



HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE (DRC) MEETING

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 16, 2017

12:00 – 1:00 P.M.

City Hall Tower

200 East Santa Clara Street

ROOM T-334

SHORT NOTES

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Edward Saum, HLC Chair

Anthony Raynsford

Stephen Polcyn

Design Review Committee Meeting Goal: Discuss project design regarding compatibility of the proposed project with the adjacent Downtown Commercial National Register Historic District and the Bank of America, a City Landmark Structure

Proposed projects for consideration:

[Site Development Permit, File No. H17-027](#) - to construct a 22-story mixed-use tower consisting of 342 residential units and approximately 17,628 square feet of commercial and office space on a .57 gross acre lot, located at 27 South First Street, in downtown San Jose, Council District 3.

PROJECT MANAGER, ELIA SORICE

Chairperson Ed Saum welcomed everyone and he was joined by Commissioners Anthony Raynsford and Steve Polcyn. Planning staff in attendance included: Susan Walsh, Shaunn Mendrin, Elia Sorice and Tim Rood.

The applicant's representative, Eric Schoennauer, his architect and several other members of their team were in attendance. Brian Grayson with Pac SJ, was the only member of the public in attendance.

The applicant's architect presented a slide show, explained the design of the building and materials, and showed some aerial photo simulations of the new building.

The Commission had the following comments:

The building design was out of scale and was not compatible with character of the National Register Historic District. They were concerned about the height and the mass of the building, and stated that the building needs to have a distinct base, middle and top. They recommended that the building mass be reduced at the top so there will be a unique shape in the skyline. The gap in the façade makes the building appear to cantilever and be more prominent, which makes the building seem like two buildings. The current building design is too horizontal, and the architect should think about not only the horizontal datum but also the vertical proportionality to provide a balance. The Commission liked the terra cotta-colored vertical wall of the back elevation of the building with punched windows shown (on page 7.3 of the plans) since it adds some more verticality. The Commission mentioned that the building should be more modest and less “aggressive”. The Commission mentioned that the Bank of America building is 13 stories in height (plus the tower above).

They stated that the views from the First Street and from Santa Clara Street are the most important views, and the current building design will make the building appear like a “giant wall” from Santa Clara Street. The building should have a greater setback, more articulation and detailing and should have a more pedestrian-oriented feel to match the character of the existing streetscape. The building should also have a more inviting view for pedestrians at the street level, including retail storefronts, doors, shaded overhangs and possibly a café.

The colors and materials of the building should be complimentary and compatible with the Bank of America building and other buildings in the historic district. The existing buildings on First Street have a lot of glass, stone and brick with muted colors. The architect explained that they have used the glass to get some of the reflections from the colors of the Bank of America building and other existing buildings on the street. The Commission stated that the use of glass was acceptable, but it should be broken up so it does not appear as an entire curtain wall of glass.

The Commission did not think the red fin elements were effective, and the architect explained that was intended to lighten the base and add color to the building. The proposed patterns do not respond to the more consistent pattern of the surrounding building facades. They would like to see the monotony of the balconies broken up as well. The architect stated that they have changed the design to respond to staff comments; however, they did not have any drawings or slides of the revised design.

The Commission agreed with the comments in the 30-day letter to the applicant, and would like the architect to address them in the redesign. The applicant’s representative stated that the use of a gap may not be the right approach, and the screen does not appear to be popular either. He indicated that the entry canopies follow the old Woolworth’s entrance canopies.

Brian Grayson said he has heard that there is a terrazzo floor in the old Woolworth’s building, and would like to see it saved and used in the lobby with an interpretive historical display. The applicant’s representative indicated they are planning to save it and relocate it to the front of the building.

Staff indicated that this project will be scheduled for review by the Historic Landmarks Commission soon to obtain the Commission’s comments on what should be in the historic analysis for the project. The architect said they will work on a redesign and will submit it to staff soon.