

MINUTES APPROVED AT THE DRB MEETING ON AUGUST 28, 2024

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

July 24, 2024
6:00 P.M.

BOARD MEMBERS

Bahar Biazar	Kimberly Butt
Ben Kellman	Karlyn Neel
Vita Rey	Brian Carter, Chair

Acting Chair Kimberly Butt called the regular meeting to order at 6:01 P.M.

ROLL CALL

Present: Acting Chair Kimberly Butt, and Boardmembers Bahar Biazar, Ben Kellman, and Karlyn Neel

Absent: Chair Brian Carter and Boardmember Vita Rey

INTRODUCTIONS

Staff Present: Planners Hector Rojas, Pete Srivarom and Christopher Dykzeul from the City Attorney's Office

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: None

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: None

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 5, 2024.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

- | | |
|---------------------|---|
| 1. PLN24-208 | ADU GUIDEBOOK & PRE-APPROVED PLANS |
| Description | STUDY SESSION TO OBTAIN THE DESIGN REVIEW BOARD'S FEEDBACK ON DRAFT DESIGNS FOR THE CITY'S UPCOMING PRE-APPROVED ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT (ADU) PLANS. |
| Location | CITYWIDE |

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APN	NOT APPLICABLE
Zoning	NOT APPLICABLE
Owner	NOT APPLICABLE
Applicant	CITY OF RICHMOND
Staff Contact	HECTOR ROJAS

Recommendation: **CONTINUED FROM JULY 10, 2024**

Planning Manager Hector Rojas presented the staff report dated July 24, 2024 for the ADU Guidebook & Pre-Approved Plans, and introduced Caroline Cochran and her team from the City's consultant Opticos. He reported that the funding had come from the State of California as part of a \$35 million Transformative Climate Community Grant that would fund several projects occurring within the Iron Triangle, Stege, Santa Fe and Coronado neighborhoods in the area of economic development, health policy and transportation, and just one of a number of projects that the City, in collaboration with community organizations would build climate resiliency for those neighborhoods. The project was under the Displacement Avoidance Program of the grant to create more housing opportunities for people to be able to maintain and stay in those neighborhoods.

Mr. Rojas explained that state law allowed the construction of ADUs in side, back or potentially front yards, which could be built up to 800 square feet in size, a maximum 16-foot height with 4-foot setbacks, which projects would be approved ministerially by staff and which would allow residents to be able to have additional income for their own properties to be able to age in place, and to have more housing options. A maximum of two ADUs could be placed on a property if all the eligibility criteria was met.

Mr. Rojas stated the hope was to build greater incentives to provide ADUs on properties and to provide a guidebook for homeowners and property owners to use and also create a couple of pre-approved plans that would be provided at City Hall, at no cost and avoiding the need to hire an architect. He noted that most plans were sized to avoid development impact fees and school fees.

CAROLINE COCHRAN, Opticos Design, Inc., introduced the members of her team, Joseph Abbamonte and Kiara Gutierrez. She noted the focus would be on the pre-approved ADU plans to solicit feedback from the DRB. She described the ADU Toolkit comprised of an ADU Guidebook and pre-approved ADU plans. The project had started last November, there had been a community meeting in February, and in the last few months Opticos had been designing the pre-approved plans. She reported that after this meeting, there would be another meeting to go through the feedback from the DRB and reconsider the proposed designs.

Mr. Rojas explained that there had been a lot of feedback and four architectural styles had ultimately been supported by the City.

Ms. Cochran explained that one style was being proposed at this time and the other three would come later. She emphasized the importance of ADUs and identified the potential benefits for the community. She reiterated that the plans would be provided at no cost to residents. There were three categories of ADUs; a Junior ADU, attached ADU that could be an addition or a conversion of an existing space, and a detached ADU that could be a conversion of a garage structure but was often a new structure. The first pre-approved plan had been proposed to be a detached ADU.

Ms. Cochran described the guidebook that would provide information and guidance on how to proceed with the process of developing an ADU as well as ways to legalize unpermitted ADUs. Since the community workshop, Opticos had focused on the pre-approved plan that would be

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one of the ready-to-use permit sets.

In response to Boardmember Neel as to the responsibility for determining the appropriateness of the site to develop an ADU, Mr. Rojas stated the Planning Commission would not likely be involved in reviewing the plans and it would just be an application to the Richmond Building Division, which would review the application and address site constraints and the like. The plans would be intended for a level lot that would not have any particular constraint.

Ms. Cochran noted that the ADU Guidebook would address those lots that might have constraints. The big savings to residents would be for money and time related to permitting fees and the acceleration of the permitting process. She explained that Opticos had evaluated the most common type of ADU and were developing plans for a one bedroom/one bath plan at 493 square feet, and a two bedroom/one bath plan at 745 square feet, specifically intended to stay below 750 square feet to eliminate impact fees.

Ms. Cochran advised that the Craftsman style had been the first plan developed. That plan had been reviewed with staff and she sought feedback from the DRB on the plan. She presented the one-bedroom plan, noted the dimensions had been informed by a lot study, and a typical footprint had been developed to fit on the most constrained lot. The same process had been used to create a footprint for the two-bedroom plan. The designs allowed flexibility and adaptability, to accommodate wheelchairs for instance. There would be four styles identified as Spanish Revival, Bungalow, Tudor and Contemporary, which had been inspired by Richmond Architectural Heritage Design Guidelines consistent with many of the historic homes in Richmond.

Boardmember Neel asked how the design integrity of Richmond neighborhoods would be maintained, and Ms. Cochran explained that the ADU Guidebook could include recommendations about how to choose the right design.

Mr. Rojas added that statewide laws prohibited the City from applying objective design standards for ADUs under 800 square feet, although anything over 800 square feet could include more conditions related to style and other issues. The ADU Guidebook would include images of the styles available.

Ms. Cochran clarified that the designs were still being refined and feedback at this time was important. She also clarified some of the issues that the plans had been designed to address, such as sizing the windows to stay under 25 percent area coverage to avoid triggering fire rating requirements. Given that many of those pursuing an ADU would likely utilize the colors of the images provided as reference, she also sought feedback on building colors.

Boardmember Neel recommended that the buildings be in harmony with the lot and with the neighborhood, and how the buildings worked together on the lot, with recommendations to be shown both in the plan set and in the ADU Guidebook.

Boardmember Biazar recommended neutral colors.

Ms. Cochran stated there were some siting guidelines in the proposed ADU Guidebook.

Acting Chair Butt noted that there might not be too many options available with respect to siting and orientation. Color wise, she supported earthtones for the Bungalow design.

Boardmember Kellman supported three pairings and agreed with the importance of the colors to

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be shown in the renderings. Design wise, he commended the presentation, stated it was a great idea, supported the preliminary designs, and suggested keeping things simple without offering too many options.

Further with respect to design, Boardmember Kellman did not like the attic vent detail and suggested it was not optimum for a cost-effective production build, particularly if there might be a buy out item that could be speced. He recommended a simpler way with potentially a more readily available pre-fabricated vent in keeping with the aim of simple, easy and effective.

Boardmember Kellman emphasized that adaptability and accessibility of the proposed designs needed to be assured. He asked if information in the ADU Guidebook would make people understand that actually renting the unit was a separate issue.

Mr. Rojas explained that specific information would be made available that Richmond had a Rent Board and there were regulations that applied to ADUs.

Boardmember Neel recommended making it clear as to whether or not the ADU would affect property taxes and that the ADU Guidebook identify what could and could not be done with an ADU. She referred to the City of San Jose that had just allowed ADUs to be sold.

Mr. Rojas confirmed that state law allowed ADUs to be sold separately from the main unit and the City of Richmond would have to opt into that possibility if it wanted ADUs to be able to be sold separately. He confirmed that the cities of Martinez and San Jose had passed regulations to do just that.

Ms. Cochran stated she would make sure to cover those issues in the ADU Guidebook.

Boardmember Neel liked the two-bedroom sketches but suggested the one-bedroom design needed some work in the front. She recommended some inspiration from the Carneros Resort in Napa that had good Bungalow designs.

Boardmember Kellman acknowledged that the finished project would have construction details with a permitted set and he asked about the permitting process.

Mr. Rojas stated given the short shot clock, that process would likely be reorganized so that the initial application would go to the Building Division and the Planning Department would be a reviewing party that would have to sign off on the plans. He suggested the only trickiness would be if any site had an easement, a creek, or geological conditions, for instance. He stated the state requirements were straight forward and not much would be involved unless there were site constraints.

Boardmember Kellman added that information about communication with local utilities would also have to be identified in the ADU Guidebook, such as whether electrical service was sized for the addition, and similar issues.

Mr. Rojas suggested that the homeowners would have to partner with a contractor who would have the site awareness to address those types of issues, which could be a pre-condition to utilizing the plans.

Boardmember Biazar asked in terms of site studies whether landscaping studies would be a component to consider, such as whether existing trees would be affected by the development of an ADU and whether or not there should be a landscape review.

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Mr. Rojas explained that the City had Heritage Tree Regulations for hillside areas but in the central lowlands there were no such regulations. If a tree was identified for removal, that could be done as long as the removal was not a heritage tree in a hillside area.

Mr. Rojas also clarified, when asked, that the plumbing plans for the units themselves would be incorporated into the construction drawings that would be MEP, electrical, plumbing, mechanical, insulation, Title 24 and the like, although the connections would have to be identified.

The DRB recommended that the ADU Guidebook also include a reference to the Heritage Tree Regulations.

Boardmember Neel noted that if the City of Richmond should choose to opt in for regulations that would allow ADUs to be sold separately, there might have to be consideration of how the utilities were installed.

Acting Chair Butt commented that the two-bedroom Bungalow was working better than the one-bedroom Craftsman. She had a concern with a 1950s feel given the awning in the image provided and recommended a modification for the awning to follow the gable and to also illustrate it with wider trim around the windows to offer more of the Craftsman appeal. She questioned the need to show divided lights and did not support divided light windows in the plans since they appeared to be more like bars than divided lights.

The DRB agreed.

Ms. Cochran also agreed and explained the difficulty in how to create visual interest. She liked the DRB's suggestions about the gable vent details, for instance, and would incorporate the details discussed into the plans, and agreed with the suggestion to skip the divided lights or make sure they showed up the same color as the trim.

Boardmember Kellman supported the windows with a wider trim and wanted to figure out how to dissuade people from a buy-out window with a narrow trim. He referred to one of the elevations and expressed a preference for the fascia.

In response to Mr. Rojas as to whether the type of windows and doors allowed would be specified in the ADU Guidebook, Ms. Cochran explained that under General Specifications, the plans included some ready-to-purchase examples that were off-the-shelf readily available, which had been included in the latest submittal of the ADU Guidebook. She verified the DRB's feedback that over door details were preferred in a gable theme. As to the entry on the two-story, she verified the material as shingles in the over door details and agreed to include the suggested materials in the plans and in the ADU Guidebook.

On the discussion of the entry for the two-story, Acting Chair Butt suggested it felt out-of-character, and Boardmember Kellman recommended omitting the angle and going straight across. Ways to modify that element to address the concern were discussed.

Boardmember Kellman commended the plans and characterized them as well developed. In the interest of keeping it simple, he suggested some example specs, product specs or options for windows, and Mr. Rojas agreed and noted the City would provide some different vendors or products, although such a list would have to be reviewed by the City Attorney's Office.

Ms. Cochran referred to three new styles, which had yet to be designed, and stated the process

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would be to get the plan pre-approved for one style and then submit the remaining three styles to the DRB for review. She asked the DRB for any thoughts as to how to interpret the styles for an ADU, explained that all three styles offered an opportunity for minimum overhangs for fire rating purposes, and sought minimum thoughts on individual elements such as roof styles.

The DRB referred to a number of sketches that had been provided and made specific comments about individual elements of those sketches without a specific identification of the sketches.

For the Tudor style, Ms. Cochran stated there should be an evaluation of the massing. The distinctive feature was a steep gable roof. She suggested lowering the eave to bring it down to 7.5 feet to allow more floor height to play with for the roof, allowing a shallow slope over the main volume with an expressive steep gable at the entry feature.

Acting Chair Butt wanted to make sure that the units under consideration were not created as a mini house of a particular style. She wanted to think about what would be compatible with the ADU to avoid mimicking the style per se and would rather take clues from it. She emphasized the need for a simple style.

The fourth style was identified as Minimal Traditional used to develop a Contemporary style, and Ms. Cochran stated Opticos had been inspired by Minimal Traditional but were not trying to mimic the style. She noted the differences in that style from the other styles, with deeper eaves and exploring the option with minimal eaves for fire rating reasons, with a difference in glazing for the one-bedroom unit only.

Boardmember Neel asked if there was a need for a design similar to a Ranch style that was the most popular style, and DRB members pointed out their favorite sketches in the presentation in terms of scale and the amount of detail.

Ms. Cochran reiterated that the next steps would be to revise the Craftsman one bedroom and two-bedroom plans and the next meeting would be to consider the other three styles. She thanked the DRB for the feedback.

2. PLN24-181	LI TWO-STORY DECK ADDITION
Description	REQUEST FOR A DESIGN REVIEW PERMIT TO CONSTRUCT A TWO-STORY DECK IN THE REAR OF AN EXISTING RESIDENCE.
Location	5336 ZARA AVENUE
APN	519-240-016
Zoning	RL2, SINGLE-FAMILY LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT
Owner	JUNMING LI
Applicant	TRACIE CANNONE
Staff Contact	PETE SRIVAROM Recommendation: CONTINUED FROM JULY 10, 2024

Pete Srivarom presented the staff report dated July 24, 2024, for the construction of a two-story deck in the rear of an existing residence. The 980 square foot two-story would be a wood deck with stairs in the rear to provide backyard access to the living rooms on the first and second floors at 5336 Zara Avenue in the East Richmond neighborhood, on property with a downslope of greater than 20 percent, with two stories fronting the street and three stories in the rear.

Mr. Srivarom stated the top story had a horizontal gray wood siding with a tan stucco exterior on the first and basement stories. The deck would connect the living rooms on the first and second floor and extend the living space for the residents. The material for the proposed deck would be

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TREX, a wood thermoplastic composite lumber, in a medium brown 'Tiki Torch' color.

Mr. Srivarom noted in terms of privacy there were many homes along Zara Avenue with the same downslope grade that also had two-story decks. He added that there were a number of trees on the north side that screened the homes and there were few privacy concerns. The owner had also reached out to neighbors and the City had received no comment letters. The proposal met the height and setback requirements and deck style and materials were compatible with the design elements of the existing buildings and the surrounding neighborhood.

Mr. Srivarom recommended approval of the application subject to the four findings and statement of facts and nine conditions of approval.

Acting Chair Butt opened the public hearing.

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

The applicant/owner had nothing to add.

Acting Chair Butt closed the public hearing.

Boardmember Neel asked if the railing would also be a TREX material, and Mr. Srivarom stated the railing would be wood and the color would match the TREX.

Boardmember Kellman supported the staff recommendation for the well thought out well-prepared application but referred to the plans and suggested it was unusual for an exterior deck to have winders with treads, which he did not support because they could be tripping hazards.

ACTION: It was M/S/C (Butt/Neel) to approve PLN24-181, Li Two-Story Deck Addition, subject to the four Findings and Statements of Fact with the staff recommended nine Conditions of Approval and the DRB suggestion to provide a landing rather than a step; approved by a Roll Call vote: 4-0 (Ayes: Biazar, Kellman, Neel, and Butt; Noes: None; Abstain: None; Absent: Rey and Carter.)

Board Business

A. Staff reports, requests, or announcements

Mr. Rojas reported that one vacancy remained on the DRB and an announcement had been placed on the Home Page and was also on KCRT.

Acting Chair Butt asked about members of the DRB who had termed out and whether after a period of time after terming out one-time members could reapply.

Christopher Dykzeul of the City Attorney's Office advised that for the DRB the term limit was for consecutive terms, and if there was a break the former member could reapply.

B. Boardmember reports, requests, or announcements: None

Adjournment

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The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 P.M. to the regular Design Review Board meeting on Wednesday, August 14, 2024.