



ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD
DRAFT MINUTES: September 15, 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

Action Items

3. **1451-1459 Hamilton Avenue and 1462 Edgewood Drive [16PLN-00174]:** Request by Walker Warner Architects, Inc., on behalf of RBLKT LLC, SFRP LLC, RFBPO LLC, and JPAWW LLC for Major Architectural Review to allow for the demolition of two single-story houses and two two-story houses and for the construction of three single-story houses and one two-story house on four separate lots. Basements are proposed for two of the houses. Environmental Assessment: Categorically Exempt per CEQA Guidelines Section 15302 (Replacement or Reconstruction). Zoning District: Single Family Residential (R-1(10,000)). For more information contact the planner, Graham Owen, at graham.owen@cityofpaloalto.org.

Vice Chair Lew recused himself from the item as he owned property located within 500 feet of the proposed project.

Board Member Kim met with Ms. Kathy Scott of Walker Warner Architects for a site visit.

Board Member Furth also viewed the site with the project architect. She learned about trees to be preserved and removed, location of proposed venting and sidewalks, basements, and capacity of a media room.

Graham Owen reviewed the context and proposals for the subject parcels and existing structures and plantings. Key issues were compatibility with the surrounding context, tree protection, basement dewatering, and construction logistics and impacts. Staff recommended the Board recommend approval of the project to the Director.

Kathy Scott, Walker Warner Architects, reported goals of the project were to maintain the character of the neighborhood and to preserve existing trees. Existing pools would be removed but not replaced. Ms. Scott shared proposals for each of the lots.

Eric Anderson, Lutsko Associates, reported regarding the project's tree protection plan.

Jim Bickford, Shuchart/Dow, shared the construction logistics plan.

Board Member Baltay questioned whether the City Arborist supported the entrance for construction being located close to a redwood tree. Mr. Anderson would review that more closely. Temporary roads would be constructed over a geo grid to protect tree roots. Board Member Baltay requested an explanation of the use of the structures. Ms. Scott indicated the structures would be residential and would expand the owner's capacity to enjoy the property. Board Member Baltay asked if four families would live in the four homes. Ms. Scott responded no. One family would share the four structures with family and friends. Board Member Baltay requested further clarification. Ms. Scott explained that the owners allowed friends to live in a couple of the houses, while the third house was an extension of the fourth house. The owner lived in only one of the properties.

Board Member Kim questioned whether Planning staff considered the covered entry porches as part of floor area. Mr. Owen noted the second-story balcony at 1457 Hamilton was counted in floor area. Board Member Kim advised that 1451 Hamilton's entry porch had a roof and three walls. Mr. Owen indicated that was not included in the FAR diagram, and he would make that revision to the calculation. Jodie Gerhardt clarified that entries less than 10 feet deep were not counted towards FAR. Board Member Kim inquired whether a washer/dryer connection counted as a plumbing fixture. Ms. Gerhardt answered yes. Board Member Kim understood a detached accessory structure could have no more than two plumbing fixtures. The garage at 1459 Hamilton seemed to have three fixtures, a sink, toilet and washer/dryer. Mr. Owen clarified that an accessory structure was restricted to two plumbing fixtures without a Conditional Use Permit. Staff would address that issue. Board Member Kim noted the second floor plan for 1457 Hamilton showed a shower while the roof plan did not. Ms. Scott explained that a shower was tucked underneath the main roof. The roof height was sufficient for an 8-foot ceiling.

Board Member Furth asked if there were laundry facilities at 1457 Hamilton. Ms. Scott replied in the basement storage room. Board Member Furth inquired regarding the area of the lot for the principal house in the complex. Mr. Owen did not know but would look it up.

Board Member Baltay remarked that the applicant provided a good presentation and a design sensitive to the neighborhood. The Architectural Review Board needed to make a series of findings to approve the project. He referred to the Comprehensive Plan regarding characteristics and purposes of single-family zoning. None of the properties was residential; they were part of a compound. The applicant was proposing to remove four homes to create one complex. He was uncomfortable with finding that the project met the intention of the Comprehensive Plan.

Board Member Kim agreed it was a nice presentation. In some aspects, the houses were not sufficiently residential. The front entries for a couple of the houses were not clearly marked. There were small oddities such as a large theater space in one basement. Kitchen spaces seemed small for a family. He appreciated the scale of the homes. There was a unique charm to the residences working with trees and proposed landscaping. He wished to see details of the metal louvers on the house at 1457 Hamilton. The accessory building at 1451 Hamilton could be converted to a secondary dwelling. He inquired regarding the space next to the "open to below" space on the second floor plan for 1457 Hamilton. Ms. Scott indicated that space was an overlook to the great room below. Board Member Kim acknowledged concerns raised by the public and felt the construction strategy would address their concerns.

Board Member Furth reiterated her request for the area of the lot for the principal house. Perhaps it was in excess of 12,000 square feet. Ms. Gerhardt assumed so. Board Member Furth commented that trees

would have a better chance of flourishing after construction. She referred to the Comprehensive Plan regarding residential uses and Commissioner Baltay's comments regarding the purpose of R-1 zoning. A maximum lot size of 20,000 square feet was designed to prevent the loss of housing stock and to protect the scale of the neighborhood. The four lots totaled approximately 60,700 square feet, which was substantially in excess of 20,000 square feet. These were not credible single-family dwellings and would not support a single housekeeping unit on each site in terms of use or design. Board Member Furth listed the deficiencies of each proposed house with respect to supporting a single household. These structures were credible as part of a larger compound. Zoning stated that an integrated residential use was not supposed to be more than 20,000 square foot. She could not make the finding that the project was consistent with zoning. Along the Hamilton frontage, the applicant proposed double fencing. Homes in the neighborhood achieved seclusion through landscaping rather than fencing. The applicant should reconsider the Hamilton frontage so that it did not look like a compound.

Chair Gooyer agreed that the proposed houses did not have a normal layout for residences. The concept of the houses was not compatible with the neighborhood in that they did not respond to the street, were almost too low key, and disappeared behind the fence and trees. The proposed project did not comply with the neighborhood context or zoning.

Board Member Baltay remarked that demolishing four stellar examples of residential architecture in Palo Alto was a shame and not environmentally conscious, even though demolition of them was legal. The project should be required to obtain a Conditional Use Permit and perhaps be vetted and reviewed by the public. Staff should view the three properties as auxiliary uses to the main property and consider more public review of the project.

Board Member Furth believed the proposed project violated zoning and was inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan. She could not approve a project that violated zoning. Ms. Gerhardt clarified that staff understood these were four single-family homes. The four structures contained the basic amenities of a single-family home. Staff shared the Board's concerns. Because all the proposed structures contained kitchens, staff felt it was appropriate to move the project forward. By retaining the property lines, the project did not violate the maximum lot size. Staff would review the Comprehensive Plan and zoning with an eye towards not reducing housing stock. Staff understood the project would not do that.

Ms. Scott explained that in the short term her clients would use the homes in conjunction with one another; however, the homes were designed as standalone, individual homes. The applicant had not moved lot lines or proposed mergers. The applicant proposed leaving each property intact and allowing them to serve as single-family homes. The idea was to make the houses flexible. The homes could be expanded and remain within the maximum allowed square footage.

Chair Gooyer commented that the issue was subjective; however, all Board Members had the same issue. Selling the homes individually would be difficult because they are unusual. The four existing residences functioned individually; the proposed four homes do not.

MOTION:

Board Member Furth moved, seconded by Board Member Baltay, that the Architectural Review Board recommend the Director deny the project on the grounds that (1) the project is inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan of the City of Palo Alto, in that the R-1(10,000) district is designated for a minimum of one household per acres and this is an integrated development designed to serve the needs of a single household on more than 60,000 square feet; (2) the house located at 1457 Hamilton is not a credible single-family dwelling but is instead designed as an entertainment area for a larger complex; (3) frontages along Hamilton Avenue are incompatible with the neighborhood in that they present too much of a unified design for an R-1(10,000) district; and (4) proposed houses located at 1451 Hamilton, 1459 Hamilton and 1462 Edgewood are not designed as independent, single-family dwellings but as accessory uses and structures for the principal house located adjacent to these properties, which if permitted would require a Conditional Use Permit.

MOTION PASSED: 3-1, Lew recused

4. **900 N California Ave [15PLN-00155]:** Request by Kohler Associates Architects, on behalf of Greg Xiong, for Architectural Review of three single-family homes to replace three existing homes. Environmental Review: Categorically Exempt per CEQA Guidelines Section 15303(a) (New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures). Zoning District: Single Family Residential District (R-1). For more information contact the planner, Adam Petersen, at APetersen@m-group.us.

Adam Petersen reviewed details of the proposed project. Staff found the project to be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, the Individual Review guidelines for single-family homes and the Zoning Code Development Standards. Staff recommended the Architectural Review Board recommend the Director find the project exempt from the California Evaluation Quality Act and recommend approval subject to the conditions and findings of approval.

Roger Kohler, Kohler Associates Architects, noted the project had been subjected to the Individual Review process. Jeff Kuo described the neighborhood context, the design concept, and details of the three houses.

Board Member Baltay requested staff provide the history of review of this project. Ms. Gerhardt clarified that the City's IR architect had reviewed the project and provided comments. Board Member Baltay inquired whether the Board could assume that the IR process would approve the project or if the Board should make that determination. Ms. Gerhardt explained that the same guidelines applied to an Individual Review as an Architectural Review.

Board Member Kim requested an explanation for Condition of Approval 3A. Ms. Gerhardt referred to an interpretation of the allowed basement under the footprint of buildings. An applicant was allowed to complete the square in two areas where those were under an entry porch or a back porch. In this floor plan, there wasn't a sliding glass door or something to that extent to make it an entry. Board Member Kim reiterated that a door was being required so that it was an entry.

Board Member Furth inquired regarding the minimum lot size. Ms. Gerhardt indicate the minimum lot size was 6,000 square feet and the maximum was 9,999 square feet.

Vice Chair Lew requested the logic for the placement of the garage and the guest house on Lot 3. Mr. Kohler indicated that combining them resulted in a fairly large building. Two separate buildings allowed plantings and trees, and the home had more of a backyard feel. Vice Chair Lew added that one building would be large and low to meet daylight plane requirements. Mr. Kohler noted the maximum allowed height was 12 feet. Vice Chair Lew inquired regarding a minimum separation between accessory buildings. Ms. Gerhardt advised of a minimum separation for accessory structures of 3 feet. The minimum separation for a second dwelling unit was 12 feet from the main dwelling.

Board Member Kim asked if there was a reason the secondary dwelling unit was not built to 900 square feet. Mr. Kohler indicated floor area limits prevented a larger building. Board Member Kim added that increasing the size of the secondary dwelling unit would not exceed the total floor area. Mr. Kohler asked if Board Member Kim was encouraging him to build to the maximum size. Board Member Kim was encouraging secondary dwelling units that would serve a second family as best as possible. Mr. Kuo clarified that the allowable floor area was 4,777 square feet. Board Member Kim was mistakenly looking at lot coverage only.

Board Member Baltay inquired regarding the width of the driveway easement on Lot 3. Mr. Kuo responded 10 feet 10 inches.

Greg Xiong stated the existing structures were not a good use of those sites. He proposed living in one of the homes and selling the other two.

Board Member Kim indicated the IR process addressed most issues. Some sheets for Lot 1 had the wrong address. On Sheet A5, part of the roof plane was shown incorrectly. He felt the project would dramatically change the intersection. He was interested in seeing 3D site perspectives showing the three homes in relation to neighboring single-story homes. Considering the size of the homes, he did not like the garage placement on Lot 2 with the side entry. The proposed homes were large; yet, Lots 1 and 2 had only single-car garages. The garage and guest house on Lot 3 needed more thought.

Vice Chair Lew liked the design of project. The porches were very desirable and would make the neighborhood look better. Blending the two-story mass with one-story hipped roofs helped tie the house into the neighborhood. His only issue was the Lot 3 guest house. There was little privacy from the adjacent house as the structure was located only 6 feet from the property line. He suggested adding a buffer or moving the building back for landscaping or a taller fence. Ms. Gerhardt reported staff had not received any comments from neighbors.

Board Member Furth agreed the project would be quite a transformation of the corner. She could not find "guest house" in the City's glossary. Ms. Gerhardt indicated the proper term was second dwelling unit. Board Member Furth suggested marking those as second dwelling units so the Board could understand which standards to apply. The relationship between Lot 3 and 920 California Avenue was problematic. The proposed structures would surround a small, low-key house on two sides. She could not make the finding that it adequately addressed the neighboring issue. Lot 3 would require significant screening/landscaping on the north side, which would require widening the driveway. The same applied to the accessory dwelling unit. She inquired whether one of the covered spaces was required for the accessory dwelling unit. Mr. Petersen advised that the Code required one parking space in the garage and one outside the garage. Board Member Furth felt a garage shared by two separate uses should be a divided space. She would not want to approve the project without a bifurcated garage. She expressed some concern that the design of the house made it look bigger than the square footage needed to look. Replacement houses along California Avenue were set back and low key. The three proposed homes were not differentiated, but appeared to be built as a set of three.

Board Member Baltay shared Vice Chair Lew's sentiment that the homes were handsome and fit into the fabric of the community. He liked the wrap-around corner porch on Lot 2 as well as the plaster finish with curved eave detailing. That provided a notable corner. He did not share the sentiment that the three homes were sufficiently different. They were clearly individually designed for individual circumstances. He could support the project overall. The driveway space on Lot 3 was too narrow and needed a minimum of 12 feet for landscaping between the driveway and the neighboring home. The driveway needed more space to be usable. Perhaps the applicant could narrow the house a bit. The guest house and garage were not thought out. He would prefer to move the project forward subject to some small changes.

Vice Chair Lew inquired whether the Board could approve the project and have changes return on the consent calendar or to the subcommittee for review. The Board discussed modifications to the design and whether those modifications could be submitted to staff, the subcommittee or the Board on the consent calendar.

Chair Gooyer viewed a five-bedroom house with a one-car garage as an invitation for cars to park everywhere; however, the Code allowed that. The proposed homes were large, but most newer homes in the area were similar.

MOTION:

Board Member Baltay moved, seconded by Vice Chair Lew, that the Architectural Review Board make the findings in the Staff Report and approve the project with an additional finding that (1) the house on Lot 3

be shifted so that there is a minimum of 12 feet between the property line and the house; (2) a landscape buffer be installed on the left-hand side of the driveway; and (3) the design of the guest house and garage return to the Architectural Review Board subcommittee for final review.

Board Member Furth offered an amendment that the garage have two separate spaces. Board Member Baltay felt that had not been required previously.

MOTION PASSED: 3-2

5. **252 Ramona Street [13PLN-00431]:** Request by Carrasco & Associates for Major Architectural Review of a proposal to demolish one existing single story residence and construct a new two-story building with two residential units. This item was continued from the April 16, 2015 ARB Hearing. Environmental Assessment: Approval of an Exemption under Section 15303(b) of the California Environmental Quality Act. Zoning District: Two Unit Multiple-family Residential District and Neighborhood Preservation Combining District RMD(NP). For more information contact the planner, Ranu Aggarwal, at RAggarwal@m-group.us.

Board Member Furth recused herself because her home was located within 500 feet of the project.

Board Member Kim recused himself at the City Attorney's recommendation of a perceived conflict.

Ranu Aggarwal reported this was the third hearing on the project. Key issues were architectural design and contextual compatibility. She shared comments from the ARB's last hearing of the project, photos of buildings surrounding the project, and photos of prior proposals for the project. She reviewed modifications in the current proposal and Staff's recommendations for further modifications. Staff recommend the Architectural Review Board recommend approval of the project subject to findings and conditions of approval.

Tony Carrasco, Carrasco & Associates, reviewed modifications made to the project in response to ARB comments. He wanted to retain the brown window mullions and the metal C channel around the porch. Ratanya [phonetic] added that they attempted to reduce the scale of the building.

Board Member Baltay inquired whether Board Members were to seek compatibility with the three buildings in the overlay district or with the entire block. Ms. Gerhardt responded compatibility with the entire neighborhood. The purpose of the NP overlay was to maintain the visual and historic character of the existing neighborhood. Vice Chair Lew added that the neighborhood was not historic such as Professorville was.

Vice Chair Lew liked metal roofs with photovoltaics, because they harmonized. The condition of approval indicated the metal roof shall be replaced with a shingle roof. That could be interpreted as cedar shingle rather than asphalt shingle. Mr. Tarrasco preferred not to use asphalt shingles, because they were not sustainable and produced greenhouse gas. He did not know which photovoltaic product he would use because they changed quickly. Vice Chair Lew inquired regarding the location of gas meters. Mr. Tarrasco advised gas was not used in the project.

Vice Chair Lew remarked that the NP overlay district was confusing and tricky. Reduced height and massing helped the appearance of the building. In terms of massing, the building blended with the neighborhood. He understood staff's concern regarding materials being different. A few houses in the neighborhood had steel and glass porches. He could accept the C-channel on the porch. The C channel and the metal roof and the glass railings were overboard, but he could be flexible on that issue. He asked if a landscape architect had been used for the project. Mr. Tarrasco answered no. The firm planned the simple landscape. The important element was the hedge. Vice Chair Lew noted landscape elements between the driveway and the neighbor and the Italian cypress trees. Mr. Tarrasco explained that he would enhance the trees. Vice Chair Lew inquired about the large tree near the garage. Mr. Tarrasco indicated it was on the neighbor's property and had been removed. Vice Chair Lew noted the

garage would be removed. He was concerned about the balcony at the rear looking into the neighbor's backyard. He felt the project could be approved with a debate of the materials.

Board Member Baltay commented that the reduced height was acceptable. He was attracted to the street facade with the metal roof and the windows extending to just under the eaves. He expressed concern about access to the garages. He felt strongly the garages should be pulled back 2 feet to allow more space for turning into the garages. The second-floor balconies did not comply with the Individual Review guidelines. He did not understand how they were acceptable. If the applicant agreed to a modification of those two issues, he could support the project.

Chair Gooyer agreed that the garages could be difficult to use. The design did not work with a shingle roof. It was a fairly severe exterior elevation, but the pieces worked together. Perhaps the applicant could soften the colors. The balconies continued to resemble guard towers; softening those would be helpful. He would need to see modifications before approving the project.

Mr. Tarrasco used a 1977 Code requirement, which was still effective, in planning the 20-foot backup space. Current cars need less turning radius than cars from 1977. Glass railings and privacy were concerns in single-family neighborhoods. In a more urban environment, people appreciated other people in the vicinity. The balance between community and privacy was important. He was open to the railings being less transparent. Chair Gooyer commented that some would disagree that the area was an urban environment. He did not feel people would utilize the garages if they were difficult to access. He questioned whether modern cars were smaller than 1977 cars.

Board Member Baltay was disappointed with Mr. Tarrasco's response regarding the garage. The questions were whether the garages could be located 2 feet further back on the property and whether the architect would consider that. With regard to privacy, the Board was attempting to enforce Codes and standards consistently. The balconies and glass railings were not consistent with current standards of practice. Chair Gooyer concurred with moving the garages back 2 feet. Mr. Tarrasco was open to both issues.

Ms. Gerhardt reported the standard solution for the balconies would be 5-foot, solid railings. She inquired whether that would be an acceptable solution. Board Member Baltay felt the architect would not agree to that type of railing. Visually, that would be a big change to a delicately designed building. The front balcony was probably not permissible, because it was too big of an impact on privacy. The rear balcony should be on the rear and not the side with some type of privacy screening. Mr. Tarrasco concurred with both ideas.

Vice Chair Lew asked if the normal contextual standards applied to this area. He was unsure whether minimizing sightlines applied to this district. Ms. Gerhardt advised that the contextual guideline requirement did not apply to this area. Vice Chair Lew inquired whether the IR guidelines applied. Ms. Gerhardt indicated Individual Review requirements applied to single and two-family residences in the RMD district, specifically to the sides adjacent to other single or two-family dwellings. In this case, the Individual Review guidelines applied with respect to privacy. Vice Chair Lew concurred that privacy was an issue for this project.

Vice Chair Lew asked Mr. Tarrasco if he could not move the garage 2 feet. Mr. Tarrasco stated a car could fit in an 18-foot space. Board Member Baltay indicated the space needed to be 20 feet in depth on the inside. He meant the left side of the building should be moved back 2 feet. The distance to the setback appeared to be 2 feet, which would accommodate moving the garage.

Vice Chair Lew asked if the Transportation Division reviewed the backup space for the garage. Ms. Aggarwal answered yes. The Transportation Division indicated the space was tight, but there were no standards for less than three-family projects.

Chair Gooyer inquired whether the balcony remained an issue. Vice Chair Lew responded yes, if the Board applied IR standards. Board Member Baltay felt the balcony was an important feature for the modestly scaled homes. As an architect, he supported the balconies. As a neighbor, he opposed the balconies. Mr. Tarrasco advised that the neighbor was agreeable to the balcony. He could put a roof on the balcony. Board Member Baltay imagined the City's architect for Individual Reviews wanting a full-height lattice screen on the entire width of the balcony facing the neighbor. He could understand the architect not wanting a solid, 5-foot railing and not wanting to eliminate the balconies. The architect should find some way to prevent a person standing on the balcony from easily looking into the neighbor's yard.

Board Member Baltay could approve the project subject to it returning to the subcommittee on the issues of the garage and privacy screening. Chair Gooyer and Vice Chair Lew concurred.

Vice Chair Lew noted the conditions of approval included changes to the materials and to the roof. Board Member Baltay felt the metal roof was superior. Chair Gooyer did not want a shingle roof. Board Member Baltay felt Mr. Tarrasco should be allowed to choose the color of the window mullions and type of brick. Chair Gooyer felt the colors were cold. Vice Chair Lew added that the staff conditions included replacing steel with wood on all trellises and porches. Board Member Baltay did not agree with using wood. Chair Gooyer wanted to see warmer colors to be more compatible with the neighborhood.

MOTION:

Board Member Baltay moved, seconded by Chair Gooyer, to approve the project subject to the findings in the staff report with the following additional conditions: (1) the garages be shifted 2 feet further to the southwest side; (2) either the upstairs balconies be removed or privacy screening be provided on the sides facing neighboring properties; and (3) the color palette be revised to warmer tones. These revisions should be submitted to the ARB subcommittee for review.

MOTION PASSED: 3-0

Ms. Gerhardt confirmed that the Board did not wish to change the roof or to replace the steel with wood.

Study Session

None.

Subcommittee Item

None.

Board Member Questions, Comments, Announcements

Vice Chair Lew reported the City Council debated modifications the ARB findings. He did not believe the Council decided the issue.

Adjournment