

DESIGN REVIEW BOARD MEETING
CIVIC CENTER MULTIPURPOSE ROOM, BASEMENT LEVEL
440 Civic Center Plaza, Richmond, CA
December 9, 2009
6:00 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS

Michael Woldemar, Chair	Eileen Whitty, Vice Chair
Diane Bloom	Andrew Butt
Otheree Christian	Raymond Welter
Don Woodrow	

The meeting was called to order at 6:03 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Chair Woldemar; Vice-Chair Whitty; Boardmembers Bloom, Butt, Christian and Woodrow

Absent: Boardmember Welter

INTRODUCTIONS

Staff Present: Hector Rojas, Jonelyn Whales and Mary Renfro

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

November 18, 2009

ACTION: It was M/S (Butt/Whitty) to approve minutes for the November 18, 2009 meeting of the Design Review Board as written; unanimously approved.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Board unanimously approved the agenda. Chair Woldemar noted any decision approved may be appealed in writing to the City Clerk within ten (10) days, or by Monday, December 21, 2009 by 5:00 p.m.

CONSENT CALENDAR

Chair Woldemar said the Consent Calendar consisted of Item 2, which was requested to be removed by Vice-Chair Whitty. There was also a request to change the order of the public hearing items which was approved by the Boardmembers.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

- 2. PLN 09-152 – OLIVER INDUSTRIAL ADDITION AND REMODEL ON S. 50TH STREET – DESIGN REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL** for a ± 6,590 SF addition and remodel of an existing industrial building located at 1376 S. 50th St. (APN: 560-033-011. M-3 (Heavy Industrial) Zoning District. Owner: Oliver & Company; Applicant: Oliver & Company; Staff Contact: Hector Rojas. Tentative Recommendation: Conditional Approval.

Recusal:

Chair Woldemar recused himself from participating as a Boardmember on the public hearing item, noting that he is the project architect.

Michael Woldemar, Architect, stated that one curb cut increased the public parking side by one car, increased the drive aisle, decreased the construction yard slightly, and kept the landscaping about the same. The existing and proposed buildings are concrete block, and the majority of the masonry is single-scored block. They will remove the long windows on the front and the security grills and they are putting in new concrete block to create a new appearance. Next to it, new structures will be built with different elevations and unique facades. The window pattern will be consistent on the entire front facade. They will replace windows with aluminum and divided light glazing. A galvanized steel canopy/cornice will be added as a decorative element. The color palette will be a series of green tones. The landscape pattern reflects the geometric offsets of the buildings, with the front corner open to allow visibility into the buildings. There is a series of street trees and parking lot trees, and different shrubs across the face of the building, across the fence of the construction area, and around the parking area. There is a chain-link fence around the construction yard with grey vinyl slats, with jasmine planted around it so it will become a green wall.

Over the entries of the new spaces will be galvanized sheets of metal with the addresses and a light will shine on them to make the addresses glow at night. Some of the "windows" on the property line are recessed and painted on, in order to break up the façade.

The public hearing was opened.

Public Comments:

Frank Lopez, Richmond, said the buildings were built in 1943 as war housing projects for people working in the shipyards and the parking was diagonal. Mr. Woldemar said they discussed diagonal parking, but there was not enough room for cars to pass by the parked vehicles. In the Phase 1 report there is a series of references to photos and some of those photos go back to 1943. He expressed interest in seeing those photos that were supplied by staff.

Donald Peckham, Walnut Creek, said he owns the warehouse next to the proposed buildings and is in favor of the project. He has owned the property for 41 years and has been fighting blight on all of the vacant lots for a long time. If something is positive for the neighborhood, such as this project, he feels strongly that the City should support it. He purchased his property to park his construction tractors. When he put a construction shed on his property he was notified by the City that he must get an occupancy permit, sanitary facilities for his employees, and a 6-foot fence. He would like to acquire more land to build a warehouse, but has not been able to get it. The Campus Bay project is affecting all of the Harbor Bay Front area. They cannot get an appraisal on any property there and no money can be borrowed to acquire it.

Vice-Chair Whitty agreed with Mr. Peckham's opinion but said the Design Review Board must adhere to the submitted design and cannot address his broader concerns. She suggested he express these opinions at the public comment period at the next City Council meeting.

Mr. Peckham said the issue is becoming acute. The land is available but it has issues, mostly regarding chemical contamination. Vice-Chair Whitty suggested voicing these concerns at the City Council meeting so it is on record that he spoke about it.

Mr. Rojas said Mr. Peckham's point is very timely because the Planning Commission will have a General Plan update meeting tonight at 7:00 p.m. He suggested Mr. Peckham attend and express these concerns.

Mr. Peckham said he approves of the current project and thinks it is complementary to the architecture of his own property.

Boardmember Butt said he appreciates the thoroughness of the submittal package. He asked if there is any colored paving. Mr. Woldemar said no, it is basic grey concrete. Boardmember Butt said he thinks it is a nicely designed project and it will improve the area beyond the blighted plot that currently exists.

Boardmember Christian agreed with Boardmember Butt and had no other comments other than the project looks good.

Boardmember Woodrow asked about the address of the property and whether McDonald Avenue extends that far. Mr. Rojas said he mislabeled it and it should have been labeled Seaport. Boardmember Woodrow asked about the well on the site. Mr. Rojas said that was from the original development of the property; there was a well on one of the properties and it was used for access to water.

Boardmember Woodrow asked what it means to "destroy" the well. Mr. Rojas said the well will be removed. Boardmember Butt said the well must be collapsed at the bottom, filled with peat gravel, and covered with 4 feet of soil. Boardmember Woodrow said it should be sealed with concrete.

Boardmember Butt noted that the County has protocols for dealing with removal of wells. Boardmember Woodrow expressed concern that fluid could come through the well unless it is filled with something non-porous.

Boardmember Bloom said the project is great and it is a pleasure to see such complete drawings. She made some plant suggestions for the landscaping. She suggested having Boxwood that requires trimming will involve the use of power tools and stated that *Euonymus Microphylla* is a more drought-tolerant shrub than Boxwood and it takes its own form so it does not need to be shaped.

Mr. Woldemar said he wanted the three-foot hedge to be the equivalent to a green picket fence, which is a rectangular shape. He did not disagree with what Boardmember Bloom said, but he wanted it to feel more industrial. Boardmember Bloom stated that most Boxwood that are not maintained get large, and she expressed the importance of including instructions to trim the hedge by hand.

Boardmember Bloom said she likes the Jasmine, but it requires more clipping than other types of vines and tends to look messy because it has small leaves. She suggested *Hardenbergia Happy Wanderer*, which has purple, white, or pink flowers, because it has larger, stronger leaves. For native grasses she suggested *Festuca California*.

Vice-Chair Whitty explained stormwater control requirements recently went into effect on December 1st. Mr. Woldemar said a stormwater management plan is required if more than 10,000 square feet of impervious surface is created. If less than that square footage, then you have to do best management practices. Vice-Chair Whitty said she would leave that interpretation to Mr. Woldemar.

Mr. Lopez said the building he owns will be right next to the new building on the north side. He said he is concerned about how close the new building will be to his building. Mr. Woldemar said there will probably be about a 2-inch separation because he is concerned about the seismic aspect of both buildings. The buildings must be separated to avoid hitting each other during seismic activity. Because both buildings are on the property line, the 2 inches will come off of his side. He also cannot allow moisture to run down between the two buildings, and flashing will be provided over the top of both buildings to prevent water. The contractor will be required to see both properties to be sure they are up to code before they can be adjoined. Mr. Lopez said he welcomes the building and thinks it will be great for the neighborhood.

The public hearing was closed.

ACTION: It was M/S (Butt/Woodrow) to approve the application for PLN 09-152 with the revised staff conditions for approval; unanimously approved (Woldemar abstained).

Mr. Woldemar resumed his position as Chair.

- 1. PLN 09-065 – (Held Over from 11/18/2009) TWO STORY ADDITION TO SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENCE ON MODOC AVE – DESIGN REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL** for a ± 784 SF second story addition to an existing dwelling located at 5507 Modoc Avenue (APN: 507-120-014. SFR-3 (Single Family: Low Density Residential) Zoning District. Owner: Paris Patron; Applicant: Carl Sherrod; Staff Contact: Jonelyn Whales. Tentative Recommendation: Hold Over to 12/9/2009.

Chair Woldemar noted the applicant is not present at tonight's meeting. Senior Planner Whales confirmed that this was the case and said it is due to a death in his family; however, it was requested that the DRB act on the item in his absence.

Ms. Whales said this project was presented at the October 14, 2009 meeting, and at that time the Board requested correcting drafting errors on the drawings and creating a proposed landscaping plan as well as the details on the proposed windows. All of those items were addressed. The landscaping plan included correspondence from Boardmember Bloom stating some plants were not native plants. Ms. Whales said the draftsman may have been confused and the project can be conditioned with draught tolerant plants if the Board wishes to approve the project this evening.

The public hearing was opened.

Vice-Chair Whitty asked if the lot size is actually 5,356 square feet. Ms. Whales said it is not and they have checked the records; it is 5,000 square feet and said the lot was being confused with a different lot on the other side of the street.

Vice-Chair Whitty noted the requirement for two covered parking spaces, and Ms. Whales said there is a two-car garage. Vice-Chair Whitty asked for the dimensions of that garage, and Ms. Whales answered it is 20 x 15 feet, and Vice-Chair Whales questioned whether two cars can fit into the garage.

Chair Woldemar said Condition #6 which requires a final landscaping plan to be submitted by the Building Regulations Engineer, and he asked whether this is the correct person to approve it. Ms. Whales said it should have reflected "Building Regulations and Planning".

Boardmember Woodrow said he thinks the applicant has met all of the demands the Board has made, and he had no questions.

Chair Woldemar noted there was an attempt to bring the Neighborhood Council to comment on this project. Ms. Whales said they declined to attend because of the holidays and because they had no further input on the project other than the letter they submitted.

Vice-Chair Whitty said she agrees with the Neighborhood Council's letter about the number of doors in the upper bathroom. She would recommend taking out the two bedroom-bathroom doors. Chair Woldemar said they cannot change the interior unless they see a code violation. Ms. Whales said she would share this information with the applicant.

Boardmember Bloom commented on the landscape plan and was glad to see agreement to remove the concrete. There is one native plant, and many non-native plants. Several plants are not named and she felt the plan is not complete because of the omission of plant names. She suggested the applicant meet with her so she could give some plant suggestions.

Chair Woldemar asked if the landscape plan is required to be installed prior to the final approval. Ms. Whales answered that this is part of the project and it will be required.

Chair Woldemar questioned whether anyone else in the City of Richmond is available besides Boardmember Bloom to consult with applicants about landscape plans. Ms. Whales answered there is a Parks and Recreation Department and other staff that can help. Chair Woldemar was concerned these are time-consuming tasks and most applicants need assistance with landscaping.

Boardmember Bloom suggested the lawn area near the parking strip be removed and see if the applicant qualifies for city street trees in its place. She said this needs to be designed and someone will need to help the applicant with it.

Vice-Chair Whitty said this is a much better application than the first one. She wanted to be sure the applicant would know that the Board sees the difference and she wanted to commend them.

Chair Woldemar said some of the new windows do not have mullions, while some of the existing windows do. He requested including a condition that all windows will include mullions so there is a consistency throughout the project.

The public hearing was closed.

ACTION: It was M/S (Whitty/Butt) to conditionally approve the application for PLN 09-065 with the Staff conditions for approval, and with the following additions and revisions: Condition #6 revised from "Building Regulations Engineer" to "Building Regulations and Planning Staff", Condition #3 revised to work with Staff to arrange assistance with the design of a landscape plan and selection of native plants, and the addition of Condition #7 stating that mullions be installed in all windows for consistency; unanimously approved.

BOARD BUSINESS

Chair Woldemar reported that at the last meeting Boardmember Butt, Woodrow, and Chair Woldemar met with the designers for the Miraflores project. There is a move to have a series of additional subcommittee meetings with the Miraflores designers. There is also a move to have the City retain a design consultant to assist with some of those meetings. He had a meeting

with Planning staff last week to ask if funds were available to hire a consultant and asked if Boardmember Bloom met with the landscape architects.

Boardmember Bloom said she has been trying to set up that meeting, but they have a lot of work to do before it is time to address the landscaping. They requested being included in the next subcommittee meeting. She said there is no point in doing the landscaping until the layout of the project is finalized.

Chair Woldemar said it is his understanding that the Planning Commission approved the plan and they want to go forward with some of the infrastructure. The Planning Commission left the landscaping all to the Design Review Board.

Boardmember Bloom asked about the timing of this project. Chair Woldemar said it is not clear, other than staff and the Redevelopment Agency are pushing to get the entitlements completed. The Planning Commission put a condition on the project stating they would need to include a certain amount of commercial grocery space. They need assistance determining where in the plan that will be located.

Chair Woldemar said the streets and how they treat the stormwater management issues need to be focused on, as well as architecture. Some of the design is determined by the grants they have secured. They are attempting to redesign the project so that soil can be re-used on site under the streets instead of hauling it away.

Boardmember Bloom questioned whether any of the roses are still alive in the location. She suggested someone should be responsible for propagating whatever is there so that it can be grown and said that perhaps a nursery could volunteer to do this.

Chair Woldemar said when he went to the subcommittee meeting they said they had 30 days to prepare an application for the DRB. There are two architectural firms, with one doing the architecture for Eden and CHDC and the other doing the rest of the attached and detached houses. They were willing to come forward to additional design meetings. He noted that this is one of the last open areas to be developed in Richmond.

Boardmember Bloom said it is important to include garden spaces in the plan because the space used to be greenhouses. Vice-Chair Whitty said study sessions are needed to keep them from being on the fast-track to approval. Chair Woldemar voiced confidence in Planning staff being able to guide the development of this project.

Boardmember Butt said a project like this has a significant impact on Richmond and he thinks it is not enough for it to come only once before the Design Review Board. He believed that it needs an entire day and other Boardmembers agreed to this type of process.

Chair Woldemar said there are five different housing types and each one needs a significant amount of study. Vice-Chair Whitty said this has happened with other Redevelopment Agency projects in the past. She would like to avoid having to make last minute decisions with this project so the Agency does not lose funding.

Chair Woldemar announced that the next meeting will be on January 13, 2010. At this point there is nothing scheduled for that meeting and he stated he will also not be present at that meeting.

The Board adjourned the meeting at 7:25 p.m.