

MINUTES APPROVED AT THE HPC MEETING ON FEBRUARY 3, 2025

**Historic Preservation Commission Special Meeting
Multipurpose Room, 440 Civic Center Plaza,
Richmond, CA 94804**

October 2, 2024

7:01 p.m.

MINUTES

Roll Call:

Chair Joann Pavlinec called the Special meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

Present: Chair Joann Pavlinec, Vice Chair Caitlin Hibma; Commissioners Michael Hibma, Fatema Crane, and Gretchen M. Stromberg

Absent:

Guest:

Doria Robinson, City Council member and Liaison

Staff:

Lina Velasco, Director of Community Development; Avery Stark, Acting Planning Manager; Wendy Wellbrock, Senior Civil Engineer

Acting Planning Manager Avery Stark and Wendy Wellbrock introduced themselves as new city staff members.

Approval of Minutes:

July 1, 2024

Chair Joann Pavlinec called for any corrections to the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) minutes for the July 1, 2024, meeting and there were none.

ACTION: It was M/S/C (F. Crane/M. Hibma) to approve the minutes for the July 1, 2024, meeting; approved by a voice vote: 4-0-1-0 Ayes: Pavlinec, M. Hibma, C. Hibma, F Crane; Noes: None; Abstain: G. Stromberg; Absent;

Approval of Agenda:

There were no actions for Agenda Changes.

Meeting Procedures:

Chair Pavlinec reviewed the meeting procedures.

Public Forum:

None

Liaison Reports:

Council Member Robinson was the City Council Liaison and there was no report.

Consent Calendar:

None

MINUTES APPROVED AT THE HPC MEETING ON FEBRUARY 3, 2025

Appeal Date: Any action taken at the meeting must be appealed prior to 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday October 15, 2024.

1. PLN24-105 RICHMOND MAIN LIBRARY MODERNIZATION

Description	CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS FOR THE PROPOSED REHABILITATION OF THE HISTORIC RICHMOND MAIN LIBRARY. THE PROJECT INCLUDES SEISMIC REINFORCEMENT OF THE BUILDING, REPLACEMENT OF OUTDATED AND DETERIORATING EQUIPMENT, AND IMPROVEMENTS TO ACCESSIBILITY AND PROGRAMMING FOR LIBRARY PATRONS. THE LIBRARY'S PRIMARY, STREET-FACING FAÇADE, ALONG WITH ASSOCIATED EXTERIOR FEATURES AND SPACES, AND THE INTERIOR READING ROOM WILL BE REHABILITATED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR'S STANDARDS FOR THE TREATMENT OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES.	
Location	325 CIVIC CENTER PLAZA	
APN	515-251-001	
Zoning	PCI, PUBLIC, CULTURAL, AND INSTITUTIONAL	
Applicant	CITY OF RICHMOND (Owner)	
Staff Contact	LINA VELASCO	Recommendation: CONDITIONAL APPROVAL

Chair Pavlinec introduced the item and Commissioner M. Hibma stated his employer was hired by the applicant to prepare the impact analysis and for that reason he would need to recuse himself from the meeting. Vice Chair C. Hibma stated she also would need to recuse herself from the item due to her marriage to Commissioner M. Hibma.

Director of Community Development Lina Velasco provided a brief summary of the item and introduced Deputy Director of Community Services Library Kate Eppler who introduced Chris Noll from Noll & Tam Architects in collaboration with Knapp Architects, and Amy Watson, and Public Works Senior Civil Engineer Wendy Wellbrock.

Amy Watson provided the presentation of the background of the project. The California State Library launched the Building Forward Infrastructure Grant Program in Fall 2021 to address life-safety and critical maintenance needs in libraries. The City of Richmond applied for the maximum grant of \$10 million for the Richmond Main Library Rehabilitation Project and, in September 2022, was awarded \$9,712,979. This grant includes a required local match of \$4,856,490, which will be funded by \$3,656,490 from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), \$500,000 from the Capital Improvement Program budget (also ARPA), and \$700,000 from Library Impact Fees. In October 2023, the City Council approved a contract for architectural design services with Noll & Tam Architects, in collaboration with Knapp Architects. The project team conducted community outreach meetings on December 6, 2023, December 14, 2023, and January 25, 2024. Feedback from these meetings, focus groups, and discussions with staff helped shape the conceptual design for the project, which was presented to the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) on April 9, 2024. The HPC expressed support for conceptual design, and the project team incorporated much of their input into the final design plans (see Exhibit A). These plans were shared with the public at a community meeting held on August 15, 2024. The City proposes rehabilitating the existing Library building to address seismic reinforcement needs, replace obsolete and worn-out equipment, and improve accessibility and programming for library patrons.

MINUTES APPROVED AT THE HPC MEETING ON FEBRUARY 3, 2025

The proposed improvements include installing all new electrical, mechanical, plumbing, and data/information technology. Additionally, new interior partitions, finishes, photovoltaic panels, shelving, racks, furniture, and equipment will be installed. The project will also rehabilitate the Library's primary, street-facing façade, as well as related exterior features and interior spaces, including the reading room (see Exhibit A). As part of the project, the main façade will also be reconfigured while preserving the building's essential Midcentury Modernist aesthetic, a character-defining feature of the District to which the Library contributes. The Library is part of the Richmond Civic Center, a complex of municipal buildings and landscaped spaces designed by San Francisco based architect Timothy L. Pflueger between 1945 and 1948 and constructed from 1949 to 1951. The Library is a contributing element to the Richmond Civic Center Historic District (District), a 13-acre historic resource that includes Civic Center Plaza, Richmond City Hall, the Hall of Justice (modern City Council Chambers), Memorial Auditorium (which houses the Art Center and courtyard), the Library and courtyard, landscaped areas, paved pathways, auditorium signage, and three surface parking lots. The District is bounded by Barrett Avenue to the north, Macdonald Avenue to the south, 27th Street to the east, and 25th Street to the west. The District has been determined eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and the California Register of Historic Resources (CRHR) due to its association with Richmond's post-World War II development and growth; its connection to Wayne Thompson, Richmond's City Manager from 1945 to 1954; its representation of the work of Timothy L. Pflueger, a regionally significant architect; and its Modernist architectural qualities. On September 11, 2007, the Richmond City Council adopted Resolution No. 99-07, listing the District in the Richmond Register. The applicants were very mindful to minimize the amount of change to the landscape with a focused target on creating additional flexible space within the courtyard and replacing some of the trees that were removed from the courtyard and along the south edge of the property. There were necessary adjustments made for storm water retention and treatment, and sidewalks sloping up to the main entry of the building and the sidewalks around the building and parking area.

Commissioner Crane inquired about the material of the seating in the Courtyard and if the framing of the windows would remain the same. Amy Watson responded that the repurposed brick is the seating in the courtyard and the entire window system would be replaced in addition to the glazing added.

Commissioner Stromberg asked how the new system is different from the existing system. Architect Chris Noll explained the proportions are the same, the features such as the glass are more modern. The current window framing is aluminum; the replacement will be thermal aluminum which has additional glazed finish. The width of the mullions and muntins will be similar to what currently exists, the storefront will be a bit deeper.

Chair Pavlinec asked when the design for the fencing was available as it is a significant element. Ms. Wendy Wellbrock confirmed that design was not yet available, it will be on the inside of the courtyard and the Arts Commission will be designing the entail panels; she wasn't sure when that would take place it could take several months.

Chair Pavlinec commented that she had an interest in the fence piece coming back before the HPC as an informational item; additionally, she had an interest in seeing the landscape plans. Ms. Watson explained that the largest pieces of the landscape plans is to increase accessibility and manage the water treatment and water retention. Other plans include removing the larger bushes along the east façade, at the request of the Fire Marshal.

Chair Pavlinec commented that she was glad they were able to keep the lawns while solving the water retention concerns.

Commissioner Crane asked about the trees that are within the low brick wall in the courtyard. Ms. Watson stated those had been removed from the plans, they are planting a new tree with a

MINUTES APPROVED AT THE HPC MEETING ON FEBRUARY 3, 2025

platform around it as a seating and play area.

Commissioner Stromberg commented that the new trees were planned for an area that would provide nice shading once they mature and inquired if they considered trees and shrubs similar to what is in the Civic Center courtyard. Ms. Watson explained they worked with the City and chose from the specific list of trees preferred/allowed and reasonable in terms of maintenance.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chair Pavlinec opened public comment and there was none.

Chair Pavlinec closed the public hearing.

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS FOR THE PROPOSED REHABILITATION OF THE HISTORIC RICHMOND MAIN LIBRARY.

ACTION: It was M/S/C (Crane/Stromberg) to Approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed Rehabilitation of the Historic Richmond Main Library with the Condition that staff bring the proposed screen back before the Commission as an informational item. Vote: 3-0-0-2 Ayes: Pavlinec, Crane, Stromberg; Noes; Abstain: Absent: M. Hibma, C. Hibma

Commission Business:

A. Commission member reports, requests, or announcements:

Commissioner Stromberg announced that she was taking another job away from the National Parks Service (NPS). The National Park Service would like to propose another staff member who lives in the City to be a commissioner. She will be attending the November meeting.

NPS staff are still trying to make contact with the Kaiser Field Hospital owners as funding is still available to do a Historical Structure Report (HSR). Mr. Tom Butt from the Rosie the Riveter Trust Board reached out for feedback on potentially working with the HPC. The City and the Commission are still deeply interested in assisting them with completing the HSR, which could lead to federal funding for preservation in the future.

Chair Pavlinec inquired about the staffing challenges. Director of Community Development Velasco responded that they continue to struggle; however, the consultant Place Works has been working on the equity concerns and how to apply the Mills Act and promote it Citywide. Hector had met with them prior to his end date, staff were not able to prepare a report in time for the meeting. They are hopeful to have a report prepared for the November meeting.

Chair Pavlinec expressed an interest in adding to the Agenda a track sheet of open projects that are awaiting for specific milestones and conditions of approval reviews. Additionally, there's a condition for Ferry Point maintenance that triggers additional funding. If that isn't tracked, the City could lose more through demolition by neglect. Commissioner Stromberg stated another project worth tracking is the cannabis business at the Pullman Shops building.

Adjournment - The Commission adjourned at 7:41 p.m.