



ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD  
DRAFT MINUTES: August 4, 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:

*[No audio is available for this meeting through and including Agenda Item Number 3.]*

**Oral Communications**

**Agenda Changes, Additions and Deletions**

**City Official Reports**

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

**Action Items**

3. **639 Arastradero Road [15PLN-00501]:** Request by Michael Ma, on behalf of Catherine Shen, for a Preliminary Architectural Review to allow the demolition of two existing one-story single family buildings and its accessory structures with a total of approximately 6,200 square feet on two parcels and the construction of three new single-family homes with a total of 11,800 square feet on three new parcels in the Single-Family Residence (R-1) Zoning District. The proposal is to combine two parcels and to subdivide into three parcels. Each new single-family home will locate on each newly created parcel. For more information contact Margaret Netto at [margaret.netto@cityofpaloalto.org](mailto:margaret.netto@cityofpaloalto.org),
4. **429 University Avenue [14PLN-00222]:** To consider an appeal of the Director of Planning and Community Environment's Architectural Review Approval of a 31,407 square-foot, four - story, mixed use building with parking facilities on two subterranean levels on an 11,000 square-foot site. Zoning District: Downtown Commercial (CD-C (GF)(P)) District. Environmental Assessment: Mitigated Negative Declaration. For more information contact project planner Adam Petersen at [Adam Peterson at APetersen@m-group.us](mailto:APetersen@m-group.us)

Adam Petersen reported the ARB should determine if proposed changes to the project addressed comments provided by the City Council. He reviewed the history and design of the project through the review process.

Jaime Wong, applicant, introduced Joseph Bellomo, project architect.

Joseph Bellomo, Joseph Bellomo Architects, provided details of the redesigned project.

Ms. Shah, Joseph Bellomo Architects, summarized design responses to ARB and City Council comments.

Michael Harbour, appellant, referenced the Council's motion of May 4, 2015. The building remained essentially the same size as previously proposed and did not comply with context for size and massing. Traffic studies were not adequate. The applicant had not adequately addressed all concerns expressed by the City Council on May 4, 2015.

Jeff Levinsky provided Municipal Code Section 18.52.040 regarding off-street parking, loading and bicycles. The Municipal Code required a loading area for the building.

Doria Summa stated the Municipal Code required loading areas to be located off streets. Parking was not allowed in the alley. A loading area in the alley would block access to bicycle parking and the subterranean garage. Ms. Summa shared Shani Kleinhaus' concerns regarding clear glass parapets on the roof being dangerous to birds.

Jan Terry felt the mass of the building would be mitigated by tree canopy. Ginkgo trees would not provide adequate shade. The building should not look like the Varsity Theatre. She supported the project.

Sam Arsan was surprised by the length of the approval process for the project. The design was attractive and addressed many of the concerns of the ARB and City Council. Because he could only offer short-term leases, tenants in the building could not improve their spaces and were not successful. Mr. Arsan had several desirable prospects looking for space in the building.

Beth Bunnenberg, speaking as an individual, commented that the corner was extremely important to Downtown. The project remained quite massive. Locating mechanical equipment inside the building added retail spaces were improvements. Nearby historical structures should be protected during construction.

Herb Borock believed Board Members should recuse themselves for reasons of actual bias rather than an accusation of bias. He did not believe demolition of a building had the same standard as rehabilitation for purposes of transfer of development rights. The project should be reduced by the amount of misapplied floor area.

Vice Chair Lew previously talked with Ms. Wong, the applicant, by phone regarding a meeting which did not occur. Sustainable design features were important. The Council was concerned regarding compatibility with immediately adjacent buildings. The project was not compatible with immediately adjacent properties. Vice Chair Lew shared photos of two buildings that would be more compatible than the proposed project. He liked the increased setbacks as they helped reduced massing. He questioned whether glass would dematerialize the building as it was reflective and dark. The deep overhangs would provide more options for using glass. The building would look great illuminated at night; however, during the day it would be dark and reflective.

Board Member Kim met with the architect twice to discuss design of the building. Context drawings or site sections could provide a better understanding of the true context of the building along the block. An element of rhythm or pattern could be presented in the building. Breaking up the pedestrian scale along University Avenue was helped by the portal, but the building still felt like one, large structure. The building needed to be more inviting and respectful of adjacent buildings. A large amount of glass could appear dark at times; therefore, it should allow visibility to the inside. The eyebrow on the fourth floor needed to be recessed further, closer to the setback of the third floor. Cantilevering the fourth floor gave the appearance of a large box at the fourth story. Additional information, such as specifications of the glass and the screen connecting to the building and the glass connecting to the concrete, was needed. He expressed concerns regarding locating the trash enclosure adjacent to bike parking and the shower

stall as well as the size of the trash enclosure. The floor plans contained some awkward spaces. He questioned whether reducing the size of bedrooms could allow a reduction of the mass of the building. Kitchens lacked windows; bathrooms lacked natural light and ventilation. The office units did not indicate a kitchen or communal sink. The project needed additional refinement before it could be recommended to the City Council. He was interested in a photometric study of the project because of the large use of glass. Some 3-D perspectives could help justify the design intent of the building and demonstrate attempts to reduce the mass. He was curious about the architect's vision to ensure the building transitioned with neighboring buildings.

Chair Gooyer felt earlier designs broke up the modules to make the building relate to University Avenue. He still perceived the building as a large, singular entity. The screens did not help modulate the building. The third floor was too large and made no attempt to step back. The bedrooms were large; reducing them could allow the third floor to step back further. The eyebrow was probably the easiest way to keep the functionality of the building while perceptually bringing the mass back. He did not favor floor-to-ceiling glass. He wanted to see smaller modulation, whether four or five bays. A large wall of glass was not in keeping with the context of the area. The design needed further refinement.

The Board concurred that the project was not moving in the wrong direction.

Vice Chair Lew did not believe the appellant would be satisfied until the building was physically smaller. The perceived mass had not been reduced.

The Board discussed the need to make findings for the project, whether it recommended the Council approve or deny the project. At the next hearing, Chair Gooyer wanted to recommend either approval or denial of the project and not to continue it again. Staff would ensure the matter could be concluded at the next hearing.

#### **MOTION:**

Vice Chair Lew moved, seconded by Chair Gooyer, to continue the item to a date uncertain and for staff to prepare findings for both approval and denial of the project.

**MOTION PASSED:** 2-1, Baltay and Furth recused

Elizabeth Wong, applicant, clarified that the project should not be considered a new project.

Chair Gooyer stated it would not be a new project.

Ms. Wong explained that she obtained approval from the City Attorney's Office for the TDRs and size of the building prior to the 2013 preliminary hearing. She had no means to propose changes and obtain feedback informally with Board Members in order to improve the project. Retail tenants wanted a modern design.

Chair Gooyer felt Board comments should be made in public to avoid the perception of impropriety. The Board discussed changes to the building's skin, which would not affect a potential tenant's choice of buildings.

#### **Study Session**

None.

#### **Approval of Minutes 5. June 16, 2016**

*[This item was not taken up.]*

### **Subcommittee Item**

6. **355 University Avenue [15PLN-00237]:** Review responses to Condition of Approval #34 and #35 regarding refinements to the 461 Florence Street 2nd story façade and refinements to the design of the recessed open ground-floor area at 461 Florence Street and adjacent public alley.

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

None.

### **Adjournment**