



JOINT ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD AND HISTORIC RESOURCES BOARD MEETING

DRAFT MINUTES: March 17, 2016

City Hall/City Council Chambers

Call to Order

Roll Call

Present: ARB: Chair Robert Gooyer; Vice Chair Alexander Lew, Board Members Kyu Kim, Wynne Furth, Peter Baltay

Absent: None

Present: HRB: Chair Martin Bernstein; Vice Chair Margaret Wimmer; Board Members Beth Bunnenberg, Patricia DiCicco

Absent: Board Members David Bower, Roger Kohler, Michael Makinen

Oral Communications

David Carnahan, Deputy City Clerk, announced City recruitment for two positions on the Human Relations Commission, two positions on the Library Advisory Commission, and four positions on the Utilities Advisory Commission. The deadline for application was the following day at 5:00 p.m. He provided requirements for applicants.

Agenda Changes, Additions and Deletions

None.

City Official Reports

None.

New Business

- 1. 901 High Street [14PLN- 00116]:** Request by Peter Ko, Ko Architects, Inc., on behalf of Bettencourt & Santana for Architectural Review by both the Architectural Review Board and the Historic Resources Board for a 18,335 square foot mixed use building with retail, office and 11 residential units on a vacant 20,288 square foot lot in the South of First Area. Environmental Assessment: An Initial Study was prepared and Negative Declaration has been circulated for public comment from February 26, 2016 to March 18, 2016. Zoning District: RT-35 (Residential Transition District). For more information, contact Margaret Netto at margaret.netto@cityofpaloalto.org.

Board Member Furth requested staff briefly explain the approval process for a project in the SOFA 2 Coordinated Area Plan area. Chair Gooyer requested staff respond after their presentation.

Margaret Netto reviewed details and shared renderings of the project. A joint meeting of the ARB and HRB meeting was requested to provide recommendations as to whether the project complied with

findings for Architectural Review, the South of Forest Coordinated Area Plan Phase 2 Performance Criteria, and the Context Based Design Criteria. The project was also subject to the interim growth meter ordinance. HRB and ARB recommendations would be forwarded to the Council for final review. No public comments had been received to date. Staff recommended the ARB and HRB review the project and provide a recommendation to Council.

Board Member Furth inquired whether the Council would actually approve the Coordinated Area Plan permit. Amy French explained the recommendation would be provided to the Council because the project included office. Otherwise, a Coordinated Development Permit within the SOFA area would be submitted to the Director for action on both the environmental document and the permit. She noted the item was quasi-judicial.

Chair Bernstein noted an apparent discrepancy on page 28 of the draft Initial Study - Mitigated Negative Declaration, under Cultural Resources a), between no historic structures and two historic structures. Ms. Netto explained the two historic structures were located across the street from the project site. The project site did not contain any historic structures. Ms. French reported the paragraph could be revised to state that the project would be located across the street from historic structures. Although, that would not mean any mitigation was needed. Chair Bernstein also noted Finding 4 on the second page of Attachment A mentioned El Camino Real; however, El Camino Real was not near the project.

Ms. Netto advised Attachment D had been revised and could be found on the dais.

Board Member Bunnenberg asked if the Boards would vote jointly or separately. Ms. Netto responded separately.

Board Member Kim noted the SOFA area was referenced as South of First Area. Ms. Netto indicated it was a typographical error.

Laura Roberts, Ko Architects, related details of the proposed project.

Board Member DiCicco inquired whether parking was solely for occupants of the building and whether entrances to the parking garage were gated. Ms. Roberts stated the garage would be open and available for all uses.

Board Member Bunnenberg asked if the color of the building was similar to the historic structure across the street. She inquired about the mural. Ms. Roberts reported the mural represented a potential location for a piece of art. Board Member Bunnenberg noted the tip of the roof appeared moderne-like. Ms. Roberts stated that would be metal. The ground level had an overhang with glass; the second level was stucco; and the third floor was recessed and comprised of metal panels.

Board Member Furth requested the thinking behind the upward slant on the roofs. Ms. Roberts explained they wanted to maximize the amount of natural light into the unit. Board Member Furth questioned the floor-length windows for the residential units. Peter Ko advised that the lower 3 feet of the windows would be obscured. Board Member Furth inquired whether a kitchen sink or stove would back up to one of the windows. Mr. Ko reported the kitchens were on the interior of the units.

Chair Bernstein inquired about the depth and space of the corrugations for the third floor siding. Mr. Ko stated no more than 12 inches spacing and probably 2 or 3 inches for the depth. Chair Bernstein requested rough dimensions for the first-floor window mullions. Mr. Ko advised the mullions would likely be 6 inches deep, and some would be 1 1/2 inches wide.

Vice Chair Wimmer inquired about water runoff from the roof and height of the roof in relation to surrounding buildings on the corner. Mr. Ko explained the roof was curved to provide natural light to the interior. Water runoff would be collected and moved to the storm drain. Vice Chair Wimmer asked if staff approved the roof to exceed the height limit. Mr. Ko understood it had been approved. Vice Chair

Wimmer suggested some type of unifying detail for garage entrances. Ms. Roberts added that the parking was open to customers of the retail space.

Vice Chair Lew advised the drawings indicated the lowest point of the roof was 35 feet, the height limit. The elevations and sections showed different heights. Mr. Ko explained that the midpoint of the roof would be 35 feet in height. Vice Chair Lew inquired about the perforations on the doors to the car lifts. Mr. Ko understood the adjacent property utilized perforated panels on the lower portions and solid panels on the upper portions of the lifts. He proposed use of perforated panels only. Vice Chair Lew inquired whether the garage would have a ceiling. Mr. Ko thought the ceiling would be open with painted beams.

Board Member Furth remarked that Attachment D referenced the height as 22 feet 4 inches. Ms. Netto reported the average height should be 35 feet. Board Member Furth requested the actual maximum height of the building. Mr. Ko indicated the maximum height would be 37 or 38 feet. She asked if the applicant was requesting a reduction in the minimum side yard from 15 feet to 9 feet. Ms. Netto responded yes. Board Member Furth inquired whether balconies faced the side yard off High Street. Ms. Netto replied yes.

Board Member Furth disclosed that she visited the site and received a communication from Richard Grant requesting additional setbacks on the building.

Board Member Bunnenberg disclosed that she visited the site.

Board Member Kim asked if there would be 48 or 49 parking stalls. Mr. Ko responded 48 stalls. Board Member Kim inquired whether the average height would be 35 feet. Ms. Netto replied yes. Board Member Kim asked if the applicant proposed to bring down the roof at the residential level or elsewhere. Mr. Ko reported the drawing used 8-foot ceilings for the lower part of the residential units on the third floor. Board Member Kim noted the drawings did not show 35 feet as being the average height. Jodie Gerhardt suggested Board Members look at Section A.S.10, which showed a 10-foot ceiling height at the lowest point of the residential. Because of that 2 feet of space, the roof could be lowered to meet the average maximum height of 35 feet.

Board Member DiCicco requested the ratio for public parking. Mr. Ko reported residential parking would be located under the building. The office parking would be located on the back facing north.

Board Member DiCicco was uncertain whether height requirements had been met. The parking seemed complex. Perhaps the applicant could have fewer openings and more clarity as to where the public could park. It appeared to be a fantastic project that would provide housing in Downtown Palo Alto.

Board Member Bunnenberg liked the project, especially use of the color scheme from the historic structure. The broken facades and setback on the third floor helped reduce the mass of the building. The retail space could use more animation. Saving the tree was good.

Board Member Furth felt the site functioned as a park-like space in the ratio of greenery to other substances. The project would harden the site. The SOFA CAP discussed adjacent properties as well as those across the street; therefore, the statement in the Negative Declaration that there was nothing adjacent was incorrect and inappropriate. In considering historic impacts on buildings in the CAP, one should clearly review properties across the street. The use of the red color from the historic structure was not sufficient to make the structure compatible with the area. The butterfly roof contradicted the roof styles of other buildings in the area. She was puzzled by the fenestration on the residential units. The windows did not relate to the interior of the units and prevented the floor from appearing as residential as it should. Another problem was enclosed parking which gave mass without usable space. The CAP stated parking for multifamily projects should be underground if possible. The use of lift parking for retail parking did not justify a reduction in parking or justify being counted as parking for retail use. She did not believe the project provided adequate parking. She liked the plaza and the tree preservation.

In general, the project was inadequately landscaped for its location. The balconies on the side yard would face a site that would be redeveloped. She did not understand how that would work.

Board Member Kim believed there was an opportunity for refinement of the building. The length of storefront was repetitive and could be broken up to create a rhythm and to break down the horizontal scale. Incorporating the bike parking into the overall circulation into the residential units would be better. As far as roof drainage, he felt much of the rain water would fall onto residents attempting to enter their units. Perhaps a gutter along the inside courtyard would be better. The applicant could utilize more greenery and landscaping. Pushing the massing and creating the courtyard along Channing needed to occur along High Street as well. The parking spaces appeared to be small. Ms. Netto reported the standard width was used for parking spaces. The form and the choice of materials were somewhat relatable to the existing buildings around the site. He liked the use of the color from the building across the street, but the red overhang was too long. Perhaps balconies could be added along High Street. Some of the residential windows along High Street were against the kitchen.

Board Member Baltay found the project exciting. The pedestrian treatment on the corner of High and Channing was attractive and good to have. The parking was quite large and resulted in a fairly unattractive and not pedestrian-friendly entrance from High Street. The parking should be underground. He would have a difficult time making Finding 16 regarding visual environment and high aesthetic quality because of the at-grade parking. Without the tandem and stacked parking, the project had 38 spaces which was not sufficient even with the 20 percent reduction. The façade on High Street was far too planer. Most architects did not utilize the same floor plan for all residential units. Reworking the floor plans would allow more modulation, perhaps some balconies. The building had a quasi-industrial look with the large, identical windows. The partition between balconies was unattractive and did not comply with high aesthetic quality. The applicant proposed too much of the 3-foot modulation of stores. Use of colors from the Peninsula Creamery building was good, but the lightness of the building was not reflected in the proposed project. The bicycle parking was not convenient. He could not make numerous findings to approve the project as presented.

Vice Chair Lew agreed with comments from Board Members Furth and Baltay. Attention should be given to the external parking lifts, particularly the height. The lifts needed a higher clearance for people. Expecting a retail customer to figure out how to use the parking lift was impractical. Space behind the lift had to be secure and safe. He expressed concern about ceilings and views from balconies. Comments regarding the High Street elevation also applied to the parking lot-facing elevation. The project was not ready for approval.

Vice Chair Wimmer appreciated use of the overhang and the color from the Peninsula Creamery building; however, the color should be downplayed so as not to compete with the historic building. The corrugated metal on the upper floor recognized the transitional location of the project. Design of the corner was good. A public art piece was an opportunity to add some interest.

Chair Bernstein inquired whether an HRB motion could include a reference to the Secretary of Interior Standards regarding historic structures. Matt Weintraub advised it would be appropriate. Chair Bernstein appreciated Board Member Baltay's comments regarding articulation of the High Street facade.

Chair Gooyer liked the concept of the project; however, the building had no human scale. The third floor metal façade would not be noticeable from High Street and would appear as a gray pattern from across the street. Use of the red color from the historic structure did not work for Chair Gooyer. He could not approve the project.

Board Member DiCicco suggested underground parking would allow more diversity in store fronts on the first floor. Eliminating the butterfly roof would make the project more compatible. The windows were a problem. The building needed more diversity, a softer approach and more greenery.

Ms. Gerhardt recalled the project was subject to the annual office limit; consequently, different criteria would apply to moving the project to a second hearing. In order for the project to be eligible for the allotment of office space, a second hearing would be needed prior to March 31. If a second hearing was held after March 31, then the project would be delayed a year for the office allocation. The Board could recommendation denial of the project.

Chair Gooyer did not believe the annual office limit was a criteria for consideration.

Board Member Furth inquired whether the applicant would prefer a continuation or a denial. Chair Gooyer indicated that was not within the applicant's purview. Ms. Gerhardt clarified that the Council would decide projects for the annual office limit. Staff would simply present the ARB's recommendation.

Board Member Bunnenberg stated a motion should include the project meeting the Secretary of Interior Standards, maintaining existing street trees, complying with green building requirements, and reviewing parking. With some careful review of materials, the project was fairly sensitive to the historic nature of the two historic buildings.

HRB MOTION: Chair Bernstein moved, seconded by Vice Chair Wimmer, that the HRB recommend to the ARB that the project is consistent with the Secretary of Interior Standards subject to the third floor massing being reduced in its perception of massing by introducing some facade articulation.

Board Member DiCicco suggested adding to the motion that the current parking arrangement be modified to allow more use of the ground floor and diversity. Underground parking would be an alternative.

Chair Bernstein did not feel parking was an issue for historic consideration. The third floor facade was the main issue of the motion.

Board Member Bunnenberg inquired whether parking was a visual aspect on which the Historic Resources Board could comment. Chair Bernstein understood parking was not on the facades adjacent to historic structures. Vice Chair Wimmer felt the ARB and planning staff should comment on parking.

Vice Chair Wimmer offered an amendment with respect to the color of the overhang canopy. Chair Bernstein accepted the amendment.

AMENDMENT TO THE HRB MOTION: The proposed caliente red color of the canopy wrapping the building be changed to a similar but subordinate color.

HRB MOTION PASSED: 4-0 (3 Board Members absent)

Chair Gooyer reiterated the options available to the ARB. Mr. Ko requested the project be continued to a date prior to March 31 if the Planning Department could accommodate such a date.

Vice Chair Lew acknowledged that many projects were in the queue and had been in the queue. The rules for office projects had changed. A long time period was required for a project to reach its first hearing. If the project did not have massing issues, he would be willing to have a second hearing prior to March 31. Massing issues would require substantial changes which probably could not be made and reviewed prior to March 31. Another ARB meeting was not scheduled prior to March 31. Ms. Gerhardt reported another meeting could be held on March 24. Chair Gooyer advised that changes could not be made and reviewed prior to a meeting on March 24.

Board Member Furth noted the ARB's consensus diverged from the staff recommendation. She was prepared to offer a motion denying the project for about 12 of the 16 required findings. She did not know how to meaningfully hear a revised project before March 31. The ARB's concerns regarding massing and parking were not minor. Chair Gooyer suggested the only viable option was to recommend denial of the project. If denied, the applicant could take the project to the City Council. Ms. Gerhardt

reiterated that the Board could continue the project to a date after March 31. Chair Gooyer clarified that a denial was the only option if the applicant wanted to proceed prior to the March 31 deadline. Board Member Furth wished to defer to the applicant. After consultation with the property owner, Mr. Ko advised that the applicant wished to continue the project.

Vice Chair Lew inquired about possible dates to which the project could be continued. Ms. Gerhardt reported May 5 would be the first available date if the applicant submitted revisions prior to the end of the month. If the applicant submitted plans in early April, the hearing date could be May 19.

MOTION: Board Member Furth moved, seconded by Vice Chair Lew, to continue the item to May 19, 2016.

MOTION PASSED: 4-0 (Board Member Baltay absent)

Chair Bernstein inquired whether the HRB would need to attend the May 19th meeting. Ms. Gerhardt advised that the HRB should review significant revisions to the project. Staff requested the HRB be available for a meeting on May 19th.

Minutes Approval:

None.

Subcommittee Item

None.

Board Member Questions, Comments, Announcements

None.

Adjournment