

**MINUTES REGULAR MEETING
DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
MAY 8th, 2007**

ROLL

APPROVED

Board Members Present: Chair Kent, Crew, Dickens, Huntsberry, Olmsted

Planning Commission Liaison: None

Board Members Absent: None

Community Development: Raffi Boloyan, Principal Planner
Steve Stafford, Assistant Planner
Jessica Leviste, Contract Associate Planner
Katie Korzun, Economic Development Coordinator

AGENDA

A. Staff Communications

- 1) Past City Council, Planning Commission and Design Review Board Action on Design Review Matters

B. Board Communications

C. Minutes

- 2) February 21st, 2007
- 3) March 6th, 2007
- 4) March 20th, 2007
- 5) April 3rd, 2007

D. Consent

- 6) AP07-001 Appeal of an Environmental and Design Review Permit approval by Zoning Administrator to allow the following changes to an existing 2-story single family residence: add a 116 sq. ft. entry including a new staircase on ground (upper) level; add a 200 sq. ft. rear deck, combine two bedrooms into one bedroom, enlarge living area, remove existing kitchen and convert a game room into kitchen on main (lower) level; and add a new 650 sq. ft. 2-bedroom (basement) floor under the residence.
171 Southern Heights Blvd. (Sarjit Dhaliwal)
Recommended continuance to May 22, 2007 DRB meeting

E. Old Business

- 7) SR07-002 Sign Review Permit to allow construction of a new signage on an existing commercial building in the West End

1619 4th St. (Steve Stafford)

- 8) ED06-054 Environmental and Design Review Permit (ED06-054) to allow new construction of a new 3,647-square-foot two story three-car garage single-family residence for subject property located in the R5.
355 Prospect Dr. (Jessica Leviste)

F. New Business

- 9) ED05-076 Preliminary review of a new auto dealership (Smart Cars) with a 3,072 sq. ft. building and outdoor display.
440 Francisco Blvd. W (Smart Car) (Katie Korzun)

A. Staff Communications

- 1) Past City Council, Planning Commission and Design Review Board Action on Design Review Matters

Boloyan introduced new Design Review Board Member Richard Olmsted to the Board who was appointed by Council in late April. Staff has also received word from Alternate Member Machnowski that he will be resigning from his term on the Board, so The Council will be looking to fill that vacancy. Again, if the Board knows any San Rafael residents who are also architects that Board members, they can encourage them to apply to the City Clerks office. Also, former Associate Planner Kraig Tambornini is coming back to the City starting next Tuesday.

Bill Meeker's recent departure, Boloyan indicated that he has taken over as Principal Planner and soon will be transferring over to the staff the Planning Commission meetings. For the interim, Tambornini will serve as the DRB liaison.

The Board congratulated Boloyan on his new position.

B. Board Communications

Huntsberry asked staff for an update on Sol Foods lighting. Stafford sent Sol Foods a letter about the Board's stipulation that the lights should remain off and staff agreed to contact Sol Foods to follow-up.

Huntsberry informed Director Brown about Extended Stay Hotel parking lot lights light heads being mounted on the building as a concern. Boloyan responded that no building lights were shown on the approved elevations, however, when the project was built, they had installed building mounted lights and those lights were parking lot light heads. Staff has required that the remove these and install a more architecturally compatible light head and the developer has bonded to do that at a later date. Depending on how they appear, staff may forward to the Board because the current design is not acceptable, so Extend Stay is aware and looking at an alternative.

C. Minutes

2) February 21st, 2007

Chair Kent asked for a motion.

Huntsberry moved and Crew seconded, to approve the February 21st minutes with two changes to page 5. Motion carried.

AYES:	Members:	Crew, Dickens, Kent,
NOES:	Members:	None
ABSTAIN:	Members	Huntsberry, Olmsted
ABSENT:	Members:	None

3) March 6th, 2007

Chair Kent asked for a motion.

Dickens moved and Crew seconded, to approve the March 6th minutes as presented. Motion carried.

AYES:	Members:	Dickens, Crew, Huntsberry, Kent
NOES:	Members:	None
ABSTAIN:	Members	Olmsted
ABSENT:	Members:	N one

4) March 20th, 2007

Chair Kent asked for a motion.

Crew moved and Dickens seconded, to approve the March 20th minutes with a change to page 13. Motion carried.

AYES:	Members:	Dickens, Crew, Huntsberry, Kent
NOES:	Members:	None
ABSTAIN:	Members	Olmsted
ABSENT:	Members:	N one

5) April 3rd, 2007

Chair Kent asked for a motion.

Huntsberry moved and Kent seconded, to approve the April 3rd minutes as presented. Motion carried.

AYES:	Members:	Huntsberry, Kent,
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NOES: Members: None
 ABSTAIN: Members Crew, Dickens, Olmsted
 ABSENT: Members: None

D. Consent

(6) AP07-001 Appeal of an Environmental and Design Review Permit approval by Zoning Administrator to allow the following changes to an existing 2-story single family residence: add a 116 sq. ft. entry including a new staircase on ground (upper) level; add a 200 sq. ft. rear deck, combine two bedrooms into one bedroom, enlarge living area, remove existing kitchen and convert a game room into kitchen on main (lower) level; and add a new 650 sq. ft. 2-bedroom (basement) floor under the residence.
171 Southern Heights Blvd. (Sarjit Dhaliwal)
Recommended continuance to May 22, 2007 DRB meeting

Chair Kent asked for a motion.

Crew moved and Huntsberry, to continue the matter to the May 22nd DRB meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

AYES: Members: Crew, Dickens, Huntsberry, Kent, Olmsted
 NOES: Members: None
 ABSTAIN: Members: None
 ABSENT: Members: None

E. Old Business

(7) SR07-002 Sign Review Permit to allow construction of a new signage on an existing commercial building in the West End
1619 4th St. (Steve Stafford)

Assistant Planner Stafford summarized the staff report and requested the Board's final comments and recommendations on the design revisions of the project. Specifically, staff requests the Board's comments on the following:

1. Whether the size and location of the proposed "pan channel" wall sign, would create appropriate proportional balance – both vertical and horizontality – within the building's architectural inset feature; and
2. Whether internal illumination, as proposed by the "pan channel" wall sign, would be compatible with the character and design of existing signs within the immediate neighborhood of the site.

Robert Rogers, the applicant from Barber Sign Company, explained that his client objected to staff's concept so he has developed an alternative design, which he subsequently provided to the Board without review or comment by staff. Mr. Rogers respectfully requested that the Board act on the latest alternate design by either approving or denying it. He indicated that it essentially accomplishes the same concept that the Board had requested previously. It decreases the height to address the concern of staff.

He believed the sign is very attractive and fits in with the character of the building. He noted that it is consistent with the “*Used Car Lot*” sign across the street that is an internally illuminated flag mounted cabinet sign.

Huntsberry asked if it is possible to have the same cabinet sign without being internally illuminated. Mr. Rogers believed it is possible. Huntsberry asked if they could incorporate a couple of cutouts between “*Indian*” and “*Store.*” Mr. Rogers agreed that could be done.

The owner indicated that this is their final design, and if not approved, they will probably have no sign. They would love to have the sign designed by Barber Sign Company approved. He believed it is a good sign and design and hoped the Board would approve it.

Huntsberry asked staff if the window signs are part of the sign package in terms of the store name and hours of operation. Stafford responded that those signs must be addressed. The window sign on the left hand sign lists all the products the store carries and is in conflict because it will cover more than 25% of the window and each could be considered an individual sign. The applicant proposed another option of just hanging information on the window and staff preferred the graphic on the inside of the window as a better alternative, but they must work with those graphics to be consistent with the City’s Sign Ordinance. Staff believed the window signage could be handled at staff level.

Chair Kent opened the public hearing on this item, and seeing no one wishing to speak, he closed the public hearing and brought the matter back to the Board for discussion and action.

Crew believed it is an improvement from the last sign. Also, she wished the sign was located in the window because in her view that is a better place for the sign to be located, but that is also a judgment call on part of the applicant. If they are going with the larger sign, they should cutout the letters better as suggested by Huntsberry, so there is consistency. She preferred the proposal in the second application, but had no objection to this most recent proposal along with the cutouts.

Dickens indicated that the character of the building could change from paint and a sign, so it has a potential impact. They could create that recess and bring it to the full width of the building by adding a few coats of paint, which will satisfy the architectural character of the building. He found the sign acceptable, but wanted to make sure that all signs comply, are compatible, sensible and reasonable. He further noted that he is comfortable with that being handled at staff level.

Mr. Rogers noted that they were contacted by the leased space next door, so now they have a guideline on what type of signage to recommend.

Huntsberry agreed it has come a long way and that it is not a perfect situation. He liked the arrangement of the logos with the elephant located in the middle. He suggested that they cut down the white areas as much as possible around the cloud part and accent more

of the cutouts. He recommended five inches deep, which is standard with two to three inches deep on the other side, non-illuminated with the same layout, he could support staff.

Chair Kent believed the trend on this street is wooden signs and internally illuminated signs, so externally illuminated or non-illuminated signs are appropriate in this area.

Huntsberry recommended that they approve the sign as submitted with the comments summarized by the Board in regard to the cutouts; cutting down the white boarder areas; the sign for the side be constructed without illumination; and staff work with the applicant to develop a reasonable sign design for the windows.

Dickens recommended stating that no other white on the sign except for the words, “*Indian Store.*” He wanted to minimize the light impact with the white because the sign on the other side is black. Mr. Rogers agreed to modify the white color to opaque. Dickens recommended that staff review the total project package, and if not comfortable, then DRB must review.

Boloyan summarized the Board’s comments:

- Approve as submitted with the following modifications:
 - Increase the cutout clouding to minimize the amount of white and that the “white” color be “opaque.”
 - Deepen the non-illuminated sign along G Street, the letters themselves, to create a sign more equivalent to the front sign.
 - Work with staff to address the window package.
 - Paint reveal along front elevation to match the other reveal or create more width to the recess.

Dickens reviewed Exhibit A that shows a dark background in front of the building. Mr. Rogers indicated the black was so the Board could see the illumination at night with the opaque background. They increased the length to address staff’s concerns.

Chair Kent asked for a motion.

Dickens moved and Huntsberry seconded, to approve the sign so that the background is painted to match the full width of the recess; that sign colors are as depicted in the Fourth Street elevation Exhibit D on the right hand sign; that the white is limited to the logo; that the total signage must be reviewed by staff for compatibility and conformance with the Sign Ordinance, and if staff is not comfortable, then DRB should review again.

Motion carried 3-2. Crew and Kent opposed.

AYES:	Members:	Dickens, Olmsted, Huntsberry
NOES:	Members:	Crew, Kent
ABSTAIN:	Members	None
ABSENT:	Members:	None

- 8) ED6-054 Environmental and Design Review Permit (ED06-054) to allow new construction of a new 3,647-square-foot two story three-car garage single-family residence for subject property located in the R5.
355 Prospect Dr. (Jessica Leviste)

Contract Planner Leviste summarized the staff report and requested the Board provide final recommendations to the applicant regarding the proposed site improvements, landscaping and parking design layout. In addition, staff welcomes the Board's guidance on any additional design details that would further improve the project.

Huntsberry clarified with staff that the majority of the front is natural state. Leviste responded in the affirmative. Boloyan noted that 6-foot side yard setback and no structures would be allowed. Disturbance would only be allowed as long as it did not exceed the total maximum allowance. The maximum allowed disturbance is 25% of the lot, plus the percentage slope of that lot. In this case it is 38% average slope. Therefore, 63% of the lot must remain natural and undisturbed.

The applicant provided a letter from the arborist certifying that the tree is only 10 inches in diameter and not 12 inches. He believed staff did an excellent job summarizing their application. He talked to Mr. Yeo from Public Works Department who was concerned about the parking and stone work in the right-of-way, and he assured they were gravity soundwalls and rock is used because it could be removed. They talked about drainage from the property and developed these dry wells to connect to the storm drain that will all empty into the natural soil. All water is now contained. They added a small swale along the edge of the driveway to collect any driveway runoff. They provided the stonework on the new driveway to be recessed behind the mound. The owner must keep their site distance clear and removing the acacias will help with the site distance. They provided good screening for parking and the parking is recessed slightly into the hillside. One consideration is adding a step down from the porch versus a railing. The copper pipe railing has been used in Sausalito and is a nice material. Copper tends to become darker with age and maintains its look. The driveway proposed provides more usable space. They are paving all the decorative areas within the property. They changed the predominant color from a lighter color to a darker color and provided the Board with a revised color board for their review. They have a landscape architect that could prepare a drainage or irrigation plan if so desired, but their desire is to maintain the natural state.

Huntsberry recommended making the new 90 degree parking space one or two feet wider. The applicant is concerned about losing the landscaping, but agreed to explore the idea.

Dickens suggested pushing the paving out to the end of the street. The applicant agreed. Boloyan clarified that Mr. Dickens suggested reducing the number of different paving materials from three to two. Dickens agreed

Chair Kent opened the public hearing on this item, and seeing no one wishing to speak,

he closed the public hearing and brought the matter back to the Board for discussion and action.

Dickens supported the project as submitted. He liked the darker color. He believed the applicant has come along way.

Crew supports widening the parking space. Also, she agreed with removing the rail and adding the step. Dickens recommended adding two steps rather than one. The applicant agreed they need two risers.

Crew agreed the project has come along way. She also agreed with staff that the use of only two materials is appropriate in regard to the driveway.

Huntsberry concurred with previous comments.

Olmsted felt it would be inappropriate for him to comment on this project at this time since the Board has spent considerable amount of time previously reviewing this project.

Chair Kent agreed with the parking space being wider and bringing the driveway material all the way to the street. As for the planting plan, Japanese maples are not appropriate for the natural state and believed there is enough trees present to have more than one variety. He then recommended a few natural trees to the applicant. He desired natural shrubs in the front yard. They must carefully review their valves in terms of drip irrigation. Also, drip irrigation will not hurt any native plants on that site.

Boloyan summarized the Board's comments:

- Revisions were adequate.
- Supported change to fourth parking space by turning it 90 degrees.
- Increase width of fourth parking space by at least one foot, if not more.
- Use only two materials in the driveway.
- Support for elimination of the rails and use two risers down to the parking area.
- More natives in the landscape palette.
- Drip irrigation should be incorporated.

Chair Kent asked for a motion.

Crew moved and Dickens seconded, to approve the project with the conditions presented by staff. Motion carried 4:1. Olmsted abstained.

AYES:	Members:	Crew, Dickens, Huntsberry, Kent
NOES:	Members:	None
ABSTAIN:	Members	Olmsted
ABSENT:	Members:	None

F. New Business

9) ED05-076 Preliminary review of a new auto dealership (Smart Cars) with a 3,072

sq. ft. building and outdoor display.
440 Francisco Blvd. W (Smart Car) (Katie Korzun)

Economic Development Coordinator Korzun summarized the staff report and requested the Board's comments and direction on whether the major elements of the design are appropriate. Specifically, staff requests input on the landscape design, tree and hedge location and the bio-swale.

Robin Bacci, applicant, indicated that a smart car is new car to the North American market. It is made by Mercedes-Benz and it is about 8.5 feet by 5 feet wide. There will be only 60 dealerships in the United States, so it is very exciting, fun and new. The car will be seen as soon as July or August. They will take a road trip across the country and those interested can go to: www.smart.usa.com to view the smart cars.

Peter Dodge, architect, discussed the layout of the site for the Board's consideration that included: customer parking; employee parking; display areas; coffee terrace; and demonstration track. He added that the design is driven by Smart USA. The building is a very simple, but elegant building. He provided product samples for the Board's consideration. He noted that the sign is internally illuminated. He pointed out that solar panels will be used and hidden behind the parapet.

Olmsted did not have a clear understanding of the site lighting. Mr. Dodge provided information that he received today to better assist the Board.

Olmsted asked the architect to further explain the bio-swale. Mr. Dodge indicated that their design criteria were to: 1) develop attractive landscaping; 2) fit into the interesting palette and basic design approved for the site; and 3) try to tackle some environmental issues in a proactive way. He then explained that the bio-swale is a five to seven-foot wide by six-inch deep with the bottom approximately three feet wide and the side slope is at a 4:1 slope. It is quite shallow and not a retention pond and the retention capabilities given the long linear nature of the site. There is a small retention area proposed in the back. Also, they would like to propose the vehicle display area be a permeable paver to allow direct filtration. They have a combination of groundcover, low shrubs and flowering accent trees, which are crab trees because they desired visibility. They have come up to about 18-inches and will take most of that grade in the landscaped area to provide some elevation to their vehicles. Along the frontage they propose red maples that are part of the plant palette. Back into the site around the building they propose deciduous accent trees such as Bradford pears in order to provide shade. Clustered around the backside of the building will be the smaller scale accent trees. On the south side they propose a new chain link fence along with a medium shrub to secure the site and remove any pedestrian traffic. Along the back edge of the site there is an existing fence that will remain and they propose a screen hedge as well as a climbing vine in order to add some landscaping.

Dickens commented on the bio-swale and requested that the applicant be very creative in that regard in order to turn the bio-swale into an asset rather than just providing a ditch or

concrete box. Huntsberry recommended using normal grass to absorb the runoff. The applicant indicated that Contra Costa County has prepared a good handbook in regard to bio-swales and choice of plant materials and those recommendations are being reviewed.

Huntsberry asked if any conversations occurred with the City's Engineer in regard to the shallow water table in that area. The applicant has not had conversations with the City's Engineer. Huntsberry recommended that the applicant do so.

Chair Kent opened the public hearing on this item, and seeing no one wishing to speak, he closed the public hearing and brought the matter back to the Board for discussion and action.

Dickens liked the project and noted his support. He recommended adding more regular customer parking spaces onsite as well as some type of canopy to allow for a covered area for the vehicles. He appreciated "*sales only*" on this site and solar panels on the roof. He reiterated his suggestion of being creative with the bio-swale. He supported the idea of eliminating the lonely trees along the frontage and instead consolidating them elsewhere and to intensify the coffee terrace into a more landscaped friendly area with a few more trees. He then excused himself from the DRB meeting.

Crew disagreed with Dickens recommendation for less trees along the frontage. She desired a more interesting and well designed plan for the accessible pathway and the test track. She supported the use of solar panels and believed it is a great idea. She liked the idea at the corner of having permeable pavers and is glad the vehicles are not being elevated. The sign is handsome. She wanted to see a better or larger size photometric to review lighting. Overall, she believed it is a very nice project.

Huntsberry disagreed with Dickens recommendation on less trees along the frontage, they are needed up along the frontage. He believed the parking spaces along the front needed some finger landscaping islands in order to have some landscaping. He desired that all planters be a minimum of 6 feet wide in order to allow the shrubs to grow. In general, he supported the application. He loves the current RAB facility. He supports the metal building materials, but not in the black. However, he respects corporate decisions. He desired walkway lights at the stair cases as well for safety reasons.

Olmsted believed it is an elegant building. He supported the color, sign program and the overall concept as well as approach. He disagreed with Dickens about removing the trees in the front because more landscape screening is needed. He saw that the lack of trees up front is the biggest problem. The word, "bio-swale" in his view concerned him regarding petroleum running off into the bio swale.

Chair Kent supported the plan. There are prominent features included in this plan that the Board normally does not see. He recommended a different paving pattern for the circles. He believed the access from the street could be made more interesting. He suggested that the ADA access to the building could be made more interesting and suggested raising it and using special colored concrete or pavers. The bio-swale is a prominent feature and

supported the concept. Also, with a shallow water table it provides a good reason to build mounds because plantings have to be raised out of the salt. He recommended that the applicant contact the City's Engineer in regard to the shallow water table. The applicant agreed. Chair Kent believed Bradford pears would be a mistake because they tend to fall apart.

Chair Kent recommended staggering the plantings, if not, a double row in order to break it off. They want the entire street to have cohesion and the only way to achieve that goal is with plantings.

Chair Kent noted that since this is a conceptual review, no formal recommendation is given.

ADJOURNMENT

BY ORDER OF THE CHAIR, THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED.

Respectfully submitted,
Jessica Woods, Recording Secretary