



CITY OF
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ALTO**

CITY OF PALO ALTO
Architectural Review Board
Regular Meeting
Thursday, April 17, 2025
8:30 AM

Agenda Item

4. Draft Architectural Review Board Meeting Minutes for March 6, 2025



ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD MEETING

DRAFT MINUTES: March 6, 2025

Council Chamber & Zoom

8:00 AM

Call to Order / Roll Call

The Architectural Review Board (ARB) of the City of Palo Alto met on March 6, 2025 in Council Chambers and virtual teleconference at 8:31 a.m.

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

Absent: None.

Chair Rosenberg called the meeting to order. She announced that Board Member Baltay was running a couple minutes late and that the record would reflect his arrival.

The Clerk called roll and declared there was a quorum.

Oral Communications

None.

Agenda Changes, Additions and Deletions

None.

City Official Reports

1. Director's Report, Meeting Schedule, and Upcoming Agenda Items

Chair Rosenberg announced that Board member Baltay had joined the meeting.

Historic Preservation Planner/ARB Liaison Steven Switzer noted that there were upcoming and recently submitted items detailed in the packet. The next meeting would include a study session related to the California Avenue signage, Delarosa exterior upgrades, and an ad hoc for the 164 Hamilton Avenue façade modifications, and he would report on who would be on the ad hoc. Recently submitted items included an exterior upgrade for the former Terrain Café, which was detailed in the packet under pending projects, as well as a preliminary ARB for 540 University. There were planned absences for the 19th. He requested that any other planned absences be directed to his or Veronica Dao's attention.

Vice Chair Chen asked that her name be added to the absences on June 19th.

Board Member Adcock added that she may not be in attendance on the 19th, which would mean there would not be a quorum.

Interim Manager of Current Planning Claire Raybould commented that the meeting may be cancelled if there was not going to be a quorum.

Planner/Liaison Switzer voiced that they were working with the Chair and Vice Chair to coordinate some of the background efforts for the ARB awards, which was tentatively set for May 29 from 5 to 7 p.m.

Interim Manager Raybould stated, regarding 164 Hamilton, that the Ad Hoc Committee would consist of Chair Rosenberg and Board Member Adcock. She asked the Board if they would be available for that date and time. They wanted to ensure that everybody would be able to attend. Regarding 824 San Antonio, she explained that it would not be in conformance with State law to have the applicant return for a discretionary action for a housing development project. The Director issued a decision letter, and staff had asked the applicant to make changes to align with Board members' requests, which included public art, and how they placed or designed their public art could not be prohibited or limited. She detailed the condition that had been added to the approval letter, which aligned with the language in the code. Regarding Item 2, the ad hoc had asked to consider the pattern of the Equitone panels, and the design had been changed to a standard rectangular vertical pattern before approving the plans. She also pointed out windows that had been revised. She added that all balconies would be glass. Due to safety concerns, they did not make changes related to the access doors between the dining room and the rear yard. She mentioned that the project could not be discussed at this meeting, but she would be happy to have further discussions with individual members.

Chair Rosenberg thanked Interim Manager Raybould for the summary.

Board Member Baltay noted that the Board had been concerned that public art was being proposed as part of the architectural design and the Board did not want it to be considered public art if integrated into the building's architecture. He asked staff if that was not the determination staff had made.

Interim Manager Raybould confirmed that was correct.

Chair Rosenberg did not believe the Board was aware of that in advance. However, it was worth noting if cited in the code.

Board Member Baltay wanted it to be more than noted. He protested it. He asked if it would be permitted if an ad hoc committee was reviewing a residential project.

Assistant Director Jennifer Armer answered that they strongly recommended against an ad hoc being used for housing projects. They recommended focusing on crafting specific conditions of approval rather than relying on review by an ad hoc for housing projects. Regarding the public art, staff heard the Board's concerns and had they worked to put as strong a condition as possible.

Board Member Baltay wanted staff to understand that there would not have been a recommendation of approval to go to the ad hoc if that had been the case with the public art.

Board Member Hirsch inquired what the process to the face of the building would lead to.

Assistant Director Armer replied that for that project staff would be responsible for ensuring it would not be significantly different in appearance than what the Board had seen.

Board Member Baltay expressed that there had been no description of the public art.

Assistant Director Armer noted that there were diagrams, so if it looked significantly different than what had been shown, it may need to return as a new project.

Interim Manager Raybould understood that the concern was that they might change it in a way that would potentially substantially enclose, which would change the design and the architecture of the project.

Chair Rosenberg stated if it matched what was shown and what had been approved that they would be good to go forward. If they tried to do a dramatic shift, it would be a problem.

Interim Manager Raybould added that they would have to return to the PAC for the final design. A representative of the ARB could make comments on the design so that the PAC could consider that when making their decision.

Board Member Adcock queried if the language on the screen had been issued as approval and if there would be editing of the language. She took exception to the description of significantly altering the character, as that was the Board's concern. She added that the concern was not just about enclosing the proposed screen, that it was the appearance of the exterior with the terracotta color and the patterning, which she stated was lovely but not what would happen. She did not consider color change to be significant, but she would consider something other than a vertical pattern to be a significant change.

Assistant Director Arme replied that there would be no editing of the language.

Chair Rosenberg supported Board Member Adcock's point as it related to the pattern being a significant change. She would rely on staff to follow up on the project. She wanted staff to understand the ARB's position and the definition of significant.

Interim Manager Raybould added that the language did preclude staff from considering other such changes significant.

Board Member Hirsch queried if the Chair could review it and indicate if it would be okay. He thought the Board should see the entire thing at some point in order to make comments to the Chair if there was a problem.

Interim Manager Raybould answered that the process could not be changed. The public art was subject to the PAC's purview. The language added aligned with the language in the code, so if it was considered to be substantially different from what had been presented, staff could require them to file an Architectural Review Application to have the change considered.

Board Member Hirsch questioned if staff would make the decision and if the Board as a whole would see the decision made by the PAC.

Assistant Director Armer replied that the determination of a significant change would be made by the Director.

Board Member Baltay remarked that that determination would typically be made with the advice of the ARB.

Chair Rosenberg stated that it would be with the advice of the ARB for the frontend.

Board Members Baltay and Hirsch did not agree.

Assistant Director Armer stated that she heard the Board's concerns. She noted that sometimes staff would consult with the Chair or Vice Chair of the ARB on certain changes, although some would be determined by the Director without consultation with the ARB. The process was not unusual.

Board Member Hirsch stated that this could be a significant change, and he thought the process should follow regulations.

Chair Rosenberg stated that argument was being made for something that had not yet happened. The ARB liked the design. If there were changes to the screen, she wanted the Director to understand that the ARB would consider it a significant change. She understood that it would not be returned to the ARB. She noted that there was overlap between art and architecture, and she questioned at what point it would be public art and at what point it would be part of the façade. She noted that for this project, it was very much an integrated part of the architecture and if removed it would be a completely different building. Considering it public art did not sit right with her. Moving forward, she wanted it to be clear when public art would be art and when architecture would be architecture. She mentioned that a screen on a building was part of the architecture.

Board Member Baltay discussed a precedent being set with this project. He commented that the intent of the ARB ad hoc was to push this through, not to allow this to happen. He voiced that if Legal staff should indicate a process could not be done, it should return to the ARB.

Board Member Hirsch thought the front of the building was significant. He could imagine part of the process being the PAC and ARB convening on something like this.

Chair Rosenberg inquired how the ARB could make an accurate and viable determination on something being art or architecture.

Board Member Adcock queried what the process is for public art to be part of the building versus the process in terms of timing.

Chair Rosenberg believed that the ARB considered the screens to part of the architecture, not public art. In the future, the ARB would be clear to say if something should be part of the architecture and not considered art.

Interim Manager Raybould stated, regarding timing, that applicants are required to go before the PAC prior to approval of the project to get approval of the location of the art and generally what was being considered in terms of materials, etc. The PAC had approved the location. The PAC had been very clear about there being only certain benefits in calling something public art, which she outlined.

Chair Rosenberg stated that off-the-shelf art may need to be addressed by the PAC. She wanted the ARB to have a discussion with the PAC to say art is art and architecture is architecture, although they sometimes merged. She did not want to set a precedent of screens being called art.

Assistant Director Armer expressed that this had been a learning experience and that it would help with future projects.

Chair Rosenberg stated that it might be helpful for staff to report on ad hoc happenings in the future.

Action Item

2. Ad Hoc Committee Report: Review Ad Hoc committee Report on Objective Standards for Townhomes and Provide Direction to Staff

Chair Rosenberg read the ad hoc committee report.

NO PUBLIC COMMENT

Interim Manager of Current Planning Claire Raybould hoped that a conclusion would be reached on the ad hoc committee's recommendations and that there would be a formal recommendation from the ARB on how objective designed standards may be changed to better align for townhome projects. When the objective design standards were originally developed there was an understanding that, while it accommodated townhomes, changes could be made to be more clearly defined for townhomes. They hoped to get a recommendation today. At the last meeting, the Chair had asked staff to return with a summary of the conclusions made at the last meeting. Attachment A was a summary of the meeting minutes and the conclusions the ad hoc committee (Vice Chair Chen and Board Member Hirsch) had put together, and they had made some additional edits for clarity. Attachment B reflected the recommendations to be added to those notes and the final recommendations, which were annotated with underlining and yellow highlighting. The ad hoc agreed on the underlined items. They did not necessarily agree on the highlighted items, but they wanted to present them for the Board's consideration.

Board Member Hirsch stated that the ad hoc agreed that all the visuals should remain in the packet. He wanted to go through each item with the Board as not all the changes he made were reflected in the underlined items. He had an additional document that no one else had.

Board Member Baltay referenced Pages 19 through 21 and asked if the highlighted and underlined items were generally new to the document.

Vice Chair Chen confirmed that was correct.

Chair Rosenberg questioned why Board Member Hirsch's underlined items were not incorporated in the document.

Board Member Hirsch understood that the item should not have been discussed prior to the meeting, so it should not have been distributed.

Chair Rosenberg declared that each item would be addressed. She did not think it was appropriate to change everything when there had been 7 meetings on the topic. She wanted this to be brought to a conclusion at this meeting.

Board Member Hirsch addressed the townhouse definition and suggested changing vertically single stacking building type units with a minimum of 2 stories, but more commonly 3 stories, with private vehicular parking on the first ground floor, living rooms and bedrooms above, at least 2 exterior facing walls and units with 3 exterior facing walls, cul-de-sac units having 3 exterior facing walls at the closed end, more atypical townhomes arranged above a grade platform, including all of the parking below, and townhome clusters above, including the unbuilt areas as pedestrian circulation and common use space,

including landscaping, so it would define not only the typical singular line of townhomes but would expand it to the description of the cul-de-sac units.

Chair Rosenberg questioned if would be better to hyper-define or loosely define the townhomes. She asked what the goal was for the definition. She was concerned that a townhome being uniquely designed in a way not matching this definition would be excluded. She asked if a T-shape versus an L-shape would change the definition.

Board Member Hirsch stated that there were several different possibilities for townhomes and that these were basic formats. He added that it would be hyper-defined later in the details. He noted that a cul-de-sac-type unit would be different because it would contain more units. He considered this to be a general definition, and he did not think it was a good idea to expand it.

Board Member Adcock stated that a definition would be general with all the items narrowing the broader definition. She felt private vehicular parking below was too much of a restriction and that it should not be a must-have.

Chair Rosenberg added that with some of the new housing rules that public parking was not required if within one-quarter or one-half mile of major public transit, but she did not know if that would apply to townhomes. She thought there should be a broad, general description and then a list of all the possible scenarios. She did not feel there should be requirements for it to be defined as a townhome.

Board Member Hirsch believed that parking below the townhomes was standard, and he wanted Planning to speak to that.

Interim Manager Raybould stated that there was an allowance to not have parking, but she thought it went back to building code and townhomes having parking below, although she had seen one that was different from the traditional townhome design.

Assistant Director Jennifer Armer discussed why she advised against requiring parking underneath.

Board Member Hirsch stated that it could be eliminated as an item in the definition. He wanted to do a format of all the different possibilities. He suggested including cul-de-sacs and platform-type housing with the parking being entirely below and under a platform.

Chair Rosenberg suggested retaining the definition as a little more high-level and, if desired, there could be an addendum listing the typical items seen in a townhome which could be used more as a description rather than a full definition. Concerning the parking, it was possible for townhomes to have driveways. She appreciated the effort to say it could be fully combined parking underneath in a big parking structure but that each individual unit being its own item made sense.

Board Member Hirsch did not know if that would properly define townhome.

Chair Rosenberg voiced that the goal was not to restrict but to include. She was concerned that things would be excluded by over-emphasizing hyper-minutia details of a townhome. Her goal was to have a broad-brushed definition and then to include a list of the smaller items typically seen with townhomes, but she did not want them to be requirements.

Assistant Director Armer inquired if these objective standards should apply to side by side rows of vertical rental units with multiple stories with carports not immediately attached, instead of garages.

Chair Rosenberg answered yes.

Board Member Hirsch noted that such buildings were in Palo Alto. He preferred that townhomes have parking below. He thought it should be in the code.

Interim Manager Raybould remarked that per the building code the definition of townhome spoke more to form, not parking.

Historic Preservation Planner/ARB Liaison Steven Switzer read into the record that it would be a single-family dwelling unit constructed in a group of 3 or more attached units in which each unit would extend from the foundation to roof with a yard or a public way on not less than 2 sides.

Board Member Hirsch stated that that allowed flexibility, and he supported using that definition.

Board Member Baltay voiced that townhomes had individual access to the exterior, and he felt it was important to include that in the code.

Vice Chair Chen stated that under the definition read by Planner/Liaison Switzer that the podium-type would not be considered a townhome.

Interim Manager Raybould noted that it could include a podium-type construction.

Chair Rosenberg suggested it state building code definition and to add in the individual access from the exterior and to note that the underlying portion with below grade parking would be viable.

Board Member Adcock stated that typically townhome party walls were vertical but she had seen some projects with jenga configuration and such and as long as fire separation, etc., was maintained, it would be for the City Building to confirm that it would apply. She did not think it needed to be added to the definition.

Board Member Baltay thought a building official would make a similar determination on a case-by-case basis and that the ARB would not need to step into that.

Chair Rosenberg declared that the definition would be a single-family dwelling unit constructed in a group of 3 or more attached units in which each unit would extend from foundation to roof and with a yard or public way not on less than 2 sides, including access from the exterior.

Board Member Baltay wanted to reference the building code with individual access to the exterior.

Chair Rosenberg added that after the words "2 sides" that "per current building code definition" should be put in parenthesis.

Board Member Hirsch suggested eliminating "treatment of end corner units" and that the chapter be titled "required elevation features."

Vice Chair Chen asked if the elevation features would be included in Item 2 under Attachment B, so that it would not be limited to end corners but to all units.

Board Member Hirsch affirmed that was correct. He felt the wording should be: All units within a cluster must consistently repeat common features per the following list, including materials, colors, and patterns, so that would be a consistent character to the entire development. End units must be

emphasized in importance by a more inclusive set of exterior design features per the following list. All other cluster units must include these selected features so that there would be consistency and repetitive relationship of townhome clusters. He stated this would replace Attachment B. He had rewritten the items in the list.

Board Member Baltay understood that Board Member Hirsch wanted to change the text under Item 1 on Page 17 pick up the text from Item 1 on Page 19 but that the list on Page 17 would remain – Items A through D.

Board Member Hirsch stated that he noted the ones that would be changed. The minimum handicapped covered or partially covered entry would need to be 5X5 minimum.

Vice Chair Chen noted that it was included in Packet Page 19, 2A.

Board Member Baltay queried if the Packet Page 19, Items A through I were being considered as the building design treatment guidelines and if they would be given an opportunity to select a certain number of the items as their objective standards.

Board Member Hirsch affirmed that was correct. He added that a 1-sided wraparound corner roofed patio should be a minimum of 4 feet deep but if it was a wraparound for an end unit it would need to be bigger, so he had increased it to 8X8.

Vice Chair Chen noted that they had agreed on it being 6 feet wide and that 8 feet was newly added by Board Member Hirsch.

Board Member Hirsch suggested that be flagged for discussion.

Planner/Liaison Switzer mentioned that there were 2 attachments in the packet, one starting on Packet Page 17 and the other starting on Packet Page 19. He understood the discussion to be a combination of both. He displayed Attachment B and requested that the Board address that list and add any additions to that.

Board Member Baltay thought a 5-foot deep entry would be challenging.

Vice Chair Chen added that there was a 5X5 accessibility requirement but not every townhome had to be accessible.

Interim Manager Raybould confirmed that only a certain percentage has to be.

The Board agreed with balconies being 6 feet wide and 4 feet deep.

Chair Rosenberg, regarding a variation in roof heights between townhome units, had been told that anything less than an 18-inch difference in roof height was difficult to build.

Vice Chair Chen suggested it be 2 feet.

Board Member Baltay did not think it made sense to specify that the variation would occur at the eave rather than at the ridge. He could conceive a building with an equal eave but a varied ridge by changing the slope. He suggested the roof height at the eave be a minimum of 2 feet.

Board Member Hirsch opted for a variation.

Vice Chair Chen pointed out that not every single unit may have the same roof variation, such as a gable roof or flat roof.

Chair Rosenberg noted that there could be a potential scenario for one being a gable and one being flat, so there would be a difference in roof height. She wanted it to be at least 2 feet and to state eave.

Board Member Baltay spoke to Item E on Packet Page 19 and he interpreted the façade to be the façade of a building and the building to be the cluster of townhomes. He noted that the intent was to break up monoplanar façades.

Vice Chair Chen questioned if it was more a reverse in saying that if projecting bays were used they must be a minimum of 5 feet wide and 2 feet deep.

Board Member Hirsch considered that reasonable wording, although 6 feet seemed better but the minimum of 5 feet was reasonable.

Board Member Baltay asked if applying these standards would mean that the current standards would not apply.

Planner/Liaison Switzer replied that there was a section on façade breaks and the language was a minimum façade break in 4 feet in width, 2 feet in depth, and 32-square feet of area for every 36 to 40 feet of façade length.

Board Member Hirsch did not think that could be applied to a townhome project.

Interim Manager Raybould explained that it had been applied in different ways to past townhome projects.

Board Member Baltay stated that basically every other unit would have to have one of the features. He voiced that it might be worth stating that this would apply to end units. He interpreted the façade of an end unit as a façade and that this would apply if it was more than 36 feet.

Interim Manager Raybould remarked that it had been applied to the side and the front. She believed it would be anything facing a street, including a private street.

Board Member Baltay asked if the objective was to change the modulation requirement from 36 feet to 20 feet for townhomes.

Vice Chair Chen stated that each 20-foot section of townhome would have a choice of the items. It was intended to apply to each townhome.

Chair Rosenberg wondered if the language should read each unit in a cluster must select a minimum of 2 or 3 instead of all units in a cluster.

Board Member Baltay inquired if it should apply to each one or the group.

Board Member Hirsch suggested that 4 items be chosen from a list for the cluster, not for each unit.

Chair Rosenberg mentioned that the desire may be for every other unit to have a porch or a variation in height difference to increase the modulation.

Vice Chair Chen suggested going through the list to determine how many items would apply to each individual unit and how many would apply to the cluster and then separate the lists.

Board Member Hirsch thought choosing 4 from the list was reasonable.

Board Member Adcock stated it depended on whether speaking about a cluster or individual unit. She considered A, B, and C to be related to unit variation, D and F to the cluster, and E to a unit or a cluster. She expressed that the title sentence of Item 2 was confusing. She agreed with Item F on Packet Page 19. She mentioned that tower element related to an end unit or a unit facing a public or private street.

Chair Rosenberg thought if it would specifically apply to end units that it should be added.

Board Member Baltay requested the definition of a tower element. He inquired if there were examples of townhomes with tower elements and if roof variation promoted tower elements.

Assistant Director Armer stated that a chimney would not be considered a tower element.

Board Member Hirsch voiced that Arbor Real had a tower element and that roof variation did not necessarily promote tower elements, which he explained.

Vice Chair Chen pointed out a tower element on Packet Page 63, which was basically another story.

Assistant Director Armer believed that the list of items had originally been intended to be about the end units and the discussion was broader and about the façades as a whole. She was concerned that this was changing what had been originally developed and recommended by the ad hoc.

Board Member Adcock queried if that meant any other façades would revert back to objective standards for any building, if the list would apply to corner units only, and if the list should be split into 2 lists for corner units versus façade.

Chair Rosenberg wanted to keep a list of corner units as that was what the Board had agreed to previously. She thought it made sense to add an additional list for the other unit required elevation features. She wanted to split the list into corner units and then additional elevation requirements.

Assistant Director Armer added that the objective standards were supposed to address specific things that would be different for townhomes and that the corner units needed special attention. General façade recommendations needed to work with the existing objective standards.

Board Member Hirsch did not believe townhomes lent themselves to the general objective standards, and he did not feel that the relationship would work.

Assistant Director Armer recommended bringing the discussion back and to look at the original goal of the document, which was to tackle a few of the unique subjects to townhomes. Some additional guidance on top of the other objective standards would be useful in making better designs.

Chair Rosenberg referenced Attachment A and stated that the original one had headers of building typology, etc., and she questioned why there were no headers in Attachment B.

Interim Manager Raybould responded that the ad hoc recommended removing the headers.

Board Member Baltay addressed Item 1 on Page 17, and he suggested it be phrased as corner units or end units that face 2 streets must have 1) a change in the roofline 2 feet at the roof eave to a different elevation or the entire unit's parapet or roof line should be different from the adjacent unit and 2) it must have at least 2 of the items in the list of A through E. He understood that Item A should be a 5X5-foot entry patio or a 4X8-foot wraparound patio or balcony.

Chair Rosenberg did not want to completely dismiss Attachment B, which the ad hoc had worked on. She noted that some of the goals between Attachments A and B were dropped.

Board Member Baltay suggested addressing the standards applying to mid-unit town homes later. He wanted to discuss what the end unit definition should be.

Assistant Director Armer inquired if the ARB supported what she had displayed on the screen.

Board Member Baltay thought with some changes it would be supported. He suggested that it be clarified that the roof change would be 2 feet at the eave or 2 feet between 2 units, in other words stating that the roof change would be 2 feet high. The second part would be choosing from the list of 5 choices. He thought the Committee was suggesting a 5X5 covered entry.

Board Member Baltay asked if that would assume that they would all be accessible units or if that dimension would still be true knowing that not all would be accessible.

Planner/Liaison Switzer asked if A would be a minimum of 5X5.

Chair Rosenberg affirmed that was correct.

Vice Chair Chen stated that, based on the Committee's discussion, it would apply to the end units, but she understood that the Board wanted it to apply to all units, and she inquired if there would be a separate requirement for that.

Chair Rosenberg wanted to focus on the corner end units, and she stated there would be a secondary list for the infill units. The dimensions could be different for the end and the infill units.

Board Member Hirsch addressed Item B and he wanted it to be 8X8 with a depth of 4 feet for a wraparound/corner unit.

Board Member Adcock stated that it could be edited to state 8 feet on the primary side and 6 feet on the secondary side.

Chair Rosenberg and Board Member Hirsch were not opposed to that.

Board Member Baltay queried if a 4-foot deep by 6-foot wide balcony was consistent with most townhomes.

Board Member Hirsch thought it was.

Board Member Baltay asked if balconies must project out from the face of the façade and not be an inset.

Chair Rosenberg said it could be changed to state a minimum of 4 feet deep. She added that the flush of the front of the balcony could be in line with everything else.

Board Member Baltay wanted it to be clear that this would apply to the façade of the end units.

Board Member Hirsch commented that it could be an inset, partial inset, or fully extended.

Vice Chair Chen remarked that the open-space requirement was 6 feet deep.

Board Member Baltay questioned if a tower element could be defined as a minimum of 250 square feet and a full story higher.

Board Member Hirsch thought it could be a minimum of 4 feet wide by 2 feet deep for a closet, pantry, etc.

Chair Rosenberg added that it would also allow for an exception to the RM30 height limitation, and she asked if a full separate floor should be allowed or prevented. She wanted to define tower element.

Board Member Hirsch defined a tower element as a smaller structure that could extend above. Regarding the RM30 height limitation, he did not want to allow a full separate floor.

Chair Rosenberg considered a tower element to be a unique architectural feature that would not be a habitable space. She opined that having a stairwell access to a roof terrace would be a nice feature, which could be utilized as a tower element, although she did not think it needed to be written into the code. She asked if a staircase extension would qualify as a tower element. She did not want fake chimneys to be part of the tower element.

Planner/Liaison Switzer expressed that in the objective standards it was defined as a corner element, which would be a change in height of at least 4 feet greater or less than the height of an adjacent primary façade.

Chair Rosenberg responded that that would be covered with the roof change height of at least 2 feet. She questioned if there needed to be a tower element. She voiced that it could state that chimney penetrations would be allowed.

Board Member Hirsch remarked that a chimney was a specific use, and he wanted to add flexibility to it. He stated that a tower element could include a chimney or a closet.

Assistant Director Armer wanted to bring the conversation back to the design of the townhomes. She believed this was added originally in talking about variation and architectural design elements, so she wanted to be cautious about allowing something that would exceed too much the standard zoning regulations.

Chair Rosenberg commented that there was a 2-foot eave roof change height. She questioned if there should be a maximum so as not to allow a second floor. She asked if there would be just a minimum of 2-foot change height versus a maximum of 6 feet and if an extra level would be allowed.

Board Member Baltay answered that violating the zoning code height limit was not realistic. He wanted the designer to decide how big the feature piece would be. He did not see a definition of tower element in any kind of statutory sense. He felt that allowing a significant change for corners going above the height limit was a larger policy issue. He wanted to focus on design details to make these better, and he thought the roof change was sufficient.

Chair Rosenberg also did not see a definition of tower element in any kind of statutory sense.

Board Member Hirsch did not think an element had to go above the roof but that it could be an expression above the roof. He thought there should be a choice of more than 4.

Board Member Baltay stated that this was too hard to define as an objective standard because there was not a clean definition.

Chair Rosenberg voiced that the existing RM30 height limit was 35, so this would be for an additional 15 feet of height for a tower element that had not been defined.

Planner/Liaison Switzer mentioned that there was a code requirement requiring a 4-foot differentiation on the end unit.

The Board was comfortable striking D.

Chair Rosenberg moved to E.

Board Member Baltay questioned if there was a definition of the setback area concerning different materials and/or color of major façade material and percentage of area in the regular objective standards.

Planner/Liaison Switzer stated that he would look into that.

Board Member Baltay noted that it was not clearly stated that the list would apply to the end façades of the units. He understood that the end façades should be more modulated than a flat wall.

Chair Rosenberg wanted the porches to be more notable and interesting.

Vice Chair Chen stated that it would be on the long façade, not the end façade.

Board Member Hirsch noted that there was an option for an end unit to have an entry around the corner.

Board Member Adcock thought the list of options would be shorter for the end units.

Board Member Hirsch felt there should be a list for the whole townhouse cluster and that the end units should be special.

Board Member Baltay stated that she was parsing words of the end units being special versus the side façade of the end unit having XYZ variations.

Board Member Hirsch agreed and mentioned that the side and the roof height variation should be emphasized. Part of the list would be the roof height variation.

Board Member Baltay did not think the roof height variation was optional.

Board Member Hirsch disagreed.

Vice Chair Chen wanted to see variations at the end units. As the corner unit list was getting shorter, she suggested putting everything in a large list that choices could be made from. She addressed Packet Page 19 and suggested deleting "all units" from item 2 and saying under A or B that each unit should have a minimum 5X5 covered porch and that there could be more specificity for the others, such as an end unit having a wraparound balcony or patio.

Chair Rosenberg asked if the goal was to have a list that would apply to all the units and if each unit in a cluster would have to have XYZ and a corner unit would have to have XYZ.

Vice Chair Chen thought it could be simplified to say the cluster could have ABCDE but that ABCDE could be more specific, such as each unit could have A and B and that the end unit could have C. She stated there could be 10 items from which the applicant/designer could choose 2 or 3.

Interim Manager Raybould stated that she was struggling with the conversation because in looking at Attachment A she had a clear understanding of the sections to be changed. She stated that what was being discussed was crossing many different sections of the code. There were whole code sections speaking to variation, depth of patios, open space, etc. Staff did not intend to create a whole separate code section for townhomes. The idea was to add in some language to provide clarity. This had to work in a way that would not completely change everything to only address townhomes.

Chair Rosenberg expressed that the goal of the document was to focus on exceptions to the objective standards.

[The Board took a 10-minute break]

Chair Rosenberg did not think the ARB was ready to continue the discussion as there was too much confusion between Items A and B. She saw 2 options moving forward. One was to vote on Attachment A (not Attachment B) versus bringing it back to comment specifically on Attachment A, highlighting what should be changed from Attachment A and highlighting items of discussion. She noted that 2 Board members each had a list of additional comments, and she stated that there should be a clear and concise list of what would be voted on. She did not feel this was ready to be reviewed as there was not a clear list of items.

Board Member Hirsch felt it needed more work. He was not ready to vote.

Chair Rosenberg declared that this would likely be brought back.

Vice Chair Chen believed recommendations should be formalized for staff instead of continuing the discussion in future meetings. She wanted the ARB to address the items in Attachment A that the ad hoc did not completely agree on.

Board Member Baltay commented that Packet Page 19 was a confusion of Attachment A as the ad hoc did not reach an agreement, which was the objective of the ad hoc. He did not know what Vice Chair Chen wanted to pass to staff.

Chair Rosenberg stated that if Attachment B was to be used that the adjustments needed to be clear and concise in a way closely related to Attachment A.

Interim Manager Raybould suggested moving forward with Option A but with clarity on next steps. Staff could make a recommendation on Attachment A where there had been consensus. The ARB could also give direction to consider some of the changes in Attachment B. Upon having a draft ordinance, staff could return to the ARB to make refinements with clear understanding and code language of how it would relate.

Assistant Director Armer added that putting it in the code could include an additional discussion by the ARB, PTC, and Council if requested by the ARB.

Chair Rosenberg asked the Board if Attachment A was ready for primetime.

Board Member Adcock thought Attachment A was ready but that a few of the underlined portions of Attachment B should be brought forward to Attachment A.

Vice Chair Chen agreed that Attachment A was ready but with some refinements from Attachment B. She felt the Board should address the highlighted portions at this meeting.

Board Member Hirsch wanted to discuss the physical limitations of townhomes that had not been discussed at this meeting, which he detailed. He did not know if there were enough items to choose from in Attachment A.

Board Member Baltay supported Attachment A on Pages 17 and 18 as written. He wanted it to be further improved, but he did not see that in Attachment B.

Planner/Liaison Switzer suggested using Attachment A with the underlined items, the definition of townhomes based on the building code with individual exterior entrances, and the 2-foot roof variations.

Assistant Director Armer commented that that level of Attachment A could be included since there seemed to be consensus on those additional changes.

Chair Rosenberg asked if it would be brought back to the ARB at the time it would be written into code. She expressed that Attachment A was a notable document that the ARB had addressed repeatedly and was the majority of what the Board had agreed to. She trusted the ad hoc's judgment on the items they agreed to in Attachment B.

MOTION: Chair Rosenberg moved, seconded by Board Member Baltay, to approve Attachment A adding in the underlined items from Attachment B and including the definition of a townhome based on building code and individual exterior elevations as discussed at this meeting and the 2-foot measurement for roof variations at corner units as discussed at this meeting.

Vice Chair Chen suggested a friendly amendment to strike the tower element.

Chair Rosenberg was amenable to that since there was not a firm definition of it.

VOTE: Motion carried 4-0-1 (Hirsch abstained)

Board Member Hirsch stated regarding his abstention that he did not think they were ready.

Chair Rosenberg wanted to see the document reviewed for correctness at an upcoming meeting and treated as a review of minutes. She did not want there to be a long discussion or for it to be voted on.

Planner/Liaison Switzer stated that it could be brought forward as an informational item.

Board Member Hirsch inquired if the details for the corner element would only refer to the corner element.

Chair Rosenberg stated that they were reverting back to Attachment A and adding in the underlined items. The details for the corner element would only refer to the corner element. The other units were

addressed with the rhythm, pattern, and materiality, and the objective standards was the overarching item.

Vice Chair Chen thanked Board Member Hirsch for his work and inquired if he should have an opportunity to speak about his additional concerns regarding townhomes.

Chair Rosenberg encouraged Board Member Hirsch to email staff the items that he felt may have been underrepresented, misconstrued, or left out altogether.

Approval of Minutes

3. Draft Architectural Review Board Meeting Minutes for February 6, 2025

Board Member Baltay noted that Martin Bernstein had asked about putting a condition of approval regarding the back alley for construction. He stated that it was not explicitly part of the motion, but he felt it was implicitly intended to be.

Interim Manager of Current Planning Claire Raybould replied that a condition had been included related to that.

Board Member Adcock referenced the fifth paragraph on Page 145 and stated that it should read flush vault, not flash vault.

Board Member Hirsch addressed Page 28 and asked what a “see-cannot” wall was.

Interim Manager of Current Planning Claire Raybould defined a secant wall.

Chair Rosenberg declared that should have read secant, not see-cannot.

Assistant Director Jennifer Armer asked Board members to email any future corrections to staff ahead of meeting time, and they would send out a revised version.

MOTION: Chair Rosenberg moved, seconded by Board Member Adcock, to approve the Minutes with the adjustment of flash to flush and noting that Martin Bernstein’s item had been covered.

VOTE: Motion carried 5-0.

Board Member Questions, Comments, Announcements Or Future Meetings And Agendas

Board Member Hirsch asked if he could share his notes on townhomes with ARB members.

Chair Rosenberg thought it would be in violation of the Brown Act.

Assistant Director Jennifer Armer suggested he share it with staff and they would have it in the file as part of this discussion, and if it came back to the ARB, it could be included at that time. She explained why he could not share it with other ARB members. The City Attorney recommended against sending it to the Board. Staff would look into it and it would be shared with the ARB if acceptable.

Chair Rosenberg thanked the ad hoc for their work.

Adjournment

Chair Rosenberg adjourned the meeting at 11:25 a.m.