

**MINUTES APPROVED AT THE DRB MEETING ON SEPTEMBER 13, 2023**

**DESIGN REVIEW BOARD REGULAR MEETING  
Multi-Purpose Room, Community Services Building, Basement Level  
440 Civic Center Plaza, Richmond CA 94804**

August 9, 2023

6:00 P.M.

**BOARD MEMBERS**

Kimberly Butt  
Marcus L. Christeson  
David Plotkin

Brian Carter  
Leah Marthinsen  
Vita Rey

Chair Brian Carter called the regular meeting to order at 6:03 P.M.

**ROLL CALL**

**Present:** Chair Brian Carter, Vice Chair Marcus Christeson, and Boardmembers Kimberly Butt, David Plotkin and Vita Rey

**Absent:** Boardmember Leah Marthinsen

**INTRODUCTIONS**

**Staff Present:** Planners Hector Lopez and Roberta Feliciano, and Kevin McLaughlin from the City Attorney's Office

Chair Carter welcomed Vita Rey, the newest member of the DRB.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** None

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** No changes

**MEETING PROCEDURES:** None

**PUBLIC FORUM**

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

**CITY COUNCIL LIAISON REPORT:** None

**CONSENT CALENDAR:** None

**APPEAL DATE**

The appeal date for actions taken by the Board at this meeting will be no later than 5:00 P.M. on Monday, August 21, 2023.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS**

- 1. PLN23-100** **JEFFRIES SECOND-STORY DECK**  
Description PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER A REQUEST FOR A DESIGN REVIEW PERMIT TO CONSTRUCT A ±210 SQUARE-FOOT

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SECOND-STORY DECK AT THE REAR OF AN EXISTING SINGLE-FAMILY DWELLING.  
Location 4074 MOZART DRIVE  
APN 414-321-016  
Zoning RM-1, MEDIUM DENSITY MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT  
Owner GARY ALEXANDER AND ROSA AGUIRRE  
Applicant OMID JAN NIAZI  
Staff Contact MARYTONAE SANCHEZ Recommendation: **CONDITIONAL APPROVAL**

Hector Lopez presented the staff report dated August 9, 2023, for the request to construct a 210 square-foot second-story deck at the rear of the existing structure eight feet from the ground on a 4,300 square foot parcel 500 feet north of Via Verdi, east of El Portal Drive on a downslope parcel of approximately 15 percent slope at 4074 Mozart Drive. The existing two-story residence in the Fairmede-Hilltop neighborhood had approximately 1,875 square feet of living space. An existing deck at the rear of the building would be demolished and replaced with a five-inch thick concrete slab. A six-inch thick retaining wall would be constructed on top with a three-foot tall guard rail four feet away from the deck, cast-in-place with a depth three feet below the lowest grade level. The project met all requirements of the zoning district in terms of setbacks.

Mr. Lopez commented that there were many similar decks along the western side of Mozart Drive. Approval of the application was recommended. He also advised that two letters had been received from neighbors; one of which supported the design as submitted and the other had expressed concern for a loss of privacy and property value.

Chair Carter opened the public hearing.

GARY ALEXANDER, the property owner, explained that there were many similar decks in the area, the adjacent neighbors had a deck overlooking their back yard, and the proposed deck in the rear of the site would not look into the adjacent home but would look into the back yard of the adjacent home.

ROSA AGUIRRE, property owner, also described the layout of the home that already had views of the neighbors' property. She noted it was their understanding that the proposed deck would raise property values not lower them.

Boardmember Plotkin verified the role of the DRB in the analysis of the application with respect to aesthetics, privacy, compatibility with the surroundings and the like.

CESAR SILVA, 4682 Mozart Drive, El Sobrante, did not oppose the project but suggested that the deck would hover over his property and affect the value of his home by impacting the privacy of his home.

There was a recommendation to work with the neighbor to create some lattice, landscaping or other screening between the subject home and the neighboring property to address privacy concerns.

Chair Carter closed the public hearing.

**ACTION: It was M/S/C (Carter/Christeson) to approve PLN23-100, Jeffries Second-Story Deck, subject to the four Findings and Statements of Fact with five Conditions of Approval and an additional DRB condition as follows: 6) The metal fence to be painted**

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**white to match the window trim; approved by a Roll Call vote: 5-0 (Ayes: Butt, Christeson, Plotkin, Rey and Carter; Noes: None; Abstain: None; Absent: Marthinsen.)**

<b>2. PLN23-081</b>	<b>SHIELDS-REID PARK RENOVATION</b>
Description	PUBLIC HEARING FOR A DESIGN REVIEW PERMIT TO CONSTRUCT GRANT-FUNDED UPGRADES TO SHIELDS-REID PARK, INCLUDING A NEW STAGE, RESTROOM, PLAYGROUND, FITNESS ZONE, PICNIC AREA, HABITAT GARDEN, PUMP TRACK, AND PUBLIC ART.
Location	1410 KELSEY STREET
APN	561-242-001
Zoning	PCI, PUBLIC, CULTURAL, AND INSTITUTIONAL DISTRICT
Owner	CITY OF RICHMOND, PUBLIC WORKS (OWNER)
Applicants	JESSE JONES AND SPENCE KOEHLER, PLACEWORKS
Staff Contact	ROBERTA FELICIANO Recommendation: <b>CONDITIONAL APPROVAL</b>

Roberta Feliciano presented the staff report dated August 9, 2023, for a Design Review Permit for grant-funded renovations to the Shields-Reid Park that would include a new 682-square foot outdoor stage, a 138-square foot restroom, playground, fitness zone, picnic area, habitat garden, pump track, lighting and landscaping and public art. The funding would be through a Proposition 68 Statewide Park Program Grant. As part of the application community residents had provided input on what they wanted to see in the park. The City’s Recreation and Parks Commission had also reviewed the proposal.

Ms. Feliciano reported that the proposal complied with the development standards for the PCI Zoning District. Letters of support had been received from both the North Richmond Municipal Advisory Committee (NRMAC) and the Shields-Reid Neighborhood Council. No other public comments had been received with respect to the project. She recommended conditional approval of the application.

SPENCE KOEHLER, Landscape Designer, PlaceWorks, commented that they had been working in Richmond for some time including on Phase I Renovations to the six-acre Shields-Reid Park surrounded by the Shields-Reid residential neighborhood, with an active community center and active after school programs. PlaceWorks was now working on Phase II where the renovations were to be constructed by 2025. He explained that Phase II focused on the southern portion of the park.

Mr. Koehler explained that the park was located in a high crime area and due to wire theft and vandalism, there was a need to use durable equipment and work to keep the amenities maintainable and sturdy. He identified the wear and tear that had occurred over the years, described the grant award concept that involved community engagement, the requests from the community that included among other things a pump track, which is a bike track that had jumps and a cycle circuit, along with all the other amenities that had been identified. He also explained that public art was being developed on a parallel track with artists working with the Richmond Public Art Advisory Committee.

Mr. Koehler presented the schematic design, noted that the stage had been moved to be a better connected more functional space, described the feedback from NRMAC and the Shields-Reid Neighborhood Council as well as the feedback from the Recreation and Parks Commission and others who worked on regular events at the park. The main feedback was for a safe park with good visibility, the need to avoid adding additional maintenance requirements to park staff, accessibility, real turf in the amphitheater, more parking, and appropriate fencing. The plans had been updated accordingly with a fully accessible path now connecting all pieces of the park,

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with the proposed activity areas identified, picnic areas surrounded by native gardens with low water/low maintenance California natives, and with the habitat gardens to be maintained by the Watershed Project.

Mr. Koehler described the bright warm color palette of oranges and yellows that had been considered to accentuate and complement the heavy wooden furnishings that had been proposed. In addition, the fitness equipment would be in the same warm color family. A unique pre-fab restroom had been proposed to address the vandalism concerns on the site in that it automatically locked overnight and automatically self-cleaned. Wood siding to match the picnic tables and trash cans had been proposed, and work with the artists would address the stage which would be open on the sides, with a gap underneath the back wall for acoustics and with visibility underneath in a shaded and inviting place for performances. The stage would be multi-functional in that when there were no performances it could be used as a secondary picnic area. The perforated roof would shade the area and allow rain through to avoid a permanent campsite option. He described the asphalt pump track that would be designed and built by a separate company. The natural play area would have zip lines, rope swings and a seat on one of the tracks, and include other natural elements.

Mr. Koehler described the existing play equipment for children under 5 years of age, and identified the new equipment that would be matched for kids 5-12, with more challenging obstacles. Planting would include trees more vertical to allow visibility underneath the canopies, lighting had been proposed for safety, and since fencing was a concern additional feedback was being sought to address that issue, although a removable fence had been proposed between the north fields and the amphitheater for overflow during a larger performance. Concerns with vehicles accessing the courts would also be addressed through the use of removable bollards.

When asked, Mr. Koehler identified the current plans for a fence and explained that lighting would be another safety element. He described the comments pro and con related to the fence that had been proposed at four feet in height consistent with the existing fence around the under 5-year old play area. He added that they were open to suggestions on the type of fence to include. He also noted the central fence was also a four-foot black chain link fence. He commented that NRMAC and the Shields-Reid Neighborhood Council had recommended the addition of a perimeter fence while the City Recreation and Parks Commission did not support a perimeter fence and suggested it could be dangerous. The community's input in that regard would again be sought during the construction document process.

Vice Chair Christeson emphasized the need to keep dirt bikes off of the proposed pump track.

Boardmember Plotkin also emphasized the need to keep the park secure after dark and suggested a four-foot tall fence would not be high enough to do that. He recommended a six-foot fence. He also commented that an open park would be more inviting to the community. He questioned whether there could be a lower fence to keep cars and dirt bikes out while keeping small children in.

Boardmember Butt expressed a preference for the fence that had been selected as opposed to a chain link fence.

Boardmember Rey also supported the fence that had been selected with the removal of the spikes on the top. She supported an open park.

Mr. Koehler asked how tall a fence would need to be to keep a dirt bike out. He explained that big eucalyptus logs would be placed along the side of the amphitheater and habitat garden and logs were often used as a BMX bike obstacle. He wanted to find something that did not seem to

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be a barrier fence but acted as a barrier fence, something that might not need to be around the entire area.

Boardmember Butt noted that everyone in the area had a fence at the perimeter of their property and in that way having an open fence would be in keeping with the area.

Vice Chair Christeson asked if there was an existing sprinkler system and Mr. Koehler stated there would be a new irrigation system and sprinklers at the amphitheater. The hatch around the pump track would be mulch. The habitat garden would have a drip irrigation system. He acknowledged that the site would be irrigated more than it was currently irrigated but water use would be kept as low as possible.

With respect to the stage, Mr. Koehler stated that the electrical question had been answered and the stage would be fully powered for equipment and lighting with that equipment brought in by those performing. The safety on stage would need to be addressed if that was a concern. The stage itself would be constructed of powder-coated posts and roof material; the top three panels and the back wall would be the artist historical photos of Richmond sports and musical figures from the past and be presented in highly weather proof ways of transferring imagery to the panels. The stage would be all level and flush at the back with a pathway for accessibility and with a proposed 1.5 to 2-foot drop in the front.

Mr. Koehler described the automatic bathroom and the method for automatic lock-down at night through the use of sensors, although he would have to provide all other relevant details from the New Zealand manufacturer at a later date. He responded to other questions and stated the benches would be made of natural cedar and chunky wood furnishings had been proposed throughout. Anti-graffiti coating was an option to be considered, such as on the bathroom walls. He also clarified that the baseball and soccer fields shared an area and there were tall fences and back stops running the northern perimeter of the site with four-foot black chain link fences separating the sports field. He confirmed that parking remained a concern for regional events, such as the Blues Festival, which would have to be addressed to allow such events to continue.

There were no comments from the public and Chair Carter closed the public hearing.

**ACTION: It was M/S/C (Butt/Carter) to approve PLN23-081, Shields-Reid Park Renovation, subject to the four Findings and Statements of Fact with 10 Conditions of Approval and an additional DRB condition as follows: 11) The perimeter fence to remain low and open and have a flat rail at the top and be used as minimally as possible starting around the children's play area, and be used as a deterrent to keep out dirt bikes; approved by a Roll Call vote: 5-0 (Ayes: Butt, Christeson, Plotkin, Rey and Carter; Noes: None; Abstain: None; Absent: Marthinsen.)**

<b>3. PLN22-008</b>	<b>LOURIE SECOND-STORY ADDITION</b>
Description	PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER A REQUEST FOR A DESIGN REVIEW PERMIT TO CONSTRUCT A ±500 SQUARE-FOOT SECOND-STORY ADDITION AND TO RENOVATE AN EXISTING SINGLE-FAMILY DWELLING. THE PROJECT WOULD INCLUDE A REQUEST FOR AN ADMINISTRATIVE USE PERMIT TO CONVERT THE EXISTING GARAGE INTO LIVING SPACE.
Location	1608 SHASTA STREET
APN	508-281-022
Zoning	RL-2, SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT

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Owner JORDAN LOURIE  
Applicant BRAD GUNKEL  
Staff Contact HECTOR LOPEZ

Recommendation: **CONDITIONAL APPROVAL**

Hector Lopez presented the staff report dated August 9, 2023, for the request to construct a 500 square-foot second-story addition and to renovate an existing single-family dwelling at 1608 Shasta Street in the Richmond Annex neighborhood that would include an office, a bedroom, a bathroom and a balcony. The application also included the conversion of an existing garage into a new kitchen increasing the floor area of the ground level from 855 square feet to 1,040 square feet. The conversion of the garage would require approval of an Administrative Use Permit, which would require sufficient depth in the driveway to accommodate a parking space with a minimum 18 feet in depth. Currently the depth of the driveway was 15 feet and a wall in the garage would have to be modified to meet the required depth of 18 feet.

Mr. Lopez reported that the DRB had reviewed the project design in study session on May 24, 2023, when the original design had included a butterfly roof, which had since been modified to a shed roof. The placement and size of windows had also been slightly modified. Exterior materials of stucco and wood siding and the treatment of the wall remained the same.

Mr. Lopez stated the abutting neighbor located at the rear of the property at a lower elevation had raised a concern during the study session of a reduction of privacy and having a three-level building facing the back yard. A suggestion had been made to modify the second floor to provide an additional setback at that level. The applicant had modified the plan by introducing a balcony and a further setback at the second level with the balcony to have a frosted glass railing with an anodized post. He reported that all of the modifications had been made but the applicant would have to clarify the type of screening to be provided at the rear of the property.

Given that all of the other issues had been addressed and the application met all of the zoning requirements, Mr. Lopez recommended approval of the application.

Chair Carter opened the public hearing.

BRAD GUNKEL, Project Architect, referred to the prior discussions in study session and the desire to move the second floor addition towards the front to provide additional privacy for the neighbor to the east within the context of the existing house and the need for the stair down to the living room. It was noted that moving the second floor addition forward would then create enough space for a useful deck to the rear and break up the rear volume as it faced to the east. Adding screening plants along the rear property line would also help address privacy concerns. Additional concerns with the way the kitchen (currently the garage) would be treated had also been discussed with the possibility of making it look more like the rest of the existing house, although the majority opinion was to accentuate it volumetrically and differentiating it from the rest of the house more by raising the volume and creating a clear delineation between materials and between roof forms.

Mr. Gunkel compared the differences between the initial design with the butterfly roof, which had since been eliminated and replaced with a shed roof, and explained that by reducing and raising the volume in different areas of the design a play of shed roofs and new volumes had been created in the second floor addition. A change of materials had accentuated the kitchen. He also noted the effort to keep the stair in the same location and stated that eight feet had been maintained for the deck in the back. He also compared the site plans of the original with the revised site plan and pointed out the Ray Hartman ceanothus, a potential 30-foot high, 10-

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foot wide planting that had been proposed between the subject site and the neighbor to the east. He stated the input from the DRB had resulted in a nicer design.

For the benefit of the Chair and others who had not been present at the study session on May 24, Mr. Gunkel described the prolonged process and results of the meeting with the Richmond Annex Neighborhood Council.

Mr. Gunkel also described the takeover of the garage for living space process that required a parking space in the front yard and explained how that space was being provided at the depth required by the Richmond Municipal Code. He commented that the parking situation after construction would be an improvement to the site, and he added that the subject home was the smallest in the neighborhood.

Mr. Gunkel also clarified that the fascia on the eaves would be clear anodized aluminum and the wood would likely be western red cedar or redwood. All the windows would be replaced and be clear anodized. Typically, if wood, it would dive straight into the frame of the window but if stucco it would be set back slightly to offer a bit of depth. He stated the stucco on the project was the existing house and it would all be stucco or siding diving into the frame. The outside corners would be miter and blue.

Boardmember Plotkin appreciated the improvements to the site that had made it a better project, especially in the proportions of the kitchen and of the roof, with an improved shed roof in the back. He also appreciated the side-by-side comparisons offered by the applicant.

Boardmember Butt commented that the revised plan suited the neighborhood much better.

Chair Carter opened the public hearing.

NANCY REICHERT, 1613 Mendocino, Richmond, the neighbor to the rear thanked the DRB and the applicant and architect for the changes to the plan and appreciated the tree that would be planted to screen the two properties.

JORDAN LOURIE, the property owner, thanked the DRB for the feedback and supported the design that had been developed over time. He also thanked the neighbors for the input and commented that a huge amount of money and effort was being put into a small tired little house to create an attractive useful home that would last for many years.

Chair Carter closed the public hearing.

**ACTION: It was M/S/C (Christeson/Rey) to approve PLN22-008, Lourie Second-Story Addition, subject to the four Findings and Statements of Fact with nine Conditions of Approval; approved by a Roll Call vote: 5-0 (Ayes: Butt, Christeson, Plotkin, Rey and Carter; Noes: None; Abstain: None; Absent: Marthinsen.)**

### **Board Business**

#### **A. Staff reports, requests, or announcements**

Mr. Lopez announced that the next meeting scheduled for August 23, 2023 had been cancelled.

#### **B. Boardmember reports, requests, or announcements: None**

### **Adjournment**

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The meeting was adjourned at 7:59 P.M. to the regular Design Review Board meeting on Wednesday, September 13, 2023.