

MINUTES APPROVED AT THE DRB MEETING ON MAY 26, 2021

DESIGN REVIEW BOARD REGULAR MEETING Richmond, CA 94804

April 28, 2021
6:00 P.M.

All Participation Via Teleconference

Due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, Contra Costa County and Governor Gavin Newsom had issued multiple orders requiring sheltering in place, social distancing, and reduction of person-to-person contact. Accordingly, Governor Newsom had issued executive orders that allowed cities to hold public meetings via teleconferencing. Due to the shelter in place orders, all City of Richmond staff, members of the Design Review Board (DRB), and members of the public participated via teleconference. Public comment was confined to items on the agenda and limited to the specific methods identified on the agenda.

BOARD MEMBERS

Kimberly Butt
Jessica Fine
Macy Leung

Brian Carter
Michelle Hook
Jonathan Livingston

Vice Chair Carter called the regular meeting to order at 6:15 P.M.

ROLL CALL

Present: Vice Chair Brian Carter, and Boardmembers Kimberly Butt, Jessica Fine, and Michelle Hook

Absent: Chair Jonathan Livingston, and Boardmember Macy Leung

INTRODUCTIONS

Staff Present: Planners Roberta Feliciano and Jonelyn Whales, and City Attorney Shannon Moore

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: April 14, 2021

ACTION: It was M/S/C (Fine/Hook) to approve the minutes of April 14, 2021, as submitted; approved by voice vote: 4-0 (Ayes: Butt, Carter, Fine, and Hook; Noes: None; Abstain: None; Absent: Livingston and Leung.)
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APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Public Forum

Staff described the format of the web-based meeting and the public's ability to speak during the meeting.

The following email was read into the record:

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CORDELL HINDLER, Richmond: "Good evening Chair Livingston, Boardmembers and staff, I have a couple of comments for the record. 1. Any potential projects upon approval has to communicate with the neighborhood councils. 2. Also I would think that the public should be able to return to the meetings. Sincerely, Cordell."

City Council Liaison Report: None

CONSENT CALENDAR: None

APPEAL DATE:

Any decision approved may be appealed in writing to the City Clerk within ten (10) days, or by Monday, May 10, 2021 by 5:00 P.M.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

- | | |
|---------------------|---|
| 1. PLN20-344 | NEW T-MOBILE WIRELESS FACILITY |
| Description | PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER A RECOMMENDATION TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF A DESIGN REVIEW PERMIT TO CONSTRUCT A NEW T-MOBILE WIRELESS FACILITY. |
| Location | 4000 BISSELL AVENUE |
| APN | 517-280-006 |
| Zoning | CM-3, COMMERCIAL MIXED-USE, COMMERCIAL EMPHASIS |
| Applicant | SCOTT DUNAWAY OF D4 COMMUNICATIONS, LLC FOR T-MOBILE |
| Owner | RICHARD LOMPA |
| Staff Contact: | ROBERTA FELICIANO Recommendation: RECOMMENDATION TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION |

[The recording of the meeting from which the minutes had been prepared started 10 minutes after the call to order during the discussion of PLN20-344.]

Boardmember Butt stated she liked the current iteration better than the prior iteration for the faux tree. She sought a color choice to keep the water tank as a background structure.

Boardmember Fine noted that the application would set a new precedent for Richmond and she thanked the applicant for the proposal. She wanted to see some contrast with the base one color and the tank a different color, particularly if no mural had been proposed. She asked about the capacity of the proposal.

SCOTT DUNAWAY, D4 Communications, LLC for T-Mobile, explained that the application was intended to be a long-term project for T-Mobile, which had a 25-year lease with the property owner of the project. He stated that while no additional water tower had been proposed on the site, there would be co-location with other carriers either below or above the proposed water tank, with enough room in the compound where the equipment was housed for an additional two carrier cabinets. He explained they had reached out to the neighborhood with the original faux tree design, which was not supported. The neighborhood response had been for consideration of other design options and he suggested the water tank proposal would satisfy that desire.

Vice Chair Carter verified with Mr. Dunaway that there would be an enclosed roof with a hatch at the bottom of the tank which could accommodate drainage flow. He urged attention to waterproof flashing and other detailing for what Mr. Dunaway described as a manufactured pre-fab unit that would be brought into the site with final texturing to occur after placement on the site.

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Vice Chair Carter asked whether any emblem or mention of the City of Richmond could be placed on the tank given its prominence above the rooflines, and Mr. Dunaway advised that he would ask T-Mobile about that possibility.

Vice Chair Carter suggested the water tank might be a target for graffiti and he supported FRP as a finish to potentially address that concern, to which Mr. Dunaway explained that someone would come to the facility every three weeks or so for maintenance cleaning at which time any graffiti would be addressed.

Roberta Feliciano confirmed that pursuant to staff recommended conditions of approval, the applicant would be responsible for maintenance and graffiti removal.

Vice Chair Carter opened the public hearing.

Ms. Feliciano described the public's ability to speak to the application.

No written comments were submitted, or oral comments made, by any member of the public.

Boardmember Hook stated the color should speak more to the industrial nature of the water tank right next to BART. She suggested that the legs of the tank could remain natural unpainted in the metal structure and that the actual tank could be a blue-gray tone. She noted that the white in the visual simulation was misleading and a contrast between the framing and the tower versus the tank would be interesting. She agreed that the water tank as an icon should be pursued given its prominence and location.

Boardmember Butt supported a two-tone color scheme with a raw base or the base with a coating to avoid rust. She did not support bright white and preferred some contrast with a dark industrial type of color for the base, if coated.

Boardmember Fine supported an homage to an historic water tank with an exposed steel base and a painted top in a natural color.

Vice Chair Carter stated the water tank could be evocative of wooden water towers or steel water towers. With a wrapped FRP panel, he stated the tank might be more of a steel tank than a wooden one and he suggested a conical cap to evoke a typical water tank profile.

The Board discussed the use of FRP but given the height of the water tank there was a question as to whether the texture would even be noticed. The Board also supported a red steel color for the bottom of the tank and blue-gray for the actual tank, along with a cap on the water tank as a functional element.

Vice Chair Carter closed the public hearing.

ACTION: It was M/S/C (Butt/Fine) to recommend to the Planning Commission the approval of PLN20-344, New T-Mobile Wireless Facility; subject to the four Findings and Statements of Fact with 15 Conditions of Approval and additional DRB conditions as follows: 16) The water tank shall be painted a red primer shade on the base and a darker gray color at the top. 17) Install a conical roof over the tank. 18) Consider some painted signage, with either the word *Richmond* or the *City of Richmond* logo, to be investigated further as an option.; approved by voice vote: 4-0 (Ayes: Butt, Carter, Fine, and Hook; Noes: None; Abstain: None; Absent: Livingston and Leung.)

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2. PLN20-079	NEW SECOND DWELLING
Description	STUDY SESSION TO PROVIDE AND RECEIVE COMMENTS ON THE DESIGN OF A NEW SECOND DWELLING UNIT WITH AN ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT (ADU) SINGLE-FAMILY DWELLING OF ±1,186 SQUARE FEET ON THE LOWER LEVEL OF AN EXISTING ±6,250 SQUARE FOOT PARCEL.
Location	1314 CARLSON BOULEVARD
APN	508-082-014 AND -015
Zoning	RL-2, SINGLE-FAMILY LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT
Owner	KAUR RAMNEET
Applicant	ROBERT AVELLAR
Staff Contact:	JONELYN WHALES Recommendation: PROVIDE AND RECEIVE COMMENTS

Jonelyn Whales presented the staff report dated April 28, 2021, for a proposal to be discussed in study session for a new second dwelling unit with an accessory dwelling unit on a 6,250 square foot parcel where an existing one-story single-family dwelling with a garage currently existed. She described the site as steep in the front with a moderate to flat iteration to the south. The applicant proposed a two-story dwelling on the south side of the parcel itself with one dwelling on the ground floor of 1,900 square feet, and the main dwelling at approximately 1,080 square feet, with an 800 square foot ADU on the top floor. The applicant proposed to use the same type of exterior materials as the existing single-family dwelling. The proposal met all development guidelines, including maximum height of 30 feet in that at no point would the structure exceed 28 feet in height. The lot coverage was 30 percent where 50 percent was allowed. She suggested it would be a prime opportunity for the applicant to develop the vacant infill lot adjacent to the dwelling and provide housing for families in the Richmond area.

Ms. Whales responded to comments from the Board and explained that the Richmond Annex Neighborhood Council had been notified of the project. No letter had been submitted although she had had discussions with the President of the Neighborhood Council. She also advised that grading and drainage plans would be required for project approval, there would be a separation of five feet between the two dwellings, there were currently two lots involved both owned by the same owner, and the two lots would be merged as part of the application. In addition, there were retaining walls on the site but she was not aware of any proposed fencing, and all parking requirements would be satisfied through the existing garage and the garage proposed for the new dwelling.

ROBERT AVELLAR, the Project Designer, clarified that there was only five feet between the buildings and no fencing had been proposed in that area because of the limited space. He noted that the existing building had a walkway on the northern side and the new building had a walking area on the southern side of that building. The topography was uneven between the two buildings. He pointed out the proposed drainage using the large area in the front of the existing building to direct the drainage to inside drainage.

Boardmember Fine asked about the elevations and the bulk and mass, had no questions about drainage since that would remain to be clarified, and emphasized that an engineer would be required even though there appeared to be a solid design. She explained that the design could be evaluated after an engineer had become involved to clarify the details.

Boardmember Fine questioned the arched openings at the deck at the south elevation with no arch anywhere else, questioned the enclosed deck versus an exposed deck, and was curious about the windows and one rather large opening with no mullions on the north elevation.

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Mr. Avellar explained that the wide opening was a sliding glass door. Boardmember Fine also emphasized the need for consistency in design and a rhythm and balance in the fenestrations. She pointed out a couple of different exterior door types on the plans that would have to be clarified. She advised that the DRB would want a landscape plan, materials boards, lighting specs and the like. She noted that the DRB offered subcommittee insights to respond to applicants' questions, comments and the need for help, which she offered to Mr. Avellar.

Boardmember Hook agreed with the need for more details and while the sections were helpful she recommended a section through the driveway and how it met the street level, especially in the perspectives shown. She sought more detail on the retaining wall where it met the top of level one and she asked that the section of the retaining wall be drawn because the retaining wall was so prominent. She also asked if the retaining wall would step, wanted to know the relationship and context, commented that a few trees had been noted in the renderings but had not been included on the plan, and sought more information about the street tree called out in the rear. She added that the patio appeared to be concrete but it would be nice if it was softscape. She sought more clarity with the landscaping and fencing.

Boardmember Butt characterized the site as tricky, sloped, small, and tight between the two buildings and commented that it looked almost as if the entry was flattening out and working against the grade, particularly since the retaining wall was heavy. She recommended looking at ways to reduce the height of that wall and work with the elevations. She wanted to look at the relationship between the proposed building and the existing building next door, stated they did not relate to each other, and suggested aesthetically it might be nice if they did not compete. She recommended a fence between the two to cover up the alleyway. She also noted with respect to massing that the structure would look tall on the street and stressed the need for the elevations to be in context with the rest of the street. She suggested pulling the top master bedroom back to step back and sculpt that front elevation.

Boardmember Butt was not sure about the appropriateness of the arch and whether it worked with the overall aesthetic of the building since it looked out of place with the rest of the streamlined look. She also suggested that in the back the deck and the way it met the hipped roof was an odd configuration and recommended potentially a different roofing type. She asked about the condition of the backyard because of the heavy retaining wall and the major cut along with the relationship to both neighbors. She noted that the right rear view looked like a blank wall to the neighbors. She also asked about the materiality in that some of the line perspectives appeared to be stucco at the bottom with siding at the top.

Mr. Avellar described what had inspired his design having reviewed other buildings in the area where some had a mix of stucco and siding. He referred to a new home that he had used as a model because the owners liked that building, which had an arch over the garage. He had attempted to capture what was already in Richmond, and added that the proposed colors were the same as the model he had used, as were the building type, windows and sliders.

Boardmember Butt encouraged the use of the two material types: stucco and siding. She suggested the grading would be challenging to avoid intense retaining walls, and spoke to the massing and how it related to the building next door. She was concerned about the massing of the retaining wall and reiterated the need to step back the third story and to consider a change in material to break up the mass.

Mr. Avellar noted that the neighborhood was a mix of large massing and small single-family homes and he had proposed something in between. .

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Vice Chair Carter opened up public comments.
Ms. Feliciano again described the public's ability to speak.

MARTHA JACKSON, who commented that she lived directly behind the vacant lot in question, expressed concern for the height of the new building if situated directly behind her fence. She stated the vacant lot had been a fire hazard for the last year and she was concerned that the lot had not been cleaned up.

Vice Chair Carter echoed most of the concerns already shared, stated the applicant had done a good job thinking through the fenestration and recommended that be tightened up with details on the mullions and the operable windows, particularly the large fixed window on the street elevation that appeared to be floor to ceiling. He agreed that stepping back would help with the massing, suggested the colors of the existing home and the new home need not be the same since it was acceptable that the two buildings enjoy their own identity. He agreed with the need to address the retaining walls and how the structure fit within the site and how it related to the neighbors all around, and recommended a site section to go through to the neighboring structures to better understand the concept. He suggested the proposal was on track and a few modifications would improve it.

Mr. Avellar commented that some of the lines did not show up on some of the drawings in the packet, particularly with respect to the solid wall, and he offered to send higher quality plans the next time.

Vice Chair Carter requested that the control joints in the cement plaster walls be indicated on the plans. He clarified the need for an expansion of the elevation to include the existing house to the left to show how the elevation of the driveways related to each other to get a sense of the retaining walls between the two driveways.

Boardmember Fine reiterated her interest in helping the applicant with insights and direction, and emphasized the need for a complete package to be able to expeditiously review the project.

Boardmember Hook also offered her help and reiterated the need for an engineer, a landscape plan, and the section drawings that had been recommended.

Boardmember Butt wanted to know the appearance of height from the street and from the surrounding neighbors, and recommended that the applicant consider the relationships of the other houses in terms of massing and size. She also recommended that the roof deck with the hipped roof be taken out, and that the scale of the window on the third floor be reduced.

Board Business

A. Staff reports, requests, or announcements: None

B. Boardmember reports, requests, or announcements:

Boardmember Fine expressed her appreciation for the DRB's recent training, which had been very helpful.

The rest of the Board agreed.

Adjournment

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The meeting was adjourned at 8:08 P.M. to the next regular Design Review Board meeting on Wednesday, May 12, 2021.