



Downtown Community Planning Council San Diego

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

PRE-DESIGN SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING OF THE DOWNTOWN COMMUNITY PLANNING COUNCIL

MONDAY MAY 7, 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: Cindy Blair, Pat Stark, Conor Brown, Dan Wery, Cameron Atsumi, Ned Lachman, Rand Barbano and Claudia Escala. Also joined the meeting Gordon Summer, Catalina Preskill (Gaslamp Quarter Historical Foundation), Amie Hayes (Save our Heritage Organization – SOHO), Phil Ochoa (East Village Residents Group - EVRG) & Bob Link (EVRG)
2. Public comments on non-agenda items. None
3. Report from Chairperson: Welcomed members from various groups outside of DCPC to join in the review of projects..
4. **Action items**
 - Ezabelle (454 13th Street) – Centre City Development Permit/Site Development Permit (CCDP/SDP) No. 2018-07 – Design Review – East Village Neighborhood of the Downtown Community Plan Area ~ James Alexander

The project consists of a seven-story, 91-foot tall mixed-use development comprised of 48 dwelling units of which 6 are affordable. The ground floor consists of leasable commercial space within a historical resource proposed to be retained on site and part of the project. At the rooftop an outdoor open space is shown for the residents.. The project as presented is utilizing an incentive under the Affordable Housing Regulations to waive required parking.

Design Issues and Considerations:

- Blank Walls – Narrow 42' wide lot result in several blank wall conditions abutting adjacent properties.. Should blank walls on the west and north elevations be further improved to add a higher level of visual interest?
- Historic Resource – In retaining portions of the historic resource on site does the proposal retain the character, integrity and historic significance with the construction of the new project above it, or would the alternative relocation outside of downtown prove to be more beneficial for its historic integrity?

Presentation by Applicant Soheil Nakhshab:

Local family and business owner residing in East Village at the Mitra building. Site where project is proposed has been in a condition of blythe for a long time. Thr applicant has gone through the process of historical designation for the existing on site building. The historical resource has 3 exterior original elevations and the flat roof allows for its better integration with the proposed project. With the intent of inviting small businesses at this location to thrive, at the ground level the concept is to create a marketplace indoor./outdoor space in a private alley scenario. The residential entrance and lobby as well as the elevators are in the back. The project proposes high end micro apartments for mixed income tenants. Will only have 12% affordable and 80% AMI for remainder of project. The project will be fully built out of concrete for increased sound attenuation. Applicant noted that proposed reduced



bathroom with no separate shower is in compliance with CBC Section 11A. The applicant explained that the site's limited size, the retention of the historic resource on site and the parking requirement of 12 spaces would result in the loss of the affordable housing units therefore the applicant is utilizing an incentive under the Affordable Housing Regulations to waive the required parking.

Members Questions

Q. Properties without parking are very constricting on city streets and affecting businesses. .Can you describe how trends are going to change traffic? **A.** Per ACE 50% reduction in parking shows a different trend in direction **Q.** Is proposed building casting shadows on adjacent building? **A.** Developer or Park Boulevard East anticipated future development and included a 20' setback from the interior property line. The applicant shared that his own views from the Mitra project have been blocked by adjacent development and he understands that is the reality of urban living. **Q.** It appears that parking requirements are being reduced in increment and that several exemptions allow for the parking requirement waiver. **A.** The applicant has concluded through an analysis of 4 different alternatives that it is economically unfeasible to provide parking.. **Q.** This constitutes the third project on that same block not required to have parking and having a negative impact on the community. **A.** Other buildings mentioned are SROs getting converted to market rate units and with a prior existence with no parking are now being allowed to remain with no parking. The proposed project is a good candidate for no parking given its proximity to public transportation. **Q.** What are the plans for the north façade? **A.** potentially a green wall and are also considering adding some fogged glass at the bathrooms facing north..**Q.** Does project provide a pet relief area?. **A.** Yes at the roof deck. **Q.** Do not see mechanical system identified?. **A.** A split system with condenser units. **Q.** Has architect studied how to address all utility penetrations that will occur at the building facades? **A.** Yes, the goal is to minimize wall penetrations as well as soffits so special attention will be given to penetrations throughout the project. **Q.** How is applicant planning ot manage the project as for example a greenwall sounds like a great idea but needs maintenance throughout the life of the project. **A.** The project is planned to have a vertically integrated property management. The applicant has been in charge of acquisition, architecture, structure and will continue as property manager. **Q.** Has consideration been given to setback the proposed concrete building with respect to the historic resource as it would improve on what currently shown. **A.** Studies have been explored but there would be a substantial increase in the cost of the structure but the applicant is willing to revisit that option.

Public Comments

Mak Vernaglia –Opposed: In opposition due to no parking included in proposal. Believes project will create congestion. Concerned with effect on surrounding buildings. Egress and safety route currently results in a fire life safety concern. A city can be many things but its evolution should be with the overall goal for the betterment of its residents.

Eric Atilano - Opposed: Resident of Park Blvd East for the past 6 years. Any improvement on the community should bring in more buyers. Seems owner is umbilically attached to their project and business. Not sure the Little Italy model is applicable to this project. Strongly encourages that projects should provide more ownership opportunities.

Ben Bower - Opposed: Believes adding another 48 units without parking would result in too many units on that particular block without parking.

Amie Hayes (Save Our Heritage Organization - SOHO) – In favor : Have been working with the applicant and did not support relocating the historical resource. Applicant will present to the SOHO Board the historic resource and the board is expected to be in support.

Gary Smith: SD Downtown Residents Group – Neutral: Having affordable housing as part of a project lets you do anything. Any site in downtown qualifies as adjacent to public transportation. Not having to have parking does a lot for the applicant. Does the project fit with the proposed blank walls? Green walls don't work just like the green roofs have not work as the existing ones are not thriving. Water restrictions affect their existence. Applicant should consider the practicality of the proposed solution reconsider.

Erich Mercado – Opposed: Recently moved to San Diego 2 years ago to the Park Boulevard East building. Bottega Americano, the restaurant across the street just shut down. He is concerned about how the neighborhood will continue to develop. Does not favor a no parking project or following the Little Italy model.

Anthony Drew – Opposed Resides at:Park Blvd East Parking and believes parking is an issue Even if a perspn worked and lived downtown people still need a car. No one has talked about streets getting blocked off sometimes due to



games.. How is the applicant planning to convince someone to live in the proposed project and pay for baseball parking?. The building is ugly as it relates to the historic building. The project will be the tallest building on the entire block. Have reviewed blue prints and is not convinced about the micro bathrooms with no shower.

DCPC Member comments

Cindy Blair: Did the applicant look at robotic parking? Per applicant he did an analysis and the cost was astronomical. Concerned that there is no parking, residents may choose to live in a building with no parking but people come to visit people in their units and expect some place to park.

Pat Stark: Would like to see some form of embellishment on the north wall. Also a bit concerned with the constructability of the south facing façade. He believes it will need great collaboration and approval from neighbors.

Rand Barbano: Many people have commented on the building being taller than the adjacent neighbors. Per the applicant it will be one story taller than the adjacent neighbor.

Dan Wery: Applicant should think of where will tenants park if there will be no parking in their building. \$1,300/month rent with all those amenities but no parking? Per applicant there is some recent data from ACE parking showing some of their parking lots are underutilized. Welcomes addressing blank walls by bringing in some additional light into the unit with frosted glass.

Claudia Escala: Applicant seems very detail oriented, reason for continuing to study the relationship of the proposed building to the historic resource. Currently it appears unresolved with the proposed building oppressing the historic resource, Recommends studying introducing a stepback.

Non DCPC Member Comments

Gordon Summer: Parking is an issue that civic planners need to address. People in Southern CA need cars to go places. Without the parking waiver through the affordable housing incentive how many spaces are required? Per Civic SD, James Alexander 12 spaces.

Phil Ochoa - EVRG: Not in favor of one more project in EV with low income housing and no parking. Understands that the inclusion of the 12 parking spaces would eliminate the affordable housing component.

Bob Link - EVRG: Curious on whether there are any studies of other urban areas without parking. Applicant shared a map showing no parking or reduced parking required for apartment buildings in urban locations. Concerned about the lack of parking.

- Chinese Theatre Revised Comprehensive Sign Plan (701 G Street) – Neighborhood Use Permit (NUP) no. 2017-42 – Gaslamp Neighborhood of the Downtown Community Plan Area ~ James Alexander.

The project comprises a commercial redevelopment of the former Gaslamp movie theater by proposing the renovation of the 60,000SF building to re-open the movie theater with eight luxury auditoriums with food and drink service as well as new street level dining tenant spaces. To supplement the ground floor dining sidewalk cafes are proposed on 5th Ave.

Design Issues & Considerations:

- Is the large changeable canopy canvas sign on G Street appropriate in the Gaslamp Quarter Historic District?
- Are the banner signs for the building tenants facing Sixth Ave. appropriate and an attractive design solution to the large solid walls along Sixth Ave.?
- Is there excessive signage on the face of the canopy which lists individual products and services?
- Are the “TCL” and “Chinese Theater” signs appropriate on the 5th & G tower element given the large graphics and signs on the canopy at street level?
- Is there excessive Sugar Factory signage with canopy cabinet signs, the canopy face signs and the projecting signs?



- Is the design of the Sugar Factory cabinet signs appropriate in the Gaslamp Quarter?

Presentation by Ruben Andrews with Graphic Solutions

Since January 2/3 of the signage has been removed. The building takes about 1/3 of the block which should be considered when looking at signage. The existing building did not survive as a theater alone. The operator will be operating all businesses within the building. To note some of the revisions, an advertisement board has been removed, signage on canopy faces has been reduced, Sugar Factory lettering has been reduced. Removed signage from Tower element, individual 6th Ave sign relocated to spandrel glass on G Street, TCL lettering removed on G Street, the quantity of movie posters at street level has increased, the banners on 6th Avenue have been reduced to 4 at about half the size and under canopy projecting signs have been reduced from 3 to 2.

Update on architectural changes by Maria Ruiz Ostmeier with ACRM Architects: Exterior curtains removed while added marble to the corner. Some value engineering changes include, along G St reduced glass size by 8", changed materials from marble back to original concrete, arched windows all the way up have been reduced. Currently changing awning fabric, samples have been given to the historical review board.

Member Questions:

Q. Signs on the building related a lot to the elevations can Civic SD give us some basic description of what is happening with the tower under construction. **A.** During plan check it was discovered that the dome could not remain without having to restructure the lateral system of the building. Therefore the dome was removed. **Q.** If 300 SF of signage is what is permitted how many SF total is the project proposing? **A.** 1,100SF. **Q.** 4 times the amount that is permitted in the PDO?. **A.** The building in its original form had more signage. **Q.** The Pendry hotel successfully has signage in full compliance with the PDO why can't this project follow in its footsteps?. **A.** The previous removed signs were larger than what are being proposed now. Graphic Solutions can provide an analysis. **Q.** From the point of view of where you started you come up good but compared to Gaslamp still 4 times more than the allowed by the PDO. What is the justification for that? **A.** 2 good reasons. Previous building and use had that much signage. Signage guidelines were developed for 25' storefronts not for buildings occupying 2/3 of a block. Per Civic SD planner James Alexander, the applicant can use 2SF per linear foot of frontage which would result in 988SF to compare to the current 1,100SF. **Q.** How is Civic looking at the height of the letters compared to PDO and Gaslamp regulations 18" height limit? **A.** Not necessarily accepting the signage based on square footage. Still using the 18" max reference. This project has a massive canopy. The Gaslamp Historic Foundation does not object to the size of the canopy but to the number of signs.

Public Comments

Amie Hayes - SOHO – Opposed: Amie sits on the Gaslamp Land Use committee. Encourages applicant to walk around Gaslamp district to understand what is appropriate for signage. Liberty Station is a good example to follow. Expressed great concern for setting the wrong precedent. Irrelevant on the number of tenants. If additional signage is allowed how is that different for a new applicant. She recommends the applicant to pursue no deviations.

Gary Smith – SD Downtown Residents Group – Neutral: Revised plan is a lot better. Before and after slides would make understanding easier. For a theater without a marquee, a blade sign makes sense. Probably no need for the 26 poster signs. Signage is not fully visible and also blocked from trees. Staff may want an opinion from the City attorney as the project could be in violation of billboard signage laws. Nothing is being sold on site with the TCL brand name. Law does not allow that. In general the signage is a big improvement from last time. Need an absolute ruling from Civic on what is permissible

DCPC Member comments

Claudia Escala: Believes that a successful business does not need to rely heavily on signage. Applicant has heard the Gaslamp Historic Foundation voice their concerns.

Dan Wery: In general a big improvement from previous version. The Wild & Oats sign is out of place. Graphic Solutions noted that particular sign is a place holder. He would like to see a version of the full signage package in full compliance with the PDO at the 988SF maximum.



Cindy Blair excited about the reuse of the building . The project has come a long way. Need to further review the signage in detail

- Broker's Building (402-424 Market Street) – Design Review – Gaslamp Quarter Development Permit/Neighborhood Use Permit (GQDP/NUP) No. 2018-14 – Gaslamp Quarter Neighborhood of the Downtown Community Plan Area~ James Alexander

The project comprises the construction of 4,685 square feet of new gross floor area on the rooftop to be used as office space and a 484 SF sidewalk café. The project is located on the designated historic resource known as the Broker's Building.

Presentation by Director of Engineering with Pacifica.

North County based real estate group. The building is listed as a designated historical resource in the Gaslamp Historic District. The project includes a rooftop and patio NUP plus seismic retrofit. The building originally only had two stories but in the early 1900s a third story was added. The seismic retrofit is required due to the existence of a soft story and the unreinforced masonry façade facing Market St. makes the building very vulnerable. The building also presents ADA and accessibility challenges. Fundamental infrastructure is lacking. Upper levels are unconditioned. The goal in design is to stay within the confinements of the PDO and within the Secretary of the Interior Standards. In regards to the added square footage on the roof, from a sightline perspective have been working with Jodie Brown at the city. The concept of activating the roof top and patio is to add an additional amenity at the roof level and a feature to the ground level. The orange awnings have been eliminated.

Member Questions:

Q. Will patio be at ground level? **A.** It will be slightly raised as the ground level has a step. Hooters used to have an entry step up stoop. Will create a smooth transition with an 8" step. **Q.** Elevator access to roof top not showing overrun? **A.** Existing elevator is non ADA compliant. The design is not to have an elevator penthouse. **Q** Cast iron ¾" pickets are they solid? **A.** That is correct. **Q.** Where is the HVAC for the 2nd & 3rd floors. **A.** Addressing infrastructure is two fold. The mechanical enclosure will not be within visibility. **Q.** Are windows at top black metal? **A.** Yes but will continue to study what is the most appropriate color.

Public Comments:

Qamar Bradford : Works with the State ADA Workforce Secretary and is also a member of the Broker's Building Art Gallery board. Has been tracking project and who owns the project. Has contacted Pacifica Enterprises. Being a representative of the artists in the gallery wants to make sure Pacifica Enterprises reaches back to them about the plans for the project. The artists in the building do not want to be treated with a 30 day notice. Would like to be part of the planning process.

Amie Hayes (SOHO) - Neutral: Great building in the Gaslamp. Excited about the retrofit. Happy about the project following the PDO. How can the structure be made thinner and lighter? Especially would like to see the awning roof eyebrow reduced.

Gary Smith (SD Downtown Residents Group) - Neutral: Will miss haunted hotel and hooters. Looks like a good adaptable reuse. Can be very attractive for an office use. Big dark thing up top could be lighter. Have not had any issues with the private alley with that space but ought to think about putting some kind of fence.

DCPC Member Comments:

Cindy Blair: The architect has treated the 4th floor very nicely. Does not mind the eyebrow.

Claudia Escala: Advised the applicant to review buildings downtown to determine the best color for the window mullions. The proposed roof top addition works well with the historic resource.



Non DCPC Member Comments:

Catalina Preskill (Gaslamp Quarter Historical Foundation): This building is one of the most iconic buildings in the Gaslamp. Very pleased with what the applicant is proposing. Would like to have awnings consistent with the Gaslamp Quarter Guidelines.

- 5th & J Restaurant (437 J Street) – Design Review Gaslamp Quarter Development Permit/Conditional Use Permit/Neighborhood use Permit (GQDP/CUP/NUP) No. 2018-10 – Gaslamp Quarter Neighborhood of the Downtown Community Plan Area ~ James Alexander

Project consists of a proposed restaurant, bar, and lounge in a designated historic resource known as the Grand Pacific Hotel on a 5,000 square foot property.

Presentation by Architect Rodolfo Ocio with Ocio Design Group: The historical resource was built in 1887. The concept is to have a multipurpose restaurant with event center on top. 2,000 SF of enclosed space at roof top with 2 elevators. Building is planned to be seismically retrofitted. Rooftop elements are located towards the back of the building so they are not visible from the street. Some windows need to be redome

Member questions:

Q. Will windows be consistent with historic building? **A.** Yes. **Q.** How far setback for the glass railing? **A.** It is 2' behind the brow. **Q.** Frameless glass? **A.** Yes. **Q.** Ground floor operable windows? **A.** Yes same type as other historical windows. **Q.** Does Jodie Brown support location of elevator at front? **A.** Yes have been working with her. **Q.** Is the interior of this building intact? **A.** No completely planning on renovating interior. **Q.** Is there any historical value in the interior. **A.** Not that the applicant is aware of. **Q.** How are the elevators distributed? Elevator access to second floor seems to only be from the back. **A.** Both elevators are accessible. **Q.** Why two elevators? **A.** Due to the number of occupants. At a given point there could be a flow as high as 950 occupants and people will not be inclined to use stairs to access the rooftop.

Public Comments:

Amie Hayes (SOHO) - Neutral: Elevator seems too stark of a mass. Concerned about visibility. Recommends to touch base again with Jodie Brown

Gary Smith (SD Downtown Residents Group) - Neutral: If this building was in East Village it would not be a good project. For Gaslamp the space works well as an event space. It can have a cool elevator. Concerned as it looks like there is a DJ booth. DJ + large bar could potentially have dancing but there is no designated dance floor in the proposed plans. Need to think about that. Design looks competent. Would like to see more transparency.

DCPC Member Comments:

Cindy Blair: recused herself.

Claudia Escala: Project looks well thought out. Encourages applicant to look at using a frameless glass with spider joint connections for the elevator mass.

Non DCPC Member Comments:

Catalina Preskill (Gaslamp Quarter Historical Foundation): This is one of the most iconic buildings in the Gaslamp and remains like the original building. Thrilled to have it. Would like the name continued.

Meeting adjourned at 7:40 PM