



CITY OF
**PALO
ALTO**

Historic Resources Board

Staff Report (ID # 14530)

Report Type: Approval of Minutes **Meeting Date:** 7/14/2022

Summary Title: HRB Draft Minutes May 26, 2022

Title: Approval of Historic Resources Board Draft Minutes of May 26, 2022

From: Jonathan Lait

Recommendation

Staff recommends the Historic Resources Board (HRB) adopt the attached meeting minutes.

Background

Attached are minutes for the following meeting(s):

- May 26, 2022

Attachments:

- Attachment A: HRB Draft Minutes May 26, 2022 (DOCX)



HISTORIC RESOURCES BOARD MEETING

MINUTES: May 26, 2022

Virtual Teleconference Meeting
8:30 A.M.

Call to Order/Roll Call

Present: Chair Caroline Willis; Vice Chair Christian Pease; Board Members Michael Makinen, Margaret Wimmer, and Alisa Eagleston-Cieslewicz

Absent: Board Members David Bower and Gogo Heinrich

Oral Communications

Agenda Changes, Additions and Deletions

City Official Reports

1. Historic Resources Board Schedule of Meetings and Assignments

Chair Willis suggested moving this item to the end of the meeting.

Action Items

2. PUBLIC HEARING/QUASI-JUDICIAL. 321 California [21PLN-00330]: Recommend Approval of a Minor Board Level Architectural Review application to allow modifications to a National Register eligible structure. The Project Includes Removal of a Non-Historic Addition and Construction of a new dining pavilion, bar, and courtyard. The project also includes a reconfigured parking lot and spaces and a new trash enclosure. Zoning District: CC(2)(R)(P). Environmental Assessment: California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Exempt per Guidelines 15301 for Existing Structures, 15302 for Reconstruction and 15331 for Restoration of Historic Resource. For More Information Contact the Project Planner, Claire.raybould@cityofpaloalto.org.

Ms. Raybould presented the project located in the Cal Ave District at California Avenue and Birch Street, which is the former Antonio's Nuthouse. The building was constructed in 1938 as a Safeway grocery store. There was a 1969 concrete block addition that was added for a card room that was later used for pool and shuffleboard. The building was deemed eligible of the National Register of Historic Places under two criteria. Criterion A, because it represents a dramatic shift of retailing in general, particularly grocery retailing accommodating an increasingly automobile-based society and also an early example of a major chain, Safeway. Under Criterion C, the building is a significant example in Palo Alto of a new building type, the supermarket, which was larger than earlier food stores and was designed to facilitate automobiles. The building is a rare example of a once-common type, a supermarket, to retain its original character.

The project proposes demolition of the 1969 concrete block rear addition which is not considered part of the historic building, and other modifications to the building and the site, including replacement of the existing awning at the front of the building, replacement of front and side doors, addition of new window openings along the Birch Street façade, landscaping, a new refuse enclosure at the rear of the building near the public parking garage, rooftop mechanical equipment and associated screening, and consolidation of parking areas into a single area at the rear of the building with an associated request for a parking modification.

Historic considerations of the project include the City's consultant, Page and Turnbull's, evaluation of the proposed project. Modifications were recommended to the original design to better comply with the Secretary of the Interior standards for rehabilitation. These include retaining the existing historic canopy on the northwest corner, the corner of Birch and California; eliminating the proposed new window opening immediately adjacent to the northeast-facing side at the entry door; shifting the rooftop equipment toward the southwest property line to reduce the height of the equipment and the screen above the roof surface and providing a solid screen for the rooftop equipment. Per Page and Turnbull's review of the revised plans, the project is consistent with the Secretary of the Interior standards. Staff's recommended motion was for the HRB to confirm the project's Secretary of the Interior standards consistency and to recommend approval of the proposed modifications to the Director of Planning and Development Services.

Applicant, Ken Hayes, made remarks about the project, joined by Mason Hayes, Project Designer, and Dan Affleck with SWA Landscape Architects. He noted the site is in the CC(2)(R)(P) overlay district, Retail and Pedestrian overlay. Behind the site is the City of Palo Alto's new parking garage. The building was built in 1938 as a super drive-in market for Safeway Grocers, and was last occupied by Antonio's Nuthouse, which shut down in 2020. According to Page and Turnbull, the building is not on the National, State or Local inventories, but is eligible for National. Some defining features include the rectangular plan of the existing building; the one-story massing with flat roof; the reinforced concrete post and beam construction; stucco cladding on the outside; the long, horizontal metal awning in front with decorative edge; the parapet walls with zigzag fluting; steel frame plate glass windows at the front and side. The ceramic tiles along the bulkhead below the windows are one of the main character-defining features.

Mr. Hayes explained that the design objective is to rehabilitate the building in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior standards for a new restaurant use. The program includes kitchen and support functions for a restaurant, interior and exterior dining areas, private dining room, bar area linked to a courtyard, and garden seating area. The parking will be repositioned, making it less obvious by moving it to the back of the property. The design concept is to work in a complementary modern style that is deferential and distinct from the historic building. The existing parking lot will be repurposed for a courtyard dining area and bar pavilion. Edges will be blurred between the pavilion and the existing building to create porous edges between all the various elements. Transparent walls will create opportunities for pedestrians to get glimpses into activities inside the pavilion and courtyard. Parking and utilities will be concealed and located towards Jacaranda Lane, which is the alley behind.

The idea is to restore the original plan of the building by demolishing the rear addition, turning it into to parking. The new pavilion addition and courtyard will be located in the current parking area. Porous edges between the existing building and the courtyard will allow people to see in and out and circulate. Landscaping will enclose the courtyard and create interest for pedestrians on Birch. The main entrance will consist of board form concrete perimeter walls that are also serrated to complement the serrated, fluted cornice on the building. The main entrance will be off Cal Ave with rear entrance completely opposite that that from the parking lot side. At the main entrance there will be a specimen tree on the corner, water features and an outdoor waiting area. The canopy will be restored or replaced to retain its current appearance.

Mr. Hayes discussed details of the project materials which include board form concrete for new exterior walls on the pavilion and the surrounding courtyard. The addition will be about eight feet shorter in height and pushed to the back of the site, with the garden and courtyard in front. Entry to the project occurs between the two building zones. The pavilion in the center will be the new entrance from Cal Ave. The horizontality of the new pavilion and trellis element picks up on the horizontality of the existing canopy of the historic building but is distinct and separate from it. The board form concrete surrounding courtyard wall has a serrated look to pick up on the flute on the building. Jacaranda trees at the rear of the building reference Jacaranda Lane. On the corner is a Chinese Fringe tree which will be a specimen tree on the corner combined with the entrance and waiting area for the project. The rear elevation showed the existing building with stucco restored on the back side and the pavilion and Jacaranda trees. Grapevines will populate the board form concrete and part of the existing building.

Mr. Hayes described further details of the plan and materials, including board form concrete and dark gray off-color metal and stucco for window frames. Use of clear glass will allow people to see in. The new steel on the outside will be a patinated metal, with a corten look. Existing ceramic tile will be restored. There

will be accents of wood on the bottom side of the canopy and at a rear entrance to the building. Landscape elements include the Chinese Fringe tree, California lilies and the serrated wall which allows glimpses into the courtyard. Over the wall the planting will be fescues and fountain grass and specimen olive trees in the courtyard. The courtyard will have an open feel yet provide a sense of privacy for those seated, with a surrounding wall of about four-and-a-half feet.

Chair Willis invited questions from the Board.

Vice Chair Pease asked for clarification that where the door on Cal Ave was to be removed, they are glassing in the space in as opposed to restoring the wall. Mr. Hayes confirmed this was the case.

Board Member Wimmer asked how the modifications will affect the building's eligibility since it is currently eligible. Ms. Raybould replied the eligibility for the National Register will not be affected because everything proposed complies with Secretary of the Interior standards. Ms. French added that this building's category has not been identified, but that is a discussion they could have with the applicant going forward. Board Member Wimmer said she would advocate pursuing that since the Board's job is to try to accumulate more registered properties.

Vice Chair Pease received clarification of the location of the equipment on roof.

Board Member Makinen thought it was an interesting and a good plan for bringing the building back into modern use. He asked if the applicant would be agreeable to installing a plaque on the front of the original building as an educational tool, to indicate what the building is, because no one will be able to recognize that it was an early supermarket. Mr. Hayes replied that the owners bought the property knowing it had historic merit, so he thought they would have no problem having a commemorative plaque.

Board Member Eagleston-Cieslewicz asked about the mural currently on the side of the building and the status of outreach to the artist. Mr. Hayes said they have spoken with Elise DeMarzo, and she gave them information on what they need to do. It is not part of Palo Alto's art inventory. They would need to comply with requirements of notification to the public as well as to the artist 90 days before any demolition to give the artist an opportunity to photograph it or take other actions but there is no protected status on the mural. Ms. Raybould added that she spoke to Ms. DeMarzo, who indicated that they did have photos. The art was catalogued even though it is not part of the public art collection.

Chair Willis commented that it is a lovely solution for California Avenue, benefiting from both the historic and the new with a great story. She agreed that conveying the story of its history in addition to maintaining its form is worthwhile. She was pleased with the project but would like to see some visual history incorporated into it.

Board Member Wimmer agreed with the previous comments and loved the incorporation of the board form concrete because it was a character-defining feature of the original building. She loved the stepping of the parapet wall and said the project will be a huge improvement on that corner. She also loved the solution in which the corner is a useable space and a garden space, and not parking as it is currently. She strongly supported the project.

MOTION

Board Member Wimmer moved to approve the project with the suggestion to include a historic plaque to reference the historic past and educate the public on the original building.

AMENDMENT

Chair Willis moved to confirm the project's consistency with the Secretary of the Interior standards and recommend approval of proposed modifications to the Director of Planning and Development Services, with the addition of some indication of its history in the form of a plaque or some other appropriate means. Seconded by Board Member Eagleston-Cieslewicz, the motion passed, (5-0).

1. Historic Resources Board Schedule of Meetings and Assignments

Chair Willis suggested the possibility of canceling the June 30th special meeting. The first two regular meetings in June are already cancelled. Hearing no comments or objections, she indicated that the special meeting will be canceled, and she will try to meet with smaller groups or individually to work on issues

related to the inventory update and details they will be working on along with the consultants. She offered the idea of developing informational sheets for property owners depending on their category to simplify the location of information for interested parties. Regarding future meetings, Chair Willis asked that members who will be attending remotely email her the night before.

Chair Willis brought up the plaque discussed during the action item and wondered if they wanted to donate a plaque, whether they had money to buy a plaque, or if they would want to approach PAST to inquire if they would be willing to donate a historic plaque for the building. Board Member Wimmer thought they could at least do a mock-up or provide wording on what the plaque might say. Ms. French suggested agendaing a discussion on this. Her understanding was that PAST does provide plaques for 100-year-old buildings. This could be researched for discussion at a later meeting.

Subcommittee Items

Chair Willis mentioned mapping and said it might be better to hold off until after the Council approval. They are starting to think about what can be used in the way of maps that could be useful. She asked that anyone with ideas in this regard email Board Member Eagleston-Cieslewicz. Regarding the inventory, she said they are in a holding pattern, waiting for approval from Council to go forward.

Board Member Questions, Comments or Announcements

Chair Willis spoke of the Preservation Alliance Awards Night. It was a lovely program. She said that Carolyn George was pleased with the award, as was PAST, and it was a successful event.

Adjournment

Board Member Eagleston-Cieslewicz moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Board Member Wimmer, the motion was carried unanimously by voice vote.