

MINUTES APPROVED AT THE DRB MEETING ON JANUARY 27, 2021

DESIGN REVIEW BOARD REGULAR MEETING Richmond, CA 94804

December 9, 2020
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
Karlyn Neel

Brian Carter
Michael Hannah
Jonathan Livingston

Chair Livingston called the regular meeting to order at 6:02 P.M.

ROLL CALL

Present: Chair Jonathan Livingston, Vice Chair Michael Hannah, and Boardmembers Kimberly Butt, Brian Carter, and Jessica Fine

Absent: Boardmembers Macy Leung and Karlyn Neel

INTRODUCTIONS

Staff Present: Planners Hector Lopez, Emily Carroll, and Jonelyn Whales, and City Attorney Shannon Moore

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: October 28, 2020 and November 18, 2020

Boardmember Fine referred to the first sentence in the fourth paragraph on Page 7 of the October 28 minutes, and requested the following amendment: *Boardmember Fine encouraged the applicant to explore the mix of unit sizes, asked about the size of the roof space, saw no parapet more than three feet in height, and wanted this to feel safe; she wanted to hear more about carrying through the landscape and pedestrianism throughout the building and what that would feel like for the residents.*

<p>ACTION: It was M/S/C (Carter/Hannah) to approve the minutes of the October 28, 2020 meeting, with the amendment as shown, and approve the November 18, 2020 meeting, as submitted; approved by voice vote: 5-0 (Ayes: Butt, Carter, Fine, Hannah and Livingston; Noes: None; Abstain: None; Absent: Leung and Neel).</p>
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APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

Public Forum

Hector Lopez reported on a public comment from CORDELL HINDLER who had supported the Country Club project the DRB had approved at the last meeting, and who had reiterated that applicants for projects considered by an appointed public body must communicate with the neighborhood council to provide input. He had also wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

City Council Liaison Report: None

CONSENT CALENDAR: None

APPEAL DATE:

Chair Livingston announced that any decision approved may be appealed in writing to the City Clerk within ten (10) days, or by Monday, December 21, 2020 by 5:00 P.M. and he announced it after each affected item.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| 1. PLN20-061
Description | ST. JOHN MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH
(HELD OVER FROM NOVEMBER 18, 2020) CONSIDER A RECOMMENDATION TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION FOR A DESIGN REVIEW PERMIT AND CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT TO CONSTRUCT A ±10,000 SQUARE FOOT RECREATIONAL FACILITY AND ASSOCIATED PARKING LOT IMPROVEMENTS TO SERVE AN EXISTING BAPTIST CHURCH. |
| Location | 29 8 TH STREET |
| APN | 538-410-027 |
| Zoning | RM-2, MEDIUM-HIGH MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT |
| Owner | ST. JOHN MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH |
| Applicant | ABDUL ESMAIL |
| Staff Contact | HECTOR LOPEZ |
| | Recommendation: RECOMMENDATION TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION |

Hector Lopez presented the staff report dated December 9, 2020, and reported the project involved multiple parcels owned by St. John Missionary Baptist Church. The subject parcel included the main sanctuary and a parking lot. The parking lot would be developed with a new recreational facility to consist of a two-story structure (2,500 square feet each floor) and a 4,800 square-foot basketball court. The recreational facility required a conditional use permit from the Planning Commission and the DRB would make recommendation to the Planning Commission with respect to the design. The church also owned several parcels across the street which would be used to relocate the parking lot. He described the design of the proposed buildings in a contemporary style using concrete tilt-up walls, to be finished with cement plaster and stone veneer, and pointed out the design of the various elevations to offer visual connectivity with the Richmond Greenway Trail. Planning staff recommended an increase in the height of the parapet wall, the removal of the stone veneer on columns facing 8th Street, and providing bicycle racks in front of the building.

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Vice Chair Hannah reported he had to recuse himself given that a member of his firm had participated in one aspect of the application.

Given the possibility that another member of the DRB might have to be recused from the discussion of the application, City Attorney Shannon Moore requested time to research the potential conflicts.

Chair Livingston moved the item to the third item on the agenda to allow a legal analysis.

2. PLN19-229	NEW TWO-STORY ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT
Description	CONSIDER A REQUEST FOR DESIGN REVIEW PERMIT TO CONSTRUCT A DETACHED ACCESSORY STRUCTURE THAT WOULD INCLUDE A GARAGE AND A ±795 SQUARE FOOT ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT (ADU).
Location	5943 CAPITOL HILL AVENUE
APN	419-191-002
Zoning	SINGLE-FAMILY HILLSIDE RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT
GP	HILLSIDE RESIDENTIAL
Applicant	SANDEEP GAHLA (OWNER)
Staff Contact	JONELYN WHALES Recommendation: CONDITIONAL APPROVAL

Jonelyn Whales presented the staff report dated December 9, 2020, and explained that the application for an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) had been presented to the DRB over a year ago but had been held over pending the submittal of more complete information. The ADU would be on a 9,425 square-foot downslope lot that already included an 1,800 square-foot single-family dwelling and could not exceed 22 feet in height. The ADU was 21 feet in height based on drawings submitted to staff, included a two-car garage, and the dwelling would have two bedrooms and one bathroom. She stated the overall design was similar to the primary dwelling and related well to other dwellings in the neighborhood. She also advised there were existing public utility (electricity) easements on the property.

Ms. Whales noted that this would be the last ADU to be considered by the DRB given that the State of California had deemed ADUs would be approved ministerially in the future.

Boardmember Fine verified with Ms. Whales that the materials for the body of the structure would be Hardie plank siding. She also verified that while the current State regulations did not allow ADUs to exceed 16 feet in height, the subject application had been submitted and reviewed in 2019 prior to the latest State legislation, and the proposed height of 21 feet in this case pre-dated that legislation. With respect to the plans, she urged attention to the dates of the applicable Building Code listed on the plans, which were incorrect in this case.

Chair Livingston opened the public hearing.

INDY CHADHA, the architect, identified the proposed two-bedroom ADU that had been in the review process for over a year when issues relating to a retaining wall had been addressed. He reported the building had been designed to 2019 Building Codes, the retaining walls would be designed based on the soils report, and there would be a Stormwater Pollution Plan to address water discharge, bring it to street level, and ensure no soils erosion. The garage size would be somewhat larger than one car because of added room for storage and a laundry room, although there would be a one-car garage door. The finish materials would be the same as submitted to staff, and there would be no change to the plans if approved by the DRB at this time.

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Boardmember Carter acknowledged the difficult site given the angle of Barth Avenue where the front elevation did not appear as a front elevation. He suggested there should be a bit more balance to the west elevation that read as the front elevation, and he encouraged the exploration of ways to formalize the west elevation to create more of a public face.

Mr. Chadha stated that he could create a false façade in front of the windows to create a Juliette type balcony to break up the upper level given that there was only a five-foot setback on the west side. It was also the traffic side of the property and there was a desire to retain privacy.

Boardmember Fine verified with Mr. Chadha that the base of the ADU would match that of the existing house but the white trim of the existing house would be brown trim in the ADU. She expressed concern for the clearance of the entry stair adjacent to the driveway and Mr. Chadha stated the owner had only one car and he did not foresee any car in the driveway, although Boardmember Fine requested that the architect address that situation with the last rung of the stairway to be moved more towards the west.

Vice Chair Hannah questioned the appropriateness of the clear Fiberglas material that the applicant had identified for the railing system, suggested a glass panel would not look right with the foam stucco exterior, and stated the material would have to be identified on the plans. He added that the façade on the east elevation was the staircase and railing that wrapped around and to the side of the main street and its appearance would be critical. He agreed that the west elevation was really the front elevation for the street and the neighborhood, and the design needed to look appropriate in that direction. He recommended changing the windows on the west elevation of the great room at the upper level to be a wider picture window with three panes to be more attractive to the street. He noted that everything else was fine. He encouraged the homeowner to rethink the foam stucco details which were okay but he recommended looking at that and the rail system to come up with something more developed. If retaining the foam stucco exterior, he recommended some corbels or some kind of decorative element to avoid the appearance of a production home placed on a hillside. He emphasized that the east and south elevations did not matter so much but the west elevation was critical.

Boardmember Butt agreed with the confusion with the entry and supported the changes recommended by Vice Chair Hannah. She stated it made no sense for the front elevation to be facing the hill and the door should be moved to create a neighborhood presence. She also agreed that enlarging the window would help.

Mr. Chadha suggested shifting the bathroom window to the north elevation. The DRB agreed.

Vice Chair Hannah recommended wrapping the south elevation to the west and figuring out the stairs and the balcony structure, and there needed to be a dose of architecture on the south and west sides. The stucco was fine but the west elevation needed to look friendlier with living space and without side windows.

Chair Livingston also stated the driveway did not conform to the zoning code, which required that for the first eight feet of the inside radius of a driveway coming off the street there had to be a maximum of 8 percent grade in the first 8 feet, which could then transition to 20 percent maximum and then transition back to 8 percent. He identified a 40 percent grade on the plans.

The DRB discussed the implications of the driveway on the design of the building and the effects on the west elevation, and Mr. Chadha suggested perhaps that the driveway be eliminated and be placed on the west elevation.

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Chair Livingston pointed out a number of areas on the plans that were incorrect and would have to be corrected, and Vice Chair Hannah emphasized that the hillside required an architect/designer to coordinate the disciplines of civil, structural, construction and architecture to resolve the garage, the stairs, and the great room in one fell swoop.

Chair Livingston noted that the landscape plan included inappropriate tree varieties for hillsides and he stated that oaks would be appropriate. He also pointed out other issues with the grade that would have to be addressed.

Chair Livingston summarized the DRB's comments, as follows:

- Balance the west elevation since it's the public frontage;
- Formalize the elevations to create a public face;
- Provide balconies;
- Provide a bigger window;
- Consider colors;
- Rethink the entry stairs and make sure there's sufficient room for the guard rail system;
- Submit an example of the product to be used on guardrails and a sample of how it would look; modern contemporary glass would not be appropriate; consider a more traditional railing design that matched the architecture of the house;
- Move the front door towards the south elevation;
- Plans to match elevations and vice versa;
- Address driveway grades; and
- Correct drafting errors.

Chair Livingston moved back to Item 1 at this time.

Ms. Moore advised that out of an abundance of caution, Vice Chair Hannah and Boardmember Butt should recuse themselves from Item 1 and turn off their devices.

1. PLN20-061	ST. JOHN MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH
Description	(HELD OVER FROM NOVEMBER 18, 2020) CONSIDER A RECOMMENDATION TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION FOR A DESIGN REVIEW PERMIT AND CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT TO CONSTRUCT A ±10,000 SQUARE FOOT RECREATIONAL FACILITY AND ASSOCIATED PARKING LOT IMPROVEMENTS TO SERVE AN EXISTING BAPTIST CHURCH..
Location	29 8 TH STREET
APN	538-410-027
Zoning	RM-2, MEDIUM-HIGH MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT
Owner	ST. JOHN MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH
Applicant	ABDUL ESMAIL
Staff Contact	HECTOR LOPEZ
	Recommendation: RECOMMENDATION TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION

Vice Chair Hannah recused himself from the discussion given a financial connection with a consultant on the applicant's team for the project, and left the Zoom meeting at this time.

Boardmember Butt also recused herself because she was married to a Principal of Interactive Resources which performed some consulting work on the project. She also left the Zoom meeting at this time.

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Chair Livingston stated with respect to height that the maximum allowed height would be 35 feet and the proposed height was 28 feet. The roof was currently at 25 feet and the parapet wall was three feet. Staff had recommended an increase in the height of the parapet wall to ensure screening of rooftop equipment from the street. He verified the location of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) parking with the applicant, as shown on the landscape plan.

ABDUL ESMAIL, the architect, reported that St. John Missionary Baptist Church had been in the Richmond area for 77 years at 662 52nd Street and 29 8th Street, where the Family Life Center had been proposed. He explained that St. John's Pastor Kevin B. Hall, who had been Senior Pastor for the last 26 years, had always envisioned a Family Life Center as an amenity to the community that would include a basketball court and a two-story building with a gymnasium and a game room on the second floor. St. John's owned four lots across the street where a building had once been considered to be historical but had been found not to be the case. Since the building was too dilapidated to be rehabilitated, it had been demolished. He stated that 26 parking spaces would be provided at that location, which would increase the parking availability for St. John's where 43 parking spaces in total would be provided in that lot and in and around the sanctuary.

Chair Livingston opened the public hearing.

TOODY MAHER, Executive Director of Pogo Park, a non-profit, explained that for the past eight years they had been working to reclaim and transform Harbour-8 Park, which was located adjacent to the proposal. They had met with the church and with the architect, and identified two reservations; the fact that the parking lot was right next to the Richmond Greenway which would deaden the space; and that the location of the gym, without windows, would also make the Richmond Greenway dead space. While windows had been included on the building in the new plan, she suggested they were too high on the building. She wanted to have more of an integrated approach with St. John's and expressed concern that St. John's had not reached out more to the community to receive comments.

At this point, Ms. Moore explained that after additional research on a quorum pursuant to Richmond Municipal Code 15.04.802.040(b), a majority of the DRB's current members constituted a quorum. Given that there were seven members of the DRB, she explained that four members would have to be present to consider an item. With the recusal of two members, the application would have to be moved to the next meeting agenda.

Since the application could not move forward as agendized, Mr. Lopez suggested something similar to a subcommittee meeting could be considered to provide comments to the applicant.

Chair Livingston advised that the three members present at this time could share their comments with Mr. Lopez so that the applicant could return and respond to the comments.

The application for PLN20-061 was continued to the next meeting, and Vice Chair Hannah and Boardmember Butt rejoined the Zoom meeting at this time.

3. PLN19-172	GONZALEZ NEW SINGLE-FAMILY DWELLING
Description	CONSIDER A REQUEST FOR A DESIGN REVIEW PERMIT TO CONSTRUCT A ONE-STORY SINGLE-FAMILY DWELLING ON A ±7,600 SQUARE-FOOT VACANT PARCEL.
Location	612 A STREET
APN	534-230-021
Zoning	RL-2, SINGLE-FAMILY LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT

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Owner	SANDRA GONZALEZ	
Applicant	LUIS FURUSHIO (DESIGNER)	
Staff Contact	HECTOR LOPEZ	Recommendation: CONDITIONAL APPROVAL

Mr. Lopez presented the staff report dated December 9, 2020, and reported that the relatively flat, vacant, trapezoidal shaped 7,600 square foot site abutted Richmond Parkway to the west and residences to the north and east.

The parcel was located at the end of Ripley Avenue and A Street where a 2,300 square-foot single-family dwelling with four bedrooms, two-and-a-half bathrooms, and an attached two-car garage had been proposed. The application met all the requirements of the district in a simple design with a gable roof, a porch in the center, and with landscaping proposed in the front yard consisting of mulch, ground cover, plants, grass, and trees. The home would be stucco with a composition shingle roof.

Mr. Lopez recommended that the porch be changed to provide wider posts instead of the 4x4-foot posts on the plans, with the stairs to face the street rather than along the side. He also recommended that at least two street trees be planted in the front of the site.

LUIS FURUSHIO, the designer, explained that the proposal was for a one-story single-family unit located in the Iron Triangle neighborhood. The house would be raised five feet from the ground to provide storage area underneath the house and potentially an ADU in the future. There would be a concrete two-car driveway for the two-car garage. A gable roof would match most of the houses in the neighborhood. The colors would be Mission Tan for the exterior, and all trim, garage door and front porch would be Whitest White. The landscaped areas in the back would provide impermeable surfaces and the rear patio area would be concrete pavers.

Mr. Furushio clarified with staff that the stairs would not encroach into the front setback if there was no roof over them. He agreed with the staff recommendation that the stairs and proposed landing be converted into a new porch facing the street as long as the stairs were not covered.

Vice Chair Hannah recommended making the pediment bigger so that the porch would be for the room and not for the door, and the reconfiguration of the stairs to the front would create a nice landing. He also recommended 6x6-foot minimum posts with potentially double columns and that the garage door be centered. He verified that the gutters would be standard gutters and requested that vents be added to the gable ends to make the building look better. He recommended a different main color from the proposed Mission Tan.

Boardmember Butt agreed with the porch comments and the centering of the garage door, and added that if an ADU was created underneath the house the unit would have to be Building Code compliant and windows would have to be provided.

Boardmember Fine emphasized that some forethought would be required to accommodate a future ADU. She liked the floor plan, did not like the color, did not support the corner trim boards, and recommended it be kept clean and be stucco. She also verified with staff that a minimum of two street trees were required.

Boardmember Carter supported the recommendation that the applicant think through the phases of construction, particularly with respect to the storage area under the house. He liked the house and asked about the stucco as opposed to a cement board such as lap siding.

Boardmember Carter noted, for instance, that the costs of cement plaster versus stucco were on par and he suggested that lap siding would work better for the size of the structure.

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Mr. Furushio stated the stucco was more practical and durable and was preferred by the property owner. He also commented that the crawl space could be accessed from the garage.

Boardmember Carter displayed a picture of a neighboring house to the subject site to show the proportion and scale similar to the proposed unit. He recommended looking at some of the trim proportions and a belly band, recommended the elimination of the white base, and for the front porch he urged thought as to how the columns would be terminated at the base of the porch or be extended all the way to the ground.

Chair Livingston explained there had to be foundation vents for the lower floor. If a future ADU was considered, he recommended some of the vents be centered under some of the windows to allow the sheer walls all the way to the ground, venting the basement, and allowing for windows for an ADU. He also suggested that one vent and two windows could be considered now to bring light into the storage area. He recommended Hardie plank siding for the porch under skirting, with the rest of the house to be stucco.

Chair Livingston closed the public hearing.

ACTION: It was M/S/C (Livingston/Hannah) to approve PLN19-172, Gonzalez New Single-Family Dwelling; subject to the four Findings and Statements of Fact with 11 Conditions of Approval and additional DRB conditions as follows: 12) The porch to be at least 16 feet wide with stairs centered on the front door; 13) The minimum width of the stairs shall be six feet; 14) The columns shall be a minimum of 6x6 posts with a minimum of four columns total; 15) The garage door to be re-centered; 16) The gable end above the entry shall have a vent; 17) Remove the corner boards and the base board at the bottom of the stucco exterior; 18) All lights shall be shielded; 19) Column termination base should land on the deck; 20) Porch shall be differentiated by using Hardie plank or equal to differentiate it from the stucco; 21) The column cap shall be something similar to what Boardmember Carter had displayed on the screen of a close by neighbor; and 22) Foundation vents to be added to the front and rear elevations to help mitigate the blank wall underneath the windows as shown in Exhibit A submitted by Chair Livingston; approved by voice vote: 4-0 (Ayes: Butt, Carter, Fine, and Livingston; Noes: None; Abstain: None; Absent: Hannah, Leung, and Neel).

Board Business

A. Staff reports, requests, or announcements: None

B. Boardmember reports, requests, or announcements:

Chair Livingston highlighted some recent meetings of the City's Public Art Advisory Committee (PAAC) and the Richmond Arts & Culture Commission (RACC), and the status of the Terminal One project.

Vice Chair Hannah reported that this would likely be his last meeting as a member of the DRB given his lack of time to be able to devote to the DRB.

The DRB thanked Vice Chair Hannah for his service, noted that his enthusiasm would be missed, and wished him well on all his future endeavors.

Ms. Moore reiterated the AB 1234 Ethics Training that could be done through an on-line course with the Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC), with the certificates of completion to be submitted to the City Clerk prior to the end of the year.

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Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:22 P.M. to the next regular Design Review Board meeting on Wednesday, January 27, 2021.