

MINUTES APPROVED AT THE DRB MEETING ON DECEMBER 13, 2023

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

September 13, 2023
6:00 P.M.

BOARD MEMBERS

Kimberly Butt
Marcus L. Christeson
David Plotkin

Brian Carter
Leah Marthinsen
Vita Rey

Vice Chair Marcus L. Christeson called the regular meeting to order at 6:05 P.M.

ROLL CALL

Present: Vice Chair Marcus Christeson, and Boardmembers Leah Marthinsen, David Plotkin and Vita Rey

Absent: Chair Brian Carter and Boardmember Kimberly Butt

INTRODUCTIONS

Staff Present: Planners Hector Lopez and Hector Rojas

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: August 9, 2023

ACTION: It was M/S/C (Plotkin/Rey) to approve the minutes of the August 9, 2023 meeting, as submitted; approved by a voice vote: 4-0 (Ayes: Marthinsen, Plotkin, Rey and Christeson; Noes: None; Abstain: None; Absent: Butt and Carter.)

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Vice Chair Christeson advised that the agenda had been modified to remove Item 2, PLN23-110, Da Silva Live-Work Building.

ACTION: It was M/S/C (Marthinsen/Plotkin) to approve the agenda, as modified by removing Item 2, PLN23-110, Da Silva Live-Work Building; approved by a voice vote: 4-0 (Ayes: Marthinsen, Plotkin, Rey and Christeson; Noes: None; Abstain: None; Absent: Butt and Carter.)

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

MINUTES APPROVED AT THE DRB MEETING ON DECEMBER 13, 2023

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, September 25, 2023.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. PLN23-198	CHEUNG SECOND-STORY ADDITION AND ROOF DECK
Description	PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER A REQUEST FOR A DESIGN REVIEW PERMIT TO CONSTRUCT A ±590 SQUARE-FOOT SECOND-STORY ADDITION WITH A ROOF DECK TO AN EXISTING SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENCE.
Location	5620 ALAMEDA AVENUE
APN	509-150-005
Zoning	RL-2, SINGLE-FAMILY LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT
Owner	CHEUNG ELAINE YI-HING
Applicant	BENJAMIN LOUIE
Staff Contact	HECTOR LOPEZ
	Recommendation: CONDITIONAL APPROVAL

Hector Lopez presented the staff report dated September 13, 2023, for a request for a Design Review Permit to construct a ±590 square-foot second-story addition with a roof deck to an existing single-family residence on Alameda Avenue, mid-block between South 56th and South 57th Streets in the Richmond Annex neighborhood on a 2,500 square-foot standard lot. The existing dwelling had been constructed in 1953 and included two bedrooms and one bathroom for a total floor area of +820 square feet, with a ±200 square-foot attached one-car garage. He described the typical one-story structures in the neighborhood with gable and hip roofs with some two-story apartment buildings with flat roofs.

The second-floor addition had been proposed in the rear half of the structure with two additional bedrooms and a bathroom, along with a roof deck of over 200 square feet and a small addition at ground level of 45-square feet to enlarge the living room.

Mr. Lopez stated the project met all the requirements of the zoning district. The second floor in the rear would have a simple gable roof with a 6:12 pitch. Stairs from the second floor would provide access to the front deck that was three feet higher than the second-floor level.

Mr. Lopez identified several recommendations from staff to add an ornamental vent under the gable facing the street, provide consistent dimensions of all overhang projections of at least 12 inches, and improve the front façade of the garage and main entry as they appeared awkwardly unbalanced from the street. He reported that the applicant had revised the plan to incorporate some of the recommendations, although the requested improvements to the front façade had not been addressed. He referred to a sketch shown as Attachment 1 in the staff report to illustrate a simple solution to that problem. With that, he recommended approval of the application.

Mr. Lopez reported that a letter from the next-door neighbor, just received, had indicated that the second-floor addition would impact the use of the solar panels on her home.

BENJAMIN LOUIE, the project architect, noted that he had just received the letter from the neighbor and had no chance at this point to look into that issue. He explained that given the orientation of the properties, both oriented to the north, the south facing sun coming around

MINUTES APPROVED AT THE DRB MEETING ON DECEMBER 13, 2023

should impose little shadowing. He added that the neighbor’s solar panels were on the south side of their roof and should be unaffected most of the day.

Mr. Louie also noted that the project had been designed to meet the immediate needs and allow the property owners to age in place. He clarified, when asked, that they had decided not to provide an ornamental vent, the tan color of the façade represented a proposed accent siding, and the roof would be a standard asphalt shingle.

Vice Chair Christeson opened the public hearing.

No written comments were submitted, or oral comments made, by any member of the public beyond the letter from the neighboring property owner that had previously been identified.

Vice Chair Christeson closed the public hearing.

ACTION: It was M/S/C (Marthinsen/Rey) to approve PLN23-198, Cheung Second-Story Addition and Roof Deck, subject to the four Findings and Statements of Fact with nine Conditions of Approval and an additional DRB condition as follows: 10) Prepare a study to address the blocking of sunlight from the neighbor’s solar panels; approved by a Roll Call vote: 4-0 (Ayes: Marthinsen, Plotkin, Rey and Christeson; Noes: None; Abstain: None; Absent: Butt and Carter.)

2. PLN23-110	DA SILVA LIVE-WORK BUILDING	
Description	PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER A REQUEST FOR A DESIGN REVIEW AND ADMINISTRATIVE USE PERMIT TO CONSTRUCT A NEW TWO-STORY 2,800 SQUARE-FOOT TWO UNIT LIVE-WORK BUILDING. THE PROJECT WOULD ALSO INCLUDE SITE IMPROVEMENTS SUCH AS PARKING, LANDSCAPING, AND HARDSCAPE AREAS.	
Location	1376 SOUTH 50 TH STREET	
APN	560-033-011	
Zoning	TRANSECT ZONE; SD; R+D (RICHMOND BAY SPECIFIC PLAN)	
Owner	JOSE DA SILVA	
Applicant	GARY GUENTHER	
Staff Contact	HECTOR LOPEZ	Recommendation: CONDITIONAL APPROVAL

As previously reported, this item had been removed from the agenda.

3. PLN23-137	RICHMOND COMMUNITY FOUNDATION (RCF) DUPLEX	
Description	PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER A REQUEST FOR A DESIGN REVIEW PERMIT TO CONSTRUCT A NEW TWO-STORY DUPLEX ON A 4,300-SQUARE-FOOT VACANT PARCEL	
Location	CHESLEY AVENUE (SOUTHWEST CORNER OF KELSEY STREET AND CHELSEY AVENUE)	
APN	561-181-013	
Zoning	CM-2, COMMERCIAL MIXED USE, NEIGHBORHOOD DISTRICT	
Owner	WEST CENTRAL LAND LLC	
Applicant	BACILIA MACIAS	
Staff Contact	HECTOR ROJAS	Recommendation: CONDITIONAL APPROVAL

MINUTES APPROVED AT THE DRB MEETING ON DECEMBER 13, 2023

Hector Rojas presented the staff report dated September 13, 2023, to consider a request for a Design Review Permit to construct a new two-story duplex on a 4,300 square foot relatively flat parcel on the corner of Chesley Avenue and Kelsey Street in the Shields-Reid neighborhood in an area dominated by residential and included one and two-story buildings.

Mr. Rojas stated the DRB had approved a Design Review Permit for a residential duplex on the site in 2015 of approximately 3,600 square feet, but that permit had expired in April 2017. The Richmond Community Foundation (RCF) requested approval to construct a two-story 2,621 square foot residential duplex on the project site. The proposed units would be stacked vertically. Both units would include three bedrooms, two bathrooms, a living room, a kitchen, and a play/study alcove with almost identical layouts, although the ground floor unit would have a slightly smaller floor area compared to the upper floor unit. He added that both units would include multiple gable roofs, a front-yard porch, a rear-yard deck for each unit and several building bump outs that would provide architectural variety along the street frontages. He presented the proposed exterior building materials and colors.

Mr. Rojas stated the proposed project would meet all applicable development standards for the CM-2 Zoning District, with the exception of the standard requiring off-street parking to be located at least 40 feet away from the street property lines, although the Zoning Code allowed the Zoning Administrator to issue an Administrative Use Permit (AUP) for off-street parking within the 40-foot parking setback subject to certain findings. He recommended that the DRB adopt a condition of approval requiring the applicant to obtain the AUP for off-street parking prior to the issuance of building permits for the proposed project. With that condition, he recommended approval of the application.

Vice Chair Christeson opened the public hearing.

The City had received no public comments and no written comments were submitted, or oral comments made, by any member of the public.

JIM BECKER, President and CEO, Richmond Community Foundation, described RCF's Housing Renovation Program where in partnership with the City of Richmond reclaimed vacant lots and boarded up and abandoned homes and turned them into opportunities for home ownership. He stated the homeowner could live in one unit and rent the other, which was consistent with the goal of affordability. The home would be offered for sale for Richmond first-time owners through Richmond Smart Home Center or Richmond Neighborhood Housing Services.

BACILIA MACIAS, the project architect, described how the design had been developed for a family unit that would be light and airy with pop-outs and siding to break up the scale and with nice trim pieces, a projecting porch on the front to add a homey feel and with shared open space in the rear. There would be two parking spaces on the lot. Landscaping would be provided around the edges to speak to the nearby park and trees had been donated by a non-profit that would be added to the side away from the park.

Mr. Becker also pointed out that a grant from the California Energy Commission would allow the homes to be advanced energy with smart all-electric appliances and smart plugs along with solar panels on the south.

When asked, Ms. Macias pointed out the fence line about two feet back from the edge of

MINUTES APPROVED AT THE DRB MEETING ON DECEMBER 13, 2023

pavement, and along the edge of pavement in the front. The fence would be a combination of skinny board and wider pieces placed horizontally across to provide a visual barrier to the parking area. The height of the fence in the rear and interior would be six feet tall, with a similar four-foot fence along the street and side consistent with code requirements. She added that the trees would be maintained by the non-profit and an irrigation schedule would be provided. Drought tolerant material would be planted.

Vice Chair Christeson closed the public hearing.

ACTION: It was M/S/C (Rey/Marthinsen) to approve PLN23-137, Richmond Community Foundation (RCF) Duplex, subject to the four Findings and Statements of Fact with 10 Conditions of Approval; approved by a Roll Call vote: 4-0 (Ayes: Marthinsen, Plotkin, Rey and Christeson; Noes: None; Abstain: None; Absent: Butt and Carter.)

4. PLN22-401	SABA MOHSEN SINGLE-FAMILY HOME
Description	PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER A REQUEST FOR A DESIGN REVIEW PERMIT TO CONSTRUCT A NEW TWO-STORY SINGLE-FAMILY DWELLING UNIT ON A 4,000 SQUARE-FOOT VACANT PARCEL
Location	7 TH STREET (ADJACENT TO THE NORTH OF 860 7 TH STREET)
APN	534-023-002
Zoning	RL-2, SINGLE-FAMILY LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT
Owner	DHAIFALLAH SABA MOHSEN
Applicant	KAID ALAMERI
Staff Contact	HECTOR ROJAS
	Recommendation: CONDITIONAL APPROVAL

Hector Rojas presented the staff report dated September 13, 2023, to construct a new two-story single-family dwelling unit on a relatively flat 4,000 square-foot vacant parcel 50 feet south of Lincoln Avenue in the Iron Triangle neighborhood. The area was characterized by residential development and included one and two-story single-family and multifamily structures built between the early 1900s and late 1950s.

Mr. Rojas reported that the applicant proposed to construct a new two-story 2,197 square-foot single-family dwelling on the project site that would include three bedrooms, three full bathrooms, two half bathrooms, living and family rooms, a kitchen and dining room, and an attached one-car garage facing 7th Street. The proposed dwelling would feature a contemporary design style with a flat roof, rectilinear forms, and large windows in the front and rear elevations. The proposed design of the building had been guided by feedback from DRB Chair Carter when the applicant and staff had met with the Chair in July to discuss three design options. Based on feedback, the applicant had selected Option 3 and had refined it. One of the questions was the appropriateness of a flat roof design in a neighborhood of predominately gable and hip roofs, although Chair Carter was open to a flat roof design if the applicant could demonstrate to the Board that the flat roof design would fit into the neighborhood.

Mr. Rojas recommended approval of the project subject to additional conditions of approval that there be an installation of at least one street tree within the front yard landscaping area (Condition 3), installation of new landscaping in the planter strip adjacent to the sidewalk (Condition 4), and replacement of the existing sidewalk, curb and gutter along the project site frontage (Condition 5).

Mr. Rojas reported that no public comments had been submitted on the application. He responded to comments and explained that the three options had been identified at the end of

MINUTES APPROVED AT THE DRB MEETING ON DECEMBER 13, 2023

the staff report. He highlighted the options and the design that had culminated into the elevations currently submitted to the DRB.

KAID ALAMERI, the project applicant, explained how the submitted option had been designed and refined over the last year and how the garage had been integrated into the house, which had necessitated raising the floor five feet resulting in a flat roof design that he suggested would better fit into the neighborhood that included some flat roofs. That design also allowed 15-foot-high ceilings. Materials had been selected that were relevant to the neighborhood and horizontal panels had been used to make the structure look low. The large windows had been designed to mimic the windows in adjacent homes.

When asked why there were so many bathrooms, Mr. Alameri explained that there was one full bathroom for each bedroom and a half-bathroom each for the living room for the family and for the guest living room.

Boardmember Marthinsen referred to the back edge and commented that it felt like a missed opportunity to connect the family living room and the dining room. She asked if there was a way to use the outdoor space to transition to the yard to provide a better connection between the indoors and the outdoors.

Mr. Alameri explained that the property owner had wanted the open area for the kids to play. Trees would surround the yard versus having a walkway and a porch. He emphasized the large size of the windows that would bring the connection to the outdoors.

Mr. Rojas noted that staff had recommended the same treatment given to the stairwell in the front also be provided in the back, and Mr. Alameri agreed with that recommendation.

Boardmember Plotkin liked the way the volume had been broken up. He thanked the applicant for taking the Chair's advice related to the options. He liked the building that he described as attractive, but he struggled with how the flat roof design would be grounded in the neighborhood. He wanted to see a better connection to the neighborhood.

Mr. Alameri stated that the treatment of the windows allowed the structure to blend in with the neighborhood, the color of the building would be in greys that were consistent with adjacent buildings and the dark grey roof was consistent with the roofs of adjacent buildings. The wood color panels were also consistent with the lighter color of the houses in the front. The proportions were consistent with the neighborhood and the horizontal siding had been intended to break up the volume with a softer tone siding in the front. He added that the house faced west and the windows would be heavily tinted on the first floor with a canopy above for the second floor.

Boardmember Rey liked the house and characterized it as interesting and fun.

Vice Chair Christeson agreed and noted it had a certain amount of efficiency.

ACTION: It was M/S/C (Rey/Marthinsen) to approve PLN22-401, Saba Mohsen Single-Family Home, subject to the four Findings and Statements of Fact with 12 Conditions of Approval and an additional DRB condition as follows: 13) Eliminate the wall in the back; approved by a Roll Call vote: 4-0 (Ayes: Marthinsen, Plotkin, Rey and Christeson; Noes: None; Abstain: None; Absent: Butt and Carter.)

5. PLN23-140 VENTO RESIDENTIAL ADDITION

MINUTES APPROVED AT THE DRB MEETING ON DECEMBER 13, 2023

Description	STUDY SESSION TO PROVIDE AND RECEIVE COMMENTS ON THE DESIGN OF A ±870 SQUARE-FOOT TWO-STORY ADDITION TO AN EXISTING SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENCE.	
Location	934 35 TH STREET	
APN	524-040-020-5	
Zoning	RL-2, SINGLE-FAMILY LOW-DENSITY RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT	
Owner	JEANETTE VENTO	
Applicant	JARVIS MOORE	
Staff Contact	HECTOR LOPEZ	Recommendation: PROVIDE AND RECEIVE COMMENTS

Hector Lopez presented the staff report dated September 13, 2023, for a study session to provide comment on the design of a new two-story addition.

The single-family split-level dwelling with a one-car garage was situated on 35th Street in the North and East neighborhood. The dwelling had been constructed in 1941 and included two bedrooms and one bathroom for a total area of 1,000 square feet. The surrounding neighborhood consisted of primarily single-story dwellings, although there were also split-level and a few two-story dwellings in architectural styles consisting of Spanish Revival, Bungalow, Tudor, and Minimal Tradition that formed the heart of Richmond's architectural heritage built from 1900 to the late 1940s.

Feedback had been requested to be able to construct a second-story addition and to renovate the existing single-family dwelling. The project entailed the lifting of the building to be the new second level, and included reconfiguring the floor plan and reconstructing the foundation. The new second floor would provide three bedrooms and two bathrooms. A half-level had also been proposed that would be a new office accessible from the master bedroom. The total floor area of the upper level would be 858 square feet. A new first floor level had been proposed and would include the living room, kitchen/dining, half bathroom and a sunroom at the rear for a total floor area of 1,027 square feet. The renovation and reconstruction would entirely change the character of the existing Tudor style and instead would offer a modern style building with a flat roof, horizontal siding, and stucco.

The DRB was asked to provide feedback on that change in style and whether it would be consistent with the context of the area.

JARVIS MOORE, the project architect, explained in response to Boardmember Plotkin as to what had inspired the proposal that the property owner had requested the design. He noted the constraints involved in raising the structure to the second level and the inability to retain the high-pitched roof to retain the original Tudor design and the constraints of the height limits, which had resulted in a more modern design with material and massing to break up the lower portion of the design.

Mr. Moore described the horizontal wood and stucco that had originally been proposed, materials that had been incorporated in different ways. He noted that in talking with staff a more streamlined simpler application of the materials had been proposed, with horizontal wood upstairs and stucco downstairs, more uniform window sizes and locations in relation to the upper and lower floors. The lower floor incorporated a porch element in the front, there was a deck element in the back off of the sunroom with a screened hot tub off of the deck, with an enclosed sauna in the rear. The garage would go away with the lifting, there would be a little gap in height, the existing bedroom over the garage would be converted to an office accessible only from the master bedroom, and the gap would be turned into storage for the upper level. The parking had been moved to the back to avoid issues with the side yard setback if there was

MINUTES APPROVED AT THE DRB MEETING ON DECEMBER 13, 2023

a carport element, and a fence would separate the back yard from the front.

Boardmember Plotkin supported the separation of materials and stated that having the heavy stucco and lighter wood combination made a lot of sense.

Boardmember Marthinsen referred to the “eagle’s nest” and suggested more could be done to make it more airy, lighter and more like a perch, with more glass on the top, and Mr. Moore stated the windows could be made wider and larger using the same width of the glass doors on the bottom.

Boardmember Rey suggested that the upstairs portion (eagle’s nest) should be broken up and that the upstairs portion be pulled back a foot or so on the left side to avoid the flat look and to provide a break, which with the larger windows would make the design more exciting to the eye. Other changes such as taking the fascia of the roof around was also suggested. Boardmember Plotkin suggested instead that both ways be considered to step back, if possible.

Boardmember Rey asked if the applicant had considered sliders for the porch window since the swing doors would take up a lot of living room space when opened, and Mr. Moore agreed that folding doors in or out or a sliding door system that folded into itself could be provided.

Mr. Moore sought feedback from the DRB about putting a window next to the door on the bottom, which had initially been the front door although that had now been put off to the side. He did not want to take up too much of the wall with glass and commented that too much glass on the façade would require more structural design.

On the discussion of that area, Boardmembers suggested adding a subtle taste of the Tudor elements of the original design in an accent window, a light fixture, or a three-panel door system. On the continued discussion, there was a question as to whether the Juliette balcony was necessary, the roof overhang was recommended to be angled a bit more or that the overhang be reduced while still maintaining the flat roof.

Mr. Moore described the access from the deck to the parking space and noted there would be a crushed rock driveway all the way to the back with a big lawn to the left of that off of the at-grade deck, with access from the internal stairs down to the sunroom from the kitchen.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

ANDREW BLYHOLDER, 964 35th Street, Richmond, who lived several homes down from the subject site also spoke on behalf of a property owner adjacent to his own home. He explained that the design disturbed him. He referred to the eagle’s nest that was taller than anything on the block in a substandard front setback that would loom over the sidewalk and the entire block. He stated the proposal was not for an addition but a new house that would take all new foundations to take the load of two and a half stories. He added that the proposal would be substantially different and much higher than other homes in the neighborhood, would not be consistent with the historical character of the neighborhood, would be a sore thumb in the neighborhood, and the height would impact the privacy of adjacent residents.

It was clarified that the proposal was below the height limit for the zoning district. The current height of the home at 21 feet 8 inches would increase to 27 feet 4 inches, and the elimination of the gable of the existing home design had considered height concerns. The eagle’s nest would be 20 feet back from the sidewalk. If located in the rear of the home, it could impact the privacy

MINUTES APPROVED AT THE DRB MEETING ON DECEMBER 13, 2023

of adjacent residents.

Boardmember Marthinsen suggested that when the application returned to the DRB, the applicant should provide a site section with dimensions to show the differences between the current height and the proposed height of the proposal, along with a 3-D view.

Board Business

- A. Staff reports, requests, or announcements:** None
- B. Boardmember reports, requests, or announcements:** None

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:35 P.M. to the regular Design Review Board meeting on Wednesday, September 27, 2023.