



Architectural Review Board Staff Report

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

Meeting Date: August 15, 2024
Report #: 2408-3353

TITLE

Draft Architectural Review Board Meeting Minutes for May 16, 2024

RECOMMENDATION

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

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Minutes of May 16, 2024

AUTHOR/TITLE:

ARB Liaison¹ & Contact Information

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ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD
DRAFT MINUTES: May 16, 2024
Council Chamber & Zoom
8:30 AM

Call to Order / Roll Call

The Architectural Review Board (ARB) of the City of Palo Alto met on May 16, 2024 in Council Chambers and virtual teleconference at 8:34 AM.

Present: Chair Peter Baltay, Boardmember Yingxi Chen, Boardmember David Hirsch, Boardmember Adcock

Absent: Vice Chair Kendra Rosenberg

Public Comment

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) Recently Submitted Projects

Planning Manager Jodie Gerhardt reported the tentative agenda for June 6 includes a first formal for 640 Waverly but staff will not seek a recommendation from the ARB yet. Lighting and bird-safe glass was tentatively on the June 6 agenda but it may be postponed as staff is in the process of making changes to this item. The tentative agenda for June 20 includes 3000 El Camino Real and 4075 El Camino Way.

There are no new projects. 762 San Antonio is on Packet Page 12 but Ms. Gerhardt believed the ARB already heard about it. 3997 Fabian on Packet Page 14 is a redo of a 330 that was on file.

Action Items

2. PUBLIC HEARING / QUASI-JUDICIAL. 525 University [23PLN-00308] and 530 Lytton [23PLN-00311] Recommendation on Applicant's Request for Major Architectural Review Approval for Two Master Sign Programs with Sign Exceptions at 525 University Avenue and 530 Lytton Avenue. The Project at 525 University Includes Five Signs: One Illuminated Directory Sign, One Illuminated Canopy Address Sign, One Illuminated Wall Property ID Sign, One Illuminated Parking ID Sign, and One Illuminated Parking Directional Directory Sign. The Project at 530 Lytton Includes Four Signs: One Illuminated Directory Sign, One Illuminated Wall Property ID Sign, One Illuminated Parking ID Sign, and One Illuminated Parking Blade Sign. Environmental Assessment: Exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Action in Accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15301 and 15311. Zoning District: CD-C (P) (Downtown Commercial). For More Information, Contact the Project Planner Emily Kallas at Emily.Kallas@CityofPaloAlto.org.

Chair Baltay asked if staff or members of the Board had any disclosures. Boardmember Adcock stated she visited the site and noticed it was under construction and fenced in. Boardmember Adcock did not see the existing signs. Boardmember Chen and Chair Baltay visited the site and echoed Boardmember Adcock's observations. Boardmember Hirsch lives close to the site but he did not focus specifically on the site when he passes by it.

Planner Emily Kallas addressed the Board. The project location is the block between University Avenue, Lytton Avenue, Cowper Street, and Tasso Street; comprised of four office buildings under the addresses 525 University and 530 Lytton. The 525 University building is eligible for the California Register of Historic Resources. Prior entitlement 21PLN-00209 is under construction, which is primarily for landscape and minor facade changes such as adding a canopy in the courtyard area.

The project being proposed to the ARB this morning includes two Master Sign Programs with Sign Exceptions. 525 University has a canopy address sign, directory sign, wall property ID sign, parking ID sign, and parking directional sign. 530 Lytton has a directory sign, wall property ID sign, parking ID sign and parking blade sign. Ms. Kallas combined the maps from each plan set to depict all of the signs, showing three signs near the parking entrance on each side and the directory signs close to the primary entrances of the buildings.

The ARB does not typically regulate building numbers because buildings are required to have numbers, so the 525 University canopy address sign is in compliance.

Ms. Kallas showed a slide with the existing 96-inch directory sign on the left, the proposed 96-inch directory sign in the middle, and on the right is how the sign would look in its proposed location. Where it says 525 University at the top of the sign is about 6½ square feet, which requires a sign exception because it exceeds 4 square feet. The total sign area for 525 University is 20 square feet.

At 530 Lytton, a 71-inch directory sign is proposed in the current location of an address monument sign. The total sign area for 530 Lytton is about 15 square feet.

The retaining wall on the Tasso Street frontage will have the proposed wall property ID sign for 525 University. The existing monument sign will be removed. The proposed sign is compliant in size; however, its location is noncomplying because wall signs are typically not allowed to project over the

height of the wall they are mounted on, as this one does in the illustration. Another wall property ID sign will be located on the other side and is considered complying because it does not exceed wall height.

A parking ID sign is proposed at the 525 University entrance at Tasso Street. The existing sign is a cluster of smaller signs. The proposed sign would be one single, continuous sign with the same information.

The intent of the signage proposed for this site is to unify the current combination of nonmatching signs.

At 525 University, an existing directional sign includes a car-coming indicator light. The proposal is to make this sign smaller and simpler but it would still contain the car-coming indicator light as required by the Office of Transportation. Typically, this type of directional sign would have a maximum size of 3 square feet. The proposed sign is 7.36 square feet but staff felt it was appropriate considering the size of the driveway it is indicating and the need to have the built-in car-coming indicator light.

For 530 Lytton, the proposal is for a blade sign attached to the retaining wall. Typically, blade signs of this size are not allowed; however, staff was in support of the proposed sign because of the importance of the car-coming indicator light as well as the parking sign providing wayfinding for cars, pedestrians, and bicyclists.

The ARB's key considerations are that sign exception findings need to be met. There are exceptional or extraordinary circumstances or conditions applicable to the property that do not generally apply to other properties in the same district. The granting of the application is necessary for the preservation of enjoyment of a substantial property right of the applicant and to prevent unreasonable property loss or hardship. The granting of the application will not be detrimental or injurious to property or improvements in the vicinity and will not be detrimental to the public health, safety, general welfare, or convenience of the public. This project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) per Code Section 15301 for existing facilities and 15311 for signage. Staff recommends that the ARB recommend approval of the project to the Director of Planning and Development Services.

Chair Baltay invited the applicant to present their project via Zoom. Will Pike spoke on behalf of LUX Create as the client's signage designer. Mr. Pike stated they took the site and architecture into consideration. They wanted to pay homage to the detailing. There are many vertical elements in the buildings with curved supports, so they applied that to the base detailing of the signs. Since 525 University is significantly higher than some of the surrounding buildings, vertical signs and directories were implemented where possible. To keep it to a minimal palette, dark gray and white was chosen to keep it looking clean and not too busy or intrusive to the surrounding neighborhood. For wayfinding, the proposed text height and panel sizing was appropriate based on multiple site surveys and line of sight visibility studies. Orientations and locations were selected that were best suited for vehicles and pedestrians. A parking blade sign is proposed to identify the garage entrances, as overheads would not be sufficient since the garage entrances are set back from the road. The wall signs were meant to have more presence on both sides of the property from a vehicular and pedestrian standpoint since the directories are small and more geared toward building entrances. The perforated metal was meant to add more intriguing texture to the design. The white acrylic and dark paint is a neutral palette to complement the existing site.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

Chair Baltay invited Boardmembers to ask questions.

Boardmember Adcock remarked that the perforated aluminum in the material sample board and packet looks like mill finish aluminum but it looks dark in the renderings. Boardmember Adcock asked if it was intended to be dark aluminum with a black umber finish or acrylic. Mr. Pike responded that the example was only to show the size and scale of the perforation pattern. The finish would match the dark gray, so it would appear like the rendering in a black umber color. The material is aluminum.

Based on Boardmember Adcock's understanding of the canopy detail on Page 10 of the drawings, the number sign on 525 over the canopy appeared to attach to an existing outrigger. Boardmember Adcock wanted to know if the number sign was going over an existing canopy or a new canopy. Mr. Pike replied that the addition of a new canopy was part of the architectural enhancements. As it has a glass top with a spider fitting over the wide-flanged structure below it, Boardmember Adcock asked if this would punch through the glass to pop up. Mr. Pike answered yes. The tube support had to be coordinated to accommodate a surface to mount the letters to since it is a glass-top canopy. Mr. Pike invited Dustin to respond, as he was more familiar with the coordination.

On Zoom, Dustin with LUX Create explained that the GC would give them a notch-out in the glass. A stem arm has been engineered that will weld to the canopy but it was not included in the planning submittal. They will run the electrical into the building. Boardmember Adcock was curious how it was going to get coordinated because she noted it looked like a different canopy on the elevation drawing on the page. Boardmember Adcock asked Ms. Kallas to coordinate so it installs as presented.

Boardmember Adcock thought the intent was for the Lytton monument sign to orient south as shown in the elevation, which was not how she read it on the plan. The planter it is sitting on top of seemed tall on Boardmember Adcock's site visit but it does not look as tall in the image. In the drawing, the grade line on Page 8 is the top of stairs, not street level. Mr. Pike stated the intention is for both signs to have a similar presence. This sign is slightly shorter because it is on a raised wall.

Boardmember Adcock remarked that the rendering for the 525 project looks like it is on the ground but it is indicated on a planter on the drawing. Mr. Pike explained that planters were being implemented as part of the architectural enhancements. At the time of design, they did not have any renderings for this side of the property, just the existing conditions. It will be a lower planter. In reply to Boardmember Adcock inquiring if the proposed height of 96 inches from grade was from pavement grade or the top of the new planter, Mr. Pike and Dustin both answered from the top of the new planter. Boardmember Adcock pointed out that the sign will be taller than 96 inches from people walking by it and Dustin confirmed Boardmember Adcock was correct.

Chair Baltay took a photo recently of the planter on 530 Lytton that is approximately 48 inches above the sidewalk, which is about 2 feet higher than shown on the rendering. The planter was rebuilt two or three years ago. Boardmember Adcock agreed the planter is taller than the rendering shows. In

response to Boardmember Adcock asking if the overall sign would be 71 inches plus 4 feet, totaling almost 10 feet from the sidewalk, Dustin said yes, that was correct although he thought the rendering was accurate to the height of the new planter.

Boardmember Adcock commented on both signs to the parking as shown on Page 5. Boardmember Adcock opined that exit and enter are the hierarchy of things you are trying to see, and it seemed odd to her that “Welcome to” had more hierarchy than the address.

Boardmember Adcock wondered if the monument sign had tenant panels that were removable as tenants change and Dustin responded yes. Boardmember Adcock asked if the font and size of tenants would be consistent and standard regardless of individual tenants’ logos and fonts. Mr. Pike replied that the intention was to have the tenant’s wordmark in white and standardizing the cap height to fit within that area but there is not enough space for the full logo. Boardmember Chen asked staff if there is a minimum requirement for the tenants’ letter size. Ms. Kallas responded the zoning code has a maximum area of 1.5 square feet but there is no minimum size.

The 525 University parking sign is mounted on top of the retaining wall. Boardmember Chen wanted to know the distance from the bottom of the sign to the street level. Ms. Kallas replied that Page 20 shows it being 12 feet from the sidewalk level to the top of the freestanding sign.

In response to Boardmember Chen querying how tall the bottom of the sign was for 530 Lytton, Ms. Kallas answered it was shown as 99 inches to the bottom and 141 inches to the top.

Chair Baltay asked staff to clarify if a sign’s height is considered from grade level, the surface a person is standing on, or from the top of the surface it is mounted on such as a planter or a wall. Planning Manager Jodie Gerhardt explained that usually when staff looks at height, they go a couple feet out from the object and measure down to the ground. For freestanding signs on a planter, staff would measure from the planter level; however, if it were at the edge of the planter, staff would measure from the sidewalk height. The directory sign had surrounding planter, so it would be measured differently. Generally, the code says to measure grade 5 feet away. Chair Baltay thought the sign code is vague on some items.

Ms. Kallas clarified that the existing sign is at the edge of the planter and the new sign is oriented as shown in the rendering. Chair Baltay stated that the planter at 530 is 5 feet deep. The rendering showed the 525 planter at sidewalk grade. Dustin commented that the planter is being built. Ms. Kallas pointed out that the approved plans do not show a planter. Chair Baltay said it seemed the planters were 4 square feet.

Chair Baltay wanted to know if monument signs were different from directory signs in our sign code and Ms. Kallas answered yes. Chair Baltay queried what the size and height limitations in the code were for freestanding signs and Ms. Gerhardt replied it was a 5-foot maximum in this area. In response to Chair Baltay asking if there was a width maximum or total area maximum, Ms. Kallas stated it depended if it was on the frontage of the building. Chair Baltay questioned why the two tall signs were proposed as directory signs instead of monument signs. Ms. Kallas stated the definition in the code for a directory sign is a list of building occupants. On Plan Page 6, it is called a primary monument. Ms. Gerhardt remarked that when projects come to the City, staff determines where they fit into the code. Ms.

Gerhardt thought this was a good topic for staff and ARB to discuss because the code is not clear. Staff called it a directory sign because it met the code's sign definitions. Other times, staff has called it a freestanding monument sign such as on Park Boulevard where there are multiple tenants on a sign. Chair Baltay asked when this code was last updated or reviewed. Ms. Gerhardt replied it has been a long time and it will continue to be a long time because there are First Amendment issues, which is the reason why staff does not want to redo this code.

Boardmember Hirsch asked what the procedure was for adding additional lines of tenants, for example the sign was shown with four tenants but it needed to accommodate eight tenants. Mr. Pike replied it was the client and owner's delineation of who had rights to representation on the signage, based upon previous signage and/or a requirement per the lease agreement. Dustin believed the 525 sign had six tenant spaces. Staff stated that the applicant had to come back for approval to add more tenant lines on the sign. Boardmember Adcock noted the 525 freestanding sign was depicted with six rows of text that said Tenant but thought there was space to use the bottom slot for a seventh tenant, so she inquired of staff if the applicant had to come back for review if they used the bottom slot. Ms. Kallas replied that where it says tenant on the sign are considered the available slots.

Boardmember Adcock pointed out that the plan showed six rows with a blank at the top and bottom whereas there is only a blank at the bottom on Page 8. Ms. Kallas wanted the Board to discuss if the bottom panel did not have a tenant if it should look like a blank or look like the rest of the frame and she wondered what the applicant's design intention was. Mr. Pike explained that the isometric view had a gap at the top and bottom because it was produced before the final elevation, so there were some slight proportion differences. For the elevation view, the intention was to have it at the maximum square footage allowable per tenant and raise them up as much as possible to make sure there was a gap below in case there was any low-lying grass or other elements in the planter. Boardmember Adcock asked for details of the sign materials. Mr. Pike confirmed that the blank would be in black umber material; the curved base, the entire facade of the sign would be the same color, including the tenant panels. Dustin remarked that C1 is black umber. Mr. Pike stated that M2 day/night acrylic is only for the car-coming element of the parking blades; the rest is white acrylic vinyl and dark gray or black umber paint.

Chair Baltay invited Boardmember comments.

Boardmember Adcock opined it was odd for "Welcome to" on the parking sign to be louder than the address. Boardmember Adcock thought it would be just as successful graphically to flip the font and bold text versus not bold on the parking sign. Boardmember Adcock expressed concern that the height of the signs relative to the sidewalk did not address the pedestrian experience because a 10-foot tall sign on top of a 4-foot planter is much more ominous and overpowering than a 6-foot sign next to you as you walk by it. Chair Baltay clarified that Boardmember Adcock's comments were in reference to 525 Sign A and 530 Sign A in the applicant's package.

Boardmember Adcock asked staff to clarify the requirements for the font size of tenant names and the square footage of the text or panel. Ms. Gerhardt replied that the code regulation is 1.5 square feet for the combined total sign area. Anything above grade is considered a sign. The code does not regulate the size of the panel but the ARB can. The text could fill the whole panel or be smaller. Directory signs have an allowance of 4 square feet plus 1½ square feet per tenant. For 525, the applicant is proposing a

directory sign of 20 square feet but the code allows 13 square feet with six tenant names. For 530, the applicant is proposing a directory sign of 14.8 square feet but the code allows 10 square feet. Therefore, the applicant is seeking Master Sign Programs with Sign Exceptions. For consistency, Boardmember Adcock wanted to know if it was possible for the ARB to provide some guidance on the percentage of text fill on the panel while not having one tenant go edge to edge on the panel with a large, bold name versus another tenant with a long name in smaller font. Ms. Gerhardt remarked that the Master Sign Program allows the ARB to add those details.

Regarding the overhead parking sign, Boardmember Chen agreed with Boardmember Adcock's comment about switching the size of "Welcome to" because it is more important and directional to make the address larger.

Boardmember Chen thought the primary monument sign's size and height for 525 was okay based on its location more toward the inside of the plaza area.

For 530, Boardmember Chen was concerned about the sign being too tall on top of a 4-foot tall planter because it is close to the sidewalk.

For the 525 parking sign, Boardmember Chen thought the blade sign and freestanding sign looked tall and would appreciate it if the applicant could lower it.

A sign does not meet code if it extends beyond the wall of a building. Boardmember Chen asked staff for the code requirements for a sign on a retaining wall. Ms. Kallas replied that the code does not anticipate signs on retaining walls. An exception could be appropriate to exceed the height of a retaining wall. Chair Baltay clarified that Boardmember Chen was referring to 530 Sign C, Parking ID. Boardmember Chen opined it is acceptable for the sign to exceed above the wall in this location.

For the sign into the parking for 530, Boardmember Hirsch disagreed with other Boardmembers' comments and felt that "Welcome to" should be the same text and size because it reads as one message rather than two messages but he did not have a strong preference for font size. Boardmember Hirsch thought Enter and Exit were clear enough in size. Boardmember Hirsch believed there should only be two varieties of font for the sign.

Referring to Page 15, Boardmember Hirsch was concerned that 525 Sign C looked huge and over-scaled, especially because the sign is located on the wall closer to the Lytton end of the street and not on the prime elevation of the building. Boardmember Hirsch wondered if his fellow Boardmembers thought it was necessary to have a sign on a side street when you can see the sign in the front of the building once you get to the corner. It bothered Boardmember Hirsch that the sign in the courtyard is out of scale.

Chair Baltay commented that the applicant's package of signs was nicely designed, fits in the design of the building, and is an improvement compared to existing signs. Chair Baltay greatly appreciated the applicant's clever, careful, and thoughtful consistency with the design of these signs. Chair Baltay expressed his concern that the applicant's packet did not accurately represent existing conditions. For example, the heights of the planters were not fully represented.

Chair Baltay believed that switching the font sizes for "Welcome to" and the address because that gets into the content of the sign, the message, rather than the design. Chair Baltay would flip the fonts if he

was designing this but he was not sure if it is within the Board's purview to make that recommendation. Chair Baltay thought it was up to the firm or owner to decide and he asked for staff's opinion. Ms. Gerhardt stated it would be regulating the content; therefore, the ARB could only make suggestions. Chair Baltay clarified that Boardmembers could make suggestions on the "Welcome to" but the applicant ultimately makes the final decision.

Ms. Gerhardt remarked that the ARB could regulate the size of the lettering of tenant names.

Chair Baltay expressed his opinions about Sign 525 C. The sign should not exceed the height of the wall; otherwise, it is not a wall sign but would be a monument sign or another kind of sign. The sign is over-scaled for the nature of the traffic going by. This is not a highway. These are small streets with primarily pedestrian traffic passing by these enormous signs. Sign 525 C is about 50 percent larger than necessary and should be scaled down.

Chair Baltay made the following comments about 525 Sign A and 530 Sign A. In the past, the ARB has enforced pedestrian-scale signs. In a downtown pedestrian environment, signs should not be taller than people are. The sign should be more than 6 feet from the sidewalk. The street on University Avenue was closed during the pandemic. A sign 8 feet high off the ground is too tall (a 6-foot sign on top of a 2-foot planter. Chair Baltay wants the application to come back to the ARB with proper height and positioning of the planters, reduce the size of the signs, and perhaps make the signs more horizontal to be of pedestrian scale.

Regarding Sign C, Boardmember Adcock wanted the Board to consider the purpose of the wall sign. The sign for University is on Cowper and the sign for Lytton is on Tasso. Having a "Welcome to" sign with the address above the entrance to the garage itself makes the wall sign secondary and therefore supports the argument that it is too big. Because of the height of the retaining wall, Ms. Kallas remarked there was concern that you do not see the sign until you are almost past it. Boardmember Adcock suggested the sign be on par with the retaining wall height or maybe a tad taller but it does not need to be 16 inches tall because 16-inch tall signs are to be seen from quite far away, not as you are about to enter the garage.

Boardmember Adcock pointed out that the rendering shows the sign flying up above the height of the wall but on Page 13 it is fully attached to a wall all the way up and down. Dustin replied there is a wall there and apologized. Boardmember Adcock stated the drawings of the elevation on Page 15 clearly showed 60 percent of the sign is above the retaining wall and there is a guardrail at the landscaping behind it. Chair Baltay asked the applicant to clarify how the sign is mounted because Detail 4 on Sheet 13 clearly shows the sign mounted to a wall taller than the sign. Dustin referred to Page 15 for 525 University, Sign C. Dustin explained that a raw elevation without the sign would show that the retaining wall has an inset wall that pops up, which is why the applicant decided to cover that portion of the wall entirely with a sign but the sign is no higher than the retaining wall. Chair Baltay asked the applicant if Detail 4 on Sheet 13 was correct. Dustin replied yes, it is correct. Chair Baltay queried if the applicant showed the wall recess on Detail 4. Dustin guessed they showed the wall going up a little higher but the wall and the sign are exactly the same height.

The elevation showed an iron railing that did not match the photo shown on the screen. Chair Baltay pointed out to his fellow boardmembers that the applicant's drawings were not consistent or clear.

Dustin stated the railing was not there yet on the photo. Chair Baltay asked staff if the railing was not there yet or if it was intended to be there. Mr. Pike remarked they were working with materials provided by the architect. The applicant based their render on previous conditions because they did not have access to updated renderings of every condition. Chair Baltay advised the applicant to respond only when directly asked a question. Ms. Kallas explained that the prior planning entitlement had locations where the railing did not meet OSHA standards, so railings have been added in those locations.

Chair Baltay did not think the Board was satisfied that the applicant's packet was consistent or complete, although that did not change his opinion that the signs are too big. This street is narrow. Chair Baltay opined that the traffic did not justify the necessity of having such a large sign. Chair Baltay is not sure it is in the Board's purview to tell applicants directly where they can put their signs. Applicants are entitled to put a sign where they want. The question for the ARB is if it fits with the character, and is the scale and size of it okay.

Referring to Package Sheet 10, the sign above the canopy for 525, Chair Baltay was concerned that the letters were 20 inches tall in a heavy font and illuminated bright white. Chair Baltay wondered if it needed to be that bright. At an upcoming meeting, the ARB will address a bird-safe and dark-sky ordinance. The Fire Department wants building signs to be illuminated. Chair Baltay asked staff for their input. Ms. Gerhardt remarked that the dark-skies ordinance is in draft form but the ARB can start to invoke it. Ms. Gerhardt would need to refer to the downtown design guidelines but she believed it encourages halo illumination, so the ARB could discuss that option. Chair Baltay invited comments from the Board.

Boardmember Adcock stated that the light level and lumen output from letters that are 20 inches tall and 35 inches wide was unknown. Boardmember Adcock noted that 500 across the street had an enormous aluminum sign but it was not illuminated. A sign that size being illuminated has a compounded, very bright, almost neon feeling, which Boardmember Adcock did not feel was appropriate. Boardmember Adcock was concerned about how the wiring for the sign with the glass on top would work with the consistency of the look of the existing canopy, which Boardmember Adcock thought was quite handsome. Chair Baltay wondered how the applicant would get the junction box and wiring up there because the detail is not in the drawing.

Boardmember Hirsch thought the sign for 525 in Elevation 4 was an appropriate scale for freestanding numerals. Chair Baltay agreed it was in scale for a building of its size but was not in scale from a pedestrian perspective on the sidewalk. Chair Baltay opined it was too brightly lit for University Avenue and the whole building was out of scale for University Avenue. Boardmember Hirsch noted it is a total glass facade, so the interior would probably be lit as well.

Boardmember Adcock asked for Google Street View to be shown on the screen. Chair Baltay asked for the elevation of the building to be shown. Chair Baltay asked if the canopy in the front over the center door was being added. Ms. Kallas replied the canopy is being added as per the 2021 plans.

Board consensus was that Signs A were too big as well as Sign C along the side of the street.

Chair Baltay referred to Packet Page 9 for 525 University Sign A. The rendering of the vertical monument sign shows it 96 inches above the sidewalk. The sign is on a planter, so Chair Baltay guessed it is about 2

feet higher. Ms. Gerhardt confirmed the planter is not shown but one is under construction. Page 6 of the plan shows a rectangle but it is not clear what the rectangle represented. Chair Baltay asked the applicant to clarify if Sign 525 A is mounted on top of a planter and what was the height of the planter. Dustin confirmed the sign is on top of a planter that he believed is 2 feet tall. The applicant made the proposed sign to conform to the existing sign size. Chair Baltay commented the proposed sign is much more attractive. The existing sign is tucked into the corner of the building where you do not see its full size relative to pedestrians or anything else. Boardmember Adcock pointed out that the existing sign was on the ground. Chair Baltay thought the sign should be 5 or 6 feet tall from the sidewalk. Boardmember Hirsch thought a total of 7 feet was reasonable. Boardmember Adcock pointed out that the sign is 8 feet tall on Page 8 but the ARB was not provided with dimensions for the planter. Boardmember Hirsch opined it was too tall for an 8-foot sign on top of a 2-foot planter.

Chair Baltay thought the applicant could get the same effective signage with a horizontal sign, which would make a big difference to pedestrians having a sign with the tenants names be less than 5 feet tall from the sidewalk. Chair Baltay was not bothered by the area of the sign as much as the height. Considering the proportion, height compared to width, Boardmember Chen thought the directory sign was appropriate to the building. Boardmember Adcock thought a vertical sign is appropriate for a tall and vertical building but she does not think it needs to be 2 feet plus 8 feet. Boardmember Adcock suggested a 5-foot sign on top of a 2-foot planter to make it a total of 7 feet and have the tenant names at or just under eye level, similar to the existing sign. At 10 feet tall, the tenant names would be too high and would not provide a pedestrian experience. Chair Baltay echoed Boardmember Adcock's comment. Chair Baltay could not support this sign being taller than 6 feet above the sidewalk.

Chair Baltay asked the Board to come to a consensus in order to provide the applicant clear direction. Boardmember Chen suggested keeping the sign at street level because it does not need to be on top of a planter. Chair Baltay thought Boardmember Chen made a good point but it is up to the applicant where they place their sign. Chair Baltay commented it was paramount to keep the sign in scale to pedestrians. Boardmember Hirsch would push for a 7-foot high sign on the ground if the Board could speak to the location of the sign. Boardmember Hirsch thought 8 feet was too much but 7 feet was appropriate and it would leave plenty of room for the tenant names to be at a reasonable level.

The ARB had a similar discussion last year about the directional signs for Stanford Hospital's addition and, per Chair Baltay's recollection, the resolution was to have 5-foot signs.

During Chair Baltay's site visit, he noted All Saints Church on the corner of Hamilton and Waverley had a very nice corner monument sign that is maybe 3½ feet high in a landscaped area. Chair Baltay thought the sign was lovely and perfectly suitable for locating that structure. Chair Baltay opined you do not need a big sign to get the point across and to serve as a functioning sign.

Boardmember Hirsch believed a bigger sign should represent a larger building with a big facade. It is important to have a significant size for the number of the building so you know you are there when you get to the front door.

Boardmember Adcock can agree with 7 feet. The proposed address portion of the sign for 525 University is 31 inches tall. If the address portion is 2 feet and the portion with the tenant names is 5 feet, you can read the tenant labels at 5-foot level to Chair Baltay's point and the address would be a little higher than

that to Boardmember Hirsch's point, and the sign would maintain its verticality relative to the look of the building.

Boardmember Hirsch commented that not showing all the landscape work was affecting this proposal. If there had been some coordination, a better solution would be to pull back the planter to allow for a freestanding sign.

Chair Baltay asked for a motion to continue this item to an uncertain date, subject to the applicant having a complete packet.

Boardmember Chen was okay with the current proposal for 525 Sign A if it is not on top of a planter. If the ARB lowers it to 7 feet, Boardmember Chen agreed with Boardmember Adcock's suggestion of changing the 31 inches to 24 inches so the tenant names could be higher and somewhere at eye level instead of bending over to see the tenant names.

Boardmembers suggestions were between 6 and 8 feet, which averaged to 7 feet.

Chair Baltay invited discussion on the appropriate size and height for the 530 monument sign. Page 9 of the 530 drawing set shows Sign A mounted on what was a planter at one point but is now taller. Page 10 shows the existing horizontal sign. Chair Baltay believed a horizontal sign was more appropriate, with signage no more than 6 feet above the sidewalk, and he asked for consensus support for those restrictions.

Boardmember Chen agreed that a horizontal sign in this location is more appropriate. Boardmember Chen asked why the applicant wanted to turn the sign in another direction instead of being parallel to the pedestrian street as the existing sign is oriented. Chair Baltay invited the applicant to respond.

Dustin replied that the orientation was for visibility in both directions and the height was to accommodate the tenant names. Mr. Pike wanted to keep a consistent program in the design since it is one campus, so the directories are the same type and proportion. There is a 4-foot wall, so it would not be conducive to have a 7-foot maximum sign. Mr. Pike thought the sign needed to be a minimum of 5 feet. The sign is vertical to be consistent in the campus. The orientation was meant to address the intersection better so people would know when to turn onto the street.

Boardmember Chen pointed out that the building is much lower in this corner and you can see some horizontal lines in the background. Considering the 4-foot-high planter wall, Boardmember Chen suggested a horizontal sign with two columns of tenant names with the sign orientation to go along with the length of the planter.

Ms. Gerhardt stated she had a picture that showed the existing planter size. Chair Baltay remarked it is important in the final presentation for the applicant to show the planter in its correct size, which he thought would affect the design of the sign.

Boardmember Adcock supported a horizontal sign in response to the building behind it and the tall planter. Sign C is horizontal but it still stays within this sign family, so the Board is not asking for a new design. Using the curve at the bottom, Boardmember Adcock thought it is appropriate to set the upper limit of 7 feet to be consistent and to give the applicant 3 feet of space to work on the horizontal version

of this sign, given the 4-foot height of the planter. Boardmember Adcock suggested keeping a consistent 7-foot height for the monument/freestanding direction sign on both properties.

Boardmember Hirsch thought that the Lytton Street sign is a problem because the planter is approximately 4 feet above the sidewalk, so a horizontal sign 3 feet above that level would not look very attractive. Boardmember Hirsch thinks it needs to be a vertical sign.

Chair Baltay pointed out that the sign would block the view out to the street, so it may be the wrong place for a sign. Chair Baltay stated there are options, for example, a 7-foot vertical sign at a 45-degree angle at the middle of the handrail would look cool but he does not want to design it for the applicant.

Boardmember Adcock noted the planter in the picture shown on the screen is about 2½ feet tall based on counting the stairs next to it but that is not the existing planter.

Chair Baltay asked the applicant how they could address the Board's concerns about the size of the sign. Mr. Pike would like to propose a smaller vertical option that still served its function. Mr. Pike believed a horizontal sign would be more unattractive and would not serve the direction of traffic they were trying to meet. Dustin thought they might propose a couple of options for the Board to review.

On the rendering, the sign seemed a couple feet taller relative to the woman walking by. Ms. Kallas stated that the 2021 plans show the increased height of the planter. The top of the planter is higher than the height of the railing, so it is likely a 48-inch tall planter as the applicant stated. Boardmember Adcock thought the 2021 plan shown on the screen was beautiful but placing the sign on top of the planter would make it 10 feet tall.

Chair Baltay suggested limiting the sign to 7 feet in height from the sidewalk and leave it up to the applicant to propose a solution. The ARB could form an ad hoc committee if the applicant wants preliminary feedback.

Chair Baltay asked staff about the sizes of the address and tenants. Ms. Kallas replied that the non-tenant area of a directory sign typically is limited to 4 feet but the applicant is proposing 7.4 feet as a sign exception because it has the address. Chair Baltay stated the justification for the sign exception could be the size of the building and property.

Boardmember Hirsch was concerned about the lack of consistency in the sign program for lettering of tenant names.

Regarding Sign C on the retaining wall, the consensus was that it was too large. Boardmember Adcock and Chair Baltay stated Sign C was huge and should not be larger than the wall it is mounted on. Ms. Gerhardt remarked that there is a wall behind this, as seen on the Google image. The applicant is covering the entire wall, which is why you cannot see it in the plan set. Chair Baltay was okay with the sign being as tall as the solid wall behind it.

Chair Baltay asked if the perimeter size was larger than the code allowed. Ms. Gerhardt replied that a wall sign on a retaining wall is allowed to be the size of the retaining wall. Besides the height, Chair Baltay opined the sign was too large. Boardmember Adcock thought the fonts were too big. Chair Baltay

wondered how the Board could ask the applicant to modify it, if by putting a limit on the size or vertical height.

Boardmember Hirsch suggested floating the numerals and letters on the wall instead of a big block. Chair Baltay thought that would go a long way toward reducing the apparent bulk of the sign. Boardmember Hirsch was concerned the letters did not have too much character and he thought that when you put letters on a wall they ought to be interesting letters. Boardmember Adcock agreed and suggested asking the applicant not to use the Master Sign Design. Boardmember Adcock suggested having a height and overall sign limit for this sign but leave it up to applicant if they want to use pin-mounted letters. Boardmember Adcock opined a 16-inch font on a pedestrian street was too tall and the whole wall does not need to be filled with sign.

Boardmember Chen commented that the location of the signs for 525 and 530 are next to the parking garage entrance, so she is not sure whether the design intent is for visitors to find the entrance easier. Because there is a lot of street parking along those two streets, to make it easy for drivers to see the address, it has to be above car height and easy to see. Boardmember Chen thought an 8-foot height from the bottom of the letter to the top is appropriate for this location. Chair Baltay pointed out that there are 7-foot signs on either corner identifying 525 and 530, so you know what building it is as you are coming close. Boardmember Chen viewed the signs as reminding her where to go to avoid missing the garage entrance. Chair Baltay stated the Google image was taken from the top of a car about 4 or 5 feet high, making the driver's vision about 2 feet lower than the Google image, so you will see the sign mounted on the wall at that height.

Boardmember Adcock suggested following the guidance per the code for Wall Property ID. As shown, the sign does not exceed the wall height but the font does not need to be 16 inches tall if the applicant proposed 9½-inch bold font on the parking sign is visible for cars. Chair Baltay suggested maximum 12-inch fonts. The applicant's proposal was 56 square feet. Chair Baltay suggested no more than 40 square feet of area within the height of the wall. Boardmembers agreed. For consistency, Boardmember Adcock suggested the same limitations for Lytton Sign C on Page 11. Chair Baltay clarified that his comments were for 525 and 530 C.

On Page 21, Boardmember Chen thought the 525 freestanding parking sign was tall from the street level. Boardmember Adcock noted on Page 20 that the top of the sign is 12 feet tall, the sign itself is 3½ feet, so 8' 6" to the bottom of the sign. On the next page, if you consider the people walking around being 6 feet tall, the sign is rendered at maybe 7 feet tall instead of 8½ feet tall. For consistency with code clearances and with the applicant's rendering, Boardmember Adcock suggested 7' 6" to the bottom. Chair Baltay agreed with Boardmember Adcock. Chair Baltay liked the design of the sign. Pedestrians are not always aware there is a driveway, so Boardmember Adcock appreciated the "car coming" light. Boardmember Adcock asked staff if there were any safety or fire concerns for access. Ms. Gerhardt needs to confirm the minimum height with Public Works. Chair Baltay commented that if the sign is too high, you do not see it once you get close to it.

Boardmember Hirsch remarked that if the drawing on Page 19 was accurate, it does not look bad where it is. Chair Baltay reminded Boardmember Hirsch that the sign would be on the top of the planter.

Boardmember Adcock stated that Page 20 shows the sign with the planter and it states it is 61 inches tall; however, it looks maybe 4' 6" on the rendering with the people, so it is inconsistent.

Boardmember Hirsch asked about the parking sign on Page 20 for 525. Chair Baltay replied it is a pole-mounted blade sign. Staff said it is a freestanding sign as defined by the code. Chair Baltay said it should be limited to 5 feet. Ms. Kallas stated it needs a height exception because it is a directional sign. Chair Baltay remarked that Page 21 has a rendering of the sign in situ. Boardmember Adcock noted on Page 6, Sign E, the red line shows the sign orientation on Cowper Street. Chair Baltay stated the sign is perpendicular to the direction of traffic on Cowper to function as a parking sign. Boardmember Hirsch was fine with it sticking out as a blade sign because it has to be seen. Boardmember Adcock commented that the sign has to be in that direction for pedestrians walking by to know there are cars coming with the car-coming light because it is hard to see with the giant retaining walls.

Motion

1. Show all planter locations and heights accurately to 2021 approved plans in the sign elevation drawings
2. 525 University Sign Type A maximum height of 7 feet from sidewalk level
3. 530 Lytton Sign Type A maximum height of 7 feet from sidewalk level
4. Define the tenant space parameters for Sign Type A
5. 525 University Sign Type C maximum size of 40 square feet, maximum height of 12 inches for lettering, clarify mounting, cannot exceed the wall height
6. 530 Lytton Sign Type C maximum size of 40 square feet, maximum height of 12 inches for lettering
7. Bottom of both parking signs Types E shall be the minimum required above the sidewalk, top of sign shall not exceed 11 feet.

MOTION: By Chair Baltay, seconded by Boardmember Chen, to continue this project to a date uncertain, subject to the seven conditions outlined in the motion.

VOTE: Motion passed 4-0.

The ARB took a 5-minute break.

The ARB returned with all members present.

3. Architectural Review Board's (ARB) Draft Annual Report and Work Plan

Chair Baltay asked Planning Manager Jodie Gerhardt if she had a presentation. Ms. Gerhardt did not have a presentation but she shared the document on the screen. This document would go to City Council in the same format as in the ARB's packet, with black and white photos. Ms. Gerhardt could look

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into the potential of color photos but it would require be a special run or it could be emailed to the Council in color.

Staff updated the document with the year and current Boardmembers, as well as high and low priorities added as per the ARB's previous request. Ms. Gerhardt invited questions from the Board on the work plan. Chair Baltay invited any comments.

Boardmember Adcock commented on Packet Page 42, Goal 4, parklet design and streetscape designs, timeline spring/summer 2024. Streetscape design is not on the ARB's priorities nor was the ARB planning to address streetscape designs this spring or summer. Ms. Gerhardt explained that the goal was meant to be generic, meaning the ARB wants to review these types of things. Chair Baltay suggested adding "to monitor parklet and streetscape designs" under low priority.

Chair Baltay asked Ms. Gerhardt to introduce the annual report. Ms. Gerhardt mentioned that a few items were removed from the list because they were not finished. The numbering in the annual report was changed to align with the work plan. The staff used yellow text to denote changes that were made to the annual report.

Boardmember Hirsch asked his fellow Boardmembers to think about areas that require urban design and how to think about long-range planning.

Chair Baltay stated that the ARB is asking Council to create a Coordinated Area Plan for Encina Avenue. Chair Baltay suggested it include the area between El Camino and the railroad, Town and Country on the south, and Palo Alto Medical Foundation on the north. Discussion ensued amongst the Board.

Ms. Gerhardt did not see a write-up for California Avenue. Chair Baltay asked the Board why California Avenue should have a Coordinated Area Plan. Boardmember Hirsch spoke about the 800 linear feet of parking lots on Cambridge. California Avenue should have a Coordinated Area Plan to develop a scope of future development, especially for the parking lots. Ms. Gerhardt pointed out that under AB 2097, the City cannot require parking within a half-mile of a train station. The Board and staff reached a consensus on the following wording: With the State's requirement outlined in AB 2097 and Builders Remedy, the California Avenue area will experience more development. The area should have a Coordinated Area Plan to better scope future development.

Discussion ensued about coordinated area plans for downtown and Encina Avenue.

Roof terraces were added to Item 4. The Board had observed many multifamily developments utilize roof terraces to meet outdoor open space requirements, yet there is a lack of clear guidance on how those should be designed. Access to roof terraces is challenging with our height limit. Allowing stairs and elevators to go up another 15 feet would provide ADA access and make roof terraces functional. The Board has received feedback from the public about roof terraces causing privacy issues.

Item 5 is formalizing a communication process with City Council and Planning.

Boardmember Hirsch wanted the ARB to be agendized to make a direct presentation of this list to City Council. Chair Baltay asked Ms. Gerhardt what the process was in the Board and Commission Handbook

for providing these reports to the Council and the PTC. Ms. Gerhardt replied that the work plan is put in a packet with all the other work plans.

Chair Baltay did not think it was appropriate to push for the ARB to present this to Council. Chair Baltay viewed the ARB as the City's architects. Private architects inform clients about things they should know about, such as a change in the code or a change in situation. That is what the ARB is doing with its annual report, clearly communicating what the ARB is seeing. Whether Council chooses to act on it is up to them.

Chair Baltay commended Ms. Gerhardt and her staff for their work on the annual report, stating it was nicely presented and attractive.

Discussion ensued on wording and staff made edits as the ARB reviewed the document on the screen.

Boardmember Hirsch pointed out that the 824 San Antonio senior project was missing. Ms. Gerhardt explained that staff excluded projects that were not final. Boardmember Hirsch remarked that the annual report was brilliantly done and he liked the inclusion of pictures in the report.

Chair Baltay mentioned to the PTC that the ARB made a recommendation to start measuring underground construction such as parking garages, as they are affected by setbacks and lot coverage at a depth below the ground. The ARB recommended 3 feet as a means to try to get greater landscaping capacity and control how stairs came up. The PTC agreed it was a good way to start making these changes. Chair Baltay thought it should be included in next year's annual report.

Motion

Accept and present this work plan for 2024 to City Council.

MOTION: By Boardmember Hirsch, seconded by Boardmember Adcock.

VOTE: Motion passed 4-0.

4. Chair and Vice Chair Elections

Chair Baltay spoke with Boardmember Rosenberg and she indicated to him that she was willing to take on the responsibility of Chair.

Motion

Nominate Boardmember Rosenberg for Chair to be effective at the close of this hearing.

MOTION: By Chair Baltay, seconded by Boardmember Hirsch.

VOTE: Motion passed 4-0.

Motion

Nominate Boardmember Chen for Vice Chair.

MOTION: By Boardmember Hirsch, seconded by Boardmember Adcock.

Chair Baltay asked Boardmember Chen if she wanted to address the motion. Boardmember Chen thanked her fellow Boardmembers for their nomination.

VOTE: Motion passed 4-0.

Chair Baltay thanked his colleagues for the honor and pleasure of serving with them, and looked forward to working with the new Board leadership next year.

Approval of Minutes

5. Draft Architectural Review Board Meeting Minutes for January 18, 2024

Chair Baltay invited any comments or a motion.

On Packet Page 61, Paragraph 7, Boardmember Chen stated she was talking about ceiling height, not seating height.

Boardmember Adcock stated that Page 63, 5th line, should read as one-hour rated window, not one out-rated window.

Regarding Page 53, the last sentence on the third large paragraph states that the best solution to minimize the hazard is to not create the bus shelters at all. Boardmember Adcock's recollection was that the speaker said to not create clear-glass bus shelters. Boardmember Hirsch recalled the speaker showed the Board a bus shelter that she thought was more appropriate. Chair Baltay asked staff to check the transcript to see what was said. Ms. Gerhardt stated she would look at the meeting video to verify intent instead of relying only on the verbal words. Chair Baltay suggested removing the sentence or for staff to use their judgment. Ms. Gerhardt remarked that since it is summary minutes, staff would ensure it is capturing the intent.

Motion

Approve Draft Architectural Review Board Meeting Minutes for January 18, 2024 as revised.

MOTION: By Boardmember Chen, seconded by Boardmember Hirsch.

VOTE: Motion passed 4-0.

Board Member Questions, Comments, Announcements

Chair Baltay attended the Planning and Transportation Commission (PTC) meeting last week. The PTC discussed NV-CAP and the ARB's recommendations on the design standards. The PTC decided to

recommend a lower height limit in NV-MXM and NV-MXH. Staff recommended buildings be limited to 55 feet, the ARB thought 65 feet was appropriate, and the PTC agreed to 45 feet. The ARB and PTC recommendations will be presented to City Council for final determination. Boardmember Chen asked when is Council's meeting. Chair Baltay believed the Council would review this in June. Chair Baltay thought it was important for the new Chair to represent the ARB's point of view on this to the Council.

Boardmember Adcock thanked Chair Baltay for his leadership during the past year. Boardmember Adcock congratulated Chair Rosenberg and Vice Chair Chen.

Boardmember Hirsch echoed Boardmember Adcock's comments. Boardmember Hirsch remarked that the ARB was able to make many decisions, primarily because of Chair Baltay's leadership.

Adjournment

Chair Baltay adjourned the meeting at 11:34 AM.