

CORONADO DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES

Regular Meeting

September 14, 2011

The regular meeting of the Coronado Design Review Commission was called to order at 3:01 p.m., Wednesday, September 14, 2011, at the Coronado City Hall Council Chambers, 1825 Strand Way, Coronado, California, by Chairperson Shallan.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Hammett, Jones, Rice, Shallan, Turpit

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Ann McCaull, Acting Director
Martha L Alvarez, Recording Secretary/Minutes Preparer

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Minutes of August 10, 2011, were approved as submitted.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

There was no separate report.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Historic Resource Commission

Commissioner Jones reported that at the meeting of September 7, 2011, the Commission approved the historic designation of the property addressed as 824 Adella Avenue, and provided comments to the applicant regarding potential future modifications to the dwelling. The Commission also took public comment, discussed, and made a recommendation to City Council regarding reduction of the Mills Act waiting list by maximizing Mills Act property tax savings for owners at 50%.

Public Art Subcommittee

Commissioner Rice reported that September is "Celebrate the Arts" month in Coronado. He invited the public to attend all of the events planned throughout the month, including a Special Meeting of the City Council on September 26, to discuss the proposed new Cultural Arts Commission in Coronado.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS AND OTHER MATTERS

There were no members of the public wishing to speak at this time.

APPLICATIONS FOR REVIEW

DR 2011-15 WALGREEN CO. – Request for design approval for an exterior remodel of the existing building and parking lot at 925 Orange Avenue in the Commercial/Orange Avenue Corridor Specific Plan Zone.

Ms. McCaull introduced the staff report as outlined in the agenda.

The applicant, Amy Ciolek, introduced herself to the Commission.

The applicant's representative, John Ziebarth, gave a brief presentation and answered questions from the Commission.

Vice Chair Hammett asked if in the zoning load area, the trucks will be able to pull parallel to or be completely out of the alley. He said the parking space is 20 feet long.

Mr. Ziebarth said he does not feel that the trucks will be completely out of the alley. He said the building is 65 feet wide, and the trucks are 65 feet in length. The goal is for the trucks to pull in and be able to maneuver their way around.

Vice Chair Hammett asked if the parking plan will retain the existing curb cut/driveway on Orange Avenue.

Mr. Ziebarth said that Walgreens feel very strongly that they would like to retain the curb cut/driveway because it allows traffic on Orange Avenue access to their business. He is unaware of any safety issues involving this access.

Commissioner Rice asked about the beige element in the area near the entry way on the first floor that arches around the corner. He asked if the plans show the rounded section. He said the rendering also shows a rounded section on the other side of the main entrance as well.

Mr. Ziebarth said the proposed intent is the rendering.

Commissioner Turpit asked if a second concept will be presented.

Mr. Ziebarth showed the Commission the alternative concept.

Commissioner Turpit asked about the plant screens.

Mr. Ziebarth said similar plant screens exist at Boney's Bayside Market and maintenance in the form of pruning is required.

Chairperson Shallan asked if other options had been considered for the wall.

Mr. Ziebarth said not much because it is on the parking lot side and the area is covered with existing trees. He said his intent was to soften the wall and have it be the main focal point.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chris Ackerman said that Boney's is a very successful commercial project in town. He said a better job could be done on this project regardless of the type of building it is. He said it may not be a formula building but it sure looks like a one. He expressed concern about the building's presentation from the top down—from the vacuum harness to the billboard-like signage band that is almost the height of a first story that magnifies many times the actual size of the word "Walgreen" as well as the letter "W" on the wall. He said he was glad to see glass installed on two of the extra bays at the first floor facing the street as well as on the side, and likes the projecting canopy. However, the building could potentially look worse than it does today. He said there is no expression that the building is two stories. As currently proposed, it almost appears to be a three-story building. There is also a tremendous lack of detail. Mr. Ackerman said Mr. Ziebarth is a good architect but felt a much better job could be done.

Caroline Murray said this was an opportunity for the Commission to make this project really fabulous. She said the current end result is not village friendly, attractive, or to village scale. She feels that the project is a huge advertisement which does not fit into the community and requested that Walgreens incorporate something that is more village friendly.

Karen Finch, Coronado Chamber of Commerce, disclosed that Commissioners Hammett and Shallan serve on the Chamber Board and were not present at yesterday's Board meeting for discussions relating to this project. Ms. Finch, speaking on behalf of the Board, said there are many options on what should or should not happen to this vital corner and site. However, in this economy and length of time that the property has been vacant, the options are few. She said the Board is excited as there is a potential to revitalize a key property in the business district with many storefront vacancies. The Board unanimously voted to support Walgreen's design concept. It felt that the glass incorporated across the front corner is very inviting for both directions of the block. She said the Board looks forward to the significant increase in foot traffic and the business re-birth for that block on Orange Avenue.

COMMISSION DISCUSSION

Vice Chair Hammett said he likes the rounded corner as it breaks up the 65 foot space which makes Walgreen's footprint on Orange Avenue look smaller. He said he also likes the two bays which are located next to Park Life. Mr. Hammett said the trees in the parking lot have been preserved as best as possible, the colors work well with the stone that is in front of the building, and the public art mosaic on the ferry has been left intact. He said he is in favor of the awning that goes completely around the building.

Commissioner Turpit commended the applicant for not storing stock merchandise against the windows. He said he likes the corner entry and the canopy, which is an element that reduces the scale of the building. He said he wants to look at different materials or colors. He also likes the

fact that the long elevation has been broken up into two parts: the three-grid part and the two-grid part, even though both of these elements need work. He said the needed work involves scale and appropriateness to Coronado. He suggested the applicant look at other formula shops in Coronado. Mr. Turpit said his dislikes include the sign that is placed on the elevation which is similar to that of a mall and suggested that the signs be brought down to a pedestrian friendly height. He said there may be safety issues with the current location of the driveway. He suggested that if the driveway is eliminated, the parking area could be moved a few feet and landscape could be placed in front of the parking lot elevation. This could prove to have a double benefit, addressing safety issues and providing an opportunity to plant additional trees.

Commissioner Jones commended the applicant for trying to work with this structure. She said the building is a statement of incompatibility as it is very large, flat, uninteresting, and not friendly to residents of the community. She said the radius corner on the structure's design has somewhat of a 30s look which is interesting. She said she likes the green walls and the division of the front of the structure. She asked if the material located above the window that is painted white is travertine.

Mr. Ziebarth said the archway goes up above the three center bays. He said he would prefer not to see the white color and would rather remove it and instead place stone all the way up.

Commissioner Jones agreed and said the continuity is lost between the two bays. She asked if the travertine stone is a creamy yellowish cast.

Mr. Ziebarth said yes. They are proposing to keep all of the travertine.

Commissioner Jones said the driveway is not pedestrian friendly especially for persons attempting to gain access to the entry. She said that considering all of the challenges, the applicant has expended significant efforts in an attempt to make the building work. She agreed that the letter "W" is quite large but understands it is within the ordinance requirements.

Commissioner Rice said the layout and parking lot works well and the removal of the curb cut would eliminate the potential for an accident; however, it does exist now and he is not aware of any issues at this time. He said he likes the glass storefront and the fact that the stock items are not adjacent to the glass. With regard to improvements, he said the building has a strong and heavy mass, not light and graceful, emanating most likely from the heavy arched corner with the brown component coming down. This, combined with the design above the canopy, it begins to read as a strong leg, almost supporting the large, white band that holds the Walgreens sign. Mr. Rice said it would be interesting to see different options on how that could potentially be improved. He said he likes the canopy that extends along the front; however, the detail is lacking and the appearance is chunky and heavy. He suggested, as in other designs, possibly an open lattice work inside with lighting within that so that it appears more light and graceful. He said one of the benefits of this type of design is that the existing mosaic would be more visible. With regard to the materiality, he said he liked that the existing travertine would be retained; however, because there is a significant amount of stucco, he suggested changing some of the material to possibly a vertical, stacked ceramic tile to give it more depth and interest as opposed to just a flat

stucco façade that does not improve as one gets closer to it. He said he liked the detail of the landscape growing up on the sides of the structure. After viewing the elevation, it appears that the landscape components are almost treated like objects that are attached to the face of the building and he would like to see that design pushed even further to where it becomes more like part of the building façade—maybe it becomes wider or solid—a portion of the façade could become green along the side, not just a small portion of the band. He also noticed the small landscaped island and suggested that it be improved. He suggested possibly having some type of landscape adjacent to the building, e.g. under the storefront two or three feet above the sill, or maybe some small plantings could soften the façade, or maybe a lattice could be placed at the area where the curving stucco wall is located at the first floor level. Mr. Rice said he would really like the landscape incorporated into the building. He said he still likes the existing cornice of the two bays that are adjacent to the Greek Grill and would like to see the same detail on the Walgreen side, and would prefer to see the cornice on the other building remain as is. He added that when the roof height of the Walgreen's building is raised, it becomes the dominant building on the block, which may not be something positive, as this building is already the largest building on the block.

Chairperson Shallen said that last week he had an opportunity to visit several small towns in northern California, St. Helena, Sonoma, and Sausalito. He found interesting some of the comments by the public regarding how a particular style does not fit the village atmosphere. He said that he still has yet to understand what that is and how it is defined architecturally. He said one of the things that make Coronado interesting is that there is no architectural definition that is specific. He noted, for example, the blocks of Eighth and Ninth on Orange Avenue, which encompasses many variations of architecture. He does not understand then the comments about the Walgreen's building not fitting the village atmosphere. Mr. Shallen said it is difficult to have a building that adheres to the village atmosphere and still fits into the Orange Avenue Specific Plan requirements because it may not necessarily be entirely aligned. In addition, there is a corporate entity that wishes to pay rent on a building that has been vacant for a couple of years and it would almost be easier to demolish the building and rebuild. He feels that the applicant has done a phenomenal job attempting to work with the existing structure. He suggested that maybe the façade of the building should be one height but variation should include the cornices and other details. He said the signage is an issue, especially the large size of the "W" on the Ninth Street side. He questioned whether blade signs may be a more applicable look for the building. He commended the architect for a job well done; however, he feels that the design is not the best it can be. Mr. Shallen suggested that the item be continued to allow the architect to make revisions to the design (but did not suggest a re-design) based on comments from the Commission and the public.

Commissioner Jones agreed that the item should be continued. She said Commissioner Rice's comment about the stucco was one aspect of the façade that stood out. She said the façade is large and flat and although she likes the radius, it has a significant amount of stucco. She also felt the trellises could be larger in the bays, especially on the parking lot side, as well as the portion of the landscaping located on the islands. She commented that the "W" sign could be made smaller.

Commissioner Rice agreed that the item should be continued.

Chairperson Shallan asked the applicant if they were in agreement to continue the item.

Mr. Ziebarth said that what has been indicated by their efforts via outreach meetings is that they are looking to do something that is good for the city. He said they would support the continuance of the item to the next Commission meeting.

Chairperson Shallan said the next regularly scheduled Design Review meeting is September 28.

Acting Director McCaull said if the item is continued to that meeting, it will not be necessary to re-notice the item.

COMMISSION ACTION

CHAIRPERSON SHALLAN MADE A MOTION TO CONTINUE THE ITEM TO THE NEXT REGULARLY SCHEDULED DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION MEETING TO BE HELD ON SEPTEMBER 28, 2011.

COMMISSIONER JONES SECONDED THE MOTION.

AYES: Hammett, Jones, Rice, Shallan, Turpit.

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: None.

ABSTAIN: None.

The motion passed with a vote of 5-0.

On behalf of the Commission, Chairperson Shallan thanked the applicant and architect for their time and effort on this project. He said it is a great project and the Commission looks forward to its completion.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:25 p.m.

Rachel A. Hurst
Director of Community Development, Redevelopment
& Housing Services