



ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD  
DRAFT MINUTES: May 5, 2016  
City Hall/City Council Chambers  
250 Hamilton Avenue  
8:30 AM

**Call to Order**

**Roll Call**

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

Absent:

**Oral Communications**

None.

**Agenda Changes, Additions and Deletions**

None.

**City Official Reports**

1. Meeting Schedule and Assignments
2. List of Staff Approved (Minor) Architectural Reviews

None.

**Action Items**

3. **1700 Embarcadero Road [15PLN-00394]:** Request by Deeg Snyder, on behalf of Jones Palo Alto Real Property, LLC for a Major Architectural Review to demolish the existing approximately 18,000 square feet building and construct a new approximately 62,000 square feet building for an automobile dealership. The application includes Design Enhancement Exception requests to allow deviation from the 10 feet build-to-line from Embarcadero Road and Bayshore Road. A request to apply the Automobile Dealership (AD) zoning overlay is also being considered separately by the Planning and Transportation Commission. Environmental Assessment: Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration. Zoning District: CS (D) Service Commercial and Site Design Review Combining District.

Sheldon Ah Sing reported this was the third hearing before the ARB. The previous week, the Planning and Transportation Commission recommended the Council approve the request for zoning change and site and design review. Mr. Sing reviewed existing zoning and the site. Key issues for Board consideration were the requested Design Enhancement Exception, architectural design and context, adjacency to the Baylands and the Mitigated Negative Declaration. The applicant had altered the elevator in response to Board Members' comments. Mr. Sing reviewed details of the project as currently proposed. Staff had received no comments regarding the Mitigated Negative Declaration. Significant impacts to biological resources and transportation should be mitigated.

Board Member Furth inquired about the type of tree shown on the bottom of page PR00.18A. Vice Chair Lew noted differences between the tree shading calculation and planting plan. Mr. Sing advised that Staff was working with the applicant regarding the tree shading calculation. Board Member Furth asked if 50 percent shading would be required. Mr. Sing indicated the Code required 50 percent. Board Member Furth noted the easement at that location. Mr. Sing explained that PG&E would not allow larger trees to be placed in the easement. Staff would work with the applicant to resolve the issue as best they could.

Vice Chair Lew was not aware of any lighting plans or details of the trash enclosure and fence in the drawing sets. Mr. Sing indicated the photometric could be found at sheet EL00.01. Vice Chair Lew advised that sheet was not listed on the index.

Board Member Kim inquired regarding the accuracy of the traffic count dates of 2006 and 2007, found in Table 8 of the traffic study, page 21. Jodie Gerhardt reported all traffic reports were reviewed by the City's Transportation Division. She would inquire of the Transportation Division.

Board Member Baltay inquired regarding the color of the concrete stair tower and a plaster sample called wrought iron. Mr. Snyder advised the color was the natural gray of concrete. The plaster sample could be found on the south and east elevations on sheet PR00.08.

Deeg Snyder related his efforts to obtain permission from the automobile manufacturer to incorporate changes suggested by Board Members at the previous hearing. He explained modifications made to the elevator and overruns, colors of materials, and lighting. With respect to placing trees in PG&E's easement, he would continue to work with City staff.

Board Member Baltay was having difficulty distinguishing between the colors sandy hook and wrought iron. He asked if sandy hook gray was used on the side facing the street and on the rear as shown on the elevation of Embarcadero looking towards the building, page 006. Mr. Snyder clarified that the lowest portion of the wall, between the overhead doors, was a corrugated material in the color silver smith. Above that was sandy hook gray. Sandy hook gray was the primary color of the building. Board Member Baltay inquired about the location of the wrought iron color. Mr. Snyder indicated it was used on the inside corners on the Bayshore side, around the reveal in the building. Vice Chair Lew inquired about the metal panel on the second floor of the north elevation. Mr. Snyder advised the portion around the window was black. Board Member Baltay believed the building was better with the reduction in the elevator core. The color palette was more appropriate to the location near the Baylands. He was uncomfortable with the stair tower materials. The printed image of the natural concrete was very dark; however, the darkness looked good against the metallic finish. He suggested using a pigment in the concrete of the stair tower.

Board Member Kim appreciated the material changes; they made a big difference. He inquired about changes made to the canopy element. Mr. Snyder explained the exposed structural steel element located on the front of the building was brought back in terms of the setback and would provide some shading. Board Member Kim requested the distance of the columns from the building. Mr. Snyder indicated the element was an element required by the automobile manufacturer. Board Member Kim felt the massing of the building and the shallowness of the columns caused the canopy to look slapped on. He was fine with the DEE. With respect to Finding 2, the building appeared to be too massive in some elevations; it looked like a large box. He asked if the second floor offices were open to customers as there were no passenger elevators to the second floor. Mr. Snyder advised that the second floor was not open to customers. The second floor contained a lunch room, training area, and a small office area. Board Member Kim inquired whether the walkway between the two stairways had full height walls or was open to below. Mr. Snyder explained that the front had a balcony condition, while the rear was a Code-required rated wall. He would likely use some type of graphic on the wall. Board Member Kim asked if the service space on the third floor contained exterior doors for ventilation. Mr. Snyder advised there was an air exchange system and operable windows at the end. Board Member Kim noted traffic backed

up at the intersection of Embarcadero and East Bayshore. The recommendation to convert both turn lanes to turn only lanes could create more congestion. While he had concerns about the massing of the project, he did not believe it would prevent him from recommending approval.

Vice Chair Lew felt changes were significant improvements. He inquired about the applicant's proposal for the existing chain link and barbed wire fence on East Bayshore as barbed wire was not allowed. Mr. Snyder indicated the barbed-wire fence would be removed. Vice Chair Lew suggested some type of screening for the side of the car wash close to the property line; the chain-link fence was fairly transparent. The Board should review site and roof lighting. Landscape plans showed two new trees at the stair tower, but they were not shown on renderings. A significant element would soften the tall concrete walls. Generally, he liked the changes in colors and materials. The wrought iron color could be too dark. If it faded or lightened over time, it would be fine. He liked the contrast in colors, because it broke the building into smaller modules. The third floor of the East Bayshore facade looked out of scale with the context. Visibility of the accessible ramp at the front door was important. The trash enclosure was required but not shown in the plan set. The staff report stated a sign application had not been submitted; however, all signage was included in the plan set. Mr. Snyder explained that the recommendation was to show the Board all signage. Vice Chair Lew advised that staff could approve signage; Ms. Gerhardt concurred. With respect to the finding that the project design was safe for vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians, he felt the weakness was the long queuing on East Embarcadero. Currently, bicycles used the sidewalk because of the long queue at the light. Adding a right turn lane as recommended would help. He could not approve the project, but it could come back to the subcommittee. The Board was required to review some items that had not been presented.

Board Member Furth noted Comprehensive Plan requirement for the site. There were no views to take advantage of. The project would improve bicycle and pedestrian connections. The site location, being farther away from the Baylands and next to the freeway, provided more freedom for design. She was concerned with the shiny metal on the building facing Bayshore. Vice Chair Lew indicated the metal would be placed along the roof and bottom on the Embarcadero side. Board Member Furth did not feel a bright and shiny object would comply with requirements. The color sandy hook gray was appropriate. She was concerned about lighting after dark. A brightly lit area would not be compatible with the transition to Baylands. The building was low and horizontal. Signs were not offensive. She was concerned about landscaping and having a difficult time understanding what it looked like from the street. Crape myrtles were out of scale with a 50-foot building. The building needed a much bigger, more significant tree. A court decision held that a city could not be required to deal with sea level rise in environmental review documents. The project did not seem to deal with sea level rise. She suggested something commemorating the cultural use of the site; the site originally was home to a Johnny Kan restaurant. Her main concerns were lack of significant landscaping and controlling lighting.

Chair Gooyer appreciated changes to finishes. The building still looked massive; however, the Board had previously approved a hotel 50 feet in height for the site. The applicant had toned down the colors, but it was still shiny. He was concerned about bright lighting. Trees were small for the size of the building. Portions of the project should return for review. The project needed a little further toning down. Reluctantly, he would accept the 50-foot height.

Board Member Kim suggested some details return to subcommittee. Vice Chair Lew inquired about the effect of the Permit Streamlining Act on returning the project to the subcommittee. Ms. Gerhardt indicated permit streamlining did not apply. The Code provided three hearings. The Director could make a decision on the project after the third hearing.

Board Member Furth believed the bright and shiny aspect of the project could be difficult for subcommittee review. Board Member Baltay felt the bright and shiny part of the building faced the freeway, Embarcadero and Bayshore. Looking from the Baylands, the sandy hook gray part of the building would be visible. The Baylands Design Guidelines seemed to allow the Board to make a judgment call. The building was more by the freeway than in the Baylands. A shiny image facing the

public side, the City side, the freeway side was appropriate. The sandy hook gray was a weaker color, but it responded to the Baylands guidelines.

Board Member Furth felt the experience driving down Embarcadero was important. That could be managed with significant landscaping. The subcommittee could address landscaping and lighting with specific direction from the Board.

Board Member Baltay inquired whether parts of the proposal could be returned to the subcommittee. Landscaping and lighting were significant issues. Chair Gooyer felt the subcommittee could adequately address the issues.

Mr. Sing noted a photometric plan was submitted; although, the Board did not receive it. A condition of approval required dimmer lighting between 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. According to the plan, the brightest lights would be along Bayshore Drive. Roof top lighting was very low, very minimal.

Board Member Kim was less concerned about lighting. Two other auto dealerships were located nearby, as was a very bright golf range. He trusted that owners would maintain lighting similar to the other dealerships. If lighting was too bright, the public would complain. Materials facing the Baylands were much more muted. The shiny parts of the building faced the freeway and the public. More landscaping details could be returned to the Board or subcommittee. Elevations with colors and 3-D perspectives would be extremely helpful.

Vice Chair Lew noted the City Council would review the project. Sheet PR00.08 was not acceptable as a presentation material for the Council. He recommended modifications that would help the Council understand the project. Chair Gooyer agreed with modifying sheets to present to the Council.

Vice Chair Lew recalled the hotel project, previously approved for the site, contained small trees underneath power lines. He asked if there was a restriction on the size of trees placed in the easement. Mr. Sing understood that PG&E did not allow vegetation to be within a certain number of feet underneath power lines. Mr. Snyder advised that the landscape designer and Dave Dockter had discussed the issue. Trees placed in the easement had to comply with a prescribed height cap at maturity. Trees that were originally proposed and that would comply with the 50-percent shade requirement would have exceeded the height cap. Vice Chair Lew asked if the crape myrtles met the shading requirement. Mr. Snyder responded yes. Board Member Furth would accept crape myrtles if they complied with Code requirements. She was concerned about the frontage along Embarcadero primarily. Trees should be among the dominant elements. She could not determine the total impact of the proposed landscaping and existing trees. The tree closest to the building was too small for the building. Ms. Gerhardt clarified that the Canary Island pine was a medium-size tree, but species did reach 100 feet. That was proposed for the Embarcadero side. Pear trees, normally a medium-size tree, were proposed for the Bayshore side. Board Member Furth felt the proposed trees were inadequate. Lighting restrictions should not be based on 10:00, rather on time after sunset. Mr. Snyder reported the species list contained all prescribed trees from the City Arborist. The pear and crape myrtle qualified under the interior accent tree category. Board Member Furth asked if a big tree was not allowed in that space. Chair Gooyer added that the East Bayshore side faced away from the Baylands and was the front of the building. The dealership would want it to be visible. He would agree to smaller plants on that side. Mr. Snyder advised that existing trees would remain on the East Bayshore side. One restraint on that side was the space between the property and the public easement. Chair Gooyer felt landscaping should become more dense towards the Baylands.

Board Member Baltay summarized concerns as shading of the parking lot and more statuesque or significant trees. Board Member Furth wanted trees that reached 30 feet in height at maturity. Chair Gooyer concurred for three sides of the building; the Bayshore side was fine as proposed. Board Member Furth clarified that the taller trees should be located at the inset, not all along Bayshore. Board Member Baltay clarified that bigger trees should be located on the front, but not so big that they blocked the view

from the street. These were parameters for the landscape architect to use in redesigning landscape. Board Member Baltay and Chair Gooyer believed the subcommittee could review landscaping.

Board Member Baltay hoped to itemize concerns as direction for the subcommittee. He recalled Vice Chair Lew's comments regarding screening behind the car wash. Lighting should be reviewed by the Board rather than the subcommittee. He wanted to review the fixtures, locations of fixtures, etc. That information was not provided to the Board. Ms. Gerhardt suggested the subcommittee could utilize the Audi dealership as a comparison for review of lighting. Board Member Baltay did not feel the Audi dealership would be approved if presented today. Chair Gooyer added that the Audi dealership was a remodel of an existing dealership. Board Member Baltay reiterated that the Board should review lighting because of the sensitive location of the site. He wanted to see a change in the natural concrete finish, which could be reviewed in subcommittee. The lighting seemed to be the major issue. Chair Gooyer suggested a full-size, rendered set of colored elevations would be helpful.

Board Member Baltay suggested continuing the item to a date certain to give the applicant an opportunity to make modifications. Chair Gooyer suggested limiting review to only those topics discussed. Vice Chair Lew stated the Board could refer the project to the subcommittee; continue it to the next meeting; or approve it with modifications to return on consent. Chair Gooyer felt changes should not be listed on consent. Board Member Kim inquired whether a date had been scheduled for the Council to review the project. Mr. Sing replied possibly May 23 or sometime in June. Board Member Baltay asked the applicant if he could prepare modifications and, if so, how quickly. Mr. Snyder had no objection to adding more or taller trees subject to City Arborist approval. The Council was scheduled to review the project either May 23 or June 6. Ms. Gerhardt advised that staff would need revisions by May 10 or 11 for the May 19 ARB hearing. Chair Gooyer suggested the applicant could provide needed materials to the Board within a week, and the Board could continue the project to May 19. Board Member Baltay cautioned the applicant to provide the photometric and to consider mitigation of offsite lighting.

**MOTION:** Board Member Furth moved, seconded by Board Member Baltay, to continue the item to May 19, 2016.

Vice Chair Lew inquired whether continuing the item to May 19 would provide sufficient time for materials to be included in the Council packet for May 23. Ms. Gerhardt would inquire regarding the submission date for the Council packet, but she assumed materials could be provided in a supplement.

**MOTION PASSED:** 5-0-0-0

### **Study Session**

None.

### **Approval of Minutes April 21, 2016**

Vice Chair Lew clarified that the Urban Design Guidelines mentioned by Board Member Furth, page 10 second to last paragraph, were the Downtown Urban Design Guidelines.

**MOTION:** Board Member Baltay moved, seconded by Vice Chair Lew, to approve the March 21, 2016 minutes as amended.

**MOTION PASSED:** 5-0-0-0

### **Subcommittee Items**

None.

### **Board Member Questions, Comments, Announcements**

Board Member Furth and Vice Chair Lew met to discuss approaches for talking about EIR comments. They focused on areas of concern that would apply no matter what alternative the City Council was pursuing.

### **Adjournment**