



Architectural Review Board Staff Report

From: Planning and Development Services Director
Lead Department: Planning and Development Services

Meeting Date: December 7, 2023
Report #: 2311-2295

TITLE

1700 Embarcadero [21PLN-00191]: Ad Hoc Committee Review of Previously Approved Project to Review Landscaping and Elevation Details

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Architectural Review Board (ARB) Ad-Hoc Committee take one of the following actions:

1. Discuss the details and revisions, and recommend that the Director find they meet the approval conditions and align with the approval findings; or
2. Provide additional direction to the project applicant.

BACKGROUND

On November 3, 2022, the ARB recommended approval of the subject project, which Council approved on December 5, 2022. At the ARB's recommendation, a condition of approval requiring certain aspects of the design to return to an ARB Ad Hoc Committee was incorporated into the Record of Land Use Action.

Condition of Approval #15 in the Record of Land Use Action (RLUA 22-04) states: Prior to building permit issuance, the owner or designee shall demonstrate to the Architectural Review Board Ad Hoc the following:

- a. Clarify cross sections along the multi-use path to confirm elevations;
- b. Show more low-level plantings in-between trees and consider other canopy trees where feasible to increase shading, such as the addition of western redbuds to the landscape fingers along East Bayshore Road;
- c. Confirm that trees can be planted adjacent to the multi-use path;
- d. Confirm that the building elevations along the west and northwest elevations include the continuation of the ribbed metal paneling and also confirm the green colors.

On October 19, 2023 the Ad Hoc Committee, consisting of board member Hirsch and Chair Baltay, met to review the revised plans for the items that were required to return to the Subcommittee. Items 15c and 15d were resolved with the revised plans during this initial ad hoc.

The Ad Hoc Committee requested further information related to the cross sections along the multi-use path, specifically related to the grade of the vegetated area adjacent the path (noting that this grade should be less than 10%) and clarity on the grades at the corner where the pedestrian path and multi-use path connect to address item 15a. The Ad Hoc also asked for further clarity on the planting in a detailed landscaping plan and again asked for trees within the landscape fingers where only small grasses seemed to be shown in a concept plan to address 15b.

ANALYSIS

Condition of Approval #15a:

Clarify cross sections along the multi-use path to confirm elevations.

Applicant's Response:

- Additional sections have been added including Section E-E at the corner to show the grade of the pedestrian path and its connection to the multi-use path (see sheets EX-1 and EX-2). Along Embarcadero, the project has been revised to show a slope of not more than 10% for the vegetated area adjacent the multi-use path (See sheets EX-1, EX-2, and L-01).

Condition of Approval #15b:

Show more low-level plantings in-between trees and consider other canopy trees where feasible to increase shading, such as the addition of western redbuds to the landscape fingers along East Bayshore Road

Applicant's Response:

- A detailed planting plan is provided on Sheet L-2 to clarify the conceptual plan shown in L-1. Sheet L-2 shows more low-level plantings in-between trees. Due to liability concerns, the landscape plan does not show trees in the PG&E easement. However, tall shrubs capable of growing to approximately 10 feet have been added to these fingers in the revised plan.

Staff Analysis:

The revision generally appears to address the ARB's comments. Although western redbud or similar would be preferable in the landscape strip, the proposed large shrubs, capable of growing to 10 feet in height appear to be a reasonable addition to add larger vegetation to these planting strips.

The ARB Ad-Hoc Committee is encouraged to affirm these changes address condition of approval #15. Otherwise, the Committee should provide direction to staff and the applicant if the submittal requires further refinement.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Project Plans

AUTHOR/TITLE:

Claire Raybould, Senior Planner

Project Plans

In order to reduce paper consumption, a limited number of hard copy project plans are provided to Board members for their review. The same plans are available to the public, at all hours of the day, via the following online resources.

Directions to review Project plans and environmental documents online:

1. Go to: bit.ly/PAPendingprojects
2. Scroll down to find “1700 Embarcadero Road” and click the address link
3. On this project-specific webpage you will find a link to the project plans and other important information

Direct Link to Project Webpage:

<https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/Departments/Planning-Development-Services/Current-Planning/Projects/1700-Embarcadero>