



Architectural Review Board

Staff Report (ID # 13632)

Report Type: Approval of Minutes **Meeting Date:** 10/7/2021

Summary Title: Minutes of September 9, 2021

Title: Draft Architectural Review Board Meeting Minutes for September 9, 2021

From: Jonathan Lait

Recommendation

Staff recommends the Architectural Review Board (ARB) adopt the attached meeting minutes.

Background

Draft minutes from the September 9, 2021 Architectural Review Board (ARB) are available in Attachment A.

Draft and Approved Minutes are made available on the ARB webpage at bit.ly/paloaltoARB

Attachments:

- Attachment A: September 9, 2021 Draft Minutes (DOCX)



ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD
 DRAFT MINUTES: September 9, 2021
 Virtual Retreat
 10:00 AM

Call to Order / Roll Call

The Architectural Review Board (ARB) of the City of Palo Alto met on this date in virtual teleconference at 10:00 a.m.

Participating Remotely: Chair Osma Thompson, Vice Chair Grace Lee, Boardmember Peter Baltay, Boardmember David Hirsch, Boardmember Alex Lew

Absent: None.

Oral Communications

None.

Agenda Changes, Additions and Deletions

None.

Study Session

1. Discussion Session (1 hour): How does the ARB define high quality development?
 (Note: We may not get to all of these questions in one hour)
 - What is the architectural character of Palo Alto? Can we define it/bottle it?
 - How do we feel about the character? Is it stodgy, or comforting, or quaint?
 - How do we want it to evolve? Do we want it to be more edgy? Transformative?
 - What is worth retaining in terms of architectural character, and worth letting go of, as we move forward?
 - What are some architectural masterpieces in the City of Palo Alto? Conversely, what are some embarrassing structures that deprive the community of its character?
 - *Optional* What parameters in a design standards/guidelines document inspire creativity? What parameters deplete a project of creativity?
 - *Optional* What kind of culture are we promoting when we promote certain architectural moves?

Chair Thompson noted the agenda was planned for three hours with no breaks. She suggested a 5-to-10-minute break following each item. The questions were born from discussions on the Objective Standards and seemed made for a retreat. She noted she would end the discussion around 10:45 to 10:50 a.m. The Board will go through each question and share its thoughts. She called for questions

prior to the discussion, but there were none, so she asked the first question about the architectural character of Palo Alto.

Boardmember Baltay suggested Chair Thompson and Boardmember Hirsch lead the discussion more directly.

Chair Thompson explained that the Objective Standards encouraged certain architectural moods and things so how does that reinforce the character of Palo Alto, how does it change it, what is the community gaining or losing? What is the current character of Palo Alto and how does the ARB feel about that?

Boardmember Baltay suggested Chair Thompson and Boardmember Hirsch answer the questions and then the rest of the ARB would react.

Boardmember Hirsch said he had no part creating the questions. He thought it was meant to be a full Board conceptualization but stated he would begin the discussion.

Chair Thompson said she would lead the conversation. She felt the most important part of Palo Alto's character is the relationship of inside to outside with a green landscape punctured by the canopy trees which frame buildings. There is a strong relationship between the natural and built environment. Palo Alto is made up of single-family low-rise buildings with sloping roofs that create movement punctured by commercial corridors.

Boardmember Hirsch reinforced Chair Thompson's opinions. He enjoys riding his bicycle and noted that the scenery is wonderful. Trees and landscape are an important part of Palo Alto, and that can be seen from Google Map aerial views. He noted that the grid of the City with major streets interrupting the residential scale. He lives near Middlefield, which is a mix. Palo Alto is important and has international name recognition as the center of Silicon Valley. One can tell that Palo Alto was a summertime community that grew up around Stanford to become almost urban. The town grew from bungalows to larger houses and Downtown became vibrant. The digital boom then changed everything and created tremendous traffic issues. Local roads like Embarcadero and El Camino have become almost highways. The new 21st century development has been shaped by those pressures and there's an adverse dynamic to Palo Alto that makes him worry for the future. Future projects will drastically change the nature of the community. The government has called for more housing. El Camino is now a highway, a commercial street, and valuable land. Palo Alto is not affordable because of the digital world and the density of Silicon Valley, which is now the third most dense place in the United States. What the ARB has seen on El Camino and San Antonio is a pressure to build up the scale of the streets with commercial buildings. The ARB is the monitor of the relationship between the buildings. The housing in Palo Alto ranging from carpenter to Spanish style to Eichler is unique to the area and are under pressure due to the surrounding commercial areas and traffic impacts. He was concerned about new development, the scale, and the effects on adjacent neighborhoods. Residents are concerned and have even objected to Wilton Court, which is a properly scaled building related to the neighbors. The ARB needs to be cautious when looking at El Camino. Boardmember Lew had been concerned about El Camino and creating an El Camino plan and that ought to be addressed as an urban design and aesthetic issue. The El Camino Real Guidelines discuss nodal points and if they should be reinvestigated for density. Palo Alto Planning does not have an urban design point of view. They deal with zoning, but that is in flux and is concerning due to the

proposed density increases. He was concerned that the buildings on El Camino have no relationship to each other. Is that what the ARB wants for Palo Alto, or do they want to see the Downtown intensified? The Research Park seems to be working out with the large land parcels they are separate from the rest of the City. The focus should be on the impacts to the Downtown and the residential neighborhoods.

Vice Chair Lee appreciated the questions and a time to reflect but was uncomfortable with the discussion. The ARB has five diverse members appointed by the City Council who come together with the objective to evaluate projects on a case-by-case basis. She was comfortable with the findings and how they were reviewed and approved. She was also comfortable because Council has the Planning and Transportation Commission (PTC), other bodies, and staff to look at planning in a wholistic way. The findings work very well, and she was not comfortable defining an architectural character that needed to be retained in a certain way. She was comfortable in being a diverse group of people with architecture, urban planning, and landscape knowledge. Land use, transportation, and other decisions should be left to the appropriate bodies. The questions will be helpful in the ARB Awards discussion. She also felt it was appropriate to discuss process, how the ARB functions, and their terms as Boardmembers.

Boardmember Lew stated he had similar comments to the other Boardmembers in his notes but would mention items that had not been discussed. First, compared to the other suburbs on the Peninsula Palo Alto had a connected street grid with a canopy. The neighborhoods have their differences; for example, the Eichler neighborhoods are different than Professorville. Each neighborhood has a consistency that makes it distinct. Second, because of Stanford and other daytime employment Palo Alto has more retail and restaurants than neighboring cities. People pay a premium to live and work in the City and that translates to more expensive materials on buildings. He agreed with Vice Chair Lee's position on the questions. In some places in Palo Alto it could be possible to follow Culver City's model.

Boardmember Baltay agreed with the other Boardmembers. He found it difficult to define the architectural character of Palo Alto or any other vibrant place; therefore, he was unable trying to answer the question. He has observed that Palo Alto along with the section of Northern California between San Francisco and San Jose is undergoing a tremendous transformation from sleepy suburban towns to a vibrant interconnected urban community. Palo Alto needs more urban planning. He lamented the fact that they cannot develop a public transportation network in a reasonable way. Change is coming to Palo Alto and the City is not looking at it well. He would like the Planning Department to do more planning and less quasi-judicial zoning checking. As Boardmember Hirsch pointed out other cities do more urban planning and enforce the decisions. Palo Alto is so concerned with being sued by an aggressive developer that it does not take control of its built environment. One of the most controversial and complicated aspects of ARB decision making is the findings that require buildings be contextually compatible. He sited questions about Castilleja school and neighborhood and tall buildings on El Camino and noted that he struggled with them during reviews. If there were a stronger set of guidelines showing what they want Palo Alto to become it would be better than trying for contextual compatibility. He apologized for not answering the question, but he supported the process in place as explained by Vice Chair Lee.

Chair Thompson appreciated the comments. She acknowledged the question was difficult. Design standards and guidelines need to have a vision. If there is a vision then the standards are justified by the vision. She wanted to discuss what the architectural vision as density and other issues like that are

beyond ARB purview. The ARB has been tasked with evaluating the aesthetics of projects and the evaluation process is supported by findings, but as Palo Alto evolves things change. Maybe as Vice Chair Lee said they should let it be what it is, but then they need to question the context base as Boardmember Baltay noted. If everything is based off context it will inevitably go in a certain direction versus if new structures are freed from context then it will go in a different direction. That is what she wanted the discussion to determine. What is important to the ARB members, what do they want to keep, what do they want to get rid of when they are evaluating projects in the future? In short, what is the vision? She noted that they had another 10 to 15 minutes of discussion left on the item. She suggested an informal discussion.

Vice Chair Lee stated they did not have to discuss favorite structures, she just thought that would come up in the Awards conversation. She thought Boardmember Baltay's forward thinking comments were exciting and appreciated Chair Thompson's idea of a vision. All Boardmembers have significant knowledge as a group and generally do not have the time to discuss how that applies and how they evaluate so she appreciated the retreat. She stated that she did not want to discuss projects that are still in review during the Awards discussion. She further noted that Boardmember Lew and herself had been on the Board for a long time and have seen a significant number of projects. In addition to the building codes and standards the ARB should consider sustainability in projects or process. Another topic they could discuss is the long process for projects in the queue and how other cities handle projects.

Boardmember Hirsch stated that the findings are terrific, and he enjoyed evaluating them in projects. He agreed that neighborhoods are different, and that Palo Alto is unique. He was not sure why the ARB could not branch out and speak on urban design issues that affect the community. He noted that he and Boardmember Baltay were trying to propose a significant change for the City that would address the issue of affordable housing. As a former New Yorker, he looked at how things were done in New York and concentrated on the transition of Park Avenue. He also looked at older buildings and how they related to the street. Those things are missing in Palo Alto. The edge of the street is always the same old thing here because they're what's in the guidelines. The new guidelines work, and he does not have a problem with them but was concerned that they were not addressing transportation issues. He noted that several cities were trying to manage the transportation, while New York is one city with five boroughs and the city government is strong. That is not the way Silicon Valley has developed, which causes problems and makes it difficult to address transportation issues. Another large issue is the population. Overall, those are the things that the ARB should consider: what is the Board's impact on these issues? The Board can speak as urban designers as well as critics of projects. Things moved much quicker in New York, and he did not understand why they could not move faster in Palo Alto. The process has not worked well, even prior to the current ARB. He was concerned about El Camino Real and the fact that it would be made up of separate buildings. He asked if it was important to work on the context of that. The Ventura area will be a dense area in the Downtown. One of the recent projects is at 250 units per acre. The City is currently facing density issues.

Chair Thompson stated she wanted to steer the discussion back towards architecture. The five ARB members understand how architecture has evolved. She asked Boardmember Lew to explain the evolution of aesthetics during his tenure on the ARB. She noted that there was new technology, design

ideas, parametric design. She wanted to hear from the ARB about future trends in architecture for Palo Alto.

Boardmember Hirsch agreed that was a good question. If one looks at recent architecture postmodernism has been put to rest. He mentioned the new Facebook, Google, and Apple buildings and noted his love of the museum building in Golden Gate Park. That building answers all questions well, including environmental questions with its rooftop areas. Those are the buildings of the future, and he was not sure how they apply in Palo Alto. The Research Park could contain buildings like them, but otherwise there might not be the land for them. So significant monumental buildings are not likely to happen in Palo Alto. He asked if it would be good to have those buildings in Palo Alto due to their scale. He thought not.

Chair Thompson noted that Amy French had her hand raised and that she wanted to give other Boardmembers a chance to speak. She called for further Boardmember comment.

Boardmember Baltay said he has a commission at Sea Ranch and has been studying what the architects did. He read a statement from Joe Esherick, a famous Bay Area architect, and explained that much of what he looked at in new buildings has to do with the relationship of the inside to the outside in terms of things like outdoor plazas and stairways. Those things define the character of commercial architecture or multifamily residential. Palo Alto is a town of the people who live in it. They are eclectic, intelligent, successful and want the architecture to reflect themselves. With respect to his favorite building in town he liked the Garden Court Hotel because that is a large building with an outdoor terrace for dining. The entrance of the building brings to the street the activity of the hotel. There are several terraces on the façade. Independent of the dated architectural style it has good design decisions that make for a good building. To Chair Thompson's question about architecture, it has to do with putting people first, letting the public and the occupants really live and work in buildings in a way that's pleasing and successful.

Boardmember Lew commented that in his first several years on the ARB he kept track of the awards won by projects from the American Institute of Architects (AIA) and other organizations. The first few years there were 2 or 3 award winning projects and about two and a half to three years ago there were 15 or 16 awarded projects in broader categories. Therefore, the ARB has done a good job and the project applicants have been working toward the same goals. He felt that things have slipped a bit in the past few years, perhaps due to the drastic price increases of land and the corresponding pressure on projects to be successful. As mentioned by Boardmembers Hirsch and Baltay the next thing the ARB needs to do is look at sustainable design. The ARB should look at case studies for more information. For example, look at the few net zero buildings in Palo Alto and determine what could be learned from them. Sustainable design is the future, and the ARB should move in that direction.

Vice Chair Lee said the retreat was only the start of a great discussion. She remembered the JCC building that led to discussions on San Antonio and on corridors. She also remembered the Hyatt Rickey's discussion held by the ARB and noted that Boardmember Lew was also there. She did not want the ARB to stray too far from the typologies of buildings that they review. The other projects on her mind were Oak Park in Downtown and the Children's Library in terms of historic preservation. The Brown Act is a

hindrance, but she thought it was lovely to discuss these items with fellow Boardmembers in a retreat as usually their scope was limited.

Chair Thompson thanked the Boardmembers.

Boardmember Hirsch said he really liked Boardmember Baltay's presentation. A scale based on user experience is important. Only the ARB is concerned about the style of the building; everyone else cares about the quality of the experience and the relationship to the street.

Chair Thompson said that was important. She was also interested in the aesthetics. That is the job of the ARB; projects must look good and function. She appreciated Boardmember Lew's point about the future being net zero. Building design has a huge impact on the environment and sustainability must increase along with density. She thanked the ARB for their thoughts. In their profession they study a lot and work and sometimes it was difficult to step back and discuss the larger picture. Architecture changes the world. She hoped the conversation could continue in person. She called for a 10-minute break prior to the next item.

The ARB took a break

2. 2020 Architectural Review Awards – Presentation of Eligible Projects Completed From 2014 and Prior to July 2021 (1.5 hours)

Chair Thompson invited staff to introduce the Study Session.

Jodie Gerhardt, Manager of Current Planning, explained that Amy French had the most history with the ARB Awards so she would provide an overview. Following that she has a detailed list of projects to review. She also has the 2015 Awards for review.

Amy French, Chief Planning Official, stated this would be her 5th ARB Design Awards. In 1998 when she started there was not a five-year schedule, but that was quickly created and put into the ARB Bylaws. The last ARB Awards was 2015 and the 2020 Awards were delayed by the pandemic. Past Awards have been lovely with displays of the award winners. Usually there have been about five winners with honorable mentions determined by a whittling down process through several ARB meetings and retreats. Usually, the five ARB members will split the list and do site visits to take pictures of the built projects that have been reviewed and approved by the Director or City Council following ARB recommendation. She noted that she had not reviewed Ms. Gerhardt's list completely, but the idea was that if a project had not been built it was ineligible but if it is under construction and nearing completion it would be. The Awards take time to decide and then must be approved by Council which often takes several months. The ARB determines the categories for the Awards. In 2015 they considered superior design and planning solutions, green building and sustainable building, transportation integration, economic development, historic rehabilitation and adaptive reuse, or a City/public project. There have been a range of projects awarded from public projects to private development. Past honorable mentions have been for lighting design projects and either smaller or larger projects. She was available for any questions.

Ms. Gerhardt shared her screen with the ARB and presented the 2015 winners including Rinconada Library, The Hoover Pavilion, The Apple Store, Paris Baguette, Mitchell Park Library, and Magical Bridge.

The ARB gets to create the award categories and those do not need to be finalized in this discussion. She showed a list of projects eligible for this years' awards. There are 140 projects, four or five of which were added by Boardmember Lew. Some of the projects were approved prior to the Award period but were constructed within the last five years and therefore were added back to the list. Some projects that are recently approved could be removed as they are yet to begin construction. If there are projects that need more consideration she will keep track of the Boardmember assigned to do the research.

Chair Thompson asked how the ARB should break down the list.

Ms. Gerhardt said any project not yet constructed could be removed as the building must be finished by the time the Awards are given. If there are buildings that require further research they could be discussed at the second hearing. Staff is available to assist ARB members with research.

Ms. French asked how many total projects were on the list.

Ms. Gerhardt stated there were currently 140 on the list.

Ms. French said that in the past the list had been separated by areas of town and assigned to Boardmembers by location.

Ms. Gerhardt stated she did not have it broken down by neighborhood, but the streets are grouped.

Ms. French said that one way was to divvy up the list and have the ARB members do the research and return with their results and photographs.

Chair Thompson stated that was approximately 28 properties per ARB member.

Ms. French said it could be less than that because unbuilt projects would be removed from the list.

Chair Thompson stated that would be part of the research.

Ms. French agreed and stated that staff would do that part.

Boardmember Lew indicated that he already crossed off several projects that had not been built.

Ms. Gerhardt asked for addresses.

Boardmember Lew said they could remove 2609 Alma, 1310 Bryant, 3001 El Camino, 375 Hamilton.

Ms. Gerhardt explained the lists had been integrated.

Boardmember Lew said the addition to 261 Hamilton could be removed.

Ms. Gerhardt stated that was half of a project.

Ms. French said that project included a request to upgrade the category, but the City Council never completed the request and it dropped. Therefore, it is still a Category 3 Birge Clark building.

Boardmember Lew stated that was all he had in his notes.

Boardmember Baltay inquired about the building on Hanover in the Research Park.

Ms. Gerhardt confirmed he was speaking of the transit building.

Boardmember Lew said the project was currently under construction.

Ms. French asked Ms. Gerhardt if that was 3251.

Ms. Gerhardt said it was the butterfly building. The question would be when it will be completed.

Boardmember Lew reported the framing was in, but it could still be six months from completion.

Ms. French said that the outside of the building was what mattered. If the exterior was complete it could be considered.

Ms. Gerhardt stated she would investigate it.

Boardmember Baltay asked if they could run through the list and remove any projects that did not have the support of at least one Boardmember. Many of the projects are too simple to be considered.

Vice Chair Lee added that she was not on the ARB during the approval process of some of the projects, so she was not familiar with everything.

Boardmember Baltay said that the key was her opinion on the building, not whether she was part of the process.

Vice Chair Lee clarified they did not have to review the projects.

Chair Thompson said that was correct.

Ms. Gerhardt explained that the question was now that the projects were built were they award winning.

Chair Thompson asked if Boardmember Baltay meant to remove the projects before or after research.

Boardmember Baltay suggested they do so before the research.

Chair Thompson asked how they knew to support a project without the research.

Boardmember Baltay said that the airport fencing project was on the list. If no members of the ARB thought that was likely to warrant an award then they need not spend time on the research. He gave the PV system on the public garages as a second example. He suggested the low bar of a project being supported by at least one ARB member.

Chair Thompson stated she saw Boardmember Baltay's point.

Vice Chair Lee said that in the past each Boardmember nominated projects from a list. She also remembered reaching out to applicants for professional photographs.

Ms. French stated that was a valid way of doing it as well.

Vice Chair Lee asked if the ARB Awards could be agendized.

Ms. Gerhardt said that the October 7th meeting had two items, October 21st had one or two items. With respect to timing, they were already behind due to the pandemic but could take time if they needed it.

Vice Chair Lee said she was happy to divvy the list up and mentioned that she worked near California Avenue.

Chair Thompson supported divvying up the list after striking some projects as suggested by Boardmember Baltay. The bottom of the list includes sign and wireless projects. she asked if the ARB wanted to consider those since they are not buildings.

Boardmember Baltay, Boardmember Hirsch, and Chair Thompson all agreed those projects should not be considered.

Ms. Gerhardt confirmed she would remove those projects from the list.

Boardmember Baltay suggested they run through all the projects on the list.

Ms. Gerhardt read the list aloud and removed projects in real time as directed by members of the ARB. Ms. French assisted with her knowledge of projects that had not been built or completed. Ms. Gerhardt stated that any project stricken from the list could be considered if an ARB member suggests it later and explained that buildings should be finished by the end of this year for inclusion. She further explained that she had already removed unfinished projects that she was aware of from the list prior to the meeting.

Chair Thompson noted that in the past landscape projects had won awards.

Ms. French said they could also consider projects for honorable mentions. Streetscape could be a category for instance.

Boardmember Baltay asked if Chair Thompson could divide and assign the list offline.

Chair Thompson indicated she would do so and requested Boardmembers send her their preference as to side of town by email.

Ms. Gerhardt finished reading the list aloud and announced that they were down to 92 projects to research.

Chair Thompson stated the next meeting was October 7th and asked if Boardmembers should be prepared to discuss their assignments then.

Ms. Gerhardt asked Ms. French about Council's plan to return to in person meetings.

Ms. French explained Council was in discussion about returning in October, possibly under a hybrid model. The ARB could also utilize some hybrid model or continue working remotely. ARB members should forward their research and photographs to staff for compilation into a slideshow. If they would rather go the nomination route then each Boardmember could select three projects for nomination from their assignments.

Boardmember Baltay suggested Chair Thompson divide the work and send the list to the entire ARB. Then the ARB could do the research and then review the full list with a photo of each project in a meeting and nominate projects from there.

Chair Thompson requested Boardmember Baltay clarify his suggestion.

Boardmember Baltay stated that they were dividing up the work to get the photographs.

Ms. Gerhardt said she would put together the slide show.

Boardmember Baltay said they needed a slide show containing all the projects and then any ARB member can nominate a project. If it does not get a second then the project is removed from the list. The objective being to create a short list for debate and consideration.

Ms. Gerhardt agreed and added that could be done through several rounds if necessary.

Chair Thompson said that made sense. She instructed Boardmembers to send their PowerPoints to Ms. Gerhardt for compilation and redistribution.

Boardmember Baltay stated the process should be part of the public agenda so that the public can be involved.

Boardmember Hirsch asked if each Boardmember should make some cuts to their list based on the significance of the project to whittle the list down further.

Ms. French suggested that each Boardmember share the values they are looking for when evaluating projects. For example, are they looking for green building or historic rehabilitation?

Boardmember Hirsch agreed.

Chair Thompson asked if that should be in the PowerPoint.

Ms. Gerhardt said they could have an early conversation about possible award categories.

Boardmember Lew recommended looking at the Comprehensive Plan for award categories. He suggested things like sustainable design, historic preservation, [unintelligible at 2:07:55] compatibility, Creekside restoration.

Boardmember Baltay liked the idea of a nomination being paired with a category.

Ms. Gerhardt said that Boardmembers could both nominate and second projects.

Boardmember Lew explained that he was looking at projects in the Research Park. The projects are all very good, so he has been using the Comprehensive Plan as a way of evaluating them.

Boardmember Hirsch suggested getting the list of categories started. He listed sustainability, adaptable reuse, urban texture, graphics, innovation, urban planning, historic preservation, compatibility as possible categories.

Vice Chair Lee liked the idea of each member nominating their own attempt at a category for the next meeting after taking the photographs and doing the research. Then the project category could receive a second from another Boardmember.

Chair Thompson asked if everyone had access to PowerPoint.

Vice Chair Lee asked if Ms. Gerhardt would rather receive photographs and inquired about naming conventions.

Ms. Gerhardt stated she would put the PowerPoint together if Boardmembers provided the photos. She suggested using the address for the title of the file.

Chair Thompson suggested making a PowerPoint template to show a photo and then a blurb about the project. She suggested attaching an Excel sheet along with the photos.

Ms. French said each ARB does its own branding of the awards. They can choose an image they want on the awards, etcetera. There is no branding other than the City tree logo.

Chair Thompson said the ARB would consider that. She asked how Boardmembers felt about the blurb.

Ms. French suggested they could separate projects by size.

Ms. Gerhardt stated the photos could be named by address and category. If Boardmembers chose to do a PowerPoint they could add more information. Once the ARB is down to a handful of projects then further research about architects and decisions on categories could be made.

Ms. French explained that part of the fun of the Awards was that each Boardmember could write up a description for why a particular project won the award.

Chair Thompson asked if it was a reasonable timeframe to continue the discussion to October.

Ms. Gerhardt advised the next hearing was October 7th. She reminded the ARB that she needed time to put the PowerPoint together and that the packet had to be published a week before the hearing. So that would be two weeks for the Boardmembers to do their research.

Ms. French explained that the PowerPoint could be assembled after the packet.

Chair Thompson stated that the ARB should provide the pictures or PowerPoint slides to staff by October 24th.

Ms. French suggested a list of each Boardmembers favorite projects as well. That way those items could be compiled into the staff report.

Ms. Gerhardt asked if the ARB was comfortable looking at about 20 projects each within two weeks. She stated she would send out the email on the 10th.

Boardmember Baltay stated he was fine with the assignment.

Ms. Gerhardt stated that Boardmember Lew wanted the Research Park and Vice Chair Lee wanted California Avenue.

Boardmember Baltay stated he was Downtown most of the time. He would prefer that or North Palo Alto.

Boardmember Hirsch preferred the Middlefield corridor.

Chair Thompson said she would take San Antonio. She noted that someone needed to take El Camino.

Ms. Gerhardt explained she would break up El Camino.

Ms. French suggested Ms. Gerhardt take North El Camino and she take South El Camino.

Ms. Gerhardt said she would be a back up and would go look at a project if someone needed her to.

Chair Thompson said 20 projects each was not excessive. She asked Ms. Gerhardt to send her the Excel sheet and explained she could put it into Google Earth and then group the projects.

Vice Chair Lee thanked Chair Thompson and Ms. Gerhardt.

Chair Thompson called for further comments.

Boardmember Hirsch said he was unsure that each area would be 18 projects. He assumed that they would group other projects that were geographically close into the areas.

Chair Thompson said that was exactly what she planned to do.

Ms. Gerhardt stated that each Boardmember may have to go a little outside their stated area.

Ms. French said that the areas would be gerrymandered.

Chair Thompson called for further comment.

Ms. French said that the ARB Awards were a time to celebrate and that no other City board had anything similar.

Boardmember Baltay suggested a residential design award. There are residential projects as well as commercial projects and it's in the City's interest to promote high quality design.

Vice Chair Lee was not in favor of that idea.

Ms. French said that might add too much work and suggested a category for projects that added a residential component even though they did not have to. So, some category that had housing as a goal.

Boardmember Baltay said that if they wanted to do a residential design award that was something that Council would need to approve. He thought it was an opportunity to promote quality design in single family residential.

Ms. French suggested the ARB consider its resources and lack thereof.

Boardmember Baltay explained he saw this as a potential future project for the ARB. He understood that they did not have the resources to work on the project now and that it would not be proper to do so without Council approval.

Chair Thompson asked what Vice Chair Lee had said.

Vice Chair Lee said that she was not in favor of the idea given the charge of the ARB. Although she did want to promote high quality design.

Boardmember Baltay explained that the ARB would ask the Council to expand their charge.

Vice Chair Lee stated she had no desire to move in that direction.

Ms. Gerhardt explained that the City has a consulting architect that assists with two story homes.

Boardmember Baltay said that staffer could be involved. Awards for single family residential could be a big thing.

Chair Thompson noted the Excel list would be long.

Ms. Gerhardt stated that there were approximately 100 houses built per year.

Ms. French said that the Comprehensive Plan encouraged historic awards program. If she had to pick a new award program, that would be her suggestion.

Boardmember Baltay said it was just an idea, but that he saw that he was not getting a lot of support.

Chair Thompson thanked him for bringing up the idea.

Ms. Gerhardt explained the third agenda item was an overview of the Objective Standards. She asked if the ARB wanted a break.

Chair Thompson asked the ARB's opinion and they determined they wanted to continue the meeting without a break.

3. Objective Standards Project Update and Discussion (30 mins)

- Jodie to give update on timeline
- Osma and David give a quick overview of the graphics, and final terms
- Reflecting query: How has the Objective Standards captured our understanding of Palo Alto's architectural character, and how do we want it to evolve?

Ms. Gerhardt shared her screen with the ARB.

Chair Thompson said that the Objective Standards were approved, and the Ad Hoc Committee made up of herself and Boardmember Hirsch have been reviewing graphics. They reached consensus on most of them, but a few where they did not are being brought back to the full ARB.

Ms. Gerhardt said that initially there were two that needed to be discussed, but now there were a different two. She explained that the Objective Standards will go to Council on September 27th for an introduction and then again for approval. Generally, the Objective Standards have been well received especially the design criteria. The code changes are moving forward. There is a height transition issue that is being tied up and staff may defer that conversation to a later date. She then shared her screen with the final two graphics. She showed the first one and read the text to the ARB.

Chair Thompson remembered being ok with the graphic and invited Boardmember Hirsch to give his thoughts.

Vice Chair Lee requested clarification.

Ms. Gerhardt explained the red outlined graphic was the old graphic and the green outlined graphic was the new one. The green graphic is proposed.

Chair Thompson stated the red graphic would be removed.

Boardmember Hirsch asked if the decision was his.

Chair Thompson explained that she wanted the ARB brought up to date on the conversation. She asked if Boardmember Hirsch was ok with the graphic or if he had comments.

Boardmember Hirsch said that if one looked at the graphic as an elevation it would be very strange because the upper windows do not match with the lower. The lower bays have a recess that is off center, and the projection is online with the lower bay. Architecturally it is a strange elevation. There are other illustrations in the book; for example, Page 22. He was concerned that this would be viewed as a prototype situation. He asked if the ARB thought that was the way that buildings would be built and noted they were not usually built that way. There is no rational decision that leads to a recess in that position.

Ms. Gerhardt asked if he was speaking on the door.

Boardmember Hirsch explained he was looking at the top image.

Chair Thompson said that image is (interrupted)

Boardmember Hirsch understood that the top image was being replaced with the one below, which is his preference because it shows an extended bay with a recessed window and does not discuss any other recess. However, it is not the stereotypical housing look.

Chair Thompson stated that it illustrated the vertical grain.

Boardmember Hirsch agreed. However, if they had the same picture in elevation they would not be happy with the window that is out of alignment with the windows below versus the projecting bay which is aligning.

Ms. Gerhardt clarified that Boardmember Hirsch was concerned about the width of the windows.

Boardmember Hirsch said the recessed window and the projecting window ought to line up with the bay below of the commercial ground floor.

Chair Thompson used her cursor to point out what Boardmember Hirsch meant.

Boardmember Hirsch said that if you had a bay and then bedroom windows in between it would make more sense. He also assumed that they were trying to illustrate the fact that you could have a recessed bay projecting inside the outer frame of the building, like the one on the left.

Ms. Gerhardt agreed that it could be showing two different options.

Chair Thompson thought that the image illustrated the verticality. Boardmember Hirsch was correct that the bedroom doors might make it slightly more accurate. She asked if the other Boardmembers had comments on the graphic.

Boardmember Baltay felt they were splitting hairs. Boardmember Hirsch was pointing out that it was not a well-designed building, but it was not intended to be, it was a sample façade to make a point. Overall, the graphic got the point across well enough.

Chair Thompson noted that Boardmember Hirsch was no longer on the Zoom.

Vice Chair Lee agreed with Boardmember Baltay.

Chair Thompson asked Ms. Gerhardt if that was what she needed.

Ms. Gerhardt asked if staff should add the smaller bedroom windows as drawn by Chair Thompson.

Boardmember Baltay stated that it made the illustration 10% better and asked if that was worth the staff time.

Ms. Gerhardt said that she would take the graphic as acceptable. She showed the second graphic to the ARB.

Chair Thompson indicated she was texting Boardmember Hirsch to see if he was able to rejoin the meeting. She explained that the Ad Hoc Committee could not agree on the second graphic either. The graphic is supposed to illustrate that 80% of the façade on the upper story will have a step back. Boardmember Hirsch thought that there was a shadow line that is not shown accurately. She thought it did not make much of a difference as the section was diagrammatic and the intent is to show the step back. She asked for ARB comment.

Ms. Gerhardt noted that it was the shadow in the green area of the graphic that felt extra. They want the verbiage and image to go together, and the extra shadow might refer to a corner tower element.

Boardmember Baltay said he agreed with Boardmember Hirsch. The shadow is sloppy and should not be accepted. The shadow should be more pronounced up above and not at all on the other façade.

Chair Thompson called for further comment.

Vice Chair Lee was fine with the graphic as shown but did see the point made by Boardmember Hirsch.

Boardmember Lew did not understand the controversy. He asked if the shadow was the issue.

Chair Thompson explained that the issue was the shadow line.

Boardmember Lew indicated he had not noticed that prior to the discussion.

Chair Thompson said that both Boardmember Hirsch and herself felt strongly about the shadow line.

Boardmember Lew repeated that he had not noticed it.

Vice Chair Lee said she just noticed it when Chair Thompson circled it.

Chair Thompson stated that was the issue. If the section were to be accurate it would have a pop out in a lighter line weight. The problem with adding that to the section is that it complicates it and deleting the shadow line makes the diagram look worse and makes the dimension harder to read.

Vice Chair Lee stated the shadow line needed to be deleted because it was incorrect and sloppy.

Chair Thompson explained that if they deleted it then the dimension needed to go on top.

Boardmember Baltay agreed.

Vice Chair Lee stated that was a good way to resolve the issue.

Chair Thompson asked if Ms. Gerhardt needed anything further.

Ms. Gerhardt confirmed the shadow in the green area was to be removed and the dimensions would be placed on top. Additionally, she noted that she was reinviting Boardmember Hirsch to the Zoom.

Vice Chair Lee thanked Chair Thompson, Boardmember Hirsch, and Ms. Gerhardt for their work.

Ms. Gerhardt indicated she planned to stay on the meeting to talk to Boardmember Hirsch and requested Chair Thompson do so as well.

Chair Thompson agreed.

Ms. Gerhardt called for further questions on Objective Standards.

Vice Chair Lee confirmed that the matter was going to Council on September 27th and asked if the staff report could provide information on what other cities are doing related to Objective Standards for context. She noted that Palo Alto may be ahead of other cities at this time.

Ms. Gerhardt said that was a great question.

Boardmember Lew suggested looking at Santa Barbara and noted that they were being very prescriptive discussing the exact region of Spain that they want Mediterranean buildings to mimic.

Vice Chair Lee said that she wanted to learn from what other cities are doing. She noted that Palo Alto did not want to isolate itself.

Chair Thompson thanked her for her comments.

Boardmember Baltay noted that the analysis was more work for staff.

Vice Chair Lee did not want to create more work for staff and said she would be happy to research it herself. The ARB is a better Board for understanding regional trends.

Ms. Gerhardt requested Boardmembers provide her with specific cities to consider as a start. She will look at Santa Barbara.

Chair Thompson thought that Santa Barbara was not necessarily applicable.

Boardmember Baltay said that Boardmember Lew's point was good; the architectural community is opposed to the idea, but several cities are going a lot further, and Council should know that the Objective Standards are not as extreme as other cities.

Chair Thompson said that was a good point. She noted that this was the ARB's last chance to discuss Objective Standards before they went to Council.

Boardmember Baltay asked who was presenting the item to Council.

Chair Thompson said she was asked to attend the meeting.

Boardmember Baltay asked Ms. Gerhardt if Chair Thompson could make a statement.

Ms. Gerhardt said that Chair Thompson gave a quick overview at the PTC and assumed she would do the same before Council.

Boardmember Baltay suggested that Chair Thompson bring up the points about the other cities. That would save the staff from having to expand the presentation. Council could request further information if they wanted it.

Vice Chair Lee agreed. She stated she would email Chair Thompson her findings.

Chair Thompson said she was happy to do that. She thought Ms. Gerhardt was on the phone with Boardmember Hirsch and did not want to end the meeting until after that call.

Board Member Questions, Comments or Announcements

Boardmember Lew reported that the North Ventura Plan was going to the Council on September 20th at 5:00 p.m.

Boardmember Baltay said that he and Boardmember Hirsch outside of the ARB worked on a proposal to prompt the City to consider residential housing on the surface parking lots called the PF Zone Project. They analyzed the economics and determined up to 1,000 affordable housing units could be gained by allowing developments on the surface parking lots throughout Palo Alto. They designed a sample building for 375 Hamilton where there was going to be a parking garage and presented it to the Housing Element Task Force last week on the recommendation of the Mayor. It was a 12 to 3 vote that the idea should be pursued. He stressed that he and Boardmember Hirsch worked on the project as individuals and not members of the ARB and they both feel that it is a positive direction for the City to promote affordable housing. He offered to email the report to anyone who wanted to review it and noted that it should be circulated by the press shortly.

Chair Thompson noted that Boardmember Hirsch joined the meeting as an attendee.

Ms. Gerhardt said that Boardmember Hirsch joined as public and Vinh was working to move him to a panelist position.

Boardmember Hirsch indicated he was present.

Ms. Gerhardt updated Boardmember Hirsch of the changes on the second graphic.

Boardmember Hirsch stated they did not finish the discussion on the first graphic.

Ms. Gerhardt explained that they planned to change the windows to bedroom windows.

Boardmember Hirsch stated that satisfied him. He stressed his points about the recess.

Ms. Gerhardt said they were focusing on the one graphic and illustrating the words.

Boardmember Hirsch asked if everyone agreed to the horizontal pattern.

Ms. Gerhardt said yes with making the windows bedroom sized.

Boardmember Hirsch stated that satisfied him. He mentioned an issue with Page 24.

Ms. Gerhardt explained that Page 24 may be different than what he was looking at and suggested reviewing it offline. She thought the only images at issue were the two they discussed.

Chair Thompson agreed.

Boardmember Hirsch stated he did not think they were complete.

Ms. Gerhardt suggested letting the rest of the ARB go.

Chair Thompson said they could stay if they wished.

Ms. Gerhardt stated they were going into Ad Hoc Committee.

Adjournment

Chair Thompson adjourned the meeting at 12:53 p.m.