



Architectural Review Board

Staff Report (ID # 13897)

Report Type: Approval of Minutes **Meeting Date:** 1/20/2022

Summary Title: Minutes of December 9, 2021

Title: Draft Architectural Review Board Meeting Minutes for December 9, 2021

From: Jonathan Lait

Recommendation

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

Background

Draft minutes from the December 9, 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

Attachments:

- Attachment A: December 9, 2021 Draft Minutes (DOCX)



ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD MINUTES: December 9, 2021

Virtual Meeting
1:00 PM

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:

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 City Council would interview candidates for the ARB on Monday, December 13, 2021. There will be no ARB meeting on December 16th or January 6, 2022. The first meeting of the new ARB will be January 20, 2022. The meeting is planned to be a hybrid meeting, but Council will make the ultimate decision and may want to hold off on in person meetings due to ongoing COVID concerns. Even in the hybrid model there is the option to participate via Zoom. Boardmember Lew did not reapply to the ARB.

Vice Chair Lee shared that she had not heard back from the City Clerk, but indicated she was sad to leave the ARB due to family matters. She apologized for having to leave the ARB following the meeting.

Ms. Gerhardt thanked both Boardmember Lew and Vice Chair Lee for their service and work. She also thanked Boardmember Baltay and Hirsch and wished them well with their reappointment.

Boardmember Baltay said it was a pleasure getting to know and working with Vice Chair Lee.

Vice Chair Lee said the feelings were mutual.

Ms. Gerhardt said that Chair Thompson was planning a “coffee break” gathering and staff wants to put something together in 2022. They are allowed to get together so long as they do not discuss ARB business. She concluded her report.

Action Items

2. ARB Awards: Consider the Eligible 25 Projects and Associated Photographs Taken by Board Members, and Decide on a List of Award Categories and Award Winners.

Chair Thompson announced the item and recapped how the list was reduced to 25 eligible projects. She suggested going through each project to see if it could get three votes. If a project receives three votes then the ARB needs to determine which category it would be eligible for. Some pictures of 405 Curtner were circulated by email.

Ms. Gerhardt said that she believed she had circulated the hospital pictures as well but indicated that she could share her screen if photos were missed. She noted that she added pictures to the projects as well.

Boardmember Hirsch asked if Ms. Gerhardt received his photographs.

Ms. Gerhardt indicated she had and was working on adding them.

Boardmember Baltay asked if he could propose categories first.

Chair Thompson said that he could.

Boardmember Baltay explained he went through the list and defined categories, which was helpful to him. He proposed four categories of architectural design: 1) residential, 2) commercial, 3) storefront improvement, and 3) institutional. He further suggested a category for best sustainable project and one for best overall project. That is six awards in total. There may or may not be a suitable project for each category. He was unable to determine a project worthy of the sustainable award, but it could be debated.

Chair Thompson asked if other Boardmembers had considered categories and would like to offer suggestions.

Boardmember Hirsch stated that he might prefer calling them “The best buildings of Palo Alto” over the past five years and recognize them no matter what their particular use might be. If the ARB uses categories they may leave one out. For example, if they have a sustainable category but no winner then they are only recognizing four projects.

Boardmember Baltay asked if Chair Thompson wanted to have a debate on the categories.

Chair Thompson said she just wanted to hear suggestions for categories. She thought they would review the list and note which categories projects would work for and potentially there would be nominees.

Boardmember Hirsch said that under that framework they would know what categories would apply. He stated that was his preference.

Chair Thompson asked for Boardmember Lew and Vice Chair Lee’s thoughts.

Boardmember Lew said that categories could be useful. For example, a small multi-family project did not have the same budget as a major office or hospital project would have. The projects are apples and oranges so categories might be useful to set the expectations. There also might be similar projects so categories might help that evaluation.

Chair Thompson remembered that Boardmember Lew had previously mentioned a category on urban and contextual design.

Boardmember Lew agreed but noted that project could also fall under “best project” or “best commercial project” or “architecture.” He suggested award categories be based on ARB findings but noted they had not trended that way.

Boardmember Baltay suggested “Best compliance with the Comprehensive Plan.”

Chair Thompson said that they had previously discussed a landscape award, which ties into the findings.

Vice Chair Lee thought it was great to start with some categories in mind. They could assist in the discussion and lead to a more natural conversation. She questioned the word “best” especially in terms of “best architecture” and noted that she was not on the ARB for the review of many of the projects. Even for the ones that she did participate in she would not use the word “best.”

Chair Thompson added that they had previously discussed “materiality” as a category. There is an approach by program and a second approach by the quality of the building. She asked Ms. Gerhardt to go through the list.

Ms. Gerhardt shared her screen to show the ARB Awards final short list. She had some technical issues.

Amy French, Chief Planning Official, asked if Ms. Gerhardt would like Madina Klicheva, Administrative Assistant, to run the slideshow.

Ms. Gerhardt said that was not necessary and began the presentation. The first project was Bowman School and she showed additional pictures, a diagram of the campus, and a picture of the sunken patio that required a variance.

Chair Thompson noted that the sunken patio was not visible from the street.

Boardmember Hirsch said that it was not visible and inaccessible.

Ms. Gerhardt [audio cut out at 16:42ish]

Chair Thompson clarified that the picture taken were part of the project.

Ms. Gerhardt explained that it was a large addition to the school.

Boardmember Hirsch clarified that all the buildings in the diagram plus the landscaping were part of the project.

Chair Thompson asked if there were any further images.

Ms. Gerhardt said there were not.

Chair Thompson explained the project needed three votes to remain in the conversation and would also need a potential award category. she called for votes of support.

Boardmember Hirsch said he went to the building, and they would not let him in, nor would they let him photograph anything because children were present. It is a wonderful little complex of buildings in the same architectural vernacular with a limited materials palette which was nicely compiled. They used traditional shapes to fit into the Palo Alto look and he thought it was a terrific and well thought out general plan for the school.

Ms. Gerhardt noted Boardmember Hirsch's vote.

Boardmember Baltay said that he thought it was a good building and strong candidate. The site planning is excellent. He would compare this to another institutional project, The Junior Museum in Palo Alto. The projects are similar, and he felt the Junior Museum did a better job of integrating. He thought the Bowman School integrated by mimicking the residential buildings nearby while the Junior Museum goes a step further.

Chair Thompson said that she wanted to see if there was interest in nominating the project. When they complete the list they would be able to tell if there were multiple nominees for similar categories. She asked if Boardmember Baltay wanted to nominate the Bowman School as a contender or not.

Boardmember Baltay said that it was second on his list of institutional projects. He thought it was a strong project.

Chair Thompson said that it would be the difference between having one contender for his institutional category instead of two if the Junior Museum also received three nominations.

Boardmember Hirsch stated that they did not have to choose a single project for each category. That was why he preferred to nominate the projects and then determine the categories. The categories could be chosen later. He wanted Bowman School kept on the list and gave numerous reasons why.

Boardmember Baltay stated the project was in his top 10 and he could support it.

Vice Chair Lee said that she did not choose to support it. She clarified that they would go through each project, see if three people supported it, and then have a discussion at the end.

Chair Thompson explained she wanted three votes in support of nomination and a potential category for each project.

Boardmember Lew explained he passed by the Bowman School often on the bike path and is disappointed with the façades that face the bike path, especially the back of the gym. He liked the front, but not the rest of the project.

Chair Thompson was also not in support of nominating the Bowman School because she found the façade on Arastradero underwhelming.

Boardmember Hirsch said he understood.

Ms. Gerhardt announced 1451 California Avenue and provided an aerial view and photographs. As previously stated by Boardmember Lew the ARB's purview was limited in the project to the California Avenue streetscape.

Chair Thompson called for thoughts on the project.

Ms. Gerhardt said that if the ARB wanted to do the voting quickly she could shorten the presentation.

Vice Chair Lee said that as it was a minor architectural review she could give the project a half a vote. She was not on the ARB when the project was considered, but it was a wonderful project and a neighborhood she knew well.

Boardmember Lew said he felt the same as Vice Chair Lee. He was also a half a vote. Matching the houses on California Avenue to the other side of the street was a major issue with the neighborhood and the ARB spent a lot of time on it. The ARB was also able to review the materials for the two condominium buildings. Stanford kept the review very limited per its development agreement with City Council.

Ms. Gerhardt heard one vote.

Chair Thompson agreed.

Ms. Gerhardt introduced 611 Cowper Street and showed a picture of the door area.

Boardmember Baltay voted to nominate the buildings and said it was a wonderful commercial project that did a great job of scaling down to fit the neighborhood and the materials. The detailing is exquisite.

Boardmember Lew also voted for the project.

Boardmember Hirsch voted for the project and noted that he liked the separation of the circulation core and the massing. The idea of the screening to bring the scale down sold him on the project. The entry is also nice and ties everything together.

Ms. Gerhardt heard three votes.

Chair Thompson asked if Vice Chair Lee had comments.

Vice Chair Lee said that she did not.

Chair Thompson noted that she heard "commercial" as a category and asked if there were any others that should be considered like "materiality" or "context design" or "detailing."

Boardmember Hirsch thought that could be part of "materiality."

Chair Thompson asked for other thoughts on categories.

Boardmember Baltay was not comfortable with "detailing" or "materiality." The range of projects is so diverse that it would be difficult to judge them on that category. he understood what they meant and stated the building had excellent detailing and wonderful use of materials.

Chair Thompson said that the program is characteristic of the building that is outside the architecture, but she wanted to celebrate what it was about the architecture that they were awarding.

Ms. Gerhardt thought that once they determined the final award winners they would have a chance to write up a paragraph explaining the reason for the award.

Boardmember Hirsch asked if Chair Thompson were suggesting that 611 Cowper would receive a “materiality” award. The concept of the building is what is powerful. The massing is more impressive even though the detailing is important.

Boardmember Baltay noted that an award winning building should incorporate a lot of things.

Boardmember Hirsch agreed.

Boardmember Lew said that the building had already won an American Institute of Architects (AIA) Award. There was a previous scheme by a different architect on the same site that was a mess. It did not tie the residential to the commercial. The architect of 611 Cowper was successful from start to finish. The building is also contextual with the high rise housing next door.

Chair Thompson suggested a category for “concept design realized” because architects struggle with that a lot related to built work. She called for the next project.

Ms. Gerhardt announced 405 Curtner and showed a new picture of the interior.

Chair Thompson confirmed it was a multi-family residential.

Ms. Gerhardt said it was a small multi-family project.

Boardmember Baltay voted for the project and explained he visited the site. It is important to have an award for what the ARB sees as good residential architecture. To achieve residential density multi-family projects are important and this one is a good example of a healthy multi-family residence. The materials and their use are also well done. During ARB review he had been concerned about the massing, but the result is highly successful. It should be awarded because it is the best residential project and an excellent piece of architecture.

Chair Thompson called for other votes.

Boardmember Hirsch said that his support would have been based on the front of the building, but it fell apart from there. The type of building on such a tight site with 8 dwellings contains too much hardscape. He was concerned about getting more projects that were as dense and car oriented. The railings are too clunky and heavy, and he disliked the large scale stucco elements and rooflines. The building is overwhelming. The concept was good, but he disliked the detailing. An award winning project needed both a good concept and good detailing.

Vice Chair Lee said that they were only on the third project and were 40 minutes into the meeting. She suggested just looking for three votes and then returning to the discussion.

Chair Thompson agreed and noted that she had to make a meeting at 3:00 p.m.

Vice Chair Lee said that it was the third meeting on the Awards.

Chair Thompson called for a straw poll on 405 Curtner.

Ms. Gerhardt said she had heard one vote.

Chair Thompson indicated she voted yes.

Ms. Gerhardt said that was two votes.

Boardmember Baltay said that it was the best residential project.

Chair Thompson said that the materials were good, and it looked nice.

Ms. Gerhardt said that she would note the two votes and stated they could return to the project if they did not find another residential project to support. She announced 180 El Camino. She provided a site plan and pictures and explained the project was Phase III of the shopping center.

Chair Thompson called the straw poll.

Boardmember Lew did not vote for the project.

Ms. Gerhardt said that anyone who did not speak up would count as a no for the sake of time.

Chair Thompson said the project was eliminated.

Ms. Gerhardt announced 180 El Camino, the Shake Shack, and showed photographs.

Chair Thompson voted yes.

Ms. Gerhardt confirmed the one vote. She announced 2585 El Camino and showed some drawings and photographs.

Boardmember Hirsch said that if the project were split in half he would vote for one section of it.

Ms. Gerhardt said he had to vote for the whole project and then confirmed it had no votes. She announced the Fire Station at 799 Embarcadero and showed photographs. She confirmed four votes.

Vice Chair Lee said that she liked the project but was not voting for buildings that had already won awards.

Ms. Gerhardt announced the Sludge Facility and showed the new pictures.

Chair Thompson said the building was utilitarian and affordable. The nicest thing about it are the trees in front. She said that the project had an "ode to brutalism" that sort of made her like it.

Ms. Gerhardt called for votes.

Boardmember Baltay asked Chair Thompson if the building really used Corten steel.

Chair Thompson confirmed it did.

Boardmember Baltay asked if it was board formed concrete.

Chair Thompson explained it was not.

Ms. Gerhardt stated the project had no votes and moved on to the boardwalk replacement.

Chair Thompson voted yes.

Ms. Gerhardt confirmed the one vote and introduced 180 Hamilton.

Chair Thompson voted yes.

Boardmember Baltay confirmed voting yes was just to keep the project in the running and then voted yes.

Vice Chair Lee voted yes.

Ms. Gerhardt confirmed the three votes and introduced 261 Hamilton and showed the photographs.

Vice Chair Lee voted yes.

Boardmember Hirsch voted yes.

Ms. Gerhardt confirmed the two votes and then introduced 3223 Hanover in the Research Park. She showed the pictures sent in by Boardmember Hirsch.

Boardmember Hirsch said that the parking is in a huge berm all around the entry at the lower level and explained the flow into the plaza. He voted yes.

Vice Chair Lee voted yes.

Chair Thompson was happy that they were paring the list down.

Ms. Gerhardt announced 480 Lytton and showed a photograph at night. She thought the building already received an award.

Boardmember Baltay voted yes.

Ms. Gerhardt confirmed the one vote and announced Kol Emeth.

Vice Chair Lee voted yes.

Boardmember Hirsch voted yes.

Boardmember Baltay said that he was disappointed in the execution of the project from what the ARB saw. He saw a garbage dumpster at the end of a building and stated that the wood slats "did not do it" somehow.

Boardmember Hirsch said that he wanted to push hard for the project on materiality. The concepts are interesting, and the site planning is amazing.

Chair Thompson said there were three votes from Vice Chair Lee, Boardmember Hirsch, and herself. She said that they did not hear from Boardmember Lew.

Ms. Gerhardt confirmed the three votes.

Boardmember Lew indicated he was on the fence about the project.

Chair Thompson said that she took the pictures.

Ms. Gerhardt announced 636 Middlefield.

Boardmember Baltay said that it was infill high density multi-family housing project. It is similar to 405 Curtner. He did not vote for it.

Boardmember Hirsch said he voted for it and liked the unusual color contrast with the dark stucco and red elements. He also liked how the houses fit the site even though there is not much greenery.

Chair Thompson called for more votes.

Ms. Gerhardt confirmed the one vote and announced 1451 Middlefield Road, the Junior Museum. She showed several pictures of the project and entryway.

Boardmember Baltay announced his enthusiastic support of the project.

Chair Thompson voted yes.

Boardmember Hirsch voted yes but noted that the scale bothered him because it did not seem to be child's scale, especially compared to the old building.

Ms. Gerhardt confirmed the three votes. She announced 2555 Park.

Chair Thompson said that at one point they discussed nominating the landscape wall, but noted they were voting on the whole building.

Vice Chair Lee gave it half a vote since it had previously won an award.

Chair Thompson asked if it won an AIA Award.

Vice Chair Lee said that it had for Santa Clara Valley.

Chair Thompson asked if anyone supported the building.

Ms. Gerhardt confirmed the half vote. She announced 1400 Page Mill.

Chair Thompson asked if that was the property with the landscape.

Ms. Gerhardt said it was not and that project had been removed.

Boardmember Lew thought 1400 Page Mill was previously removed. He liked the project because it was net zero energy, but it had no other support.

Boardmember Baltay said that he had not been aware that it was a net zero project.

Boardmember Lew stated it was the first net zero speculative office building.

Chair Thompson voted yes. She thought another building was also net zero.

Boardmember Lew said that 636 Waverley was also net zero but was a much smaller project.

Boardmember Baltay asked if Boardmember Lew was sure about the building being net zero.

Ms. Gerhardt indicated she looked it up and the building is Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Platinum Net Zero.

Boardmember Baltay indicated his support.

Chair Thompson said that was three votes.

Ms. Gerhardt confirmed the three votes. She announced 1050 Page Mill and showed the pictures. There is a large courtyard that was not pictured.

Chair Thompson indicated her support.

Boardmember Lew voted for the project.

Vice Chair Lee voted for the project.

Ms. Gerhardt stated it was a larger building on a larger site.

Chair Thompson indicated the category could be "design concept." She asked if others had category ideas.

Ms. Gerhardt announced 355 University Avenue.

Boardmember Baltay voted for the project and said it was a wonderful storefront improvement to the avenue.

Boardmember Hirsch voted yes.

Vice Chair Lee supported the project.

Ms. Gerhardt confirmed the three votes. She announced 375 University Avenue.

Chair Thompson voted yes.

Boardmember Hirsch voted yes and noted it was beautifully detailed with good proportions.

Boardmember Baltay said that he would support if for now as a beautiful façade renovation.

Ms. Gerhardt announced 500 University Avenue and showed additional pictures.

Boardmember Lew noted the project had already won a Silicon Valley Business Journal Award. He voted for the project.

Boardmember Baltay said he compared the project to 611 Cowper, and he liked 611 better, but 500 University is a close second. He voted to keep it in.

Chair Thompson said that was two votes.

Ms. Gerhardt confirmed the two votes and announced 636 Waverley.

Boardmember Lew thought that it had been previously struck from the list.

Ms. Gerhardt confirmed there were no votes then announced 701 Welch, the children's hospital. She provided additional photos.

Boardmember Hirsch really liked some aspects of the project a lot.

Ms. Gerhardt counted it as a half a vote.

Chair Thompson asked what aspect of the building they wanted to consider if they did not want to vote for the whole thing.

Boardmember Hirsch said that pictures did not do the building justice. The elevation that works well is not photographed.

Boardmember Lew stated that the sense of human scale set the building apart. There is attention to the design of the building everywhere, which is something that is not seen very often.

Boardmember Hirsch agreed with Boardmember Lew.

Chair Thompson asked if he was speaking to the ground floor experience.

Boardmember Lew stated that throughout the entire building every vestibule, elevator, lobby, courtyard has been designed around child height.

Boardmember Hirsch said the outdoor spaces were as well as the entry. For a very large building that aspect was important.

Boardmember Lew also noted that in the medical center all buildings are going above the Palo Alto 50 foot height limit since they were in a special zone. There is something that could be said about going over the height limit but maintaining scale, character, and quality. That could be addressed by the ARB.

Chair Thompson confirmed the children's hospital had Boardmember Lew and Boardmember Hirsch's votes.

Vice Chair Lee indicated she would vote for the project as well. From what she read in the description she was not sure what the ARB reviewed or if it was a minor review.

Boardmember Lew thought it was a minor review but the whole project was completed within the ARB's timeframe. The only reason he saw the interior was because he took the grand opening tour.

Vice Chair Lee voted to keep the project on the list.

Ms. Gerhardt asked if Boardmember Hirsch wanted to add back in 2500 El Camino and displayed a picture.

Boardmember Hirsch stated that he wanted to add it back because there were more photos for context. He wanted the ARB to see the full context.

Boardmember Baltay thought the building was problematic from El Camino and was not a good example of good urban design or housing.

Boardmember Hirsch said that they were missing pictures of the courtyard before, and he thought that was quite nice.

Boardmember Baltay agreed that the courtyard was great.

Boardmember Hirsch agreed that there was something weak about the El Camino side.

Chair Thompson said that the project did not have her support.

Boardmember Hirsch thanked Ms. Gerhardt for bringing it back up.

Chair Thompson indicated that she had 11 yeses.

Boardmember Baltay asked her to list them.

Chair Thompson said they were 611 Cowper, 799 Embarcadero, 180 Hamilton, 3223 Hanover, 4175 Manuela (interrupted)

Boardmember Baltay requested she slow down with the list.

Chair Thompson shared her screen.

Boardmember Hirsch asked if they would discuss categories again.

Chair Thompson thought it was a good time to discuss categories. She confirmed that everyone could see her screen. She listed potential categories on the right.

Boardmember Hirsch asked if the California Avenue garage was completed within the Awards timeframe.

Chair Thompson said that if it was not finished then it was not considered.

Ms. French confirmed that they were stopping in 2020. She did the final site visit for the garage in 2021. It is not eligible for the five year period ending 2020.

Boardmember Hirsch indicated he understood. With respect to categories, he thought there was a discrete category for commercial buildings which Cowper or a few others could fit. Then there is the large project on Hamilton that is a major commercial complex. There is a possible category there.

Chair Thompson asked for the category.

Boardmember Hirsch said it was commercial buildings.

Chair Thompson showed where she noted the type of project. 611 Cowper is all commercial.

Boardmember Baltay said that it had top floor residential.

Chair Thompson indicated they could call it mixed-use. She confirmed that 1400 Page Mill is Research and Development (R&D).

Ms. Gerhardt stated it was.

Boardmember Hirsch said that R&D would be the larger scale building.

Chair Thompson explained that she noted the quality items they spoke about. There are two for sustainability, three for materials, and three for design concept. She asked for categories on the storefront façades other than commercial.

Vice Chair Lee mentioned that 355 was a historic review and seismic rehab. She was struck by the basement and daylighting and use of glass for transparency. So that may be more than just the façade. for the categories she would feel more comfortable with typology categories because it's harder to find consensus on design concepts. She asked if they should discuss each project and see if any could get four

votes. A few of the projects previously won awards and she would rather lift up one that had not received a regional award.

Boardmember Lew thought they should try to reduce the list down. When the City Council makes their proclamations they are wordy, and it takes a lot of time. There are also photo opportunities after each one. Therefore, he thought it was better to get to four or five awards if possible.

Chair Thompson did not have the same reservation as Vice Chair Lee about awarding a project that had received another award. Boardmember Baltay and Vice Chair Lee have both indicated preference for awarding according to typology. She thought there should also be an architectural component as well. She asked for Boardmember Lew and Boardmember Hirsch's opinions on the categories.

Boardmember Hirsch requested clarification.

Chair Thompson explained that the design concept category would be a "design concept realized" category where the concept is clear in the execution. It is not necessarily the best concept. Sustainability, materiality, and scale have been discussed. Those were things worth celebrating.

Vice Chair Lee added that in the past at the ARB Awards they had written an explanatory paragraph stating what the ARB felt strongly about. She asked if that was a way for their words to come through when the awards are presented.

Boardmember Hirsch said that projects could have more than one description.

Chair Thompson said they have three R&D projects so they would only pick one.

Boardmember Baltay agreed with that.

Vice Chair Lee suggested that it could be ok to have multiple projects of the same type win awards.

Boardmember Baltay said that most design competitions were isolated by typology with the jury having the ability to pull a few special things out for consideration. It is usually organized by the way the public perceives the uses of the buildings. It is hard to judge execution of a design concept especially by City Council or the public.

Vice Chair Lee said that the ARB's purview is institutional, commercial, and multi-family. Most of the projects they see are commercial. She thought if they gave two or three awards to commercial projects that was in line with what they have reviewed. In the past they had not given one award per typology and listed off past winners.

Chair Thompson asked if she had the past categories.

Vice Chair Lee said that she was just reading the staff report and looking at the 2015 projects that were awarded. They were Hoover Pavilion, Rinconada Library, Apple Store, the Magical Bridge Playground, Mitchell Park Library for sustainability, and [Paris ? 1:13:54] remodel.

Boardmember Baltay thought they needed a housing category and if no building fit the award then it should be publicly known. He thought that was a good statement to make.

Chair Thompson said that they have a mixed-use category which could count as housing.

Boardmember Baltay said that was not an example of housing he could support. The housing was not what made the building good.

Chair Thompson said that was part of her point and why she did not want to do it by only typology. She did not think the typology was what made a building good and stressed that they needed to judge buildings on what made them good.

Vice Chair Lee explained Santa Clara Valley has merit awards, honorable mentions, etcetera. She said they could consider that as well.

Boardmember Hirsch said that it struck him that the reason they chose the buildings was because of the proposed categories as described. They do include descriptive language but noted that was missing from Chair Thompson's sheet.

Chair Thompson said that they did not discuss categories for those projects.

Boardmember Hirsch said he liked it because it gave a general sense of what they liked about the buildings rather than the use function.

Chair Thompson wanted to address Boardmember Baltay's concern about the public getting behind the ARB Awards. She thought the public should be encouraged to look at buildings for more than their use.

Boardmember Hirsch thought they should fill out the proposed categories so that people can understand why the projects were selected.

Chair Thompson asked Boardmember Lew his opinion on the categories.

Boardmember Lew had no comment.

Chair Thompson asked if he had an opinion on how they should do the categories.

Boardmember Lew thought that they needed to figure out a method to cut the list in half and then determine the categories.

Chair Thompson said that she was also ok with Vice Chair Lee's suggestion of trying to get four votes. She asked if Ms. Gerhardt had whittled the presentation down to the remaining projects.

Ms. Gerhardt indicated she needed another minute to finish doing that.

Vice Chair Lee said that in 1998 five awards went to 5 projects, 2005 five awards went to 5 projects, 2010 ten awards went to 10 projects from an eligible list of over 100 projects. 2015 five awards went to 5 projects. It is interesting to see what each Board decided to do.

Chair Thompson wondered if they could have more awards since the list was long.

Boardmember Baltay agreed with Boardmember Lew's assessment that they need to keep the awards to five or six projects.

Ms. Gerhardt stated staff agreed. She shared her screen of the final short list candidates. She called for a revote and announced 611 Cowper.

Boardmember Baltay, Boardmember Hirsch, and Boardmember Lew voted yes.

Ms. Gerhardt announced the Fire Station #3.

Boardmember Baltay, Boardmember Hirsch, Boardmember Lew, and Chair Thompson voted yes.

Ms. Gerhardt announced 180 Hamilton.

Chair Thompson and Vice Chair Lee voted yes.

Ms. Gerhardt announced 3223 Hanover.

Boardmember Hirsch, Chair Thompson, Vice Chair Lee, and Boardmember Lew voted yes.

Ms. Gerhardt asked everyone to announce their votes. She announced Kol Emeth.

Chair Thompson, Boardmember Hirsch, Vice Chair Lee, Boardmember Baltay voted yes.

Ms. Gerhardt announced 1451 Middlefield Road, the Junior Museum.

Boardmember Baltay, Chair Thompson, Boardmember Hirsch, and Vice Chair Lee voted yes.

Ms. Gerhardt announced 1400 Page Mill.

Chair Thompson, Boardmember Lew, Boardmember Baltay voted yes. Vice Chair Lee was on the fence.

Ms. Gerhardt announced 1050 Page Mill.

Chair Thompson, Vice Chair Lee, and Boardmember Lew voted yes.

Ms. Gerhardt announced 355 University Avenue.

Boardmember Baltay and Vice Chair Lee voted yes. Boardmember Hirsch indicated he liked the project, but that he liked another one better. He did not know what to do.

Boardmember Baltay said that it would have been easier to make selections within categories for that reason. Both projects are excellent, but he liked this one better.

Boardmember Hirsch stated preference for the other project.

Ms. Gerhardt confirmed they were speaking about 375 University.

Boardmember Hirsch thought that was stronger.

Boardmember Lew corrected that the building was Roxy's not Chop Keenan's.

Ms. Gerhardt said it sounded like both would go though.

Chair Thompson did not hear Boardmember Lew's vote on 355.

Boardmember Lew stated he was a no on 355.

Chair Thompson said she was also a no.

Ms. Gerhardt confirmed two votes.

Vice Chair Lee said that she had planned to also vote for 375 University because she liked it as well.

Chair Thompson said that she could.

Boardmember Hirsch asked where they were.

Ms. Gerhardt said that she would reconduct the straw poll on Design Within Reach, 355 University.

Boardmember Baltay and Vice Chair Lee voted yes.

Ms. Gerhardt called the vote on 376 University.

Boardmember Hirsch, Chair Thompson, Vice Chair Lee, Boardmember Baltay, and Boardmember Lew voted yes.

Chair Thompson indicated that was the only unanimous vote and was getting an award.

Ms. Gerhardt called for a vote on 701 Welch.

Chair Thompson, Vice Chair Lee, Boardmember Hirsch, and Boardmember Lew voted yes.

Ms. Gerhardt confirmed the four yes votes. She asked if Chair Thompson updated her spreadsheet.

Chair Thompson indicated she had and shared her screen.

Ms. Gerhardt said that two projects were eliminated.

Chair Thompson said that if you only took four yes votes and up there were only 6 projects.

Boardmember Hirsch asked if there were only three votes on Cowper. He wanted to go back and look at it.

Vice Chair Lee said that she did not vote for that one because it had won a San Mateo Award. She noted that she voted for three institutional projects.

Boardmember Hirsch thought it would be a shame not to include the Cowper building.

Boardmember Lew explained that Kol Emeth had won an AIA Project Award for Santa Clara Valley.

Vice Chair Lee said that she was fine if that one did not get a Palo Alto Award. She was also not a part of the review of the project.

Chair Thompson asked if she would retract her vote.

Vice Chair Lee explained that she did not vote for the Fire Station because it won an award.

Chair Thompson said the Fire Station had four votes.

Boardmember Baltay asked Vice Chair Lee if she realized that she was skewering the result by having a standard that no one else held.

Vice Chair Lee said there were many standards that they did not share. She thought they should have multiple commercial and institutional projects win awards.

Boardmember Baltay said she was entitled to whatever standards she wanted, but no one else is judging by that standard so it skews the results.

Vice Chair Lee repeated that everyone was judging by different standards.

Boardmember Baltay said he understood.

Vice Chair Lee stated that she thought she should not be part of the vote as she had not been part of the review.

Ms. Gerhardt said that all ARB members have an equal vote, and they are all qualified architects who could judge the projects after the fact just the same. She asked if they wanted to provide categories for the top projects.

Chair Thompson said that the number one project was the Cheesecake Factory. She asked if they wanted to talk about anything other than it being a commercial façade.

Ms. Gerhardt said they would write a paragraph about each winner. They needed to determine the main award and then give key points about why the project is interesting. Later the paragraph will be completed.

Boardmember Hirsch liked the process.

Chair Thompson asked what the award should be for the Cheesecake Factory.

Boardmember Hirsch asked to revisit Cowper. He did not want to leave it out.

Ms. Gerhardt said they would focus on the top ones first and stressed that they had not completed the process. With the Cheesecake Factory Boardmember Baltay had mentioned a storefront renovation category.

Boardmember Hirsch liked the proportions and the detailing and how it fit the context.

Chair Thompson mentioned the high quality material.

Boardmember Hirsch said materiality.

Chair Thompson said most of the projects had good materiality.

Chair Thompson asked if they liked the category as “storefront renovation.”

Boardmember Baltay said it should just be “storefront.”

Boardmember Lew explained it was more than that because they had to break the space into two buildings since the Cheesecake Factory combined it.

Chair Thompson thought “urban design” was a good category because she really liked the connection with the street due to the location of the windowsills.

Ms. Gerhardt asked if that was “human scale.”

Chair Thompson thought that was something different, but it could work. "Urban design" is street experience and urban experience. She thought the project enhanced the urban experience along University.

Boardmember Hirsch agreed.

Vice Chair Lee said that she normally thought of urban design in a planning context. She could see the human scale and how it related to the street.

Ms. Gerhardt asked if it was "streetscape."

Vice Chair Lee asked who would write the paragraphs after the five or six projects were chosen.

Ms. Gerhardt agreed that it would be helpful to give someone ownership of the projects.

Chair Thompson asked Vice Chair Lee if she meant that the person would decide the category.

Vice Chair Lee suggested they determine the five or six they want as there were still 11 projects listed.

Chair Thompson stated that they had six.

Ms. Gerhardt explained they had a top six and that Boardmember Hirsch wanted to further discuss Cowper. She thought they could look at categories and then determine if they were missing anything.

Vice Chair Lee apologized for her misunderstanding.

Ms. Gerhardt said that they were trying to determine which categories the top six would fall into. Then they need to list some key words about the project. From the category and the key words then someone could take ownership and write the paragraph.

Chair Thompson said she was ok with "human scale."

Boardmember Baltay asked if they were calling the category "Best Human Scale Architecture."

Chair Thompson preferred "Urban Experience."

Ms. Gerhardt thought the category was "storefront renovation" and then the human scale and urban experience were more key words.

Boardmember Baltay stated that was not what he heard Chair Thompson say. He agreed with Ms. Gerhardt's characterization but thought Chair Thompson was pushing something different.

Chair Thompson said she was but realized that she might be alone on that. She asked if everyone felt good about the "storefront" category.

Boardmember Baltay said yes.

Boardmember Hirsch said that it was a "Storefront renovation."

Ms. Gerhardt said that the whole building was renovated.

Chair Thompson moved the discussion to Kol Emeth. She stated it had a sustainability story. There was another project with a 3.5 vote which was net zero sustainability. So, there might be two in the category.

Boardmember Baltay asked why Kol Emeth was sustainable.

Chair Thompson said that the website contained diagrams showing circulation. She did not know that it was passive.

Boardmember Baltay remembered the review and noted they did not have anything out of the ordinary for sustainability. They basically met CALGreen standards. It would be a mistake to give it a sustainability award if they were not sure about it.

Boardmember Hirsch said that the first project was at human scale, but Kol Emeth (interrupted)

Ms. Gerhardt stated the project was LEED Platinum.

Chair Thompson said that sustainability could still be on the table.

Boardmember Hirsch wanted to see something that gave it a sense of place.

Chair Thompson liked the connection to the context of the street.

Boardmember Hirsch said that there was a natural corner to the landscape that they made a connection with.

Vice Chair Lee said that it would be appropriate to say something about how the daylight was handled.

Chair Thompson asked if they would still consider it for sustainability since it was LEED Platinum.

Vice Chair Lee thought it could.

Chair Thompson said that they could have two awards for sustainability.

Boardmember Baltay supported Kol Emeth winning an award for sustainability over the project on Page Mill.

Vice Chair Lee said that Kol Emeth was an older campus and they started from the beginning and did a lot of site planning. That may have been sustainability thought out in terms of light. She was not part of the review, but she gathered that there was a long master planning process that probably kept sustainability in mind.

Chair Thompson confirmed they felt good about sustainability.

Boardmember Baltay said it was fine with him.

Chair Thompson asked for Boardmember Lew's opinion.

Boardmember Lew thought it was a good project but was ultimately disappointed in it. He felt similar to Boardmember Baltay.

Boardmember Baltay said he was on the fence. If this project is sustainable then the office building at 1400 Page Mill is net zero. That is a tough thing to achieve and if they have done so it's better than LEED Platinum.

Vice Chair Lee thought the category was institutional for Kol Emeth with "sustainable" as a descriptor.

Boardmember Baltay noted that in the proposed category column it said "sustainability."

Chair Thompson asked if institutional would count.

Ms. Gerhardt said that the ARB could choose its own categories.

Vice Chair Lee thought "institutional" would be the category and "sustainable" could be a descriptor.

Ms. Gerhardt said that the Fire Station and the Junior Museum were also in the top.

Vice Chair Lee thought they could have multiple winners in the categories.

Chair Thompson said that she thought there should be something to distinguish them unless they decided to have three categories for institutional work. Last time the ARB did the awards they did not just focus on the type of architecture, they said something about it. She asked if she was alone and if everyone else wanted to do a program.

Ms. Gerhardt thought the categories could be a mix of uses and other things. Kol Emeth is an institutional type building, but they could have multiple awards. The Fire Station could have something else about it that was award worthy other than the use. It would be strange to have three of the same awards.

Boardmember Baltay agreed.

Vice Chair Lee asked if they should discuss an institutional category and within that there's a merit award and a main winner. The bulk of the projects reviewed by the ARB are institutional and commercial. They are forcing themselves to find a residential project when they do not see that many of them. She was fine with going the route of changing the category as well.

Boardmember Baltay said institutional made perfect sense. That is how the world sees the buildings. The ARB is not creating the category.

Chair Thompson asked for Boardmember Lew and Boardmember Hirsch's opinions.

Boardmember Hirsch said he could go along with it as it stood.

Ms. Gerhardt suggested moving on.

Chair Thompson said the next project was the children's hospital and was also institutional.

Ms. Gerhardt said that what she heard the ARB liked was the attention to detail.

Boardmember Hirsch said it was the scale.

Boardmember Baltay suggested giving it an honorable mention for attention to detail.

Chair Thompson said it received four votes.

Boardmember Lew said that much of what he liked was on the inside, which is not really in the ARB purview.

Chair Thompson said that a lot of it was visible on the outside.

Boardmember Lew stated that it was also not open to the public so no one would see the inside unless they were a patient other than the lobby.

Vice Chair Lee said she was in support of an honorable mention or merit award within the institutional category.

Boardmember Lew said it was a major project. The description was incorrect.

Vice Chair Lee said that there were different ways to do the awards and noted they could call out something special about the hospital under the category of institutional.

Ms. Gerhardt said that the next project was the Fire Station.

Boardmember Baltay said that on his list that was the number one project. He thought it was above the category.

Boardmember Hirsch agreed.

Chair Thompson asked what they meant.

Ms. Gerhardt explained it could be an overall winner.

Boardmember Baltay said he agreed with Vice Chair Lee that they should not use the word "best," but it was his first choice of all the projects for most successful design.

Chair Thompson asked what about it was successful.

Boardmember Baltay explained that it fit the scale of the environment, functioned exceptionally well, is an innovative use of materials, the design is modulated to be next to the park in a successful fashion, they preserved a large redwood tree successfully. The building is wonderful.

Ms. Gerhardt said that she thinks Boardmember Baltay just took ownership of the award.

Boardmember Baltay said that if it was the best of the lot he would.

Ms. Gerhardt said it was in the top six.

Chair Thompson said that they had not decided to do a best overall yet.

Boardmember Hirsch agreed with Boardmember Baltay on the Fire Station.

Chair Thompson moved to the Junior Museum. What she liked most about the project were the materials and the [knave ? 1:47:21] form was compelling.

Boardmember Baltay said that there was great site planning compared to what was previously there. They reconfigured the parking lot elegantly and preserved the Girl Scout building nearby.

Boardmember Hirsch thought the streetscape was also wonderful.

Boardmember Baltay stated they needed to pay attention to the R-1 neighborhood across the street without making the building look like a bunch of houses. It is also something the Bowman School does not do as successfully. This building does what they want others in town to do and does it exceptionally well.

Vice Chair Lee said that there were notes about historic review and asked if there was a Historic Resources Board (HRB) conversation.

Boardmember Baltay said that the Girl Scout building was next door and that was the historic part of it. It's on the Lucie Stern campus as well.

Vice Chair Lee thought the entry was improved from the parking lot. She did not know the history and was a little on the fence.

Boardmember Baltay explained how the parking lot used to be set up and stated the site planning took care of the issues.

Vice Chair Lee agreed that the site planning was better.

Boardmember Baltay said that there were many categories, but the site planning brought everything together. He saw it as an institution project.

Chair Thompson said they had four institutional projects. the last project is either R&D or office.

Ms. Gerhardt said that it was the research park building with the butterfly roofs.

Boardmember Baltay said it was a commercial building.

Chair Thompson said it was office and not commercial.

Boardmember Baltay said that R&D and office were both private businesses.

Vice Chair Lee said it was commercial.

Chair Thompson said that she had notes on sustainability and site planning.

Boardmember Lew suggested tree preservation and noted they improved the lighting on the bike path.

Ms. Gerhardt said that the bike path was a big deal.

Boardmember Lew said they also addressed privacy with the adjacent houses.

Boardmember Baltay said they should not get an award for that as they "did that kicking and screaming."

Chair Thompson said that the project looked good.

Boardmember Baltay said that it is not sustainable as it is all glass and faces south.

Chair Thompson said there were overhangs.

Boardmember Baltay thought they were not substantial. He remembered the review and thought there would be enormous heat gain.

Chair Thompson asked if it had a LEED score. She told the Board that she needed to leave in 5 minutes. She asked how people felt and if what they had done was enough.

Boardmember Hirsch stated they had not addressed the other project that was left off the list yet.

Chair Thompson offered to deputize Vice Chair Lee to finish the meeting.

Ms. Gerhardt said that she did not see a green building score for Hanover, but the project is newly completed.

Vice Chair Lee requested Chair Thompson to provide direction on assigning tasks and who would plan with staff to achieve consensus on how awards are given, how they would reach out to the architectural team, and other things. There are still several things left to do to complete the planning of the awards.

Ms. Gerhardt wanted this ARB to make the decision on the winners.

Chair Thompson asked if they needed to do another round of votes or if they had determined the winners.

Boardmember Baltay wished 611 Cowper was in the mix.

Ms. French thought it was not a problem to have another meeting with the current ARB members to finalize the effort. In the past they have asked former Boardmembers to come back and participate so if there was another hour meeting necessary that would be fine.

Vice Chair Lee said that was great and she would be happy to do that.

MOTION: Boardmember Baltay moved, seconded by Boardmember Lew, that the ARB provide architectural awards to the top six projects on Chair Thompson's list for architectural merit with the categories to be determined later.

Boardmember Hirsch called for a point of information. He asked if Cowper was included on the list.

Boardmember Baltay said that it did not have the votes.

FRIENDLY AMENDMENT: Boardmember Hirsch asked if they had taken a poll and offered a friendly amendment to include Cowper.

FRIENDLY AMENDMENT REJECTED: Boardmember Baltay did not accept the friendly amendment.

Boardmember Lew agreed that to award 611 Cowper another project would have to be removed from the list.

Boardmember Baltay asked which one Boardmember Hirsch would substitute for 611 Cowper.

Boardmember Hirsch said that was difficult.

Chair Thompson thought they should move forward with the Motion.

UNFRIENDLY AMENDMENT: Boardmember Hirsch called for a vote on his friendly amendment.

Boardmember Baltay said it was not a friendly amendment and asked how the Chair wanted to proceed.

Chair Thompson explained she heard no support for the friendly amendment.

Ms. Gerhardt asked if there was a second on Boardmember Hirsch's unfriendly amendment and explained that was how it had to be viewed.

UNFRIENDLY AMENDMENT FAILED FOR LACK OF SECOND: Chair Thompson heard no second. She called for a vote on the original Motion.

MOTION PASSED: 5-0

Chair Thompson stated that they would continue the conversation and thanked Boardmember Baltay for his Motion.

Boardmember Hirsch thanked Ms. Gerhardt for her work.

Ms. Gerhardt thanked the ARB for its help and for their Motion. She also thanked Ms. French for the suggestion of meeting to work out the details and thanked the Boardmembers for their willingness to do that.

Chair Thompson thanked the whole board for its participation.

Boardmember Hirsch looked forward to seeing everyone.

Ms. Gerhardt noted that they would try to meet in person on January 20, 2022 but noted it might not happen until February. She would let everyone know.

Board Member Questions, Comments or Announcements

Chair Thompson thanked Boardmember Lew and Vice Chair Lee for their service.

Adjournment

Chair Thompson adjourned the meeting.