

**DESIGN REVIEW BOARD MEETING
CIVIC CENTER MULTIPURPOSE ROOM, BASEMENT LEVEL
440 Civic Center Plaza, Richmond, CA
January 27, 2010
6:00 p.m.**

BOARD MEMBERS

Michael Woldemar, Chair	Elieen 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, Welter and Woodrow

Absent: None

INTRODUCTIONS

Staff Present: Lina Velasco, Jonelyn Whales, Kieron Slaughter, Mary Renfro

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

ACTION: It was M/S (Woodrow/Bloom) to accept minutes for the December 9, 2009 meeting of the Design Review Board as written; unanimously approved.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chair Woldemar reviewed the procedure for speakers and noted any decision approved may be appealed in writing to the City Clerk within ten (10) days, or by Monday, February 8, 2010 by 5:00 p.m.

CONSENT CALENDAR

Chair Woldemar said the Consent Calendar consisted of Items 1, 2 and 3. Boardmember Welter requested removal of Item 1. Chair Woldemar requested removal of Item 2. He noted Item 3 is to be held over to an undetermined future date.

ACTION: It was M/S (Woldemar/Whitty) to approve the Consent Calendar Item 3 as a hold over to a date uncertain. The item will be re-noticed for a public hearing when a date is determined; unanimously approved.

Items Approved:

- 3. PLN 09-144 – BIO-RAD INDUSTRIAL BUILDING ON REGATTA BLVD – REQUEST FOR DESIGN REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL** to replace existing modular trailers currently used for office and laboratory space with a new ± 17,000 SF industrial building for research and

development activities on the Bio-Rad campus at 3110 Regatta Blvd (APN: 560-111-001). M-2 (Light Industrial) Zoning District. Specific Plan: KCSP (Knox Freeway/Cutting Boulevard Specific Plan): Mixed Use; Owner: Bio-Rad Laboratories, Inc; Applicant: John Stier; Staff Contact: Hector Lopez. Recommendation: Hold Over to Date Uncertain.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

- 1. PLN 09-132 – VILLANUEVA WAREHOUSE ON S. 1ST STREET & MAINE AVE –** REQUEST FOR DESIGN REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL to construct a new ±1,750 SF warehouse at S 1st St & Maine Ave (APN: 550-081-008). M-2 (Light Industrial) Zoning District. Owner: Jose A & Maria Villaneuva; Applicant: Brenda Munoz; Staff Contact: Kieron Slaughter. Recommendation: Conditional Approval.

Assistant Planner Slaughter gave the staff report and stated that the site is a 5,166 square foot corner lot located in the Santa Fe District. The site is currently vacant and is sometimes used for storage of miscellaneous equipment by the owner. The surrounding neighborhood is a mixture of 1-2 story dwellings, warehouses, and vacant lots. There is a large storage facility across the street. The applicant is proposing a 1,750 square foot warehouse, divided into two smaller warehouses for use as a light industrial warehouse. The proposal meets all zoning and General Plan designations.

The public hearing was opened.

Brenda Munoz, Applicant, discussed their work to match materials and colors of the surrounding area. Landscaping has been designed for low water usage and will include rainwater collection, and they are proposing trees on the north and west side.

Boardmember Welter questioned whether the bathroom windows on the west elevation are too high to be operable. He also encouraged the applicant to shift the windows into the center of the stucco pattern. He asked about the finishing materials on the fence. Ms. Munoz replied that the fence will be painted. Boardmember Welter suggested powder coating instead of painting the fence so it will last. He asked for details about the irrigation from rainwater barrels. Ms. Munoz explained the water system will be transported through pipes from the collection barrels.

Boardmember Bloom said the water appears to move through the pipes by gravity.

Boardmember Welter questioned and confirmed with the applicant that she contacted the neighborhood council twice and attended a meeting, but there was not enough time to discuss the project.

Chair Woldemar asked if Mr. Slaughter had any contact with the neighborhood council, and he replied that he only received one phone call from a nearby resident. He received no formal feedback or disapproval by anyone in the neighborhood.

Boardmember Bloom said she is in need of clarification of some of the symbols in the application. The hardscape entrance includes grey and red decorative stone but there is not enough detail about the type of material. Ms. Munoz said it will be pre-cut concrete.

Boardmember Bloom questioned if it is all concrete around the building, and why it is concrete and not plantings. Ms. Munoz answered there will be plantings around it.

Chair Woldemar questioned why there is a fence and gates on the main street elevation, and Ms. Munoz said that is to keep the area safe. Chair Woldemar asked why the fence does not go

all the way around if that is the purpose, and he suggested more landscaping around the front which he said would help the building quite a bit.

Boardmember Bloom believed that there are a lot more planting opportunities that could be taken advantage of, and she suggested looking at areas where there could be more plantings and trees. She questioned why so much hardscape is needed.

Boardmember Woodrow suggested that the concrete may be needed for large trucks to be able to drive over the area. Chair Woldemar asked if Boardmember Bloom could meet with the applicant to locate areas where additional trees could be planted. Boardmember Bloom said this is possible and she suggested the applicant will need to identify such areas.

Chair Woldemar suggested a condition of approval that eliminates the fence, creates additional landscaping, and that the applicant meet with a member of the Board or staff to determine locations of additional plantings and trees.

Boardmember Bloom suggested a picnic table or lunch area in the "private" area inside the gate, and suggested re-thinking the shape of the concrete area that is needed. Chair Woldemar said a topography map is also needed to show the grades at the site so water drainage can be determined.

Boardmember Woodrow questioned and confirmed that the applicant met with the Chair before the end of last year and confirmed that ideas from that meeting were incorporated into the current plans. Boardmember Woodrow also confirmed with the applicant that the project would not generate new jobs.

Boardmember Butt questioned the parking areas, and asked if it is allowable to have two spaces inside the private area of the building. Assistant Planner Slaughter answered yes, but they must be dedicated spaces. He said the three tandem spaces on the side do not work based on the Municipal Code and he suggested removing them and landscaping instead.

Ms. Munoz said there are two parking spaces, one for each building. The primary purpose of the warehouses is to put a roof over those vehicles. Boardmember Butt suggested it will be difficult to move the vehicles into the space and said the bathroom could be moved to create more space. Chair Woldemar said the key point is to be sure there is maneuvering room for the big truck. Boardmember Welter felt that widening the door would also help create more room for the truck.

Boardmember Butt said the curb cut for the driveway should be reduced to 20 feet. He also suggested landscaping and/or using granite in the hardscape. There is a lot of concrete and he recommended looking at another material. He questioned and confirmed with Ms. Munoz that the awnings are covered and he asked for more detail about the material. He also asked about exterior lighting and suggested lighting on either side of the large doors. He would like to see how the detailing of some of the architectural features is going to be done, including materials used. Ms. Munoz said they are just stucco. Boardmember Butt said he would like to see that broken up more and suggested the first four feet could be tile. On the West Elevation he suggested a wire lattice with plantings growing up. He would like to see the windows aligned with the reveal on the stucco.

Boardmember Welter pointed out that the bathroom windows are too high to be operable, and Boardmember Butt suggested aluminum versus vinyl windows. Chair Woldemar said he recommends aluminum for commercial buildings, and stated that more colors are available in aluminum. He suggested picking up the colors of the fence and awnings to bring it together. Boardmember Butt suggested making the windows larger to bring more light into the building.

He said he would like to know the color of the fence and the specific style of the fence, since that is the first thing people will see. Chair Woldemar noted the fence may not stay in the plan. Boardmember Butt agreed with the other Boardmembers' comments regarding the hardscape and landscaping.

Boardmember Christian said he agrees with the comments on landscaping, and noted that it beautifies the neighborhood. He pointed out the adjoining property is a residence with a large side yard and suggested increasing the landscaping on that side and decreasing the concrete.

Vice-Chair Whitty asked where the address numbers will be located and asked that the style of exterior lighting match the style of numbers on the building. Ms. Munoz said Main Street will be the address and they plan to use lighted numbers. Vice-Chair Whitty agreed with the comment to include lattices on the building with plantings instead of the fencing. She asked if there will be any signage, and Ms. Munoz answered no.

Boardmember Woodrow said this project will help improve the area, and he questioned and confirmed with Ms. Munoz that trucks will be stored inside the building. Boardmember Woodrow asked if this building will do well in an earthquake, since the entire area is fill. Assistant Planner Slaughter said the building must meet building codes.

Chair Woldemar said the Building Code has changed and there are simple techniques for creating a wall with windows that is strengthened to withstand an earthquake. Ms. Munoz said one of the reasons the door is 12 feet wide is to strengthen it.

Chair Woldemar asked about the height of the windows in the north elevation. The west and east elevations show the window sills at a lower location. He suggested making all window heights the same, and for the window on top of the roll up door to be full size. He agreed the materials and window locations need to be described.

Boardmember Welter asked if the buildings will be heated or cooled. Ms. Munoz answered that the buildings will only be ventilated.

Boardmember Woodrow said he is still struggling with how the interior space will be used. He questioned why the building is so long if all that is stored is one truck and some tools. Ms. Munoz answered they need the space for storage boxes. Boardmember Woodrow said he thinks the truck will occupy only about 20% of the space, and suggested making it smaller so it is less expensive.

Chair Woldemar said this project is within the M-2 zoning, which includes a variety of uses. This kind of facility will allow future rental of the space to a tenant or other use when the truck is no longer stored there.

Boardmember Christian asked for the Santa Fe neighborhood council's response. Ms. Munoz said their response was it would be better to have a building there instead of an open lot. They did not have the time to hear about the project at their meeting.

Boardmember Welter suggested improving the project by adding inexpensive industrial gooseneck lighting with a nice finish that complements other metal materials. He also suggested taking the top half of the building to introduce a different material, such as a tight metal-corrugated siding adjacent to the stucco on the bottom. This might be less expensive than stucco and would create a nicer look to the building. He also suggested painting a subtle checkered pattern to create a more interesting building.

Boardmember Butt agreed with Boardmember Welter and said he likes the idea of a material change so the building exterior is not all stucco.

Chair Woldemar read a list of comments the Board has made and suggested continuing the item so the applicant can work with staff on the materials and landscape and meet to talk through these items:

- Remove the fence along 1st Street
- Revise the landscape and meet with staff and boardmembers to create a new landscape plan
- Additional street trees along 1st Street
- Additional landscape trees as a buffer between the building and the adjacent single family residence
- Additional design work on the entry canopies and features of the building eaves and window surrounds
- Exterior lighting and dark sky ordinance
- Work on windows and coordinate with grid pattern
- Windows should be aluminum in color
- Address handicap access
- Align window heights in the upper band
- A sign program and addresses on the building
- Different colored "foot" at the bottom of the building
- Grading plan, drainage, elevations

Mr. Slaughter said the plan has been revised many times, and in the original plans the fencing was included on the entire lot. They revised that so it did not have the appearance of a fortress. He asked the Board if they are familiar with the security issues in that neighborhood.

Chair Woldemar said he understands the need for security and the front and back gate would remain. The front fencing is not necessary and he suggested security cameras.

Mr. Slaughter said the Code is vague for tandem parking in industrial zones. The tandem parking was included to provide additional parking, and it could happen in the future because it can be applied for separately.

Chair Woldemar suggested keeping the gate, removing the parking, and labeling that area as storage. Boardmember Butt said this allows for more flexibility of use of that space.

The public hearing was closed.

ACTION: It was M/S (Woldemar/Whitty) to continue the application for PLN 09-132 to the February 24, 2010 meeting; unanimously approved.
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2. PLN 09-166 – CIVIC CENTER MONUMENT SIGN ON MACDONALD AVE – REQUEST FOR DESIGN REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL to remove and replace the existing monument sign at the Civic Center, A Richmond Historic District, at Macdonald Avenue and 27th St (APN: 515-252-001). PC (Public and Civic Uses) Zoning District. Owner: City of Richmond; Applicant: Public Works; Staff Contact: Lina Velasco. Recommendation: Conditional Approval.

Assistant Planner Velasco noted this project is located in a historic district and, therefore, requires design review. The City is requesting a variance for the height exception because the sign ordinance reduces the allowable height and they would like to keep the sign at 18 feet. They attended the neighborhood council meeting and she distributed their comments to the

Board. The northeast planning and zoning committee recommended an anti-graffiti coating be added over the brick. They also recommended a white frame to be added around the monitor. The frame would be 2 inches thick around the monitor and would match the stucco reveals around the building. They also requested a concrete pedestal be added around the base so it does not appear to be growing out of the landscaping.

Boardmember Woodrow questioned why the sign is not going to be 10 feet high. Yader Burmudez, Department of Public Works, answered they are using the existing structure of the sign. Boardmember Woodrow asked if this will be like the billboard in Berkeley that is very bright. Ms. Velasco said it will be an electronic message center, which is an LCD screen, with a total pixel count of 1,824 pixels. It will dim at dusk and brighten in the morning. It can also be manually controlled by the city and adjusted if necessary.

Boardmember Woodrow asked if the messages will move across the screen. Ms. Velasco answered it would have that capability, and the plan is to allow events to be publicized that will switch from the screen.

Boardmember Woodrow said he does not like signs that blink and move when people are driving. Mr. Burmudez said the sign will have these capabilities but they are planning to communicate messages in a more subtle way. The purpose of the sign replacement is because the current sign is an embarrassment in its current condition, and also to advertise many events in the city as a source of pride and method of bringing in more business. Boardmember Welter said he likes the idea that the sign will be dimmed at night so it is not too bright.

Chair Woldemar asked if the Board's decision is final on the sign variance. Boardmember Bloom said the existing sign is the same height and size as the proposed sign, and she questioned why there is a variance being requested. Ms. Renfro said it is appealable to the City Council, and the variance is necessary because of the new sign ordinance.

Boardmember Bloom asked for plans at the base of the sign. Mr. Burmudez said Parks and Recreation will take ownership of the landscaping of that area. Vice-Chair Whitty said she does not want lighting at the base. Ms. Velasco pointed out that there are rocks at the base and not lighting.

Boardmember Butt questioned and confirmed with Ms. Velasco that the letters are pin mounted. Chair Woldemar pointed out that if the brick has any mortar revealed, the halo lighting will not be straight. Mr. Burmudez said the material looks like brick but is metal. Chair Woldemar said in El Cerrito they created a sign like this but the material was held off of the ground for drainage. Mr. Burmudez said the material comes all the way to the ground and then will be decorated by the landscaping. Boardmember Butt suggested a one-foot base would look too small on a sign that is going to be 18 feet high. He thought the sign would look best with no base.

Boardmember Butt asked how the sign will be waterproofed. Mr. Burmudez said the monitor inside needs to be protected and it will have the same material on top as on the side. Boardmember Butt suggested it should have a slope at the top to drain water.

Boardmember Christian asked if it will be double-faced, and Ms. Velasco answered there will be lettering and a monitor on each side of the sign.

Boardmember Welter asked for clarification of the border around the monitor. Ms. Velasco said the neighborhood council suggested painting it white to match the windows of the building. Boardmember Welter said he is not sure it makes much of a difference to paint that border white, and he suggested foregoing it. He also suggested if it is going to be thin brick veneer, he

would like to see the corners wrap rather than butt together so it gives the appearance of a full brick.

Chair Woldemar said he thinks the thin brick is a problem because the brick on the Civic Center is an odd-sized brick. He thinks it will be difficult to find thin bricks that match the elongated bricks on the Civic Center. He suggested it should be a replication of the brick in the building. He thinks there should not be a base, and there should be a reworking of the landscape plan in this area so the Board can know what is planned. This area goes all the way back to the Plaza and should be considered together. The frame should be the same aluminum color as the letter and the reader board should be flush with the brick so the graphics and letters pop forward. The waterproofing could then be done with the aluminum surround. He expressed concern that the graffiti coating might change the color of the bricks so it no longer matches the buildings.

Vice-Chair Whitty suggested it will be a challenge to match the red color of the brick exactly, and Boardmember Butt agreed but said he thinks it will be possible.

Boardmember Bloom asked why the sign does not say Richmond Civic Center. Ms. Velasco said they want to possibly add the City seal below the monitor. If they put on the City logo it might change soon. Vice-Chair Whitty suggested including Richmond on the sign.

Mr. Burmudez said the size of the letters was an issue and they did not want to crowd it on the sign. Vice-Chair Whitty asked where they would put the seal on the sign, and suggested it is important to know if the seal is there for landscaping planning. Mr. Burmudez said the seal is not included and this is the final version of the proposal.

Ms. Renfro said the City had to re-do the sign ordinance because content cannot be regulated. Therefore the Board cannot rule on the content of the sign, including whether it says City of Richmond or an address.

Chair Woldemar suggested including a condition that there should be three lines of text proportionately distributed on the reader board. He asked if materials are going to be provided by the sign manufacturers and then they will build the sign. Mr. Burmudez answered the sign designers are doing the design for free, and then there will be bidding for the building of the project.

ACTION: It was M/S (Woldemar/Whitty) to approve the application for PLN 09-166 based on staff's various recommendations and findings, with the following additional conditions for approval: 1) that there be a solid top to the sign, and if there is any flashing overlap it will match the treatment surrounding the existing buildings, 2) that the graphics be reviewed to be the same as the existing buildings in terms of font and letter spacing and those graphics be adjusted to be better proportioned to the space between the reader board and the top of the sign, 3) that full brick be used if possible, and thin brick allowed if it matches the shape, size, and color of the existing buildings, 4) that a landscape plan be prepared and returned to the Board informally as a matter of information, 5) that if thin brick veneer is used the corners are finished to give the appearance of full brick, and 6) that the monument run completely to a concrete foundation base; unanimously approved.

BOARD BUSINESS

Ms. Whales noted there will be no meeting on February 10, 2010, since there are no items for that meeting. The first meeting in February will be on February 24, 2010. She said Bio-Rad

would like to meet before February 24th, and Ms. Whales suggested meeting the week of February 17th.

Boardmember Woodrow asked if the Board can be given a tour of Cal Oil if there will be a proposal from them. Ms. Renfro said under the Brown Act a tour would constitute a meeting if more than 4 members of the Board attend.

Chair Woldemar requested staff explore the initiation of incorporating a landscape maintenance bond for a 1-2 year period so it is part of an approval of projects. He suggested other jurisdictions have done this to keep landscaping alive and it gives the City the ability to enforce it.

Chair Woldemar said there is an additional sign on the bottom of the Pacific East Mall, and he wanted to bring that to the attention of staff.

Chair Woldemar announced Boardmember Bloom, Boardmember Butt and himself met with people on the Miraflores project. The City has arranged for the Board to have an outside design consultant to assist; Jonathan Livingston. Mr. Livingston will meet with architect individually to resolve a series of issues before they spend a lot of time on drawings. They will bring this to the Board before April 30, 2010.

The Board adjourned the meeting at 8:14 p.m.