



Downtown Community Planning Council San Diego

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

PRE-DESIGN SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING OF THE DOWNTOWN COMMUNITY PLANNING COUNCIL

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2015
5:15 PM

CIVIC SAN DIEGO
401 B STREET, SUITE 400
SAN DIEGO, CA

1. Roll Call at 5:15pm. Members in Attendance: LC Cline, Jon Baker, Jon Gordon, Dan Wery and Claudia Escala.
2. No public comments on non-agenda items. A member of the public made a comment on the First & Beech project but was requested by the Chair to speak during the action items portion of the meeting.
3. No report from Chairperson

Action items:

4. **First & Beech** (South side of Beech Street between First and Second avenues) – Centre City Development Permit/ Neighborhood Development Permit – Preliminary Design Review – Cortez Neighborhood of the Downtown Community Plan Area ~ Christian Svensk
4-36 Story tower, approximately 45-420 foot tall residential development on an approximately 32,000 SF site.
270 residential dwelling units and 298 automobile parking spaces.

Design Issues and Considerations:

Tower

- Does the overall design of the tower respond to its immediate environs, that of the Cortez District or greater San Diego? Is it a distinctive addition to the City's skyline?
- Is the use of two different tints of glass appropriate and does it result in a more attractive tower.

Street wall

- Should the above grade garage levels be enclosed to avoid future light and noise impacts to surrounding developments?
- Do the varying materials and design of the upper parking levels provide an attractive façade especially on the key First Avenue frontage?
- Are the enclosed glass staircases attractively designed to enhance, rather than detract from the podium design?
- Are the tall voids of enclosed "amenity" space along Second Avenue and the hallway facing First Avenue attractive habitable space as envisioned by CCPDO requirement for encapsulating 50% of above grade parking levels?

Interior Property Line Walls

- Are the 45-foot tall interior property lines architecturally treated to provide visual interest until adjoining properties are redeveloped?

Presentation by Architect, AVR Studio

The design is composed of two masses, a formal one facing the City versus an organic one with curves facing the water.

Active uses on ground floor with a lobby reception as visual as possible. A 3 story open atrium will bring the exterior in and the interior out.

The parking is encapsulated with the use of glass and some landscape areas.



The project proposes robust amenities including an active podium deck with a west facing swimming pool and lounge area plus a reflection pool.

The tower itself captures a view for every unit. Each unit has a balcony facing the view and promotes an inside outside living concept

Facing East, the city facing mass shows two planes split down the middle.

A softer more organic faces towards water and is stepped on the last top 30%.

There will be a rooftop amenity with an infinity pool facing the bay and Balboa Park plus a 3 story green wall.

Members Questions

Is the only setback requirement the 15' above at the 50' elevation on Beech St?. No additional setbacks as noted by Civic SD. Elaborate on different types of glass Blue glass versus clear glass. Applicant will provide larger samples to Civic SD. Is large percentage of parking visible from street?. Parking is setback 15 to 20 feet from the property line. What are the active uses along the podium? Ground floor level residential and lobby. Staircase exposed to view who will use it? Residents in case of an emergency. Define active versus non active uses. Residential units and a hallway on the third floor. Can applicant define amenities? Have not fully programmed yet. Is it acceptable to have the loading dock driveway immediately adjacent to the parking driveway? Per Civic there needs to be a separation of 3 feet minimum.

Public Comments:

Hope Horton – A resident in the building right across the street. The building will lose its views. It is a senior building occupied by senior people. They are used to having screen doors opened for fresh air and are now concerned on how construction and the homeless people in the immediate vicinity are going to be handled.

Gerald Lang – Noted there are currently nine 72 hour parking spaces and 3 meter spots available at the right of way of the existing site. Concerned about what will happen to parking during construction and afterwards. Inquired about how soon will construction start and how long it would last. Per Civic SD's response a project at this stage of development takes 9 to 12 month to start construction and construction will be for 24 to 30 months. Parking in the street surrounding the site will not be available during construction.

Jeanne De Florio – Are there any set aside housing units? Per Civic SD, there is no affordable housing incorporated in the project. Civic SD is not aware of any plans regarding homeless in the area.

Currently the developer of this project is building one other project downtown.

Jose Gonzalez – Requested more clarity and explanation of the permits needed for project to take place.

Per Civic SD, the NDP is required for the encroachment into the right of way. On Second Ave. there will be a below grade hatch with a lid.

Benetha Edwards – Most questions have been answered. Is property currently owned by developer? Yes. Where is the setback taken from? Per Civic SD from the property line and the sidewalk is typically 14 feet wide. She expressed concern about the blank wall. The applicant responded that the area is zoned for the proposed density. The view of adjoining properties will be affected. The applicant also looked at various configurations during the design phase. On Ash side how much would remain as a parking lot?. Per Civic SD the parking on the south parcel will remain as is and there are no protection of views under CEQA

Susan Nelson Commented that as a resident we live in a relative low rise area. 36 stories high seems excessive to her. Most developments in Little Italy are much smaller. She finds it difficult being in her own condo having all these rentals with above grade parking that may not be properly maintained. Per applicant Units on tower are elevated to connect to the water.

Brockway Clark Inquired if applicant currently has ownership of the site. Applicant confirmed. Also inquired about timeline to start construction. The developer has no specific timeline. Is this a market rent development? Yes. Any provisions for low income occupants? Not on site, applicant planning on paying in lieu fee. Per Civic SD approximately 3 million will go towards affordable housing to be built



off site. Applicant could provide 10% affordable units but opted not to.

Gary Smith Regarding the above grade parking, the applicant has done a good job at articulating the facade but it is not completely sealed off.

The feature stair will be required by code to have lighting and signage that will impact how it will look like an those elements should be taken into consideration.

Southern side will have to live with a blank wall but believes architect has articulated it well.

Members Comments

Jon Baker: Glass is not really a way of concealing parking. Glass works during the day but not at night. Streetscape does not have much of a pedestrian experience. The lobby is nice. Hard to figure out what is being done on the elevations of the first 4 stories. Recommends organizing better materials shown on the podium façade..

LC Cline: Regarding above grade parking the applicant could better refine the enclosure of above grade parking. The texture and articulation of the south façade may be a problem. Applicant should continue to explore and maybe bring a graphic artist. Likes the lobby area with super tall glass. Agrees that materials need to be better organized in the overall architectural composition. Pleased to see high quality materials. Pool not very big. The project has a great podium amenity area.

Dan Wery: The tower is great for the people that will live in it. The podium is not very attractive and not doing much for the neighborhood. Great amenity spaces. Would encourage a lot more work on the podium, activation, materials, wants to see people using the space. Has issue with the glass at the garage. Glass stairwells do not offer much added value, dead void space. The voids at the amenity level are not acceptable. The blank wall to the south could be interesting with louvers and glass over the concrete

Jon Gordon Overall really likes the design of residential tower. Believes the garage should be fully enclosed and the above ground facade should be treated properly. Noise and smell could be an issue. Street level activation is critical. Amenity space with hallways and stairwells are not an active space.

Claudia Escala Concurred with other members on the design of the podium level needing more work. Appreciated some elegant elements in the tower. Interested in the detailing and execution of certain elements like the awning at the lobby and what appears to be structural glass in a couple key areas.

5. **15th & G Amendment** (Northeast corner of 15th and G streets) – Preliminary Design Review – Centre City Development Permit/Neighborhood Use Permit / Variance – East Village Neighborhood of the Downtown Community Plan Area – James Alexander

A six story approximately 85 feet tall mixed use development on a 10,000 SF site. 28 residential apartment dwelling units, approximately 3,000SF of commercial space and 14 at grade parking spaces.

Requested amendment includes:

- Removal of the building on eastern portion of the site. The four units in the previous eastern building are proposed to be moved to the building located to the west of the fault line, resulting in an additional floor (totaling six stories) and increased FAR (4.61 with approval of Variance)
- Architectural/design modifications
- Addition of a security gate along the G Street frontage at the entrance of the at-grade parking lot.
- Proposed installation of public art on the blank wall of the north façade.

Applicant presentation by Canvas Ventures: Walked team through fault area setbacks. Pointed out that the key design elements remained the same. The concept has gone from two buildings to one. Feasibility drove moving to one building. They have addressed previous security concerns with an attractive gate design. The architect noted that the retail spaces have expanded slightly. The grid pattern has been maintained as well as the accent tile. The security gate will be composed of a tube steel frame with metal panels in varying widths creating a balance between security and visibility.

Member questions:

What is facing the parking?. The recently approved Streetlights project with a 20 setback and green wall



area. Open space area to the north of the building. Could the spaces be coordinated better with Streetlight on East property line? The developer is already in conversations with Streetlights and will continue to work with them

Public Comments: None

Members Comments:

LC Cline Pointed out that the planters/ green elements previously shown on the west façade are all gone and were a big component of the previous design. Would like to see a connection with East Village Green. The east elevation will be problematic unless something can be done with the railing height walls. Pointed out the rental car facility that just opened along Pacific Highway used some sculptural precast walls.

Jon Baker: He understands why the building is coming back for review. The little skinny building did not make sense before. The east wall does not fit and does not have the proper vocabulary. More work needs to be done with massing and openings.

Dan Wery: In the previous design the sliver building created a nice space. Trees in the parking were also a nice feature so recommends greening that area up. He likes the west façade a lot. Could add value by adding openings to the north elevation. East side needs work and recommends working with the neighbor to enhance each other's property. As far as the reduction in parking he understands the applicant has requested variance to reduce it due to the fault line and Civic SD supports it.

Jon Gordon: He saw this project before as part of EVRG's design review. Agrees with other members comments and recommends improving on the east elevation but feels the overall design of the project is good.

Claudia Escala: Disappointed to see the sliver building gone. Understands the economics but feels that it was a jewel in the past scheme. On the west façade preferred the previous design that offered more randomness and misses the open spaces the previous scheme created. Regarding the north wall does not see the need for public art as the previous façade was already well composed with material changes and offset planes to make it an interesting blank wall. Overall feels the project is well designed.

6. Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 6:25PM