



Downtown Community Planning Council San Diego

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

PRE-DESIGN SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING OF THE DOWNTOWN COMMUNITY PLANNING COUNCIL

TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 11, 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, Ned Lachman, Dan Wery, Jon Baker, Cindy Blair, Stacy Dion, Pat Stark & Claudia Escala. Also joined the meeting Gordon Summer (Community Member), LC Cline (Downtown Residents Group) and Kathleen Hallahan and Bob Link (East Village Residents Group)
2. Public comments on non-agenda items. None
3. Report from Chairperson: An Ad-Hoc committee has been created to review the 12th Land Development Code Update and will be having its first meeting next Wednesday September 19 at 4:00PM before the regular DCPC meeting.
4. **Action item**
 - Jefferson Makers Quarter (Full block bounded by Broadway, E, 15th, 16th streets) – Preliminary Design Review – CCDP/PDP – East Village – Brad Richter, Civic San Diego

Claudia Escala recused herself and Jon Baker acted as chair for this agenda item.

The project is comprised of a seven-story residential development containing 318 units, 12,000SF of commercial space behind the existing warehouse facades and approximately 436 parking spaces in three subterranean levels.

Design Issues and Considerations

- DCP Consistency – Does the Project meet the overall vision of the Northeast quadrant of the neighborhood by helping to create a high intensity node with varied building heights?
- Overall Massing & Architecture – Does the proposed design provide sufficient breakdown of building massing or variation in bulk and scale? Does the overall mass and design of the Project provide an attractive addition to this portion of the East Village neighborhood?
- Building Materials – Does the predominant use of grey colored plaster throughout the Project enhance the image of the neighborhood? Should more upgraded materials be utilized, especially at the lower levels?
- Street Level Design – Does the ground level along Broadway create an interesting pedestrian experience? Should additional planters be provided to create additional buffers for the ground level units?
- Roof – top Mechanical Equipment Screening – Is the proposed rooftop screening method adequate (screening sides but not the top of the individual condenser units)?



Presentation by Applicant Vice President of Development with JPI – David Potter

JPI has done projects in the City of San Diego and other cities around the country but this is the first project in downtown SD. JPI is a multi-family developer established in 1989 and has developed over 335 apartment communities totaling 102,000 units and with 13 active projects in southern California. This particular site has some unique characteristics and has been on the market a few times with other developers not able to move forward. There is a 60" storm drain pipe running through the northwest quadrant of the site that will need to be relocated to the public ROW. Through Single Discipline Preliminary Review a new acceptable location has been identified but it will require relocation of other existing dry utilities and comes at a cost to the project. The project is also proposing to preserve in place the existing building façade along 15th & E Streets. This will require specialty demolition and shoring which also adds cost.

Presentation by Carrier Johnson – John Martinez (Project Designer)

Presented concept that each project is unique in its history and has its own story. In conducting research the design team found a hand drawing of San Diego from 1876. In this drawing a creek is shown going through the site. Known as Switzer Creek it runs through site to the water harbor. The natural typology that once existed is used as a source of inspiration. Explored the dichotomy of the natural and the fabricated and looked at the concept of erosion. Wanted to study movement of people, traffic especially along Broadway and used movement as shaping and eroding the project's massing.

The project is presented as refined and bohemian. Typical podium projects are internally focused. This one in addition to a central courtyard and one on the south the project has a series of amenity spaces that are connected along a spine. At the pool deck the outdoor space opens to the south. At ground level retail is focused at the southwest corner where retail activity is already energized with 10 Barrel Brewing Company and Punch Bowl Social. The team believes retail at this location and not along Broadway would thrive with other existing retail. 15th, 16th and Broadway streets are activated with unit entries and stoops. Some stoops are also brought into the courtyard center spine. A second lobby is proposed on Broadway. At podium level the gym & clubhouse are facing south for daylight. The roof top amenity has been further explored and the project capitalizes on outdoor living providing a 2,400 SF dog park. The existing old warehouse is incorporated into the proposed façade. The team has gone back and forth with SOHO on making the proposed building feel separate but respectful of the old building in terms of scale and material. Starting at the ground plane the erosion concept is expressed. The erosion is brought up into the building in a larger scale carving into the mass and also creating opportunities for oriel windows to add to the composition. There is no exposed above grade parking unlike other projects that have the challenge of addressing facades with non-habitable space. Starting at the ground a pedestrian can look into the project's courtyard and beyond into the open sky as the space is 2 ½ stories tall. A great part of this project is that the energy climbs up to the podium and the roof top with the dog park and lounge bar.

The landscape concept takes cues from the architectural concept and has as its primary focus the green street on E Street.

DCPC Member & Non Member Questions

Q. Is there public access all the way through the spine? **A.** No in order to provide security and safety there will be glass to offer porosity but have security. **Q.** What is the parking ratio? **A.** 1.3 ratio with no above grade parking. In order to get to the proposed density the project has all parking below grade. **Q.** At the NE corner 3 large spaces on Broadway what are they and why do they not engage Broadway? **A.** They are units and one does have stoops but dealing with grade changes the other two do not have stoops. **Q.** Are balcony railings punched aluminum? **A.** The team is studying in more detail looking at perforated, prefab metal railings with a clean and elegant look. Have not reached yet a specific style. **Q.** On the proposed Ceraclad product what is the finish surface? Will it be painted Can a knife go through it? **A.** No a knife should not be able to cut into the product. UCSD is currently installing the product in one of their student housing projects. **Q.** For a potential restaurant tenant in the retail area have grease interceptors and venting be taken into consideration? The façades do not show any penetrations. **A.** The renderings do show some penetrations. **Q.** Are the vents on the façade or going all the way to the roof? **A.** For the restaurant venting it is planned going all the way up. Venting for the units will be horizontal and going through the exterior



walls. **Q.** What is the mechanical system? **A.** 2 pipe horizontal water source heat pumps. **A.** Mezzanines at top unit will help conceal from view the condenser units. **Q.** Will garage have dedicated spaces or separate specifically for car chargers?. **A.** Have not decided yet but will address chargers. **Q.** Can you share economic factors that are keeping the project at a lower density? **A.** The 2 primary ones are the site specific issues: relocation of storm drain line and other impacted utility relocations (2M cost determined by JPIs in house estimator) and the old façade specialty demo and shoring costs. (estimated at 1.5M). Plus the Green Street improvements although the team is excited about enhancing the front door they are also coming at a cost. There is a process in place for reimbursement but it comes with other strings like the PLA. The team did study a 24 story high rise and the project would pick only 42 units not a unit count jump that made sense economically. **Q.** 15 floors only gave you 42 units? **A.** The Shift project only has 368 units. Financing is also becoming more and more competitive and the larger the project it makes it more difficult to get a construction loan and all the financing pieces in place. **Q.** On page 44 showing the Broadway elevation not seeing the type of green space expected for Broadway? **A.** Used standard for Broadway per streetscape manual. **Q.** Can you speak to sustainability Features? **A.** Sustainability will be at the level of CalGreen, no LEED certification. This is an increasing trend since Cal Green is getting closer to the LEED Silver requirements. **Q.** Cost of project? **A.** 175 million. **Q.** 3.5 million did not play a factor as much as the number of units correct?. **A.** Jumping to a different product type has a significant cost increase. **Q.** How many of your projects are high rise? **A.** JPI has no high rise projects in their portfolio. **Q.** Any affordable units? **A.** No the economics did not work on this one but the JPI project in Pacific Beach does have affordable.

Public Comments

Doug Hicks (Labor Organization) – Opposed- Concerned with street wall heights and wonders if it requires a variance. The south elevation above the historic façade is monochromatic. Varies in depth but not in tone. Façade does not do justice to the historic building. Density for DCPC is it really a goal or just lip service. Along Broadway there is only a lobby and applicant is claiming Broadway is not as commercial. The applicant is neglecting a location that could be very profitable.

Jesse Garcia (Labor Organization) – Neutral- Looks at design as a big box. JPI construction based out of Texas is a self performing general contractor. Fear is they have strong connections with other subs from outside San Diego. Would like them to use local subs. With a bus stop on Broadway it looks like the parking along the street is minimal. Only 10 guest parking shown. Should have more.

Armando Nunez (Labor Organization) – Opposed- Makers Quarter Projects located in block B & D imported all their workforce from Arizona with their wages. Performance Drywall is plagued by cash pay and an undocumented workforce. Recognizes it is a design review meeting but as a representative for 5,000 members and many others that don't belong to a group, the message received from City Council is to speak to Civic San Diego and vice versa. meetings they have been told to tells go to Civic SD and vice versa and would really like to know who can listen.

Javier Santizo (Labor Organization) – Opposed - Concerned for our community with carpenters working in this town Responsible contractors should be on these projects. Makers Quarter is iffy due to their history with out of town contractors and they are as much a façade as the design of this building. It is a front.

Gary Smith (Downtown Residents Group) – Opposed - Good things: The SW corner looks nice. Amenity space stretching through building is innovative as well as the dog park Neutral things: The developer is spending a lot of money to restore a façade that no one has deemed historical. Not sure it makes sense to spend 1.5 M for an unregistered building. Bad Things: Stoops have to be isolated from street with a fence and a gate so they don't become amenities to our transient population. On Broadway St. having residential on ground level is a no no as blinds will be closed 100% of the time resulting in no street activation. If there is no neighborhood retail planned where are neighbors going for nails, dry cleaning? Major FAR issues.

Comment from Jon Baker acting a chair: Does not think workforce issue is DCPC's purview and would like Brad Richter to explain if City has a way of monitoring cash no cash payments.

Per Brad Richter it is a State Labor Department issue and subject to state labor laws. Some labor violations on past project were reported and Brad Richter is aware that the state responded.

Doug Hicks: the City of San Diego has a way to enforce regulations and does it through insurance fraud. Enforcement mechanism is the general contractor. It is in Civic San Diego's purview to look at developers they approve projects from. Every tax dollar not paid by a developer it translates into less teachers in a classroom.



Per Brad Richter Civic San Diego does not approve developers.

DCPC Member comments

Par Stark: Regarding design issues concurs the density is problematic. Conversation on a high rise opportunity makes sense. For a 7 story podium the product looks OK as far as design. Agrees with Gary on stoops on Broadway are problematic. For roof top screening would not like to waive the horizontal screening primarily because we have held the height of the building down so other buildings will be looking down on it. Worried about quality of building materials in particular with the Ceraclad concerned with durability.

Dan Wery: Concerned with density and massing. Appreciates the erosion effort but it is not significant and still reads as a double donut project. The south side is appealing but the north side needs work. The project needs to go back and have more varied massing. If applicant will be sticking to podium project the north should look more like the south. Why not propose bulb outs at every corner? Likes stoops but is concerned that everything will fit and ground level currently feels squatty. Should consider potential transition to retail on Broadway as the project is currently turning its back. Could use some attention. Decks on 15th & 16th streets look boxy so it is accentuating the boxiness of the proposed design. Density and massing needs to be addressed.

Cindy Blair: The proposed project is a continuation of product we have. Encourages applicant to go back and look at the FAR. Likes SW corner and central amenity core that have given a great genesis to the project but the rest has to step to that level.

Jon Baker: Likes a lot the design of the project and believes the design team has done a terrific job. Materials and composition are well handled. There are some easy tricks to address taller components and encourages the applicant to explore those. Not to put retail on Broadway is a total disconnect. Residential units on Broadway will not work. It is a nice project that should not be on this site. Need to amortize the 3.5M cost of the utilities and the old building façade restoration over a larger project so the 3.5 M becomes incidental. Need to achieve the density goals. It is a terrifically designed project for what it is but this site needs the density. Cannot support project.

John Martinez with Carrier Johnson added that the team did study a tower option but since more units need more parking it results in a scheme with above grade parking with units above so the bulk of the project does not get the residential units but more parking above grade.

Non DCPC Members comments

Kathleen Hallahan Likes incorporation of the old warehouse facade element. Gave compliments on a lovely design for the green street. Very disappointed with the facades and believes the massing does not do justice to the energy and dynamic elements the community is looking for in East Village. At the same time cautions the architect about making the façade more articulated but running the risk of becoming a decoration. Encourages the developer to go for more massing. Understands the constraints of the other projects but encourages larger massing. A comment directed at the DCPC Board. Are they just giving lip service to density. Believes the board has a responsibility knowing about the housing crisis.

Summer: Major issue with FAR situation. Looking at the current floor plate with 45 units a floor if one takes half of the building, 22 units times 10 floors would be another 220 units. The math is wrong when the applicant says that going with a high rise will only add another 42 units. Downtown welcomes density. Understands the developer is having trouble with financing but the other stuff does not make sense. Upset because he believes it is possible to get many more units into that floor plate.

LC Cline: Disappointed with the streetscape. Agrees the old existing building façade could be far better replicated with new materials. Disappointed in FAR as it is a large site. Building elements are nice for what they are but there is not a lot of cohesiveness with the whole building when looking at the facades.

Bob Link: He is a little contrarian as he lives close to the proposed project. Does agree that this project is a contrast to what exists in a 5 block radius. Believes project will complement the area. Density would be good and he does not understand the math presented by the applicant. Believes there is not a need for residential neighborhood retail in those blocks. Wants to understand a little better why not more density.



5. Action item

- Union & Ash (north side of West Ash Street between Union and Front streets) – Preliminary Design Review – CCDP – Little Italy – James Alexander, Civic San Diego

Claudia Escala returned to chair this item

The Project proposes a 36-story residential development consisting of approximately 389 dwelling units, 405 parking spaces in three subterranean levels and five levels above grade. 32 affordable dwelling units for very low income will be provided.

Design Issues and Considerations

- Overall Massing – Does the proposed design sufficiently breakdown the building’s massing? Does the building incorporate a variety of modulations to develop distinct architectural volumes per the Downtown Design Guidelines (DDG)
- Tower Architecture – Does the tower design utilize a variety of fenestration and material patterns to create visual interest and avoid the appearance of a repeated single floor extrusion per DDG?
- Ground Floor Finished Floor – Should the finished floor level of the ground floor be raised to more closely align with the sidewalk grade in order to avoid a sunken floor condition whereby pedestrians would look downward into the ground floor space?
- Pedestrian Entrances – Should additional pedestrian entrances be provided along West Ash Street.
- Blank Walls – Could the portion of the ground floor on the east elevation containing utilities and lacking pedestrian engagement be enhanced or reorganized to reduce the length of the dead zone per DDG? Is the exposed blank wall on the north elevation sufficiently treated to provide adequate visual interest per DDG?
- Parking – Should the amount of parking be reduced based on the reduction allowed by the Affordable Housing Regulations? Should the reduced parking be effectuated by eliminating above-grade levels and/or increasing below-grade levels to reduce design impacts of the podium parking in the Project?
- Parking Garage Screening – Does the parking garage screening successfully utilize strategies to provide visual interest and complement the Project per DDG? Is the screening sufficiently architecturally incorporated in to the design of the overall building?

Presentation by Applicant – Trammell Crow Residential represented by Jessica Duncan and Alec Schiffer - With the success of Alexan East Village TCR is moving forward with the same development and design team. The project proposes to maximize density through the use of affordable housing. The tower will have floor to ceiling glass and the project will be highly amenitized. The team has met with the Little Italy Association and they are supportive of project.

Presentation by Applicant – Joseph Wong Design Associates – Chris Fassler

The project goals were to maximize FAR, LEED Gold for sustainability and 15% very low income for affordable housing. The site is 182’ wide which is narrower than a typical block. Placement, shape and height of tower was developed to maximize density but respecting setbacks. The shape of the tower is responsive to the context and views are amplified in all directions. The tower is envisioned all in glass with a footprint that extends above the podium to the 36th floor. The building presents itself as a background building but also wants to be iconic. The podium with 5 levels of above grade parking offers a contrast to the all glass tower. A perforated panel concept is proposed that allows for light to filter during the day and animate it at night. The project is currently parked at a ratio of 1:1.15 and without counting tandem 1:1. The parking is designed with flat slabs and speed ramps to allow for a future conversion to residential units when parking demand drops in the future. This is a building that belongs more in the business core as the zoning on adjacent projects has an employment requirement. There is a single point of access for security purposes. Most utilities are grouped along Front Street. Indoor and outdoor amenities are located on level 6, level 35 has a terrace area and at the very top level 36 has a sky deck with a pool used and



offers variation at the tower top. The north shear wall that is a blank wall will be treated with a form liner. The site has a really large slope. The lowest point is on Union Street where the entry is located. Some areas of the project are set below grade due to the grade differential. The tower dimension is accomplished via an incentive as there is a 10' diameter pipe crossing the property that shortening the tower would result in a loss of 2 units per floor making the project not viable. The building skin material will be similar to Alexan EV and there would be no differentiation aesthetically between the vision and spandrel glass. The black stone cladding relates well to office core.

Members Questions

Q. Is the glass at ground level an issue, is it breakable? **A.** Yes it is breakable but it is tempered glass typical to that application. **Q.** Glass on first floor on Front Street seems to allow people to look into a storage space. **A.** It is a more residential use with bicycle maintenance. **Q.** Loading area on ground floor shown with the 90 degree turn as coming in looks like all move ins and move outs will happen here is this appropriate? **A.** For the size of truck planned and no parking zone adjacent to it it is anticipated to work. **Q.** Is parking mechanically ventilated? **A.** Yes. **Q.** Storage unit reduction what is the thought process? **A.** The economic analysis from other projects reveals that only 15% to 20% of the storage spaces provided are getting rented. This project proposes storage spaces for 30% of the number of units. In the future parking could also be converted to storage. **Q.** Provisions for EV car chargers? **A.** There will be dedicated spaces for EV car chargers and provisions will be made for future installation. Charging stations will be centrally located. **Q.** With Union & Ash being on the southern boundary of Little Italy it is not clear why retail would not be a viable and attractive use? The location begs an opportunity for excellent retail all the way around the block. Feels like a lost opportunity for small boutique type retail **A.** Union street would be feasible for retail but had to use it for lobby program. Ground floor spaces are activated with high end amenity spaces, co-working and a speakeasy space. **Q.** More parking spaces than needed is good are these included in the rent or are extras? **A.** TCR does not have it all figured out yet but the market in LI shows that people want the parking included with their unit. Typically renters get one spot and pay for the next one. **Q.** Is there a view corridor step back requirement on Ash? **A.** Only on the south side of Ash so not applicable to this project. **Q.** Is the mechanical system same as Alexan EV? **A.** No there will not be PTAC units directly venting to the outside.

Public Comments

Gary Smith – Opposed - To put things in perspective the podium portion of this project is the same size as the whole project that just got reviewed. Storage lockers are required so balconies do not become storage areas. 90% of other apartment developers do not provide the first parking space. No one wants to pay \$120.00/month for a parking space. This project is close to the Civic Core. The developer should explore shared parking opportunities as in the core there are many buildings without cars after 6:00PM. There are two sides facing neighbors staring at a 6 story thing. Will not be a pleasant view out their windows. The building design has a bottom, middle and top and fits in downtown but not in Little Italy. Need to rethink about the podium really hard as well as doing away with storage units.

DCPC Member comments

Jon Baker: At the ground plane the curtainwall wrapping the building needs a little more development. Some buildings are uncomfortable to walk by. On the Ash elevation the composite panels tilted are conveniently not really clear. Could look monolithically and pretty flat. Understand that the tower itself is intended to be a background building but not sure that it can be a landmark too. JWDA has done some more interesting towers. This one does not come across quite that way. Most concerned with how some elevations terminate at the top looking like we just ran out of curtainwall.

Cindy Blair: Likes background characteristic of the tower. Has issue with podium and reminds her of the parking over at Mr. As. Need to take another look at the design of that level and activation of pedestrian level.

Stacy Dion: The Little Italy Association endorses the project. This is a lot more desirable than having the Aladdin Bail Bonds. Love tall and shiny buildings.

Dan Wery: Overall impression, elegant and clean. Objection to huge monolithic base at above grade parking. Encourages Brad to change zoning so above grade parking does count towards FAR. Does not mind when it is



wrapped. Would like to see more habitable space. Eyes on the street are non-existent in this project as they start at Level 6. Need more active livable spaces at the lower floors. Encourages East & West to have livable spaces.

Pat Stark: Storage reduction is used as an incentive due to affordable units but it is not presented as a deviation Interested in justification in the economic analysis. Building is too monolithic. Agrees with comments made regarding podium parking structure projects. Additional points of entry with that many units should be encouraged from a street activation point of view. Agrees with form liner. No problem with tower.

Claudia Escala: Agrees with TCR that activating the ground plane with amenity spaces is effective. Has visited the Alexan in EV and thinks it is very sophisticated and can tell the developer invested a lot in the interiors. One disappointment in EV are the townhomes that look less finished and sophisticated than the rest of the project. Would encourage the developer to allocate more money to the exteriors on this project. With regards to the podium the proposed screen looks timid. There is a project in downtown LA named Atelier by Carmel Partners that had a very well executed screen for above grade parking. Would like to challenge the architect to come up with an innovative solution for screening the parking.

Non DCPC Members comments

Gordon Summer: Loves the tower and applauds the number of parking spaces. Concerned with having parking spaces at the cost of having less storage spaces.

LC Cline: Regarding the podium and parking situation the project has created a flat floor plate to in the future turn into units. Along Ash encourages the applicant to add an artistic element to the façade. The podium seems to float in air not tied to anything especially along Ash. Something to continue to develop. The width of the tower allowed the ability to maximize unit count. Alexan in EV shows very well.

Alec Shiffer with TCR: Regarding the pedestrian experience encourages the board to go to the Alexan and see the activity as he believes people are the art that activates the scene. Above grade parking can be usable in the future while underground parking will not be as usable. Wrapping the project with units could generate the wrong units that would be difficult to lease. 6,000 units in California show that storage is not on high demand.

Meeting adjourned at 7:44 PM