

DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE MINUTES

Vacant, Chair
Fiona Dunne, Vice-Chair
Albert Antelman, Member
Daniel Saltee, Member
Vacant, Member

Peter Gilli, Community Development Director
Neda Zayer, Assistant Community Development Director
Andy Heglund, Senior Assistant City Attorney
Tracy Oehler, Assistant City Clerk

**REGULAR MEETING:
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 5, 2020 – 6:00 P.M.
WEBEX EVENT**

Chair Dunne called the meeting to order at 6:08 p.m.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Members Antelman, Saltee, and Chair Dunne

ABSENT: None

STAFF: Neda Zayer, Assistant Community Development Director
Andy Heglund, Senior Assistant City Attorney
Elizabeth Richardson, Senior Planner
Tracy Oehler, Assistant City Clerk

PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS – None

CONSENT ITEM

1. Approval of the DRC June 22, 2020 Meeting Minutes.

Recommendation: Approve, as presented.

Member Antelman made a motion to approve the DRC June 22, 2020 Meeting Minutes.

Member Saltee seconded the motion.

Upon call of the roll the vote was as follows:

AYES: Members Antelman, Saltee and Chair Dunne

NOES: None

RECUSED: None

ABSENT: None

Assistant City Clerk Oehler declared the motion carried 3-0.

FORMAL ITEM

2. PROJ-10084 – 1926 Thompson Project Design Review located at 1926 Thompson Boulevard.

Request for Formal Design Review for the construction of a three-story, 12-unit multi-family residential apartment building including two live/work units and two affordable units, and 23 parking spaces (covered) on a 0.3-acre site in the General Urban (T4.5) zone.

Recommendation: Design Review Committee provide comments on the proposed plan.

Case Planner: Elizabeth Richardson, Senior Planner

Applicant: Bruce B. Mehdiani

SPEAKERS:

Staff: Neda Zayer, Assistant Community Development Director and Elizabeth Richardson, Senior Planner

Applicant: Mark Pettit, architect (Lautherbach & Associates Architects, Inc.) and Jack Kiesel, landscape architect (Kiesel Landscape Architecture, Inc.)

Members of Public: None

Documents: PowerPoint by Staff and Applicant

Ex-Parte Communication: None

Public hearing recessed for five minutes at 6:40 p.m. due to technical difficulties experienced by Committee member Saltee. Hearing resumed at 6:45 p.m.

Vice Chair Dunne was out at 7:09 p.m. due to technical difficulties and came back at 7:21 p.m.

The Design Review Committee provided the following comments on the proposed plans:

General

- Do not favor the presented minimalistic building design. Things are popping in and out that seems it is an after thought and not really part of the design.
- Want to see the project look more interesting in terms of architectural design and materials.
- It seems the applicant is going back to previous monolithic design. Try to listen to the comments made by the Committee and staff back in 2017-2018. Current design might be resolved by changing the window patterning, massing break up, and not keeping the horizontal planes continuous throughout the building.

- Placement of the bedrooms on the two front units on the ground floor. Consider flipping the bedrooms (put at the back) and the kitchen (put on the front) fronting the street side so more eyes on the street not the other way around.

Massing

- Break up the massing with window fenestration.
- Separate massing on the front by having things more recessed in the front.
- The balcony is just placed on the front to create the illusion of depth, but it doesn't seem to work. The walls are still vertical, and the balcony seems to disappear and not really add to the layer. Consider recessing it back instead of just popping out balconies.

North Elevation along Thompson Boulevard

- Connection of the building to the street is important. Would like to see different treatment on the corner something that relates to the street.
- Current front yard typology doesn't work. The planters on the street look almost like a fortress. In the previous design it was broken by stairways.
- Consider small clusters with railings instead of a wall on the front and have the landscape come through on the ground level to help eliminate the barrier being created on the ground level.

South Elevation – Alley Parking Entrance

- Eliminate a lot of details on the 3rd floor outdoor deck area could be an opportunity for cost savings.
- Wanted to see larger trees in the planters not the western redbud (*cercis occidentalis*) trees to create a screen for the one-story neighbors that are adjacent to the building. This way occupants in the building are not peering down on existing single-family residence in the back and at the same time neighbors are looking at something green.

East Elevation – Santa Cruz Street

- There is a lot of presence in this frontage and it was lost by the parking placement.
- Don't know how it can be a strong frontage as previous design without eliminating some units and getting rid of extra parking.
- Windows are needed and second floor podium access door is not a great frontage type.

Windows, Patio, Architecture style and details

- Consider some muntins or mullions on windows to divide them up. It might help get the building more scaled.
- Explore some opportunity to do something different on windows for live/work units, i.e. larger glazing.
- Increase size of the windows to create more character of the building and bringing in the change and a little bit more of the traditional materials

- Railings system could be an opportunity to add architectural detailing to the building.
- Improve the patio area – recommend creating four clusters (could be a semi-public) at the corners that relates to each unit and a central cluster that could be a public area and for larger gathering areas.
- Water feature – maybe put a different type of water feature on each of four small cluster.
- Parapet on the current design are not wrapping all the way. Consider turning all the parapets to have a finished look.
- Have a trim piece on the top not just go up to the sky like the current design.
- Colored stucco as the base is not the best material. Try to pick some nice materials and bring it all the way up the building.

Landscape

- Consider changing the hierarchy of plant materials on the front entrance to enhance the front entry. The mass planting of the same plant palette across the frontage is nice.
- Vertical plant materials, trellis along the side to help with vertical element.
- Landscape architect should review the original design drawing of the project for reference.

STAFF COMMUNICATION

Assistant Community Development Director Zayer informed the committee of the next DRC meeting schedules: August 19 – cancelled; September 2 -- next meeting.

Chair Dunne asked status of the recruitment for new DRC members. Assistant Community Development Director Zayer will check status with City Clerk and report back to the committee.

Committee member Antelman inquired about expiration of his terms. Assistant City Clerk Oehler and Assistant Community Development Director Zayer will double check and let him know.

Committee member Saltee proposed to have a dialogue about form-based code, architectural design/style, design guidelines, etc. to resolve some issues about project's designs, architectural style, etc. that the Committee reviews. Assistant Community Development Zayer agreed and confirmed to include an informational item on future DRC agenda.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further items on the agenda, meeting is adjourned at 7:29 p.m.