

**CITY PLANNING COMMISSION AND DESIGN REVIEW BOARD  
JOINT STUDY SESSION  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL  
1401 MARINA WAY SOUTH, RICHMOND, CA**

**September 21, 2006**

**7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.**

**MINUTES**

**Commissioners**

Virginia Finlay, Chair  
Stephen A. Williams, Vice Chair  
Ludmyrna Lopez, Secretary  
Jeff Lee  
Zachary Harris  
Nagaraja Rao  
Vicki L. Winston

**Design Review Board**

Eileen Whitty, Chair  
Michael Woldemar, Vice Chair  
Robert Avellar  
Diane Bloom  
Jonathan Livingston  
Ted J. Smith  
Donald Woodrow

The meeting was called to order by **Chair Whitty** at 7:00 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

**Planning Commissioners**

**Present:** Chair Finlay and Commissioners Harris and Lee

**Design Review**

**Board members Present:** Chair Whitty, Vice Chair Woldemar, Board members Avellar, Bloom, Livingston, Smith and Woodrow

**Chair Whitty** led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**INTRODUCTIONS**

**Staff Present:** Janet Harbin, Mary Renfro and Hector Rojas

**Assistant City Attorney Harbin** noted there was not a quorum of the Planning Commission and therefore, no involvement could be taken by the Commission.

**Chair Whitty** gave an overview of procedures for speaker registration and public hearing functions and procedures. She said any decision approved may be appealed in writing by 5:00 p.m. to the City Clerk within ten (10) days.

- 1. EID/TM/CU/DR 1103055 – Mixed Use Development at 12<sup>th</sup> Street & Macdonald Avenue -** STUDY SESSION to provide comments on the proposed mixed-use development at 12<sup>th</sup> Street and Macdonald Avenue. The applicant proposes construction of a 237 unit condominium unit mixed-use development with ±23,000 SF of commercial space situated upon two city blocks bounded by Macdonald Avenue to the south, Nevin Avenue to the north, 11th to the west and 13th Street to the east. The property is designated as Office/Commercial/Institutional in the City Center Specific Plan and 931/ City Center in the Richmond General Plan. (APNs: 540-092-016, 017, 018, 540-081-001, 002, 003, 004, 005, 020, 021, 024, 025, & 026). Richmond Community Redevelopment Agency, owner; AF Evans Development, Inc., applicant.

Mohammad Nithery, AF Evans Development, Inc., presented and described the project, noted their goal was to create dramatic spaces, lot units, mixed housing, using a shared public garage, and introduced architect Peter Waller.

Peter Waller, BKF Architects, presented an original sketch of the project, said the site was interesting, felt there was no back to the project, an incredibly important front and felt the project would revitalize the area. He presented various views and areas of the project, described courtyards, pedestrian areas, plantings, lawn areas and community facilities. He presented alternative sketches for the project, colors for the project, side streets, railing work, lattice, parking,

**Board member Avellar:** Questioned 12<sup>th</sup> Street lighting and questioned if the buildings would be phased. Mr. Waller said the project would be partially phased with the larger block being done first. Some nice low level street lighting and building lighting would be proposed. He noted 12<sup>th</sup> Street would remain open for pedestrians with an emergency vehicle access turn-around.

**Board member Woodrow:** Said ABAG maps show the area to be of high risk, questioned if the design would handle significant shaking from earthquakes, questioned possible podium and cornice failures, and asked for an explanation of parking stackers. Mr. Waller discussed structural integrity of building construction, said cornices would be tied back to the primary structure, said a half brick would be used, explained parking stackers.

**Vice Chair Woldemar:** Said he likes the project, asked staff to talk about timing, schedule and process for the project. **Ms. Velasco** said the project would be heard by the DRB in October, final approval would be by Planning Commission, discussed density bonus issues, and said the timeline depended on where the project went and comments received.

**Vice Chair Woldemar** hoped for a complete application, confirmed the DRB would be able to provide input on the EIR document, said in the subdivision ordinance there is a requirement for 200 cubic feet of storage in the subdivision ordinance and asked if this would be required for this project. **Ms. Velasco** said they need final interpretation from the Attorney's office. He felt there would be residents with bicycles and motorcycles and asked if there would be provisions for motorcycle parking. Mr. Waller said this was being considered and asked for guidance for the number of spaces, given demand. **Ms. Renfro** said there were no applicable standards for such parking and she felt it was up to the applicant in bike and motorcycle parking design and it would be voluntary.

**Vice Chair Woldemar** referred to the site plan, diagonal parking spaces on both blocks on north side of Macdonald Avenue west end, the curbs terminate in a sharp triangular corner and

the location will trap refuse. He felt the curb should turn 90 degrees to the parking space. Relating to Nevin Avenue, it is a street that is becoming more pedestrian, and he wondered about street improvements that enhance the experience along the street, such as bulb outs, bus stops. Mr. Waller said there has been some discussion but no commitment to date.

**Allen Wolken, Redevelopment Agency Director**, said the RDA has submitted a grant for streetscape improvements and submittal had also been done for a second round of grant funding. He said the project would be addressing sidewalks within 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>, and the crossing at 12<sup>th</sup> Street could be included in this. **Ms. Renfro** noted any conditions that concern redesign of traffic and pedestrian would require approval of the City Engineer.

**Vice Chair Woldemar** questioned the canopies projecting over the right-of-way and **Mr. Wolken** said the applicant team was working to ensure the project works with the streetscape.

**Vice Chair Woldemar**: Asked for porches, entries that step back off the sidewalk level, noted there were shared activities of both blocks on the different podiums and hoped to connect them and hoped the applicant close or provide randomness of the gaps between some of the buildings.

**Commissioner Bloom**: Questioned stacked parking system width requirements, and Mr. Waller said the stackers did require more width because of equipment, but the aisle was the same width. She asked if there was dedicated employee retail parking and Mr. Waller said there would be dedicated spaces in the existing garages and the new garages would be used solely for resident's parking. She confirmed the environmental document would be available for review in the next couple of weeks and asked about HVAC systems, and Mr. Waller said they are under the new Title 24 requirements, but these would have to be gas fired heating systems, common water heaters, and air conditioning was still under discussion. He noted Cathy Garrett was present for landscaping questions.

**Board member Smith**: Asked about affordability levels, and **Mr. Wolken** explained 15% moderate income pricing.

**Board member Livingston**: Liked the way the project was moving, regarding 12<sup>th</sup> Street pedestrian promenade, felt the experience was doors into units and questioned whether a destination could be incorporated into the focal point of the building to bring pedestrians from the street into the symbolic entry. Mr. Waller said the gateway was evolving, said they were imaging the space with a covered arcade coming out on the street with outdoor seating, possibly a fountain or greenery.

**Board member Livingston**: Encouraged the applicant to bulb out the western and eastern ends of the two main buildings and to encourage outdoor dining which would hold people on the street. He felt the entrance was hard to find on the west side building, he said the eastern half has base, mid-section and top and asked for a one-two pattern on the western side to vary the massing. He confirmed the texture of the stucco would be a mix or combination, brick at Macdonald Avenue, as well as exposed concrete and other materials would be used. He confirmed the cornice on the building was under review.

**Chair Whitty**: Said the project was reminiscent of the Santana Road project in San Jose, felt it was handsome in nature, agreed the entrances needed work, said signage would follow for the project, liked the balconies, and requested an explanation of how to get from various places to garages, to lofts, to lobbies, to units and from BART.

**Richard Mitchell** confirmed Planning Commissioners could provide public input as a member of the public under public comment.

Cathy Garrett, landscape architect, PGA Design, said they were seeing the 12<sup>th</sup> street approach as a central park, described trees, enhanced paving, said the paving links the two lobbies, said there is a pocket park in the north/south area, shaded areas was for loading/unloading, paving was drivable but would be played down to promote pedestrian uses. Regarding courtyard area left hand block, there is a substantial lawn space which would filter podium level water, with the intention to create an integration of some paving and planting areas. Patios would be separated from the general community space by planted areas, were not fenced but enclosed with plantings, trellis would cover a BBQ area used by residents, a community building connection separates the two courtyards with seating, BBQ, planting and shaded areas.

**Board member Bloom:** Felt the Board needed to look more carefully at the landscape plan and Mr. Waller felt they could meet again one-on-one to receive more comments.

**Board member Livingston:** Asked that City of Richmond heritage elements could be woven into the development, such as a public art structure, and Ms. Garrett said they could further consider this.

**Vice Chair Woldemar:** Confirmed there would be no palm trees and questioned whether there was not a specific requirement for public art. **Mr. Wolken** said the RDA would work with the developer and would hopefully champion a piece or ask the developer to provide funding, but said there was no specific requirement for public art.

**Chair Whitty** encouraged the landscape plan be Mediterranean and very low water based and referred to Sunset and EBMUD books.

**Board member Smith:** Asked what the City's plans were in dealing with graffiti across the street south of the project in the shopping center to keep it from spilling over into this project. **Mr. Wolken** said they were working to protect and address the issues along Macdonald Avenue.

#### Public Comment:

Virginia Finlay, Chair of the Planning Commission, said she has a number of questions, felt the meeting did not require her request to satisfy a joint meeting, felt Commissioners should be heard, felt staff should have notified her to inform her a quorum would be required and she felt the study session has not been satisfied from her point of view.

Jeff Lee, resident, reiterated Woldemar and Livingston's comments, felt it was refreshing to observe the constructive collaboration and mutual respect between the Commission and development team and thanked them.

#### **BREAK**

The Design Review Board and Planning Commission took a five-minute break and thereafter reconvened the Study Session.

2. **PRE 1103297 – Adams Court Mixed Use Development on Nevin Avenue - STUDY SESSION** to provide comments on the proposed Adams Court project, a 268 unit mixed-use development that would reuse two sites (formerly the Employment Development Department's (EDD) office and parking lot). Site A, the former EDD parking lot at the corner of 23<sup>rd</sup> Street and Nevin Avenue, would be developed with a mixed-use structure containing 3,900 square feet of commercial space, 143 residences on eight floors of residential area, a 3,300 square foot fitness-club, common area, and two levels of basement parking. Site B, the former EDD office site at the corner of 21<sup>st</sup> Street and Nevin Avenue, would be developed with 125 residences on eight floors of residential area, a 4,600 square foot fitness-club, common area, and basement level parking. Total proposed floor area for both sites is approximately 298,879 square feet. (APNs: 514-090-018 and 514-080-013). The project straddles two Zoning Districts which are as follows: 1.) C-2, General Commercial and 2.) MFR-3, Multi-family High Density Residential Districts. Carl Adams, owner; The Bedford Group, applicant.

**Board member Livingston:** Questioned whether there have been any long term planning for Nevin Avenue to City Hall, and Mr. Thompson noted this would fall under Redevelopment.

**Vice Chair Woldemar:** Confirmed the Board would be able to review and comment on the environmental document.

**Lamont Thompson** gave a brief description of the project proposal, said the project would reuse two sites, said the site was 1.75 acres, said the applicant would need to obtain approval from the City Council, Planning Commission and Design Review Board, and staff recommended the Board and Commission listen and provide comment on the project and receive public comment.

Carl Adams, project owner, introduced Steve Kudama, Eduardo Cassidas who would present the project.

Steve Kudama, Architect, said Eduardo Cassidas would also discuss design aspects of the project and said they were hoping to receive further comments for refinement.

**Chair Whitty** confirmed that no revisions had been made to the plans as a result of meetings between applicants and board members. Mr. Kudama agreed more meetings would need to be held and felt the project was slightly different than most redevelopment projects due to private financing issues.

**Board member Livingston:** Hoped that comments could be reflected into the plans, said Nevin Avenue connects to the City Hall and was under transition, wanted to look in a broader way in how the building would integrate with City Hall, felt the Nevin Avenue/23<sup>rd</sup> Street corner was struggling and he suggested stepping the building back, transition it into residential, incorporate an outdoor eating area with public art and felt the architecture did not relate to Richmond.

**Board member Avellar:** Wanted a stronger corner front, planting materials on the commercial side of 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, and liked the building.

**Chair Whitty:** Liked the diversity and mix of residential units, felt stoops that lead into the units needed work, encouraged the applicant to either step the building down on the corners or step it up, felt it was too blocky and needed further refinement, questioned whether retail would truly be successful and suggested the applicant inquire whether or not a police sub-station should be

considered.

**Board member Bloom:** Liked the massiveness of the hand rails, felt the building was too massive and too tall, encouraged the applicant to do a three-dimensional mock-up to further study the approach, and requested the maximum plantings for greenery.

#### **EXTEND MEETING**

**ACTION:** It was M/S (Whitty/Woldemar) to extend the meeting at 9:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.; unanimously approved.

**Board member Woodrow:** Confirmed with the applicant the building would be phased, recommended stepping down the building, confirmed Site B's "senior tower" on the plans was an error and felt the number of town homes cut down the amount of public open space.

**Vice Chair Woldemar:** Felt the applicant should pay attention to the pedestrian environment along Nevin and use pedestrian pop-outs, pocket parking, wanted a complete application the next time the DRB reviews it, requested exterior elevations that show adjacent buildings for context, suggested using computer animation, shade studies, BART relationship, identify the location for homeowner meetings, felt there was a disproportionate parking ratio between Site A and Site B, felt the applicant was short on visitor parking, identify commercial and fitness center parking, said the floor plans did not reflect the setback of the podium and railing design area, said the building did not have a top to it and suggested setting a limit to it, asked to address motorcycle parking and bicycle storage, identify trash and refuse areas on the plans and access from the garbage company, felt the plan needed 40,000 square feet of common open space and not 25,000 square feet, private storage discussion needs to be addressed, felt 22<sup>nd</sup> Street was also important and asked how the buildings were affected by 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> Streets, asked for an architecture relationship for each corner, thinks the idea of connecting the blocks with a bridge was important, was not sure the building's character fit in Richmond, said the DRB addresses bulk and scale, felt the City would see more infill high density projects and the City should discuss and set policy in a retreat setting for large building designs.

Mr. Kudama felt the design was slowly being refined based on comments and thanked the Board for their comments.

#### Public Comments:

Jeff Lee, Planning Commissioner, felt if the project were successful the single family homes across the street on Nevin Avenue might be turned into higher buildings and suggested the bigger, future picture also be considered.

#### **Public Forum – Brown Act - None**

### **COMMISSION & BOARD BUSINESS**

#### **3. Reports of Officers, Commissioners and Staff**

**Vice Chair Woldemar** requested a status report on Toll Bros. **Ms. Harbin** said the Planning Commission denied the certification of the EIR, Toll Bros. has appealed the decision to the City Council and a hearing date has not yet been set. She said an opinion is being formulated by the City Attorney's office on specific application approvals, requirements for return to the DRB and/or whether the project would be approved if the appeal was upheld.

**Vice Chair Woldemar** confirmed with staff that the retreat would be held October 27, 2006.

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The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.