



# Architectural Review Board

## Staff Report (ID # 13631)

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**Report Type:** Approval of Minutes **Meeting Date:** 10/7/2021

**Summary Title:** Minutes of September 2, 2021

**Title:** Draft Architectural Review Board Meeting Minutes for September 2, 2021

**From:** Jonathan Lait

### Recommendation

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

### Background

Draft minutes from the September 2, 2021 Architectural Review Board (ARB) are available in Attachment A.

Draft and Approved Minutes are made available on the ARB webpage at [bit.ly/paloaltoARB](https://bit.ly/paloaltoARB)

### Attachments:

- Attachment A: September 2, 2021 Draft Minutes (DOCX)



ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD  
 DRAFT MINUTES: September 2, 2021  
 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 virtual teleconference at 8:30 a.m.

Participating Remotely: Chair Osma Thompson, Vice Chair Grace Lee, Boardmember Peter Baltay, Boardmember David Hirsch, Boardmember Alex Lew

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, reported the cancelations of the August meetings and announced the retreat on September 9, 2021, at 10:00 a.m. The September 16, 2021, meeting has been cancelled. The October meetings may or may not be held in person at Council's discretion. The retreat will contain the first discussion on the Architectural Review Board (ARB) Awards and a discussion on high quality development. The second discussion on the ARB Awards will be held later and in person.

Chair Thompson stated the Retreat Agenda would be sent to the ARB later in the week.

Ms. Gerhardt explained that several questions about high quality development would also be in the agenda.

Chair Thompson advised Board Members to come to her with additions to the agenda.

**Study Session**

2. As Requested by Mr. Sommer, This is a Discussion on the Color of one Pole Located Within the University Avenue Caltrain Station

Chair Thompson called for a report from the City prior to Mr. Martin Sommer's presentation.

Jodie Gerhardt, Manager of Current Planning, stated the item was about the University Avenue Caltrain Station and the color of electrification poles. She utilized a PowerPoint presentation to explain that Mr. Sommer was concerned about the color of the recently installed Caltrain electrification poles which can be seen from his upper floor residential unit. The electrification of Caltrain poles included the installation of nearly 200 poles in the Palo Alto area. It is a Caltrain/Joint Powers Board project, which is outside the City's jurisdiction. Environmental review required feedback from neighbors, but the Joint Powers Board retained jurisdiction. In 2019 the Joint Powers Board presented pole colors to the Historic Resources Board (HRB) and ARB over three public hearings. The HRB recommended tan color poles at the University Avenue Station to match the historic station buildings. The ARB supported the recommendation and supported green and black poles elsewhere. In September 2020 Mr. Sommer contacted Caltrain and requested the poles be repainted. In December 2020 Mr. Sommer copied the City Council on his communications with the hope it would pay for repainting. In order to be repainted the poles likely need to be removed and recoated. In February 2021 Caltrain denied Mr. Sommer's request due to the precedent it would set, liability issues, and contract issues. The City Manager advised the Council of the denial. Based on this, it is staff's opinion that the ARB's opportunity to review the pole colors has passed and is outside of City jurisdiction.

Martin Sommer stated that the poles are scheduled to be repainted every 10 years. The ARB report states that he is concerned with 1 pole, but that is incorrect as there are 11 poles at the station that should be repainted. Early Environmental Impact Reports (EIR) noted the need to minimize the visual impact on surrounding properties. He discussed his issue with legal counsel who advised that he attempt to gain ARB support first, then City Council support, and then ask City Council to request that Caltrain change the color of the poles when doing other scheduled work on the electrification project. In 2019 the ARB recommended that Caltrain make the poles specific colors and he is requesting that Caltrain repaint 11 poles to the standard marine green because in 2018 and 2019 the City and Caltrain stated the goal was for the poles to blend or fade into the background. Caltrain also told the ARB in 2019 that the center poles would be 35 feet. Neither standard was met, the beige poles do not blend with the environment and the poles are 28% higher than presented to the ARB. Those changes are significant enough to merit additional City review. He showed a picture that was widely circulated during the electrification project and noted the poles were dark, the pole height was equal to the electrical line height, and the physical design of the poles is symmetrical from north to south. The City ended up receiving light poles that are 30% higher than the wires and an unsymmetrical design from north to south. The colors are out of sync and do not blend in as evidenced by two pictures he provided. The current poles represent a tremendous eyesore, creates a stressful environment, and lowers property values. Cell towers go through a stringent process and these poles should be subject to the same principles. Further, the poles do not even match the grey light poles placed by the City during renovations to the Caltrain station. Three things can be done: 1) replace the taller poles with the 35-foot poles as promised in beige, 2) paint the top half of the poles green, or 3) paint all 11 poles marine green to match most of the other Caltrain poles in the City. The pole issue makes one wonder if Caltrain is making other mistakes along the route and if so, is it addressing those mistakes. At the California Avenue Station they drilled a hole in the middle of the platform and are now correcting it so the same principle should apply to the poles. He asked the ARB and the City of Palo Alto to request that Caltrain repaint the 11 beige poles marine green. He suggested creating a two-person ad hoc subcommittee on

the topic so that Commissioners could visit his apartment and view the poles without violating the Brown Act.

Chair Thompson called for ARB questions of staff or Mr. Sommer.

In response to Boardmember Baltay's questions about resident notification and public hearings Ms. Gerhardt stated that the topic would have been an agenda item published in the paper since all ARB hearings are noticed. There was an HRB meeting, an ARB meeting, and a joint HRB/ARB meeting to discuss the poles, all of which were public.

Chair Thompson called for other questions, but there were none. She opened the topic for discussion and explained to Mr. Sommer that the Commission may have questions following discussion.

Boardmember Lew disclosed that he viewed the poles from San Antonio up to University Avenue and was generally comfortable with the ARB's previous decision. He noted that unpainted or light color poles are all over the City and are acceptable. Green or black poles do look good, but he felt that green would stand out at the University Station. Based on this, he thought things could be left as is or the poles could be painted grey to match the existing light fixtures. He agreed with staff that the matter was out of their control but noted that if there was a painting schedule the colors could be addressed at that time. He explained that the poles were powder coated and that he thought the original coating would last longer than 10 years.

Vice Chair Lee voiced concern about the process. She appreciated the time and comments put forth by those that wanted the issue reopened but believed staff was correct. There were three public meetings addressing the issue and therefore it was not her place or the City's to make further comment. There were sufficient meetings, and a decision was made so reopening the matter would set a bad precedent.

Boardmember Baltay saw two issues. First, the question of process as addressed by Vice Chair Lee. He stated that Mr. Sommer had three opportunities to speak on the poles initially and could have approached the ARB informally before requesting a formal hearing. Reopening the matter sets a bad precedent for anytime a resident has an issue with an ARB decision. Second, the issue is unique to Mr. Sommer's situation as the owner of an upper story property. The ARB's decision was correct to begin with as the poles close to the station from the perspective of most of the public at ground level blend better with the tan color. He disclosed that he looked at the property recently to confirm that opinion. He also viewed the site when they made the original decision, and the poles are better blending in the tan color. He supported the original decision and noted Mr. Sommer's mistake was not participating in the original hearings.

Boardmember Hirsch stated that the process was well vetted the first time around. He was a new Commissioner at the time and did not voice much of an opinion then, but now he would support a dark green or a neutral color. However, the decision was made, and he could not recommend repainting the poles at this time. In studying the paint issue he learned it would be difficult to repaint the poles without removing them. He disagreed with Mr. Sommer that the poles changed his property values. Poles and utilities are necessary and residential units near the railroad should acknowledge that. Views from the ground level and the relationship of the poles to the station have validity. Both for process and aesthetics he did not think they should make changes at this time.

Chair Thompson appreciated the ARB's perspective and Mr. Sommer's presentation. She was not present at the initial ARB hearing regarding the poles. There are a lot of poles and wires because of electrification but all of it should be in service to a better environment. She agreed with other Boardmembers that the ARB did not have jurisdiction to reopen the item, several Boardmembers do not support changing the color, and the public street level realm is where most people experience the poles so she would not support a change. She further appreciated the discussion.

Mr. Sommer asked to respond to the ARB's comments.

Chair Thompson stated that she would provide Mr. Sommer with three minutes once the ARB discussion concluded. As there were no further comments she gave him the floor.

Mr. Sommer stated that the poles were not a foreseen issue by people who owned higher level units. He is requesting a recommendation to correct the issue. Regarding notices he was involved with the Caltrain project from the beginning. He developed the blended approach and believed that hard problems could be fixed. The notices were sent out, but not to the 600-foot realm. He was not noticed about the poles. He stated that in 2019 and 2020 he lost two family members to COVID and had a difficult time. Further, people do purchase property based on views and putting an eyesore in the view is detrimental to value. He thanked the ARB for its time.

Chair Thompson announced the closure of the item.

### **Action Items**

3. PUBLIC HEARING / QUASI-JUDICIAL. 555 Middlefield Road [19PLN-00413]: Recommendation on Applicant's Request for Approval of a Minor Board Level Architectural Review and Design Enhancement Exception to Allow for Modification to the Façade of an Existing Medical Office Building and Other Minor Site Improvements. Environmental Assessment: Exempt from CEQA per Guideline Section 15301 (Existing Facilities). Zoning District: RM-30 (Medium Density Multiple-Family Residence District). For More Information Contact the Project Planner Danielle Condit at [Danielle.condit@cityofpalto.org](mailto:Danielle.condit@cityofpalto.org).

Chair Thompson announced the item and called for the staff report.

Danielle Condit, Associate Planner, provided a report on the application for a Minor Architectural Review and Design Enhancement Exception (DEE) on 555 Middlefield Road. The site has a grandfathered medical office use and was built in 1956. The property has a variance for its encroachment into the special 24-foot setback along Middlefield Road. The site was evaluated for historic significance and was deemed not individually eligible for the California Register of Historic Resources by the City's contracted consultant. She showed arial photographs of the site, which has remained basically unchanged since 1955. The applicant plans to make minor changes to the façade and exterior finishes. Exterior building improvements include replacement of perimeter windows and exterior doors, with modifications to the size of the openings and removal of exterior air conditioning units. The site will receive new landscaping, signage, bicycle parking, a covered trash area, and an accessible lift system within the exterior court and other Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) modifications. There will be no changes to the building's interior layout, footprint, parking circulation or use are proposed. The new parapet requires a DEE due

to the existing grandfathered office use. In order to grant the DEE the ARB must find that it does not increase Floor Area Ratio (FAR) or decrease the parking or landscaping on site. The application does not result in increased FAR or decreased parking or landscaping. She provided photographs of the existing site conditions, the proposed left side elevation including the new parapet, and a side by side of the existing conditions and the proposed changes. The existing street trees will remain, and new landscaping will be added to the front of the building with the long-term bicycle parking. The proposed project complies with the development standards except with respect to the permitted changes for grandfathered use, which is why the DEE is sought. The DEE would not be necessary if the site had a permitted land use. The parapet complies with the maximum height and daylight plane requirements for RM30. Staff recommends that the ARB recommend approval of the project to the Director of Planning & Development Services based on findings and subject to conditions of approval. She noted that the applicant, Randy Popp, has a presentation and is present to answer questions.

Chair Thompson called for ARB disclosures.

Boardmember Baltay disclosed that he visited the site earlier the week. He did not notice a public [unintelligible at 43:55] when he visited.

Boardmember Lew disclosed that he visited the site and viewed the color board. He recalled seeing an ARB notification on the site on Tuesday.

Boardmember Hirsch disclosed that he visited the site and the panel at City Hall.

Vice Chair Lee disclosed that she visited the site.

Chair Thompson had nothing to disclose. She called for the applicant's presentation.

Randy Popp, Architect, introduced his team; Christian Hansen is a partner at Wheatley Properties and Paul Lettieri is the Landscape Architect.

Christian Hansen, Wheatley Properties, thanked the ARB for its time. They purchased the building and want to give it new life through renovation. The goal is to beautify the building. He complimented Ms. Condit on her work.

Mr. Popp explained the project was simple, with the goal of extending the life of the building by making necessary repairs and updating and refreshing the look to entice new tenants. The building is part of Palo Alto's downtown and having it be vacant is detrimental to the City. He utilized a PowerPoint presentation to highlight the issues faced by the building and show the ARB the updated façade. The major improvements planned are an electrical upgrade, landscape improvements, bicycle parking, a covering for the trash area, and a correction of a nonconforming ADA accessible stall. The building will receive finishing changes. The main window will be centered, the doors will be removed, windows will be replaced, the first level will be painted, and a clean stucco finish will be applied. The side of the building will receive the new parapet to update the look and conceal some ductwork. There will be roof screening for the mechanical units. The parapet will help to cover the nonconformance of the building. The parapet is aligned with the existing ridge, but it could go higher. They have not placed a roof screen around the entire building as that seemed dramatic and less desirable. He showed a slide devoted to the new cover for the trash area and noted the changes were acceptable to Greenwaste. The ARB needs to

weigh in on the monument sign closer to the street. Paul Lettieri from the Guzzardo Partnership has provided images and a planting plan and is available for comments and questions.

Chair Thompson called for the public comment, but there were none. She called for questions of staff or the applicant.

In response to Boardmember Baltay's question about the current wall mounted air conditioners Mr. Popp explained the window mounted units would be removed and ductwork for the central air conditioning system would be installed.

In response to Boardmember Baltay's question about the lack of stoops for the ground floor secondary doors Mr. Popp explained that was an existing condition. The Building Department felt the doors did not need modification as they would impact the parking. The doors are simply emergency exits and are not required. They are hopeful that they would not have to do stoops to avoid the parking issues. It is possible they will only need to add a step as the door opens inward, not outward. Because the parking is angled there is adequate space if the doors would open.

Boardmember Lew stated that he had several questions. He inquired about code and accessibility issues related to the iron gate [audio cut out].

Mr. Popp stated he could not hear Boardmember Lew.

Boardmember Lew asked if they considered having the monument sign perpendicular to the street instead of parallel. He also stated that the materials board featured an unfinished cedar sample and asked for the detail on the fences. Finally in the planters along the curb he asked if it would be mulched or planted or both.

Mr. Popp indicated he would answer all the questions but the last, which he would have Mr. Lettieri address. The existing gate will be maintained with modifications necessary to bring it into ADA compliance. The gate is a deterrent, not a high security barrier and is part of the character of the original building. The gates are currently locked, but for their age and material they move efficiently. They discussed changing the orientation of the sign and was open to ARB thoughts, but felt the current orientation was more aesthetically aligned with the building. The cedar material is for the trash enclosure. It will be attached to the steel with screws and is intended to weather in place.

Paul Lettieri, Guzzardo Partnership, said that one consideration with the sign was if it was turned perpendicular the field of view increases and it has more impact on the planting. They felt it was more pedestrian oriented to keep the sign parallel and then the landscape did not have to respond to a sight distance triangle. There will be both mulch and planting along the street and he referred to a drawing for the ARB's information.

Boardmember Hirsch thanked the applicant for the presentation and said it would improve the building.

Chair Thompson reminded Boardmember Hirsch that this portion of the hearing was for questions.

Boardmember Hirsch inquired about the lighting in the parking area, where the roof drains, a tree scheduled for replacement. He also stated that he had a similar question as Boardmember Baltay about the doors, but that it had been explained.

Mr. Popp reported that they are adding under soffit lighting which would occur under the cantilever of the building. They are aware of the residential neighbors and there is a fence and natural foliage to keep the light down. The light should be concealed to the neighbors and the street. The added lighting at the front and rear are RAB lights with controlled and tailored dispersion. The photometrics are included in the ARB packet. The lighting is necessary for the safety and security of the site. The building will most likely be occupied by therapists or other medical professionals who see patients in the evening, so security is a concern. The roof drains are not fully represented on the drawings, but the intention is to have an internal drain at the second level that will exit the building underneath the cantilevered overhang. It will be a round downspout leader dropping to a splash block and going out to the landscape area. The goal is to paint the drains to match the building. He asked Mr. Lettieri to answer the tree question.

Mr. Lettieri was unaware of any street trees that were recommended to be removed. There may be a neighbor tree which is questionable, but it is not on the project site. All street trees are being retained.

Mr. Popp said that the plan set did not have any street trees being removed.

Ms. Condit explained that the reason for the tree replacement is that there were three trees in the planter in the exterior courtyard. For the no net loss canopy policy those are the trees that are being replaced. Two trees will be placed in the front and one in the back corner of the site.

Mr. Lettieri agreed and explained the three trees had been removed prior to Wheatley Properties purchasing the building but that they were being replaced. No other trees are proposed to be removed.

Vice Chair Lee thanked Mr. Popp for his presentation. She asked Mr. Lettieri about the rendering that showed a smaller line of trees.

Mr. Lettieri explained they started with four relatively small redbuds but were told they weren't acceptable as trees. When they started the mitigation they did not want to wall off the building with trees so they determined it would be better to have two larger trees in boxes.

Chair Thompson stated she was unable to find the trash enclosure in the drawings and requested a second viewing of the slide showing the views.

Mr. Popp explained the rendering was not in the package but was shared with staff during development.

In response to Chair Thompson's question about the roof screen Mr. Popp explained that it was about a 4-to-5-inch corrugation. It is intended to provide structural integrity and is tightly corrugated. It comes prefinished and a silver color intended to blend with the sky was selected.

Ms. Condit directed the ARB's attention to Sheet A1.0 for a picture of the material.

Chair Thompson called for further questions. As there were none she called for Boardmember comments.

Boardmember Baltay thanked Mr. Popp for the presentation and stated the design was a definite improvement that he would support. He was pleased the window air conditioners were being removed and trusted the applicant team to figure out the door landings. He cautioned that other medical



buildings in Palo Alto have had issues with patients tripping so they should be careful in their approach. He was concerned that the trash enclosure was not as compatible with the building as it could be and could be solved with a subcommittee. The DEE is acceptable and is clearly appropriate. The signage is fine as presented or if rotated 90 degrees and the landscaping is excellent.

Boardmember Lew thanked Mr. Popp for a clear drawing set and presentation. His thinking was in line with Boardmember Baltay. He noted the existing magnolia street tree appeared stressed and cautioned them to be careful when landscaping not to destroy too many roots. He assumed Urban Forestry would review the plan. The current placement of the monument sign was correct. He also reviewed the landscape plan and could make the native plant finding. The DEE is also acceptable.

Boardmember Hirsch thanked the applicant team for the presentation. Both the façade and the landscape plan are improvements to the current state of the building. He wished there was more capability for planting around the building but understood that was not possible. He appreciated the lighting explanation and the decisions the team made. He was concerned about the inner court lighting of the staircases to the second floor and recommended they make sure the lighting was adequate. The windows and treatment are a nice improvement but noted the eyelid treatment was not really a solar control and was an irregular item on the face of the building. He would prefer canopies at the top of the window only and to have them expressed more fully. On the north side of the building where there is swale he would like a planted area but acknowledged there might not be enough space. He suggested operable windows on the building for airflow but understood that may not be possible due to the central heating and cooling system. He agreed with his colleagues that the signage was appropriate and that it interfered less with the landscape in its current configuration. The rooftop elements that might be seen probably won't be seen because they're held back from the face of the building. He reemphasized his point about finding a different canopy for the upper windows instead of the eyelid. The shape difference in the roofline is a substantial improvement and he looked forward to seeing it in the neighborhood.

Vice Chair Lee thanked the applicant and stated she would support the DEE and approve the project. With respect to the trash enclosure, she was concerned about the wear and tear on the fence and suggested they look at a metal material in black or dark grey. She was on the fence about the feather white paint color as it covers a lot of area. In A3.0 she suggested they consider three trees rather than two in order to break the scale of the long façade. The monument sign is fine but as the building will be a medical office they might consider rotating it for vehicular visibility.

Chair Thompson thanked the applicant for the presentation. She stated that the shades that bothered Boardmember Hirsch were her favorite thing on the façade and that she would push the diagonals as stucco provides the opportunity to do diagonals. She was concerned that the corrugated roof cover would be visible from the street, especially if it were too shiny. She noted that was a potential item for a subcommittee as was the trash enclosure. If the exterior of the trash enclosure is all wood then the metal cover seems to be incongruous. She supported the landscape comments and Boardmember Hirsch's comments on operable windows. Many Boardmembers commented that the monument sign could be placed either way. For vehicle visibility it would make sense to rotate it, but she did not feel strongly about the item. She could support the project with a few items going to subcommittee. Boardmember Baltay's comment on the doors should be explored further. She called for discussion.

Boardmember Baltay asked Vice Chair Lee about the planting plan. He noted that the street view showed four trees and the planting plan showed two.

Vice Chair Lee believed that the plan was A3.0 and that she preferred 3 trees if possible.

In response to Boardmember Baltay's question about the proposed plantings Mr. Lettieri explained that the trees were not native to California. They also do not want to plant sizeable trees under the street tree canopy. They felt it was better to have a symmetrical placement of the trees so that they were open to the sky. There are two trees because they are a slightly bigger scale and are open trees that do not provide a solid barrier of leaves. Previously the plan was four small redbud trees and now it's two larger scale trees. The rendering shows the previous plan before the applicant team responded to the City's comments.

In response to Boardmember Baltay's question about her wanting three trees Vice Chair Lee stated that she did not feel strongly about the trees or hold up the application.

Boardmember Baltay said that it seemed like it should be two or four trees for the sake of symmetry.

Vice Chair Lee stated she understood the applicant's response and had only been reacting to the length of the building.

In response to Boardmember Baltay's question about her comment on diagonals Chair Thompson explained the shading devices on the windows had side elements that diagonal in. She thought that Boardmember Hirsch did not care for it because everything else is octagonal, but she really appreciated the diagonal and would like to see more. To her it was the strongest part of the design.

Boardmember Hirsch explained that a good bit of his reaction was not strong so Chair Thompson's suggestion to make the detail more prominent might change his opinion.

Boardmember Baltay thanked the Boardmembers for their clarifications. He noted that Mr. Popp had used the eyebrows over the windows in other buildings in the City and they were quite successful, so he respected Mr. Popp's judgement.

Boardmember Hirsch said that if the applicant was going to use the diagonal asymmetrically then they should make something more out of it. He suggested the top portion be heavier and the side be different. It is a design element that really makes the façade so it should be thought about further.

Chair Thompson acknowledged that Mr. Popp had raised his hand.

Mr. Popp said that it was their goal to get a recommendation and not go back to subcommittee since the project has been in progress for two years. The eyebrows on the building are intentionally limited due to the special setback on Middlefield Road. Part of the limitation is to not increase the nonconformity of the building. Therefore, they are seeking a balance between adding character and interest without doing something overly dramatic. His architectural instinct on the building is not to add diagonals that are not related to the architecture and to respect the rectilinear form. The eyebrows were to add a bit of interest. With respect to the trash enclosure, they would happily paint the base to match the base of the building if the ARB thought that was more compatible. They are happy to be flexible to avoid returning to subcommittees.

Boardmember Hirsch agreed with Mr. Popp that the cedar on the trash enclosure would grey out over time and stated that it was nice to have natural texture toward the perimeter of the site. He disagreed with Mr. Popp about the understated eyebrows and agreed more closely with Chair Thompson. He felt a subcommittee would not be a problem.

Vice Chair Lee stated she was ready to approve the project and just wanted to offer some comments, not go to subcommittee. She was confident that the application could move forward.

Boardmember Baltay stated he could support the project without subcommittee as well. After Boardmember Hirsch's comments about the trash enclosure he could accept it without subcommittee. He further felt the eyebrows were just about right in size and that they add character and some functionality.

In response to Boardmember Baltay's question about the wording of the findings Chair Thompson asked him to elaborate.

Boardmember Baltay stated that the findings seemed overly wordy and inconsistent. Finding #2 the first 5 to 10 lines relate to the landscaping. He thought that the last three sentences were all that was needed. Finding #3 only the last sentence is needed. Finding #4, convenient parking, is not a cause for making a finding. He requested the language gets tightened up.

Chair Thompson asked how Boardmember Baltay would like to see the issue fixed.

Boardmember Baltay said the project could be approved as the wording of the Findings was not the fault of the applicant. He asked for other Boardmember opinions and noted that he might be being overly sensitive.

Chair Thompson asked for other Boardmember comments.

Boardmember Lew stated he had the same reaction to the Findings as Boardmember Baltay. He suggested including an edit of the Findings in the Motion.

Boardmember Baltay asked if Boardmember Lew meant to give staff instruction to edit the findings without further specifications.

Boardmember Lew said the ARB could be specific about deleting and moving items in the Findings.

Boardmember Baltay said he would make a motion to approve the project as submitted but restructure the Findings as follows: Finding #1 should state "The continued grandfathered use... adjacent residential uses."

Ms. Gerhardt stated that the information related to context-based design criteria needed to be included in Finding #2. The first half could be taken out and refined. She stated she understood the concept Boardmember Baltay wanted to include.

Boardmember Baltay stated the Findings were not fully edited yet. On Finding #2 the first part should be moved to the landscaping section.

Ms. Gerhardt said the landscaping part could be minimized.

Chair Thompson said that the information on landscaping was repeated in Finding #5.

Boardmember Baltay stated that landscaping was usually handled in Finding #5. Finding #3 the last two sentences should be the support of the Finding. Everything prior to that should be struck. He asked Boardmember Lew for assistance.

Boardmember Lew indicated he was rereading the Findings.

Boardmember Baltay thought that in Finding #4 the first sentence is fine, but the last sentence discusses adding an ADA lift which is a change to the function of the building and inherently contradictory. Therefore, leave the first sentence.

Chair Thompson suggested taking the sentence out.

Boardmember Baltay said if the word “convenient” was removed he would support it. Using convenience as a means of complying with the required findings was a bad precedent. He asked if Ms. Gerhardt was comfortable reworking the Findings with that detail.

Ms. Gerhardt said she was and indicated that the first and last sentence should be combined somehow as there are minimal changes to the property.

Boardmember Baltay said changing the Findings in meeting was difficult. Finding #5 requires two sentences explaining that the landscaping complies with the code.

Ms. Gerhardt thought the first sentence was the most important.

Boardmember Baltay agreed. He indicated he was happy if staff would wordsmith the Findings.

Ms. Gerhardt said the remainder of Finding #5 was about the additional trees planted. She asked if the ARB did not want that level of detail in the Findings and just let the plans speak for themselves.

Boardmember Baltay thought that was how Findings were traditionally handled. They are supposed to be a summary of why it complies with code. They should be concise and quick and supportive of the discussion for the record. Finding #6 was fine.

**MOTION:** Boardmember Baltay moved, seconded by Vice Chair Lee to approve the project as submitted with an instruction to staff to edit and restructure the Findings as discussed.

Boardmember Hirsch asked to add a Friendly Amendment.

Boardmember Baltay said he could do so following a second.

Chair Thompson stated the Motion was seconded by Vice Chair Lee.

**FRIENDLY AMENDMENT:** Boardmember Hirsch proposed a Friendly Amendment for the architect to investigate the detail and look of the eyebrow sun shades on the second floor without the need to come back to committee.

Boardmember Baltay confirmed that it was to recommend that the architect consider alternate [unintelligible at 1:49:34].

Boardmember Hirsch said yes, on their own explore the possibility.

Boardmember Baltay asked what direction they were asking the architect to respond to, what is the ARB asking them to do?

Boardmember Hirsch explained they were being asked to recognize the ARB concerns about more emphasis on the eyebrow window shades on the second floor of the building.

Boardmember Baltay said to consider alternates on the eyebrow designs that give them more emphasis.

Boardmember Hirsch said that was his request.

Chair Thompson asked why the ARB would instruct that if the item was not returning for further discussion.

Boardmember Hirsch said so that the architect could make its own decision.

Chair Thompson stated she was not sure she saw the point.

Boardmember Hirsch said that Chair Thompson had stated that the eyebrows could be more impressive, so he was reinforcing that idea.

Chair Thompson explained her comment was to keep the eyebrows and explore possibilities elsewhere. The eyebrows were the strongest part of the design.

Boardmember Hirsch agreed and noted that Chair Thompson had wanted to emphasize the diagonal even more which would mean emphasizing the top more as well. He agreed that was an important design aspect of the building and that it should be further explored by the architect without coming back to committee.

Boardmember Baltay asked if the Friendly Amendment would lose Chair Thompson's vote.

Chair Thompson was unsure as she did not see why the applicant could be told to change the strongest part of the project without ARB review. She thought it was dangerous and would not agree.

Boardmember Baltay stated he could not accept the Friendly Amendment.

Boardmember Lew stated that a Friendly Amendment needed a second prior to being voted up or down.

Vice Chair Lee said that whoever makes the Motion can decide on Friendly Amendments. As the seconder she did not accept the Friendly Amendment either.

#### **FRIENDLY AMENDMENT REJECTED**

Boardmember Baltay stated that if Boardmember Hirsch put the amendment forward as an Unfriendly Amendment then it would be voted on, if he got a second.

Chair Thompson stated an Unfriendly Amendment would need a second and she did not see one. She called for further discussion. She asked if there were further comments about the trash enclosure, but there were none. Vice Chair Lee mentioned the color being too bright, so she asked for further thoughts on that, but there were none. She called the vote on the Motion.

**MOTION PASSED: 5-0**

Chair Thompson thanked the applicant.

Mr. Popp thanked the ARB.

**Approval of Minutes**

4. Draft Architectural Review Board Meeting Minutes for July 15, 2021

**MOTION:** Boardmember Lee moved, seconded by Boardmember Hirsch to approve the Minutes for the ARB meeting of July 15, 2021.

**MOTION PASSED: 5-0****Board Member Questions, Comments or Announcements**

North of Ventura Coordinated Area Plan (NVCAP) Working Group Updates – Boardmember Lew

Boardmember Lew reported the project was on hold pending Council decision. The Council heard a prescreening for a Planned Community (PC) at 280 and 300 Lambert Avenue, which is within the NVCAP area. The review was generally favorable, and the project is 49 units with 20% of those being affordable. They are stacked townhouses along the street with more conventional apartment buildings along the rear of the property. The architect is Hayes Group, and they are proposing to go over the height limit at 55 feet. The Council requested more stepping to the massing. No action is taken during a Council prescreening.

Chair Thompson thanked him and called for further questions, comments or announcements.

Ms. Gerhardt announced the retreat on September 9, 2021, at 10:00 a.m. Any other topics Boardmembers were interested in should be announced.

Chair Thompson stated the discussion questions would be sent to the ARB the following day. There are a lot of questions and they probably will not be able to cover all of them at the retreat, but they were important conversations for the ARB.

Ms. Gerhardt stated the retreat would be held via Zoom and would start at 10:00 a.m. There will be no boxed lunch as the retreat is virtual. The second ARB Awards meeting will require more back and forth so the second retreat will be in person if possible.

Boardmember Baltay asked if they would be provided a list of potential award-winning projects.

Ms. Gerhardt indicated she was working on a list for the ARB to start from.

Boardmember Baltay said he would like to review them prior to the discussion.

Ms. Gerhardt said it would be included in the packet.

**Adjournment**

Chair Thompson adjourned the meeting at 10:30 a.m.