

DESIGN REVIEW BOARD MEETING
CIVIC CENTER MULTIPURPOSE ROOM, BASEMENT LEVEL
440 Civic Center Plaza, Richmond, CA
November 18, 2009
6:00 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS

Michael Woldemar, Chair	Eileen Whitty, Vice Chair
Diane Bloom	Andrew Butt
Otheree Christian	Raymond Welter
Don Woodrow	

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Chair Woldemar, Vice Chair Whitty, Boardmembers Butt and Welter

Absent: Boardmembers Bloom, Christian and Woodrow

INTRODUCTIONS

Staff Present: Jonelyn Whales, Hector Rojas, and Carlos Privat

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

October 14, 2009

ACTION: It was M/S (Whitty/Butt) to accept minutes for the October 14, 2009 meeting of the Design Review Board as written; unanimously approved.

October 28, 2009

ACTION: It was M/S (Whitty/Butt) to accept minutes for the October 28, 2009 meeting of the Design Review Board as written; unanimously approved.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chair Woldemar noted any decision approved may be appealed in writing to the City Clerk within ten (10) days, or by Monday, November 30, 2009 by 5:00 p.m.

CONSENT CALENDAR

Chair Woldemar said there are no items on the Consent Calendar.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

- 1. PLN 09-125 – (Held Over from 10/28/2009) RICHMOND PLUNGE ROOF SIGN AND SITE LANDSCAPING ON E RICHMOND AVENUE – PUBLIC HEARING** to consider a Design Review permit to restore the historic roof sign and provide site landscaping for the Richmond Municipal Natatorium, a contributing structure to the Point Richmond National

Register Historic District, located at 1 E Richmond Ave. (APN: 556-170-002. PC (Public and Civic Uses) Zoning District. Owner: City of Richmond; Applicant: Todd Jersey Architecture; Staff Contact: Hector Rojas. Recommendation: Conditional Approval.

Associate Planner Rojas thanked the Board for having the special meeting tonight to consider the project. The applicant presented the application at a previous meeting; they made a substantial presentation at that point and said he is prepared to answer any questions. He spoke to the applicant, Todd Jersey, who agreed the landscaping plan is not sufficiently complete and suggested returning with a more complete landscaping plan at a future date. He suggested the Design Review Board make a modification to Condition 1 in the staff report to read such that the project shall be completed in substantial conformance with the site plans in Exhibit A and not the landscaping plans in Exhibit B. He also suggested adding another condition specifically stating that the landscaping would come back to this Board for review and approval prior to installation. He also recommended adding a condition that landscaping take into account the planned completion of the Bay Trail segment along the perimeter of that property.

Vice Chair Whitty questioned the light being on until 10 p.m. and suggested changing that to 9 p.m. to save energy and create less irritation to neighbors. Mr. Rojas said businesses generally close at 10 p.m., though he cannot imagine the client itself will be open that late. They could make it coincide with the closing of the Plunge. He does not know what time the Plunge closes, but they want to be able to have the lights on to provide a general ambience to the Point Richmond neighborhood. They could lower it an hour without causing much of an impact. Chair Woldemar noted the condition is written as "no later than 10pm." Mr. Rojas said he will leave the decision up to the Board. Vice-Chair Whitty said most people are not swimming or driving around at 10:00. Chair Woldemar said this discussion is appropriate because they know this sign is over and above what would normally be required under their sign ordinance. To make some specific requirement like this makes sense.

Chair Woldemar suggested having a discussion of landscaping after the sign discussion.

Boardmember Welter said the plywood in the sign is still shown on the plans after discussions at the last meeting to replace it. Mr. Rojas said there was some discussion with the applicant, who determined powder-coated aluminum would be longer lasting than plywood. He suggested making another condition specifying that material. They did not have time to revise the plans to show that notation, but that was the intention.

Chair Woldemar said they had some discussion last time about the orientation of the sign, but the general consensus was that, even though it might not be where they would put it today from a visibility point of view, there was some nostalgia about it being skewed on top of the building. Mr. Rojas clarified it is a requirement for historic building to restore according to historic fabric or expectations. To orient it a different way would provide a false sense of history and it would not meet the Secretary of Interior's treatment of historic properties.

Boardmember Butt asked if there is a tile mosaic on the building, and stated he is concerned about the non-historical nature of that. He asked if there was any DRB or other review of the building redesign. Mr. Rojas said the DRB had reviewed the overall restoration and rehabilitation of the project in 2007 and it was approved. The only part that was not included at that time was the landscaping and the sign.

Boardmember Butt said it appears that someone decided on their own, which elements to put back and which to not, but typically in historical preservation, one must come up with a period of significance and it should be restored to that period. He asked why the two wooden flagpoles on either side of the entry at the front of the building were not included.

Mr. Rojas replied that he does not think the Secretary's standards address restoring every single component during a property's period of significance. Instead, if any changes are made they must be consistent with the period of significance for the property.

Chair Woldemar questioned who gets to choose which elements of nostalgia to keep. Mr. Rojas answered that at the time the Plunge project was reviewed, although the historic structures code was in place, they did not have a historic preservation advisory committee to provide the services they have now when the sign was reviewed.

Boardmember Butt said it suffers from lack of cohesive direction and lack of funding. The state historic preservation architect was very disappointed with some of the choices that were made. He would like to hear from the applicant who has not attended any DRB meetings.

Chair Woldemar said they will hear about the project again at some point, and it should not be difficult to install the flagpoles if the DRB agrees they should be there. He asked staff to research this issue and find out why each element was included.

Boardmember Welter pointed out the north façade notes the flagpole as significant. Boardmember Butt said there is a flagpole out front, but Chair Woldemar said he did not believe there was a flagpole out front.

Boardmember Welter asked what flagpole marker this refers to, and Chair Woldemar suspected it is the historic flagpole on the roof.

The public hearing was opened.

Chair Woldemar noted one speaker who wanted to speak about landscaping.

Bruce Beyaert, TRAC, addressed the importance of closing the gap in the Bay Trail in this area. After seeing the drawings for the Plunge with regard to landscaping it was apparent there was a real disconnect and there are trees planted where the trail will be. The intersection of Gerald and E. Richmond also shows a planting area where the trail will be. TRAC strongly supports the condition that the project come back for review under the DRB to close that gap in the Bay Trail and find a way for pedestrians and cyclists to get through the area. He would be glad to work with builders and the City to help design that area of landscaping.

Chair Woldemar opened a discussion of landscaping, recognizing that staff recommended taking that out of tonight's approval. He suggested staff take note of these comments so they may be passed on to the applicant so they may be properly responded to.

Boardmember Welter said no finishes are noted for the railings and metalwork. He thinks they should be a powder-coated finish to match the light poles. He is also concerned that the front area is a gathering place but there are not enough benches or areas for people to gather. He supports adding more benches to the area, supports the Bay Trail and is glad that it is being worked on. On page 80.23, site section B, there is a dimension of 18 inches minimum, and it does not specify what it is.

Chair Woldemar said his first reaction to the landscaping was that landscaping shown was meant to be a palette of materials. The board is used to seeing much more detail on the landscaping plans. He understands the landscaping is intended to be drought tolerant and resistant, and there may not be an irrigation system. He also questioned how the landscaping would be started and maintained. On the site plan (page A0.21) he questioned the 6 ½ foot light fixture in the field versus the discussion of the light fixture on both sides of the stairs. He said he

needs a lot more detail, including topographic material showing the slope or ramp to the front door so they could determine if it needs a handrail. He would like to know the extent of the concrete wall, grading in the whole area, and how the benches fit into the concrete wall. A slab is indicated for the generator and trash enclosure on the west side of the building, and he wondered about the functionality of taking the trash out to the street from there. He would like to know what the rest of the project will look like at each phase of the project, suggested there be a lighting study in the front area for security, and said the refuse area requires a roof over it as part of the storm water management discussions that have been taking place. He questioned how storm water is being dealt with in the whole landscaping pattern. He stated there is an existing landscaping path on the western edge, but when he went to view the site he did not see it at all.

Chair Woldemar requested more detail such as would normally be shown on a site plan/landscape plan so they can better understand the project and so there is something to review it against as it is being built.

Boardmember Welter asked for photos of the actual plants since they do not the plants by their Latin names.

Boardmember Butt asked how handicapped parking will be handled, as he sees no accommodations for handicapped parking. He also thinks it is important that benches and trash receptacles match what was done across the street so everything ties together. The lighting fixtures show 6 ½ feet high, and he thinks it makes sense for the two fixtures at the entry, but it is too low for the other two. The other two should be higher, and he suggested those should match the ones across the street. He would like to see the design of the mosaic as well as the tile.

The public hearing was closed.

ACTION: It was M/S (Whitty/Butt) to conditionally approve the application for PLN 09-125 with the Historic Building findings, the sign ordinance findings, the Design Review Board findings, and the staff conditions for approval, with the following additions and revisions: Condition #1 revised to read that the project shall be completed in substantial conformance with the sign plans in Exhibit 8 prepared by Todd Jersey Architects submitted to and date stamp received by the Richmond Planning and Building Services Department on October 16, 2009, except as they may be modified by the conditions of approval of this project; revise Condition #1 to state that the plywood will be substituted with powder coated metal; Condition #4 revised to read that all landscaping and site plan elements such as the mushroom fountain, benches, and light fixtures, shall be reviewed and approved by the DRB prior to installation; the landscaping plan shall incorporate details regarding the gap closure of the Bay Trail segment along the Plunge property; Condition #3 be revised to read that the illuminated roof sign shall be programmed to automatically be turned on at dusk and shut off automatically at 9:00pm.; unanimously approved.

- 2. PLN 09-065 – (Held Over from 9/24/2009) TWO STORY ADDITION TO SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENCE ON MODOC AVE – DESIGN REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL** for a ± 784 SF second story addition to an existing dwelling located at 5507 Modoc Avenue (APN: 507-120-014. SFR-3 (Single Family: Low Density Residential) Zoning District. Owner: Paris Patron; Applicant: Carl Sherrod; Staff Contact: Jonelyn Whales. Tentative Recommendation: Hold Over to 12/9/2009.

Chair Woldemar announced that the applicant requested holding this item over until December 9, 2009.

ACTION: It was M/S (Woldemar/Whitty) to continue the application for PLN 09-065 to the December 9, 2009 meeting; unanimously approved.

BOARD BUSINESS

Vice Chair Whitty said the City Council voted on October 6, 2009 to re-send the Point Molate EIR to the DRB for review and comment and to give a recommendation to them. It will arrive in December.

Boardmember Butt questioned the turnaround time on that review, and Chair Woldemar noted it is not included in the December DRB meeting. Boardmember Welter said he thought the intent was for the DRB to review the design but not the EIR.

Vice Chair Whitty said they will need to review the design in December. Ms. Whales said she will check and follow up with the Board. Vice Chair Whitty expressed concern that December is very soon and they have no guidelines for reviewing the design.

Chair Woldemar said there was a communication on Tom Butt's e-forum last week that included a letter from the applicant who discussed the issue of coming up with quality designs and then coming forward to the DRB, but there was no timeline included.

Chair Woldemar said Planning Director Richard Mitchell sent the Chairs of the DRB and Planning Commission, and numerous staff people, to a form-based code class held in Oakland. He found it very interesting to see what was being done in other areas and what the architecture looked like.

Chair Woldemar noted the agenda for the December 9, 2009 meeting will have two agenda items, one continued from tonight and a new warehouse project. He is the architect on that project and therefore will be recused. Vice-Chair Whitty will lead the discussion of that project.

The Board adjourned the meeting at 6:45 p.m.