



ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD
DRAFT MINUTES: August 15, 2024
Council Chambers & Zoom
8:30 AM

Call to Order / Roll Call

The Architectural Review Board (ARB) of the City of Palo Alto met on August 15, 2024, in Council Chambers and virtual teleconference at 8:37 AM.

Present: Chair Kendra Rosenberg, Vice Chair Pingxi Chen, Board Member Mousam Adcock, Board Member Peter Baltay, and Board Member David Hirsch

Absent: None.

Oral Communications

None.

Agenda Changes, Additions and Deletions

None.

City Official Reports

1. Transmittal of 1) the ARB Meeting Schedule and Attendance Record, 2) Tentative Future Agenda Items and 3) Recently Submitted Projects

Jodie Gerhardt, Manager of Current Planning, discussed the upcoming schedule and September's agenda. The agenda for the September 5 meeting will include discussion on the tenant space located at 180 El Camino (The Melt). The Board will also be discussing 3000 El Camino, where they are planning to convert a movie theater into office space. A formal application was received for a pending project located at 3400 El Camino Real, which will be a builder's remedy housing project to include 231 units and 192 hotel rooms. Ms. Gerhardt received the SB 330 preliminary application for 2300 Geng Road. The applicant for that project was seeking to convert existing office buildings into 159 townhomes.

Action Item

2. PUBLIC HEARING / QUASI-JUDICIAL. 525 University [23PLN-00308] and 530 Lytton [23PLN00311] Recommendation on Applicant's Request for Major Architectural Review Approval for Two Master Sign Programs with Sign Exceptions at two locations. The Project at 525 University Includes Five Signs: One Illuminated Directory Sign (Type A), One Illuminated Canopy Address Sign (Type B), One Illuminated Address Wall Sign (Type C), One Illuminated Directional Sign at Parking Entrance (Type D), and One Illuminated Directional

Sign – Parking Monument ID (Type E). The Project at 530 Lytton Includes Four Signs: One Illuminated Directory Sign (Type A), One Illuminated Address Wall Sign (Type C), One Illuminated Directional Sign at Parking Entrance (Type D), and One Illuminated Directional Sign – Parking Blade ID (Type E). Environmental Assessment: Exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Action in Accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15301 and 15311. Zoning District: CD-C (P) (Downtown Commercial). For More Information Contact the Project Planner Emily Kallas at Emily.Kallas@CityofPaloAlto.org.

Chair Rosenberg asked if there were any disclosures. All board members disclosed that they had either visited or driven by the site recently.

Project Planner Emily Kallas addressed the Board and presented a slideshow. The applicant attended the meeting via Zoom. The project was before the ARB on May 16 for the approval of sitewide signage located at 525 University and 530 Lytton. The applicant had obtained a prior entitlement and building permit for landscape changes. The ARB previously reviewed the four sign types at those locations, which included an Illuminated Directory Sign (Type A), an Illuminated Address Wall Sign (Type C), and an Illuminated Directional Sign at Parking Entrance (Type D). The signage for 525 University will include a Directional Sign – Parking Monument ID (Type E) and 530 Lytton will have an Illuminated Directional Sign – Parking Blade ID (Type E).

Ms. Kallas discussed the overview of the project, including which signs were being revised. The ARB previously requested the Illuminated Directory Sign (Type A) located at 525 University be lowered to account for the raised concrete pad. The previously proposed height was 96 inches. The proposed height is now 84 inches from the ground and 66.5 inches from the concrete base.

The Illuminated Directory Sign (Type A) for 530 Lytton was originally proposed closer to the sidewalk and slightly taller. The proposed sign height was changed to 66 inches when measured from the total sign area and 84 inches when measured from the bottom of the planter. The applicant requested the ARB consider measuring the sidewalk height from the height of the plaza rather than from the height of the public sidewalk. Ms. Kallas mentioned the Illuminated Address Wall Sign (Type C) was reduced to 40.5 square feet which will not exceed the wall's height. The 530 Lytton side of the sign was reduced, and its mounting is now clarified.

The size of the Illuminated Directional Sign – Parking Monument ID (Type E) on Tasso Street was clarified to meet the ARB's recommendation of not exceeding 11 feet from the sidewalk level. It also met the minimum height requirement. The height of the pole portion was reduced from 83 inches to 71 inches. On the opposite side, the orientation and height of the blade sign mounting now meets the 11-foot recommendation. It was her recommendation that the ARB approve the project based on the findings and subject to any conditions of approval.

Chair Rosenberg noted the materials board was present if anyone would like to view it.

Public Comment

The applicant, contractor, and sign designer, Dustin Passalalpi, requested that the Board consider allowing him to measure the Illuminated Directory Sign (Type A) from the height of the plaza rather than the height of the public sidewalk.

Chair Rosenberg closed public comment and turned comments and questions over to the Board.

Board Member Baltay questioned the wall height of Sign C located at 525 Lytton. The elevation in the drawing on Page 15 was different than the previous rendering on Page 14. There were two walls, and he thought the intention was to have that sign match the height of the lower wall adjacent to the sidewalk, not the higher wall. Board Member Baltay wanted the record to indicate the sign height must match the lower wall. The Board requested a response from the applicant. Mr. Passalalpi admitted it was an error. He forgot to add the projection. It will match the rendering on Page 14 and match the lower wall's height.

Board Member Hirsch asked if there was an elevation on Sign B that would be attached to the front door's canopy. Ms. Kallas explained that the canopy sign will be the address number for the building and not part of the Architectural Review Board's purview. Board Member Hirsch questioned why that was and thought the Board should be reviewing all address numbers. Chair Rosenberg explained that standard addresses are reviewed by the Fire Department. Board Member Baltay wanted clarification because the Public Hearing title says Sign B, Canopy Address Sign. It is on the agenda today and it was discussed at the last meeting. Ms. Gerhardt read the building code for the Board. Title 16.04 addresses signage and says any numbering 4 to 12 inches is the Fire Department's purview. It is only when it goes beyond 12 inches that it comes before this Board. These numbers are 20 inches tall, so it is correctly before the Board.

Board Member Hirsch referred to a picture of the canopy on the slide. He pointed out the canopy was beautiful but was worried that it might disturb the entryway's design and disrupt the aura of the building. Board Member Adcock mentioned a difference in the picture versus the elevation drawing on Page 10. He questioned if the canopy was being replaced or if a sign was being added to the existing canopy. Mr. Passalalpi clarified that the sign would be added to the existing canopy. The letters will be illuminated freestanding letters, as shown on Page 10. Upon further explanation, Board Member Hirsch admitted the drawing misled him and retracted his earlier statement.

Board Member Hirsch opined that when approaching the building, the plaza seems like an empty space. He suggested the idea of adding a piece of art to the face of the building to give the plaza entry an appealing feeling from different angles and viewpoints. Chair Rosenberg pointed out that the landscape and building permits were already in place and not on the agenda today.

MOTION: A motion was made by Board Member Adcock, seconded by Vice Chair Chen, to approve the project as submitted today.

VOTE: Motion passed 5-0.

Approval of Minutes

3. Draft Architectural Review Board Meeting Minutes for April 4, 2024

Board Member Hirsch referred the Board to an error on Page 44. "Elimination Engineering Society" should have been "Illuminating Engineering Society." Board Member Adcock found mistakes in the minutes. The word "elimination" should have been "illumination." The word "site" was spelled "sight" throughout the minutes. The sheet and reference numbers on Page 50 were also wrong. Board Member Adcock mentioned that it was hard to read because most sentences ran on for five to seven lines before the use of a period or semicolon and she lost track of what was being discussed. She questioned why the minutes read differently than the next four sets of minutes. Chair Rosenberg also noted "mountain view" was spelled as one word. Audubon was also misspelled. It was written as "Autobahn." Chair Rosenberg pointed out that they were not discussing the German freeway.

Ms. Gerhardt explained they have since switched transcription companies. The minutes from April 4, 2024, were through the previous transcription company. Ms. Gerhardt said she would attempt to get the minutes corrected. Member Baltay did not believe it would be an efficient use of the staff's time to find the drawings and cross-reference them and was pleased that they captured the debate regarding the light temperature. Board Member Baltay noted that the transcript was only "partially verbatim." Ms. Gerhardt reminded him that were minutes, not a transcript, and they were not verbatim.

Chair Rosenberg asked if they would like to have a formal review of the minutes but decided against it.

MOTION: Board Member Baltay moved to approve the minutes as presented with a note to fix the errors. Chair Rosenberg seconded the motion.

VOTE: Motion passed 5-0.

4. Draft Architectural Review Board Meeting Minutes for April 18, 2024

Board Member Adcock had an issue with a sentence on Page 73 and read it into the record. "She also mentioned maintaining the privacy of the Hamilton residence and suggested that space be confined to smaller seating areas." She felt she was speaking of roof-top space and suggested changing it to "rooftop space" or "roof-terrace space."

Board Member Baltay questioned if they captured Vice Chair Chen comments correctly regarding the setback on Middlefield Road. Vice Chair Chen believed they captured her general idea and rationale.

MOTION: Board Member Baltay moved to approve the minutes as presented. Board Member Adcock seconded the motion.

VOTE: Motion passed 5-0.

5. Draft Architectural Review Board Meeting Minutes for May 2, 2024

Board Member Baltay mentioned that meeting covered the Parklet design and questioned whether the minutes captured the motion regarding pressure-treated wood. On Page 118, he claimed the minutes did not mention the modification concerning the use of pressure-treated wood that they agreed upon. Chair Rosenberg will get clarification on that motion. Chair Rosenberg moved to bring the minutes back to the Board after the issue was researched. Board Member Baltay asked Chair Rosenberg to verify that without involving the Board. Ms. Gerhardt will research the issue and report back to Chair Rosenberg.

MOTION: Chair Rosenberg made a motion to approve the minutes excluding the final motion. Vice Chair Chen seconded the motion.

VOTE: Motion passed 5-0.

6. Draft Architectural Review Board Meeting Minutes for May 16, 2024

Board Member Baltay had a concern on Page 123 where it mentioned the building numbers they discussed. It was not clear to him who was speaking. Chair Rosenberg read the sentence into the record. "The ARB does not typically regulate building numbers because buildings are required to have numbers, so the 525 University canopy address side is in compliance." Ms. Gerhardt suggested the minutes of today's meeting will clarify the issue. Board Member Baltay asked for that sentence to be stricken from the minutes. Chair Rosenberg did not feel comfortable striking anything from that record that was discussed during the meeting. Board Member Baltay claimed it was not a discussion. Chair Rosenberg thought a credit for who made the comment would clear up the issue.

Ms. Gerhardt reminded the Board these were minutes not verbatim. The Board agreed to remove the sentence from the minutes.

MOTION: Board Member Baltay moved to approve the minutes as revised. Board Member Hirsch seconded the motion.

VOTE: Motion passed 5-0.

7. Draft Architectural Review Board Meeting Minutes for June 6, 2024

Chair Rosenberg pointed out that her name was spelled incorrectly numerous times.

MOTION: Chair Rosenberg moved to approve the minutes as written. Board Member Baltay seconded the motion.

VOTE: Motion passed 5-0.

Board Member Questions, Comments, Announcements or Future Meetings and Agendas

Chair Rosenberg sat in on the PTC Hearing for Bird-Safe Glazing, Dark Skies, and Stream Corridors and found it fascinating. Shani Kleinhaus from the Audubon Society and Dashiell Leeds from the Sierra Club were speakers. Chair Rosenberg highly recommended her fellow board members take the time to listen to the segment. Ms. Kleinhaus and Mr. Leeds will be returning to the next meeting, which she plans to attend.

Board Member Baltay attended the City Council meeting two weeks ago regarding the NVCAP, which was approved (6-1). Council Member Kou opposed. Board Member Baltay represented the ARB's position on building heights. The Council focused on the height of the buildings in the NV-XM zone, which are the buildings along El Camino. The ARB had recommended a limitation of 65-feet high and to have them rely on the daylight plane as a means of limiting bulk. The Planning Commission recommended a 45-foot height limit, but they settled for 55 feet in the end. Board Member Baltay thought they were concerned with the State Density Bonus laws which allow applicants to go higher and wanted to keep the starting point at a lower height.

Chair Rosenberg asked if Council Member Kou spoke about why she opposed it. Board Member Baltay was unsure of why and did not want to speculate.

Board Member Baltay said Council was concerned that the NVCAP project eliminated all required parking in the entire zone, and they wanted a better understand why they were eliminating parking. Council voted against it because parking would be required and necessary under the current code. Council Member Burt proposed an increased setback along Park Avenue, which was approved. All new developments along Park Avenue will now require a 15-foot setback.

Adjournment

Chair Rosenberg adjourned the meeting at 9:41 AM.



Architectural Review Board Ad Hoc Committee Review

TO: Mark Donahue, Lowney Architecture, 360 17th Street, Suite 200, Oakland CA 94612
SUBJECT: 800 San Antonio Road [23PLN-00010]
DATE: August 23, 2024
FROM: Emily Kallas, AICP, Planner

PLANNER'S SIGNATURE

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Emily Kallas
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The additional exhibits dated March 21, 2024 and July 11, 2024, were reviewed by the ARB Ad Hoc Committee on April 4, 2024 and August 15, 2024 in accordance with condition of approval #4 a-g, as stated below. The ARB Ad Hoc Committee comprised of Board members Adcock and Hirsch.

ARB SUBCOMMITTEE: Prior to the issuance of building permits, the applicant shall return to the ARB subcommittee for approval of the following items, to the satisfaction of the Director of Planning and Development Services:

- a. No projections be allowed above ground into the special setback
- b. That private and common space be revised to meet the open space requirements
- c. The hallway adjacent elevator 2 be revised to have fewer bends in the hallway and to have more functional space adjacent the trash storage and elevator
- d. Recommend considering alternate locations of the trash collection area, means of bringing trash to the street staging area, and location of the trash staging area
- e. Schematic foundation design including consideration of planters, bioswales and secant walls
- f. More comprehensive landscape plan in the courtyard including provisions for planters, furnishing and pathways through the courtyard
- g. Provide clerestory windows in the bicycle storage area

The Ad Hoc Committee agreed with the revisions presented April 4, 2024, with the exception of trash collection. As part of the August 15, 2024 meeting, the Ad Hoc Committee recommended no changes to trash collection, therefore reverting to the Council approved plan set. The applicant will ensure these changes are incorporated into the building permit plan set design and this Ad Hoc Committee Review letter shall be printed on the plans submitted for building permit(s).