



CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

PRE-DESIGN SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING OF THE DOWNTOWN COMMUNITY PLANNING COUNCIL

TUESDAY MARCH 12, 2018
5:15 PM

CIVIC SAN DIEGO
401 B STREET, SUITE 400
SAN DIEGO, CA

1. Roll Call at 5:15pm. DCPC Members in Attendance: Nancy Wilson Ramon, Rand Barbano, Cindy Blair, Dan Wery, Jon Baker, Pat Stark, Conor Brown & Claudia Escala. Non DCPC members Kathleen Hallahan (EVRG) & LC Cline (Downtown Residents Group)
2. Public comments on non-agenda items. None
3. Report from Chairperson: Claudia Escala announced she will not be returning as DCPC Pre-Design Chair. Will chair one more meeting in April but is looking for a volunteer to chair the meetings moving forward.
4. **Action item**
 - **Park & Broadway** (full block bounded by Park Boulevard, 13th Street, Broadway, and C Street) – Centre City Development Permit/Planned Development Permit/Neighborhood Use Permit (CCDP/PDP/NUP) No. 2018-41 – Preliminary Design Review – East Village Neighborhood of the Downtown Community Plan Area ~ James Alexander

The proposed project is comprised of a 40 story, approximately 400-foot tall residential tower and two mid-rise building (six and seven stories) comprised of 613 residential units and approximately 18,000 SF of commercial space. The Project consists of three building (two podium buildings and a tower) constructed in two phases and designed around an earthquake fault line that runs through the full block site

Design Issues and Considerations

- Overall Massing - Does the Project's overall massing and architectural design present a development compatible with existing development and with the overall neighborhood context?
- Tower Design - Does the proposed design sufficiently breakdown the tower's massing to mitigate the requested deviation to tower floor plate dimensions? Does the building incorporate a variety of modulations to develop distinct architectural volumes?
- Parking Podium Design – Does the parking podium adequately screen the parking levels and provide adequate architectural treatment? Is the parking podium properly modulated or is it too monotonous?
- Street Level Articulation: - Does the ground floor provide visual interest to the commercial spaces and adequately distinguish them from the residential lobby? Is the pedestrian experience enhanced through street level architectural articulations?
- Street Level Activation: - Does the Project adequately activate the pedestrian experience along 13th Street in a way that is consistent with the DCP vision for Main Streets? Should the commercial space on Broadway be lowered to increase street activation, avoid blank walls, and improve the Project's interface with the public realm?



- Paseo – Should more effort be made to create more public open space at the corner of 13th Street and Broadway? Is the proposed landscape design appropriate for an urban setting?

Presentation by Architect- Callison RTKL

The seismic fault is a limiting factor regarding the location of buildings on site. Massing responds carefully to the site conditions locating the tower at the wider portion of the site. Besides the tower the project includes a 7 story and a 6 story building and proposes a corner green space at the corner of Broadway & 13th. The ground level plane addresses the public realm. The site is also on a retail active zone, therefore key program activities are placed along the street. Lobbies are proposed along Park & 13th. Curb cuts are concentrated on Park Blvd. and kept to a minimum. A paseo dissecting the site at the fault line location deals with substantial grade differential. This creates an opportunity for interesting moments and the spilling of retail. The paseo acts as a gateway on C Street. There are event steps that serve also to address the significant grade change. An open zone at the corner of 13th & Broadway opens to the site. The Paseo will have gates for security but is intended to feel as transparent as possible and will provide a lush environment for residents. Phase 1 is planned to include the midrise buildings and the tower will come at a later phase. At the project's base stone is a prevalent material with metal panel and glazing above. The tower massing has been brought all the way down to the ground where possible. Bring tower down in as many places as possible. Regarding parking it is composed of 5 stories below grade 7 stories above grade. The project proposes 3 different screen types. The first screen uses glazing and a shadow box, The second screen is proposed on frosted glass and metal panel with a crash barrier behind. The third type is composed of cable railing with a solid panel to avoid light pollution. Feature lighting is also proposed. Along Broadway there will be a thin light system, vertical LEDs at lower level of garage and the main paseo terraces and pathways will have low level ambient light. The Project exceeds open space requirements. Over 85% units have balconies as the tower shape helps capture ocean views.

DCPC Members & Non Member Questions

Q. Phasing why and timeframes? **A.** The developer is wanting to move quicker with northern portion since it was acquired earlier. Architect unaware of timeframe between phases, **Q.** How does parking work with the phases? **A.** Splitting parking phasing along center of site. **Q.** What does the interim look like? **A.** Bldg A becomes the finished façade. The midrise bldg wall will be articulated in the interim. Will include some type of artwall. **Q.** Above grade parking is it naturally ventilated? **A.** Yes with staggered panels allowing for airflow. **Q.** What separates the residential units from the retail patios? **A.** Planters. **Q.** Could someone hop over to the residential area? **A.** Possible a person could cross over. **Q.** When both phases occur do buildings connect? **A.** No but smaller buildings will have access to top amenities. **Q.** What is lower PH? **A.** A penthouse unit. **Q.** Any work on tower site within Phase 1? **A.** Architect does not know details of phasing. **Q.** Bldgs A & B have roof top mounted units adjacent to amenities. Type of screening? Is that going to be noisy for people using amenity areas and people in tower looking down? **A.** Noise could be mitigated with acoustical treatment and green wall. No mechanical unit will be running in full force at any time. **Q.** Access for public? Can they enter off C Street and will the paseo be open during business hours? **A.** It is designed as a private space for the residential building. Access through patios would happen through the retailers. Not intended as a major thoroughfare for the public. **Q.** Service and delivery for Bldg A will it occur off C Street? **A.** Yes only 50 units contained in that building. **Q.** Gates on property line? **A.** Yes. **Q.** Above grade parking on tower how are you screening potential light spill? **A.** Frosted glass will give diffused lighting and perforated panels have a solid wall behind them. **Q.** Plan for interim use of south portion? **A.** Information is not available at this time but the next step is putting together the phasing plan.

Public Comments

Gary Smith – President Downtown Residents Group - Neutral: His board will love the art deco style component on the tower facing Broadway to call attention as it is a ceremonial street. Use of paseo is a good use. Concerned with above grade parking. Cannot see a speed ramp so is assuming the floors are sloped for parking. It is a pretty significant 19% across 200'. Would like to see more development on how the parking works. Circulation in the project seems well thought out. In regards to the facades on the midrise buildings on C Street the illustrations don't



show it enough. Need more info. Another concern is huge amount of fencing on SE corner. Wants to make sure it does not look like a zoo or prison. All the fencing needs to be attractive.

Architect clarified that the parking does have a flat slab on Park & Broadway. On the interior zone parking is proposed on a 5% slope but only visible from the paseo façade.

Non DCPC Member Comments:

Kathleen Hallahan (East Village Residents Group): Very pleased with having this building. Very disappointed with corner of 13th & Broadway. Believes that it is a disservice to the design team. Need a stronger design feature as the 14th street promenade is one block away. Encourages applicant to further study. On lighting would like the elegance of the tower shape accentuate the project but not through the use of LED lighting. She does not feel it is necessary.

LC Cline: No problems with deviations. For resident usage only there has to be a more creative way of doing the Paseo. As currently designed all 600 units would have to leave the building to go into the Paseo. Setbacks on the tower are very nice.

DCPC Member comments:

Dan Wery: Really hates above grade parking making the urban experience dead. The proposed screening solution is better than other projects as it reads as residential floors. Glad to see gaps for airflow hope that it is possible code wise. Would like to see how parking could convert to other uses in a future. The Paseo reads as a public space yet it is not. Sees it as a space to go through. As designed feels very deep and defined. Believes there should be some area allocated to public space. Overall it is an attractive project.

Rand Barbano: Overall excellent design. Concerned about residents across Park Blvd. Would like further study of the AC units on rooftops of smaller buildings and public space. Noted that on a different project neighbors recently came to complain about noise for a similar scenario. Noise abatement above a tower space is concerning. Would love to see the corner of Broadway and 13th be part of a public space. The Project is beautiful overall but the Park side looks very monolithic with its plain color. Would like a breakup of the monotonous color.

Nancy Wilson Ramon: Would like applicant to consider that the corner space at 13th & Broadway may be a good space for a coffee shop. Disappointed with a project with 600 units that cannot build affordable housing and is paying the in lieu fee instead.

Jon Baker: Concurs with comments from other members and would like to add that it is difficult from the renderings to tell what is happening with the midrise buildings. Disagrees with colleague regarding affordable housing. This is not a good place for affordable housing. Better to build affordable housing in other areas of the City where it is less expensive than downtown.

Pat Stark: Echoes other members' comments. Everything is revolving around the tower that may not get built for a while. Expressed concern about phasing. A vacant lot for a long time is not a good solution. Also noted that building a tower next to a 7 story building will be cumbersome.

Conor Brown: Public space and retail on ground level need more character. Concerned about phasing and would like to see applicant come back with more information.

Claudia Escala The tower is definitely the protagonist and looks well designed. Suggests applicant not rely on LED lighting to accentuate the building but rather let the form do it without a lighting enhancement. Need to see more detail on the mid-rise components. Their architecture is very simple so the detail is extremely important like how far in do the windows sit on the façade.



- **777 Beech** (south side of Beech Street between Seventh and Eighth avenues) – Centre City Development Permit/Planned Development Permit (CCDP/PDP) No. 2018-57 / Map Waiver (MW) No. 624011 – Preliminary Design Review – Cortez Neighborhood of the Downtown Community Plan Area ~ James Alexander

The proposed project consists of a 12-13 story residential tower averaging approximately 143 feet and comprised of 104 residential condominiums. The project was previously entitled but permit expired and proposal is consistent with originally approved project.

Design Issues and Considerations

- Overall Massing - Is the Project's overall massing and architectural design compatible with existing development and with the overall neighborhood context? Is the Project appropriately designed to respect the historicity of the El Cortez building?
- Tower Design – Does the proposed design sufficiently break down the tower's massing and incorporate a variety of modulations to develop distinct architectural volumes?
- Tower Top and Roof – Does the tower top create a graceful transition to the sky? Is the rooftop mechanical equipment properly screened or should it also be screened from above?
- Street Level Activation – Does the Project sufficiently activate the street level? Would direct access into the ground floor residential DU improve the pedestrian experience around the Project?

Presentation by Architect Safdie Rabines - Taal Safdie:

The proposed project is similar in many ways to the originally entitled project when it comes to concept and original massing. The main difference is that the wings have been made equal and the retail component has been replaced with townhomes. The proposed solution had to deal with steep grades on 8th Ave. The context is a mixture of mid-rise and high-rise buildings. The building is designed to protect views from and into El Cortez historic building. The design includes a large transparent lobby on Beech St. and includes a green buffer along the ground plane. The area in the back is a sort of alley and provides a buffer to El Cortez building. Some amenity spaces include a pool and a gym. The typical floor plate from level 2 – 6 is composed of studios, one and 2 bedrooms. The tower starts on Level 7 and has additional amenities and private gardens. A typical tower plate goes from level 8 thru 11. The top level contains penthouses. Mechanical units at the top are screened on the sides, not the top. Exposed concrete is proposed as a finish material at walls, floor slabs and underside of slabs.

DCPC Members & Non Member Questions

Q. Ground floor units in the back how are they accessed? **A.** From the back only. **Q.** Is the building closer to El Cortez historic building? **A.** Correct the building is closer to El Cortez. The reason is before the geometries were more complex. **Q.** Is there a new curb cut entrance proposed? **A.** Yes and has shifted south. **Q.** No tree grates in lieu decomposite granite? **A.** Landscape architect is trying to create something softer. **Q.** Reason for garage exhaust in between two buildings? **A.** The garage exhaust presents big challenges and is located on the SE & SW. **Q.** What is happening with the relocation of transformers? **A.** Need to create a new set of transformers and phase the installation with El Cortez. **Q.** Are the diagonal cables proposed used to support the large cantilevered decks? **A.** Correct, they are needed to support the large cantilevers. **Q.** How are move ins and outs going to be handled? **A.** Through the garage. There is a location at P1. **Q.** Is there a bicycle lane on Beech at the project's location? **A.** Per Civic SD It ends at 6th Ave. **Q.** The building looks beige depending on rendering. **A.** The design team is looking at natural poured in place concrete. The base would have a colored concrete finish while the rest of the slabs would be natural grey concrete. **Q.** What does material painting to match El Cortez mean? **A.** Team is still studying but would prefer a natural concrete finish that matches El Cortez. **Q.** At underside of balconies are you looking to see panel joints? **A.** Going for a very smooth concrete look. **Q.** Has been a long time project is there a real expectation it will occur? **A.** Yes. **Q.** How are you handling drainage on the extended balconies? **A.** Have not gotten to that level of detail. **Q.** Is this a new project approval request or extension. Has it gone thru historical? **A.** It is applying for a



new entitlement approval and has received historical clearance. **Q.** Is the concrete look going to include exposed tie holes? **A.** No the intent is a more sophisticated smooth concrete appearance.

Public Comments

Genti Sara – Opposed: Inquired regarding the recommendation from the Historic Board to reject project and asked if there were any patios on 8th Street. Architect responded that historic board rejected the 17 story building therefore the proposed project reflects 12 stories and the revised project does not propose any patios on 8th St.

Gary Smith – President Downtown Residents Group - Neutral: The building is about as acceptable as the last one. Understands given the site constraints the objective is to make it the best building possible. The loft units right adjacent to the sidewalk are ingenious. Suggests bottom up style blinds. It is a very weird looking building. Some people like weird units. The building looks drab by just being grey concrete. Would like to step back on a perspective view to see how it looks with the complex of buildings around it. Does not look San Diego although the form is interesting. Need one more perspective from street.

Non DCPC Member Comments:

LC Cline: Studios feel sequestered from the rest of the building. Understands what happened on the North & West sides of the building. 6 levels on El Cortez and proposed project being parallel to each other create a canyon. The units in that area will be a hard sale.

DCPC Member comments

Jon Baker: First reaction is that it is a weird shaped building. Understands the approach based on views. Concerned about the cantilevered balconies. Cable sounds like a good idea but may whack someone. May end up with columns at ends. Drainage is an issue. Difficult site but have done interesting things with it.

Pat Stark: Hoping for a cool building but fears it could look like something under construction.

Conor Brown: Likes revisions to base with more solid at bottom and emphasizing the tower. Would like to see the different colors of concrete represented on the rendering views.

Cindy Blair: Elegant design but need to be detailed properly. Hopefully the lower units could have the possibility of being small retail venues.

Rand Barbano: Grey concrete reminds him of East Berlin of the 1960s. Hopefully does not end up looking like something under construction. Retail is important to the neighborhood and should be considered.

Dan Wery: Overall reaction is the same as Gary Smith. Underwhelmed by the brown tone. Had imagined a blue glass building and now has a lot more concrete. The ground floor unit designed as very exposed create tough spaces to live in and people will board themselves to have privacy. Likes idea of converting ground level units to small shops. In regards to the tree grates encourages the applicant to use the historic tree grates for consistency with the neighborhood character. Concerned with the relationship to El Cortez. It was designed to command the block. Anything around it would crowd it. The original design did good things to avoid it with the more curvilinear façade. The original design worked better in that regard. The proposed design has gotten closer, tighter and bigger in relationship to El Cortez. Is concerned with exposed cantilevers. Also there is not enough detail on roof screening. The mechanical area needs a top. For the transformers on 8th there is not enough detail. Applicant should also pay attention to the look of the garage door as well as the fence around the transformer. Prefers the transformers indoors. Where the pet open space is located would hate to live next to it. Does not seem well



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thought out. The loading space also needs more work.

Claudia Escala: Understands the resulting massing. Fan of exposed concrete buildings but need special attention to detail. Cautions architect to also focus on coordinating fire sprinklers at balconies. Recommends concealing sprinklers in a bulkhead as part of the window wall. Trusts that the architect will execute well this building
Meeting Adjourned at 7:20pm