal exceeds the height allowance so in order to be considered it would need to be done with a variance or a DEE. With the DEE the ARB and staff can find that the elements are aesthetically important to the building, but do not contribute to floor area or anything that might result in a reduction to another requirement.

Boardmember Baltay asked how much taller the tower was and what the necessary findings were for a DEE.

Mr. Worthington stated it was 8 feet taller and it was to accommodate the atrium element. The added height helps with wayfinding and a sense of destination on site.

Boardmember Baltay again asked how much taller the tower was and what the necessary findings were for a DEE.

Mr. Worthington stated it was 8 feet taller.

Mr. Sauls said it was a total of 43 feet. The DEE are found in Palo Alto Municipal Code Chapter 18.76.050, and he shared his screen and read them aloud.

Vice Chair Hirsch asked if there were limitations on where DEEs were to be located on a site.

Mr. Sauls explained that there are applicability portions of the code. They focus more attention on not being an opportunity for an applicant to reduce other requirements like parking or open space and to provide elements that might add aesthetically to the building without increasing floor area.

Vice Chair Hirsch stated that the DEE was due to the health club. He asked if there were limitations where that needed to be placed and if it could be used by people other than tenants of the building.

Mr. Sauls explained that the code did not specify where the amenity must be placed.

Vice Chair Hirsch stated that he wanted to know how the exercise space related to the users and if it can be used by people who are not tenants.

Mr. Sauls stated that the amenity space was for use by the tenants.

Chair Thompson stated that they were asked to comment on the entry sequence and requested clarification about where the entry was located.

Mr. Worthington shared his screen and pointed out orientation of the building and the main entrance. He also noted where they were requesting the DEE.

Chair Thompson asked about the double doors.

Mr. Worthington moved to another rendering and showed the arcade leading to the double doors for the lobby. He again noted the section that required the DEE.

Chair Thompson clarified the entry sequence from the parking lot.

Mr. Worthington showed the entry points from the parking lot and from the street. Bicycle parking is located at the back of the project.

Chair Thompson said that her second question was about the design justification for the DEE.

Mr. Worthington explained the intention was to give greater visibility to the entrance of the project.

Chair Thompson inquired about the size of the Terra cotta tiles

Mr. Worthington indicated that they were 1 foot tall by approximately 5 feet wide.

Vice Chair Hirsch asked how many tenants the building would accommodate.

Mr. Worthington stated the building was intended to be for multiple tenants, anywhere from two to four, which is why the lobby is located in the middle.

Vice Chair Hirsch asked if the floor plans would come later based on the tenants.

Mr. Worthington explain that the plans do not include tenant development. The light colored areas of the plans would be shared space and the darker area would be divided for tenants.

Vice Chair Hirsch inquired about the height limitations for the zone.

Mr. Sauls explained that the height limit was 35 feet with an additional 15 feet for mechanical screening. The total height of the glass tower is 43 feet.

Chair Thompson asked if the member of the public returned with his comments.

Ms. Klicheva said that Andrew was back, and she would set it up for him to speak.

Andrew [no last name given] apologized for raising his hand accidentally.

Chair Thompson brought the topic back to the ARB for discussion and reminded them it was a Study Session.

Boardmember Baltay thanked the applicant for the project and said that he was very excited about the pedestrian amenities. With respect to the site planning the side entrance works well and adding the double drive on the back of the building is a good idea. He appreciated the pedestrian access from California and how the commercial activity was removed from the street. He suggested an enlarged drop off area for deliveries and pickups, the current plan is too small and should accommodate at least three vehicles. The paved surface area of the site is being increased by the project as they are maintaining the

surface parking lot. He thought it was a shame not to put the parking underground or in a more compact structure and welcomed efforts or studies to reduce the amount of surface parking and increase landscaping. The side entry is great and has wonderful composition. There are wonderful people spaces both on the ground and on the terrace. The front of the building feels too heavy. He appreciated the recessed windows but found the building to read as one large block which is only accentuated by the red terra cotta. It does not feel like the public façade of a building and is not suitable for California Avenue. It could be more modulated and look more like the front of a building. Page 24 shows the staircase and he felt that area also looked blocky, but that might be acceptable as the back of the building. The entry area feels very different and is more successful. He stated that he would like to see the whole building move in that direction. The vertical fins on the east façade also need work and seem overscale. More shading is necessary for human activity on that side and could be used to break up the façade. The fitness and bicycle storage area are a wonderful amenity, and he was happy to see it proposed but felt that it was not in a location that made sense and encouraged the applicant to work on that. It also should not be in the same location as the bicycle spin room. To ensure the project fits into the neighborhood he requested they conduct a study on the light given off by the glass tower at night. He instructed staff to watch that aspect of the project closely. He was pleased to see the physical examples of the materials. He was not sold on the Terra cotta and thought the color was very bright, too strong, and might not work together with the yellow and the brown/black metal extrusion. The project has two architectural directions, one is the California Avenue façade and then the other is the steel/glass elements with terraces. He recommended the applicant try to bring those visions together. Overall the brightness of the red may be too much. It was difficult to comment on the landscaping since there was no planting plan included. At a high level he thought there was not enough landscaping and too much impervious surfacing; he noted the 50% parking shading requirement. He encouraged the applicants to keep the existing palm trees on the left side of the building from California Ave. With respect to the DEE he liked the tower element and could make Finding #2 but was hard pressed to find the unique character of this property that did not apply to other properties. The tower is also not a minor architectural feature but a major one; therefore, he was unsure he could support a DEE under the necessary findings, specifically Findings #1 and #3. He suggested that if the top portion could be some form of mechanical screening then it might be allowable and asked staff to look into it. He thanked the applicant for bringing the project forward and stated his appreciation for the pedestrian amenities.

Mr. Sauls requested that Boardmember Baltay repeat his point on the façades and the materials.

Boardmember Baltay explained that he felt there were two architectural motifs being used. One is the California Avenue façade, which is a large mass of terra cotta material with deeply recessed windows. That motif is also repeated at the back right corner of the building. Secondly, there is the architectural treatment of the glass entry and tower with the terraces and the lightness of the glass and steel architecture. He found those to be disparate architectural vocabularies.

Mr. Sauls thanked Boardmember Baltay.

Chair Thompson acknowledged Vice Chair Hirsch.

Vice Chair Hirsch stated that he really liked the materiality and colors. The materials create sharp points where they meet, especially around the recesses, and he would like to see how those fit together better.

Dividing the floors in half with the fins is very successful. The project does not look like housing which is good. The Terra cotta is a fantastic material and he approved of its use. The project makes a strong statement and fits into the Research Park. Having the entrance in the middle of the project is appropriate for multiple tenants. The shared facility on the side makes a lot of sense as does the balcony. He requested that the applicant show the view from the balcony in future iterations of the project as it should relate to the building next door. The back of the neighboring building is very unattractive. He agreed with Boardmember Baltay's comments on the convenience of the bicycle parking. He suggested moving the spin room to the third story accessible by elevator. Currently the spin room did not have the most attractive views to the exterior. Moving the spin room would allow the applicant to change the back of the building and provide a more landscaped area for the rear tenant or an area for bicycle parking. Putting the parking underground could also provide more landscaping, but this property has features that made the above ground parking acceptable, including the existing evergreens. If the exercise area was moved then they would have additional room for landscaping in the back. In his opinion the landscaping was the biggest weakness in the entire concept of the project. The scale of the back of the building was less pleasing than that of the front or the sides. He wondered why it did not repeat the scale of the front of the building and suggested that they coordinate it better. With all commercial buildings and Palo Alto's weather he wondered why there were not more operable windows. He understood that the building is sealed but did not find it necessary. If the applicant could provide more operable windows it would improve the environment of the inside significantly. He asked if it was a possibility to allow for a third floor to move the exercise room.

Ms. Gerhardt explained that rooftop gardens were defined in the code but were currently only allowed Downtown. Therefore the applicant would have to ensure that it was under 35 feet, or it would require a code change.

Vice Chair Hirsch I thought that was unfortunate because it could be accommodated through the sight lines so that it was unseen and thought it would be nice to allow the change. He repeated that he would like to see some repeat of the front of the building on the back façade.

Chair Thompson thanked the applicant and staff and her fellow Boardmembers for their comments. The first thing she noticed on her site visit was the sloped entrance of the current building. She thought the projects homage to the old building was nice. Having the entrance on the side of the building removes foot traffic from the front of the building and she questioned if that was the right approach. She noted Boardmember Baltay's comment about the front of the building being monolithic especially compared to the current building which has a break in the front façade. She wondered if relocating the lobby to the front would force people to have eyes on the street. Bicycle parking should also be as close to the lobby as possible. Based on those points she encouraged the applicant to reconsider the location of the lobby. She also appreciated Vice Chair Hirsch's comment about operable windows and thought that it looked as though the north side of the project had operable windows. She encouraged operable windows in all ways possible. She also appreciated Boardmember Baltay's comment about reconsidering the parking and incorporating more landscaping. The design is very strong, but the connection to landscape is what will make the building successful. She could not comment on the planting plan as it did not list any species but strongly encouraged additional landscaping and water pervious paving. The materials were excellent, and she disagreed with Boardmember Baltay on the color palette. The wood tone could be changed to better

complement the terra cotta. With the DEE she agreed with the other Boardmembers that she wasn't sure there was an exceptional design circumstance that would merit the height exception especially considering the height of the neighboring building. The façade is very nice but could still be lovely without the height. She appreciated the design direction and thought the building would look nice on the street but wanted to see the relationships of the design better defined. With respect to the back façade and the louvres she found them to be kind of iconic but thought it could be improved by possibly breaking up the scale. She called for follow up comments from the Boardmembers.

Boardmember Baltay suggested the ARB discuss the side entrance versus the front as that was a large change for the applicant to make. He believed the side entrance facilitated many program elements and modern drop off and delivery. He was fine with the side entrance so long as the façade was broken up a little more.

Vice Chair Hirsch started talking about the exercise room and Chair Thompson reminded him that they were speaking specifically about the lobby.

Chair Thompson explained that she had made a suggestion to move the lobby to the front of the building.

Vice Chair Hirsch thought the entrance was responsive to the programming. He did not think there was much flexibility and that it did not make sense to move the entrance as it would add to the interior corridors. He did not think the tower would be an eyesore from the street and indicated there would need to be wayfinding signs. The side of the building is the proper location for the entrance especially considering the balcony and the outdoor seating areas.

Chair Thompson stated that by straw poll the entry was okay in its current location. She noted they agreed that there should be a more robust landscaping plan.

Vice Chair Hirsch suggested creating a separate structure to house the exercise room. He indicated that the parking could be moved, and the building could be pulled back to create room for the structure. The exercise portion of the building does not seem to fit in his opinion.

Chair Thompson summarized that Boardmember Baltay had suggested underground parking.

Vice Chair Hirsch did not think that was necessary.

Chair Thompson said he just suggested making the exercise room its own structure.

Vice Chair Hirsch said that so long as the parking lot was well landscaped it did not need to go underground.

Boardmember Baltay clarified that underground parking was not required. The current parking works fine and is beyond the purview of the ARB. He just wanted to point out that there is a lot of impervious paving due to the surface parking.

Chair Thompson said she would support asking the applicant to consider moving the parking underground.

Boardmember Baltay noted they could also build a two story parking structure at the back of the building. He would support anything that would compact the parking and provide for more landscaping.

Vice Chair Hirsch noted that parking garages had their own issues.

Chair Thompson confirmed that Vice Chair Hirsch wished to move the exercise facility.

Vice Chair Hirsch thought that it could be a stand-alone area with its own adjacent garden. It could also be used to create a barrier between the building and the parking structure or lot.

Chair Thompson asked for Boardmember Baltay's thoughts.

Boardmember Baltay thought Vice Chair Hirsch's comments were creative but that the fitness area was a fantastic amenity, and the City was lucky the applicant had proposed it. They should encourage the amenity and not push too hard to go beyond what was offered. It should however be more integrated with the entrance of the building.

Chair Thompson supported Boardmember Baltay's comment about integrating it with the entrance. She appreciated Vice Chair Hirsch's intention to get more landscaping near the fitness area. What they all seem to like about the color and material palette is that it was biophilic. She encouraged the applicant to consider that as part of the design of the fitness center. The ARB made several comments on the façade, and she wanted to provide the applicant with more direction. She noted that there were several comments that the front was monolithic.

Vice Chair Hirsch indicated he would like to see the concepts brought from the front to the back. The materials are nice so long as they meet properly, and the front façade is a nicer concept than the rear and has scale.

Chair Thompson thought the back was "cool" due to its scale. She appreciated the front façade as well and thought the patterns were nice. Lastly, on the materials two ARB members liked the terra cotta. She had made a comment regarding potentially softening the wood.

Boardmember Baltay indicated he agreed with Chair Thompson's comments. He further cautioned that the red was very bright, and the building was large and suggested they think of the people in the neighborhood.

Chair Thompson asked if the applicant had any questions of the ARB.

Boardmember Baltay asked if they should give clearer direction on the DEE and asked for Vice Chair Hirsch's opinion on the findings.

Vice Chair Hirsch thought it was reasonable to use the DEE for a higher entry.

Chair Thompson explained that she and Boardmember Baltay did not find anything exceptional which would allow for the DEE. She asked if Vice Chair Hirsch disagreed.

Boardmember Baltay said he was concerned if they could make the required findings that the property had something exceptional, that it was a minor and not major feature, and that it enhances the architecture.

Vice Chair Hirsch said that Planning presented it as if it was possible so he thought there were reasonable exceptions that could be made to provide amenities.

Chair Thompson explained that the DEE is for the lobby and not the exercise space. The DEE relates to the 43 foot high lobby.

Vice Chair Hirsch thought the exception could be allowed.

Chair Thompson noted that the ARB was split on the DEE.

Vice Chair Hirsch indicated he really liked the tower.

Chair Thompson said that they all liked it, but the concept could be achieved without having the height.

Vice Chair Hirsch disagreed and said the height was properly considered. He asked if it fit the parapet height, or the enclosure allowed for mechanical screening.

Mr. Sauls stated that it was less than the allowable screening height.

Vice Chair Hirsch did not see how they could object to something lower than the allowed mechanical screening height.

Boardmember Baltay explained he needed to meet the ARB findings and had concerns about any precedent set. It is important to follow the law the way City Council wrote it.

Vice Chair Hirsch said that he would have to review the wording of the findings. He saw this as a small but important element.

Chair Thompson noted that they were not making a Motion. She asked if there was anything further to summarize for the applicant.

Mr. Sauls indicated that Boardmember Baltay had concerns about light spillover for the front façade and asked if the ARB thought it needed further treatment. The applicant provided night renderings which showed the use of wood slats to interrupt the light at the tower and on the front façade which he displayed for the ARB. The City would look at the light spillover as part of the application and the applicant is required to submit photometric drawings that demonstrate compliance.

Boardmember Baltay expressed confidence that the staff would look at the matter carefully. The basic approach to the California Ave elevation is correct and minimizes the glazed area. His prior comment was mostly related to the tower element and out of concern for the houses across the street.

Mr. Worthington indicated there was a night view from California included with the project materials.

Mr. Sauls stated it was on Page 26.

Boardmember Baltay said that was the angle he was talking about and was not convinced that the artistic rendering would be accurate as far as the brightness to the community. Staff will look into the matter.

Vice Chair Hirsch thought that you would only see that view for a millisecond while driving by.

Boardmember Baltay indicated that was not the case if you lived across the street.

Vice Chair Hirsch recalled that the house across the street did not have many windows.

Boardmember Baltay said the house was notable, but it was an R1 neighborhood next to the Research Park.

Vice Chair Hirsch explained that there was always a possibility that the house would be replaced or renovated. He repeated that there was a small view of the tower that would be prominent from California Avenue since it was set so far back. The applicant has already successfully addressed the light issues for the neighborhood with the treatment of the wood on the tower.

Chair Thompson inquired about the barrier between the project and the property to the north which she described as low rise. She noted that the tower would be visible from there as well.

Ms. Gerhardt thought those were great questions which staff would ask the applicant to work on prior to the formal application.

Boardmember Baltay requested that the applicant provide a calculation of the impermeable coverage of the property in its current configuration versus the proposed project.

Chair Thompson supported that request. She reviewed her notes and said that the majority of the ARB agreed that the lobby was acceptable in its current location and the terra cotta material is acceptable, but the wood material is too bright and should be reconsidered. The applicant should increase landscaping where possible, consider adding more operable windows, consider moving parking underground or to a structure to increase landscaping, integrate the fitness center with the landscaping, and possibly relocate the fitness center and bicycle parking closer to the entry. With regard to the façade there were comments about the front being monolithic and that there should be some consideration of connecting the four facades aesthetically across the project. A majority of the ARB was not in support of the DEE and there was a request for the applicant to provide the percentage of impermeable lot coverage.

Vice Chair Hirsch noted that the underground parking did not have to be beneath the building, it could be beneath the landscaping.

Chair Thompson noted that she had mentioned the idea of undergrounding the parking. She called for applicant comments or questions.

Mr. Worthington thanked the ARB for its comments.

Mr. Lew stated they had no questions and thanked the ARB.

Chair Thompson thanked the applicant and called for a five minute recess.

The ARB took a Break

3. California Avenue Street Improvements / Parklets

Chair Thompson called the meeting back to order. She noted that the meeting was running over time and suggested that Boardmembers give their brief thoughts on the topic.

Ms. Gerhardt informed the ARB that the Council had voted to keep the California Avenue closure until December 2023. Staff is doing further work on the item.

Chair Thompson thanked Ms. Gerhardt for the update. She walked California Ave at approximately 7 p.m. and observed some successes and some things that could use improvement in terms of design and making the space a pedestrian plaza. She wanted to map the current situation and interview the community. She took pictures which could be shared the next time they spoke on the matter.

Boardmember Baltay said that he would love to see the pictures.

Chair Thompson asked if he meant to continue the discussion.

Boardmember Baltay stated that it was an important discussion and had been agendaized.

Chair Thompson agreed but explained that her pictures were not currently easy to be shared. She noted that some of the restaurants had outdoor spaces with visibility on both sides while others were very closed off. The ARB will also have to consider the ideal location for pedestrian foot traffic. If foot traffic were moved to the street it might feel more bustling, but the infrastructure currently has foot traffic on the sidewalks.

Vice Chair Hirsch indicated that to start they needed a base map and asked how they would obtain one.

Chair Thompson asked if the ARB should do that itself or attempt to get some help.

Boardmember Baltay asked what the ARB was charged with doing.

Chair Thompson said that currently they needed to develop a framework for moving forward. California Avenue will be closed through December 2023 and there are temporary structures and improvement. The ARB should have input into how that area develops aesthetically. She noted that Ms. Gerhardt was sharing some pictures.

Vice Chair Hirsch suggested discussing a scope of work.

Boardmember Baltay asked if they were being tasked with creating a proposed design or to spearhead a process that would include getting a designer or simply to figure out what the community wanted. He has discussed the issue with some members of City Council and some of them would appreciate the ARB branching out to provide guidance to the City on how to develop California Avenue. He strongly supported creating an ARB committee to look at the issue from a design project perspective. That would involve meeting with the community, a subcommittee of the Council, and putting together a base drawing and sketches for input. The ARB has the potential give strong input. He just wanted to clarify the process. He repeated that he wanted to create an ARB subcommittee independent of staff and encouraged the City Council and the Planning and Transportation Commission (PTC) to do the same. Following that it would be apparent whether or not they would need City staff to hire professionals to execute the plan. As soon as Public Works sends out the Request For Proposals (RFP) the City has lost creative control and time for meaningful community involvement.

Vice Chair Hirsch asked if that would include the PTC and someone from the Art Commission as well as a landscape person.

Boardmember Baltay encouraged Chair Thompson, the Mayor, and the Chairs of other Committees/Commissions get together and figure out the structure. Subcommittees are more effective

because they do not need to have public hearings and it is very difficult to do design work within the context of a public hearing. Subcommittees could also ensure that comments were received from the community and merchants. He thought Council would support that process and it would not be controversial. He suggested that they could just embody the ARB's subcommittee.

Chair Thompson indicated that as she walked California Avenue the other day she thought about how she would organize it if it were her project or the group's project. The first thing that should be done is scoping and determining the process for public engagement. She asked Ms. Gerhardt if the ARB could have subcommittees with only three current members.

Ms. Gerhardt explained that while the ARB sat at three members it could not hold subcommittee meetings. Council is interviewing ARB candidates on March 11th.

Chair Thompson stated that in the interim the regular public meetings were the only forum in which they could discuss the item. She stated that they could give themselves homework related to the topic.

Boardmember Baltay indicated he had already written a one page summary of the process following a conversation with a member of the City Council. The summary begins by defining the scope. He indicated that he could bring that to the next discussion and stated they could form a subcommittee of one if they chose.

Chair Thompson said she would love to see the write up Boardmember Baltay created. She indicated she had access to software and could create a map if that was how they decided to start.

Boardmember Baltay thought all of that information was already contained in a City database as California Avenue is a well-studied street. Public Works should have drawings from the tree project.

Chair Thompson offered to handle that task.

Boardmember Baltay thought the bigger issue was to get buy in for the idea of subcommittees made up by the various bodies. That would start a valuable process that is not often done in the City of Palo Alto. He referenced the bridge project to cross the highway and how City Council decided to do it the formal way and resulted in something that if built would be a real compromise. He thought this project should start with citizen volunteers and then they could figure out how to build it or pay for it. He suggested Chair Thompson speak with the Mayor and the Chair of the PTC.

Chair Thompson said there was an idea of doing a surette for community outreach and design ideas.

Boardmember Baltay agreed that they would want to do that. This type of design project requires community input. He suggested that Chair Thompson's point about foot traffic being relocated to the middle versus the sidewalks was exactly the type of thing that should be discussed with the public. Utilizing the ARB and other boards or commissions is the right way to approach the project and would not cost the City money.

Chair Thompson asked if Vice Chair Hirsch had other thoughts.

Vice Chair Hirsch was torn between having one person write a scope of work and disseminate it or creating an inclusive committee. When the City creates committees that are too big and contain too many varied opinions that does not work well.

Boardmember Baltay clarified that he was not suggesting they form a committee like the Housing Committee. Rather he suggested each board or commission provide two members to informally work together. A formal committee creates a slower and more political process with too many people involved.

Vice Chair Hirsch did not want to commit the time of two Council Members to the project for time reasons.

Boardmember Baltay thought that was a fair point. He emphasized that they were trying to create a design process and a large committee is not good at the design process.

Chair Thompson said that in an RFP the designer would have set times to gain community feedback and then return with updates. It is important to develop that process and hear from the community in an equitable manner. She thought they could learn from the shortcomings of past processes and move forward.

Boardmember Baltay wanted to use their expertise as design professionals to come up with a group process that would be productive. He repeated that the committee should be a limited number of people and suggested no more than 6 members. The Mayor ought to be involved in the decisions.

Chair Thompson stated that until they could create a subcommittee there were several homework items.

Boardmember Baltay may draft a proposed process. She volunteered to work on a base site plan map. She asked what Vice Chair Hirsch would like to do.

Vice Chair Hirsch expressed interest in researching similar areas in other communities. He has experience from Fulton Street in Downtown Brooklyn, but that was mostly commercial. He will look to other pedestrian areas across the world.

Chair Thompson indicated everyone had their tasks and that they could schedule a check in on the next agenda.

Boardmember Baltay said that it was important but not urgent.

Chair Thompson thanked everyone for their excitement.

Action Items

4. 250 Cambridge Ave [21PLN-00281]: Request for a Minor Board Level Architectural Review to Allow Renovation of the Façade for an Existing Three-Story Office Building to Create a more Inviting Public Entry and Improved Pedestrian Experience. A Design Enhancement Exception (DEE) is Included to Increase the Height of the Building to Allow for Light Monitors to be Installed on the Roof. Zoning District: CC(2)(R). Environmental Assessment: Exempt per Guideline Section 15301. For more information, Contact the Project Planner, Samuel Gutierrez at Samuel.Gutierrez@CityofPaloAlto.org.

Chair Thompson introduced the item and called for ARB disclosures.

Boardmember Baltay disclosed he had visited the site several times.

Vice Chair Hirsch disclosed he had also visited the site several times.

Chair Thompson disclosed that she had also visited the site. She called for the staff report.

Samuel Gutierrez, Project Planner, shared his screen and presentation on 250 Cambridge Avenue. The project is an existing office building located approximately a block from California Avenue. The project involves a façade update, and he displayed a rendering of the proposed changes. The application is a minor board level review to update the existing façade. A DEE is requested to allow for minor height increases to accommodate the light monitors on the roof. The total amount that exceeds the height limit is 3 foot 8 inches. The site is zoned CC(2)(R) and is three-story building on a 1,500 sf parcel. Parking is below grade and part of the assessment district that was set up in 1986. He displayed a slide showing the adjacent zones which are RM-30, Public Facilities (PF), and other CC(2)(R) uses. He showed an image of the current building for reference and noted that it was made of simple forms and concrete. The proposed design changes seek to change the scale of the building by providing more relief where possible. It would also add public seating which does not currently exist. Proposed materials include two different types of fiber cement panels. He showed another rendering of the proposed design, which breaks the building into three pieces which are compatible and creates interest. The entry has changed and includes new public seating and planters. There are 12 existing trees on the site running along the rear property line and the RM-30 zone. The trees will remain. Another three street trees on Cambridge will remain. The proposed landscaping includes a majority of California native plants, are low water use, and support habitat. One nonnative plant is isolated in the center open courtyard and was considered by staff to be interior and not exterior. Nothing is proposed to change regarding the access and parking for the site. The project includes new bicycle parking via two new racks near the entry and 11 long term spaces in the parking garage. It also includes lockers for those that bike to work and upgrades to the bathrooms. The project is zoning compliant and does not seek to increase FAR, rather the modifications reduce the FAR slightly by 279 sf. The project does not change any existing setbacks, but a DEE is requested for two rooftop light monitors which would exceed the maximum height of the building by 3 feet 8 inches. Currently the existing southwestern tower like feature is the tallest part of the building and encloses the rooftop equipment and elevator cabin. That is 42 feet 4 inches. He displayed an elevation including the two light monitors which are offset from the edges and will be difficult to see from the street. It is likely that the light monitors will not be visible from the ground level, but they would be visible from the public parking structure across the street. The DEE is allowed per the code to allow a minor exception that would enhance the design and enable the architectural style of the existing improvements on the site. with respect to the DE findings the rooftop light would not increase the height of the entire building and is basically limited to the popup windows. DEEs can allow for minor height changes. The light monitors do not increase FAR or change any other requirements for the site. They allow for additional light to the building without modifying the rear windows or adding side windows which would have the potential to impact the adjacent residential parcels. The rooftop lights are also more efficient energy wise than windows on the side of the building. Approving the DEE would not be injurious to the property or improvements, public health safety or general welfare, and staff believes it is within the context of the DEE process and could be approved. The project is compliant with several policies in the Comprehensive Plan which he listed and explained for the ARB. Overall the project meets the requirements for approval

and is consistent with the zoning. The DEE is consistent with the DEE intent. Staff recommends approval to the Director of Planning based on the Findings and subject to the Conditions of Approval.

Chair Thompson called for the applicant's presentation.

Heather Young spelled her name and also introduced Aaron Pavitt. She shared her screen with the ARB and thanked Mr. Gutierrez and the ARB. The project is located at 250 Cambridge and Mr. Gutierrez gave an excellent overview of the site, which she briefly recapped. The building was originally built in the mid-1980s and is in need of improvement. The goal was to improve the building via a series of phased projects. The first project has already been completed and that is the shower and toilet facilities mentioned by Mr. Gutierrez. That project will support bicyclists traveling to and from the building. The existing site contains a brick sidewalk, cast concrete planters, a garage entry and a deeply recessed pedestrian entry leading to an open air courtyard. The design is a bit tired, and they tried to distinguish the building entry from the garage entry. Therefore they are revising the paving pattern and replacing the brick with tile that moves from the entrance to the interior courtyard with a lighter tile for the new seating area. This area features new landscaping and reshaped planters which will be closer to grade level and more contemporary. The street trees will be retained but the planters and courtyard are being replanted as part of the façade update. She showed the original façade compared to the updated one. The proposal breaks the façade into three distinct features. Originally the building was built right at the property line, so they are proposing to pull the third floor middle wall back in attempts to deepen and add complexity to the façade. They are also increasing the glazing and proportions on the third floor with new terraces on either side recessed into the façade. The walls on the terraces may be opened for access to the exterior. The second story glass is also replaced with clear glazing and treated to add depth. The round columns are structural and clad with steel plate to become more rectangular. The corner is closed to frame and protect the pedestrian seating area and entrance. A new signage component clearly demarcates the entrance to the project. She provided angular views from a pedestrian and vehicular scale as well as close up views pedestrian approach. When built the project was fully FAR compliant so the entry could not be moved closer to the street. She provided several slides of images differentiating the materials which she listed and explained.

Chair Thompson stated that Ms. Young's time was up and requested that she wrap up the presentation.

Ms. Young stated that the before and after images were complete in the ARB packet. The secure bicycle room in the basement is part of the project and is close to the elevator. She also showed a night rendering of the façade and thanked the ARB for its time.

Chair Thompson called for the public comment. Hearing none she called for Boardmember questions of the applicant or staff.

Vice Chair Hirsch inquired about the EQUITONE panels on the materials board and learned that his understanding of their use was correct.

Ms. Young explained that some of the EQUITONE was the same paint color as the steel. The shadow boxes are painted aluminum.

Vice Chair Hirsch inquired about the tone of the panels.

Ms. Young explained that he was viewing an actual sample of the material.

Vice Chair Hirsch continued to ask where the materials were used.

Ms. Young reviewed her drawings and explained there were a lot of subtleties in the colors. She shared her screen with the ARB and pointed out the use of the EQUITONE panels.

Vice Chair Hirsch inquired about the difference in the tile and confirmed that the darker material was for the entry.

Ms. Young stated that his understanding was correct. The lighter tone tile was for the seating area to the left of the entrance.

Vice Chair Hirsch noted that the change was very subtle. He inquired about the face of the seating.

Ms. Young explained that it was wood, either Resysta or possibly natural.

Vice Chair Hirsch asked where the poured concrete material was used.

Ms. Young stated that it was a tile product, not poured. She demonstrated on the drawings where the material was used to clad the existing poured in place concrete.

Vice Chair Hirsch asked if there was any brick on the building.

Ms. Young indicated that it was poured concrete on the current building.

Chair Thompson asked a follow-up on the materials. The steel plates used to square out the columns are actually done in painted steel.

Ms. Young stated that was correct.

Vice Chair Hirsch inquired about the material in the larger windows between the columns.

Ms. Young said it was painted grey and is made of aluminum.

Vice Chair Hirsch did not understand the answer and explained the point of the building he was looking at.

Mr. Gutierrez interjected that Vice Chair Hirsch was looking at the ground floor at the center.

Ms. Young thanked him and clarified on the drawings that they were speaking about the same element. She explained that it was the glazed curtain wall system and that the ARB had samples of the materials.

Chair Thompson asked if the worn grey color was the same.

Ms. Young said it was not and showed that there were two tones of grey. She apologized for the confusion.

Chair Thompson confirmed that the columns would be the same color. She called for further questions.

Boardmember Baltay asked staff if the proposed tile over the sidewalk would be permitted.

Mr. Gutierrez explained that the applicant would have to apply for an encroachment permit via Public Works. Public Works had no issue with the tile.

Boardmember Baltay thought the City had a standard for sidewalks that discouraged individual buildings from modifying it.

Mr. Gutierrez stated that it had come up in Downtown, but he was not sure about Cambridge. California Avenue has not allowed the sidewalk to be changed by a private party.

Ms. Gerhardt explained that on University or California Avenue the City would have more say.

Boardmember Baltay asked if staff saw any reason why the sidewalk would not be approved with this project.

Mr. Gutierrez repeated that Public Works had voiced no concern about the project.

Ms. Young stated that the existing brick in the sidewalk was part of the original project. Technically the applicant is replacing its own sidewalk which had been permitted before.

Chair Thompson stated that Ms. Young had mentioned that the previous project was inspired by the Villa Savoye and inquired about the design inspiration for the current proposal.

Ms. Young explained that the client had requested the building be brought into the 21st century with large glass openings to bring light into the building. They wanted a stripped down look that was clean, clear, crisp, and more articulated. There was no precedent used.

Chair Thompson thought it was helpful to understand the design goals and thanked Ms. Young. She called for further questions but hearing none she returned to the ARB for comment.

Vice Chair Hirsch thanked Ms. Young and thought that the building had greater clarity and variety of materials and textures. Overall the building appeared friendlier. He saw a lost opportunity where the scale and detail fall apart. He suggested they compare the image on A17 with the proposed façade material perspective on A26.

Ms. Gerhardt noted that Mr. Gutierrez was pulling up the images for the ARB.

Vice Chair Hirsch instructed them to look at the photo in the middle of A26 and compare it to A17. He noted the area behind the columns seemed to be its own architectural element and appeared structural with its own shadows. It's glazed over from top to bottom. He then requested they show another photo of the current condition. Currently there is mirrored glass and he felt it serves to disorient you from the street. That idea is inconsistent from the other ideas contained in the front elevation. The metal framing on the new project while it may not be the exact composition of the columns it could be and rather than covering it with glazing it could be used to give scale to the building. It is more pleasing and provides more scale to the building as an expression. It ought to be expressed, seen, and the same color as the column enclosures. That would make a much stronger building. The scale is lost in the curtain wall enclosure and harkens back to the inappropriate scale of the mirrored glass on the existing building. Many of the elements Ms. Young explained work very well, such as the name of the building above the entrance. He stated he had other smaller items that he wanted to comment on. The nice thing about the current building is that it gets sun at the entry, and he encouraged them to revisit the wall next to the seating area to improve the lighting. They should also look into adding a third tree in the center of the building between the two existing street trees. He also thought that they could do better than the hanging cigar light fixtures

pictured, which are too boring for the entry. Like with the previous project he advocated for operable windows. He questioned if the left hand balcony opened the way the right side did. He really appreciated the bicycle storage room and thought the drawing was fantastic. Overall the project has done a good job and the painted steel color as the eyebrow around the openings was terrific. Most importantly he requested they changed the two ground floors in the middle and expose the material better.

Boardmember Baltay stated he could recommend approval of the project and thought that it had many good things going for it. He requested clarification on Vice Chair Hirsch's point about the center of the façade and the first two stories. Looking at the sectional details on Sheet A30, specifically Detail #2, he thought that Vice Chair Hirsch was saying that the glazed assembly on the first two stories, the recessed part of it, did not have a physical manifestation of a floor structure and that is what he wanted to see.

Chair Thompson requested staff zoom in on Detail #2.

Boardmember Baltay requested that Vice Chair Hirsch point out his concern.

Vice Chair Hirsch noted that the whole face of the building is just glazed. The second floor does not express itself from the outside of the building.

Boardmember Baltay pointed out that there were different metal channels and extrusions.

Vice Chair Hirsch indicated it was all glass.

Boardmember Baltay requested to hear Ms. Young's thoughts.

Chair Thompson wanted to know what was visible. Earlier she wondered if there was spandrel there but had forgotten to ask.

Ms. Young explained that it was a double height curtain wall system. The two horizontal mullions above and below the concrete are backed with an aluminum panel to block the concrete slab. The character of the existing concrete slab is irregular and so they need to provide acoustic and environmental sealant between the two floors which is the reason for the spandrel condition. They also had to extend the wall above the existing concrete stem wall. Depending on the angle of light from the time of day the spandrel will read prominently as a horizontal line across the two story extent of the façade. She felt the facade was lively and animated.

Chair Thompson requested clarification if the material was spandrel or clear glass with an aluminum backing.

Ms. Young said it was the same glazing as what was applied to the office spaces and there is a back set aluminum panel.

Chair Thompson confirmed that the metal panel was painted the same color as the other painted metal.

Ms. Young thought so but requested clarification from Aaron Pavitt.

Aaron Pavitt explained that they originally tried to replicate the concrete but had had issues with that. They wanted it to be lighter in tone so that it was similar to the lighter tone above near the window shadow boxes and not the darker tone of the columns.

Chair Thompson confirmed that the glazing was clearer and less mirror like than the existing glazing.

Ms. Young said that was the case and noted that the existing glazing was mirrored glass. The proposed sample is transparent and high performance. It is low iron glass that is incredibly transparent.

Boardmember Baltay thanked Ms. Young. He thought Vice Chair Hirsch had a good point, but he could support the project either way. If his colleagues wanted them to return on that one point he would accept that. Overall the changes made were impressive, the materials were wonderful, and it would be a big improvement. He voiced concern about having two bicycle racks near the entrance and reducing the pedestrian area. On Sheet A26 they show the bicycle rack alongside the sidewalk which seems more appropriate.

Chair Thompson asked that he repeat the Sheet Number.

Boardmember Baltay explained Sheet A26 showed it.

Chair Thompson indicated that it was not on the floorplan.

Boardmember Baltay agreed but noted that a bike rack was shown there in a rendering.

Ms. Young apologized and said that the rendering on A.26 was prior to Transportation's requirement that they relocate the bike racks to be solely on the project property and not in the sidewalk.

Boardmember Baltay stated he would not come between the project and approval over bicycle racks.

Chair Thompson noted that the plans were changed.

Boardmember Baltay agreed that the plans were correct.

Vice Chair Hirsch noted that adjacent to the projection of the office space at the entry on the cover sheet they have a bench piece. If there were enough depth there he suggested that to be where they locate the bike rack.

Ms. Young believed that they tried that and the required width on both sides of the bike rack impeded on the property line and did not allow for the two required spaces. The current proposal is the "unhappy alternative" that they negotiated with Transportation.

Chair Thompson said she was confused and asked if there were bike racks on the ground floor plan.

Ms. Young stated they were and pointed them out on the plan. She apologized that the rendering still showed the initial placement of the bike racks. When the bike racks moved they overlooked removing them from that rendering.

Chair Thompson thanked her and stated she had misread the plan.

Boardmember Baltay indicated that the bike racks were not ideal but that he understood the project had to pick its battles. With the DEE he could recommend support but wanted to return to the written findings as he could not accept staff's current justification for the DEE. Because it's an existing building there is an exceptional circumstance particular to the property and the feature adds to the property by allowing for additional daylight. Additionally the features are clearly minor.

Chair Thompson said she also had comments on the findings. She thanked the applicant for answering the questions but noted she was struggling with making Findings #2 and #3. Finding #2 requires a unified and coherent design and the original building had a strong parti and is clean and crisp. The proposed design is like three different buildings put together and do not feel coherent. The main entrance is being flanked by columns of two different materials and is inconsistent. Cladding the columns seems to make the project bulkier where the existing building felt light and airy. Vice Chair Hirsch mentioned how the entry is currently open on the side while the proposal is closed off. The openness makes it more inviting, and the curves led your eye to the entry. The proposal blocks that and may not achieve the project's goals. She noted the lack of shading elements despite the building facing South. Shading is as important as operable windows. She struggled with the material palette as the existing building had warm tones and red accents while the proposed change contains cool colors and makes the project somewhat more brutalist. While she loved brutalist architecture she was not sure that met the goals of the project. She could not make Finding #2 or #3 but could support the DEE. She agreed with Boardmember Baltay that it improved the building and was a special circumstance. The bicycle racks were fine where located, and she appreciated the benches. Overall, she could not support the project at this time. She reminded her colleagues that façades remain for a long time, and it was important that they find a way to meet Findings #2 and #3. She thought the ARB should be more critical as the building was on an important part of California Avenue. The current building is dated and needs to be brought into the 21st century but she was not sure that the current proposal did that.

Boardmember Baltay noted the Villa Sevoia was set on a big grassy field and is a classic work of architecture but a terrible model for an office building on Cambridge. The original parti is good, and if he had to address it himself he would do so though the materials. They have requested that buildings on Cambridge be broken up and the architect has gone to great lengths to do that. The project is not perfect, but the current condition is inappropriate for the area and the proposal is better. This is the second time the applicant has come before the ARB and the building should be updated rather than torn down. If the ARB pushes too hard for the perfect it may derail the process. He agreed with Chair Thompson and shared her gut concern but was not sure that the ARB should push it.

Chair Thompson asked Boardmember Baltay what was the parti of the proposal.

Boardmember Baltay agreed that it was hard to define. The building is trying to be three separate buildings and the property does not have enough room to express that properly.

Chair Thompson asked if Boardmember Baltay felt the façade was a coherent design.

Boardmember Baltay refused to answer the question.

Chair Thompson noted that it was Finding #3.

Boardmember Baltay said he understood.

Vice Chair Hirsch said that the project was replacing a single image building and broke it into pieces. Changing the scale of the facade was an improvement. He could not approve the project unless it expressed the first to second story divisions as he described earlier so the windows are no longer a plane of glass.

Chair Thompson asked how that related to the ARB Findings and requested Vice Chair Hirsch tie his thoughts to a Finding. The ARB cannot suggest changes without a relationship to the Findings.

Ms. Gerhardt clarified that this was the first hearing related to the project. The applicant did not request a preliminary review. This is a Minor Architectural Review so they would normally have up to two hearings.

Boardmember Baltay stated the ARB had heard Ms. Young's firm present on this building before.

Chair Thompson stated that was a different building.

Mr. Gutierrez indicated that Boardmember Baltay was thinking of a building on California Avenue.

Ms. Young stated that she had met with Boardmember Baltay and Vice Chair Hirsch individually to preview the more conceptual project, but it was not part of a formal application.

Boardmember Baltay thanked Ms. Young for that clarification. He disclosed that he met with Ms. Young quite some time ago with a different proposal for the project.

Chair Thompson noted that the pandemic had blurred things.

Boardmember Baltay agreed that there were issues with Finding #2. What staff wrote does not support the Finding. He tried to write something to make it work and was unable to make the Finding.

Vice Chair Hirsch thought that under Finding #3 he could make his suggestion because it was of a higher aesthetic quality. His suggestion is also more scaled to the neighborhood than the proposed façade.

Chair Thompson clarified that he could not make Finding #3.

Vice Chair Hirsch agreed.

Chair Thompson struggled with Vice Chair Hirsch's suggestion because of how it incorporates with the greater design concept. She heard the goals were to update the façade to the 21st century, provide large glass openings, and make the façade clean, crisp, and simple. The double story glass is simple. She repeated that she struggled with the parti. If the ARB supports Vice Chair Hirsch's suggestion the parti falls apart. Unless there is a conceptually strong design reason to adopt his suggestion she could not support it. She stressed that the parti was not clear and it seemed to be three different buildings currently. She asked if Boardmember Baltay wanted to comment on Vice Chair Hirsch's suggestion.

Boardmember Baltay asked which suggestion Chair Thompson was referencing.

Chair Thompson stated it was the one about expressing the floor in the glass.

Boardmember Baltay thought Vice Chair Hirsch was correct that the glass would be better with two curtain windows and a piece of floor coming out or a physical shadow line. However, that is not the big issue with the project. He was struggling with if the proposed design was coherent and unified but could easily make Finding #3. Finding #2 was different but he still was prepared to approve the project.

Chair Thompson asked for thoughts on the material palette. She found it to be colder than the existing building.

Ms. Young asked if Chair Thompson was asking the question of her team.

Chair Thompson clarified she was asking the ARB.

Boardmember Baltay was comfortable with the warm grey tones and the wood paneling as an offset. He had no issues with the colors or materials.

Vice Chair Hirsch indicated he was okay with the materials except as mentioned in the middle of the building.

Chair Thompson did not find the materials that compatible with the area. She called for a Motion.

MOTION: Boardmember Baltay moved to recommend approval of the project as submitted.

MOTION FAILED – LACK OF SECOND

MOTION: Chair Thompson moved, seconded by Vice Chair Hirsch, to continue the project to a date uncertain.

VOTE: 3-0

Chair Thompson noted that she had not summarized the ARBs points and asked staff if they would like her to do so. Having received a nonverbal yes from staff she confirmed that was okay with her colleagues. The main item was that the ARB was unable to make Finding #2, the design was not unified or coherent. They recommend the architect consider unifying the façade in a coherent parti. They were unable to make Finding #3. She asked if the ARB was open to asking the applicant to consider different materials that might be warmer and compatible with the neighborhood.

Boardmember Baltay did not think “compatible with the neighborhood” had much meaning. He supported the request for a warmer tone.

Vice Chair Hirsch did not find material changes to be necessary.

Chair Thompson indicated that was two out of three.

Boardmember Baltay indicated his intent to be neutral and stated he was fine if they wanted to consider a warmer palette of material.

Vice Chair Hirsch agreed with Boardmember Baltay.

Chair Thompson asked if they wanted to consider operable windows.

Vice Chair Hirsch agreed they did.

Boardmember Baltay made a hand motion that indicated he had no opinion.

Vice Chair Hirsch stated he wanted more operable windows since the project did have some already.

Chair Thompson agreed with that language. She asked how the board felt about considering shading.

Boardmember Baltay was find with the request to “consider.” He thought the point was well made.

Vice Chair Hirsch said there were multiple ways to provide shade, including through interior means.

Chair Thompson noted that type of shading was more ineffective.

Vice Chair Hirsch agreed but was unsure if the shadow boxes would allow for the same type of shading one might see in a building with a flat profile. The shading could be handled differently.

Chair Thompson asked if “consider shading” was acceptable to him.

Vice Chair Hirsch said that it could be considered, but it could be interior.

Boardmember Baltay suggested Chair Thompson let the shading point go.

Chair Thompson thought it would help make the design more coherent and indicated that was why she suggested it along with sustainability reasons.

Vice Chair Hirsch thought it was in conflict with the shadow box idea for the windows.

Chair Thompson said that they were in the inset part of the façade. she was thinking about the unshaded glass on the face of the façade.

Vice Chair Hirsch agreed that the applicant could consider shading.

Chair Thompson asked for ARB additions to the list.

Boardmember Baltay suggested they consider relocating the bicycle racks.

Vice Chair Hirsch suggested they consider expressing the second floor in the middle of the building.

Chair Thompson asked if she could add “in as far as it meets the design concept” to Vice Chair Hirsch’s request.

Vice Chair Hirsch did not agree to that.

Boardmember Baltay agreed with Vice Chair Hirsch. They could “consider” expressing the second floor.

Chair Thompson called for anything further.

Vice Chair Hirsch suggested that they consider opening the end wall near the entrance.

Chair Thompson supported that suggestion.

Boardmember Baltay confirmed they were only speaking of the part the project had proposed to close off. The rest of the blank wall exists on the side of the building.

Chair Thompson assured him they were not addressing the side of the building, simply the closure of that area by the entrance. It could be partially opened instead of completely closed. Hearing nothing further from the ARB she asked if staff needed anything further.

Ms. Gerhardt wondered if the applicant had any questions.

Ms. Young had no questions but wanted to thank Mr. Gutierrez for his work and assistance. She understood that he was leaving the City and wanted to wish him well with his future endeavors.

Chair Thompson and the other Boardmembers also thanked Mr. Gutierrez.

Mr. Gutierrez thanked Ms. Young.

Boardmember Baltay commented to staff that when they ultimately make the DEE findings he wanted to make sure that they focused on Finding #1 and there being something unique about the property or circumstance. The finding should directly focus on that, and the current findings as written do not. The fact that is an existing building is really the unique circumstance. The City needs to be careful about setting precedents.

Chair Thompson thanked everyone.

5. Public Hearing: Discuss Revisions to Objective Design Standards based on Feedback from City Council and Analysis of Missing Standards

Chair Thompson stated it was 12:05 p.m. and Item #5 promised to be lengthy. She asked if they could consider moving the item.

Ms. Gerhardt stated that the consultant was ready, and they would need to check her availability for another date. Additionally March 22, 2022 is the second scheduled community meeting before they return to Council. Staff wanted the ARB to weigh in prior to the Council meeting.

Chair Thompson inquired about an additional interim meeting.

Boardmember Baltay was willing to hold a special meeting. If the ARB did not speak on the issue it would not be heard.

Chair Thompson agreed.

Ms. Gerhardt suggested they look at March 10th but indicated it could be in conflict with the Historic Resources Board (HRB) meeting. The ARB may be able to start later in the morning. The consultant appears available on March 10th.

Chair Thompson had a meeting conflict but indicated she would try to resolve it. She inquired about continuing the current meeting into the afternoon.

Ms. Gerhardt stated she could do that.

Boardmember Baltay preferred to discuss the topic.

Ms. Gerhardt stated that the ARB Draft Work Plan could be moved so long as they could get it to City Council by April. The consultant advised her that the 10th would be better than working into the afternoon on the topic.

Chair Thompson preferred to hold the meeting on the 10th as she had a conflict in the afternoon.

Boardmember Baltay asked if they needed a Motion.

Ms. Gerhardt indicated they did. She asked if Boardmember Baltay and Vice Chair Hirsch were available.

Boardmember Baltay indicated he was available.

MOTION: Chair Thompson moved, seconded by Boardmember Baltay, to discuss Item #4 and #5 [Note- she meant Items #5 and #6] at the special meeting on March 10, 2022.

VOTE: 3-0

6. Discuss the Draft Architectural Review Board's (ARB) Draft Work Plan, Suggest Changes, and Recommend Submitting the Draft Work Plan to the City Council; and Discuss the ARB's Annual Report and any Bylaw Changes Needed.

[Moved to March 10, 2022 via above Motion]

Approval of Minutes

7. Draft Architectural Review Board Meeting Minutes for February 3, 2021

Chair Thompson called for a Motion.

MOTION: Boardmember Baltay moved, seconded by Chair Thompson, to approve the Meeting Minutes for February 3, 2021 as presented.

Ms. Gerhardt asked if they skipped the Work Plan discussion.

Chair Thompson indicated that it was included in the Motion.

VOTE: 3-0

Subcommittee Items

None.

Board Member Questions, Comments or Announcements

Chair Thompson announced that the ARB needed to turn in their annual report. This will be a double report on 2020 through the end of 2021. Per Bylaws they put out a report of their findings. Boardmember Baltay completed the last report prior to her being elected Chair. She asked if Boardmember Baltay had simply drafted it and placed it in the staff report.

Boardmember Baltay explained he worked closely with the Chair prior to himself, and they created an informal concept that the Chair would draft the report in December roughly at the end of their term with consultation from the Board. Following the drafting the ARB massaged the report and found consensus. It was not delegated; it was the Chair's responsibility.

Chair Thompson thought that it was written differently in the Bylaws. It says, "not less than one year."

Boardmember Baltay said that it stated the Chair had a one year term.

Chair Thompson thought she had been Chair for longer than a year.

Ms. Gerhardt said that they were speaking about the same thing. The ARB Annual Report comes from the Chair, and they decided that would be done at the end of the Chair's term. The Annual Report is different from the Work Plan. It could be discussed on the 10th as well.

Boardmember Baltay thought it was fair to discuss them together.

Ms. Gerhardt suggested adding the annual report to the Agenda for the 10th.

Chair Thompson agreed. She asked when her term ended.

Ms. Gerhardt noted they recently installed the Vice Chair and stated she would look at it.

Boardmember Baltay said they traditionally change Chairs in January. The Council in the new handbook stated that they wanted it done in June. He understood it that Chair Thompson would carry through until June but left it to staff.

Ms. Gerhardt indicated the date had changed several times over the past years.

Chair Thompson indicated they would discuss it further on the 10th.

Adjournment

Chair Thompson adjourned the meeting.