

CITY OF SAN DIEGO HISTORICAL RESOURCES BOARD

DESIGN ASSISTANCE SUBCOMMITTEE

Wednesday, February 1, 2012, at 4:00 PM
5th Floor Large Conference Room
City Operations Building, Development Services Department
1222 First Avenue, San Diego, CA

MEETING NOTES

1. ATTENDANCE 4.05pm

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|----------------------|---|
| Subcommittee Members | Alex Bethke (Chair); Gail Garbini; Linda Marrone; Ann Woods |
| Recusals | N/A |
| City Staff | HRB Kelley Stanco; Jodie Brown CCDC Lucy Contreras |
| Guests | Item 3A Marie Lia; Mike Ramsay, Dick Bundy Other Paul Johnson; John Eisenhart; Bruce Coons |

2. Public Comment (on matters not on the agenda): None

3. Project Reviews

▪ **ITEM 3A:**

Listings: National Register Listed

Address: 815 E Street

Historic Name: U.S. Post Office

Significance: Architecture (Starved Classicism); Architect (William Templeton Johnson)

Mills Act Status: Not Eligible (Redevelopment Area)

PTS #: 265857

Project Contact: Richard Bundy, Architects Bundy and Thomspson

Treatment: Rehabilitation

Project Scope: This Rehabilitation project proposes to maintain the existing four facades of the building and construct a new 20 story tower with underground parking between the walls, setback 80 feet from the front façade. The existing building and interior lobby will be restored and a new park will be constructed at the south end of the lot.

Existing Square Feet: 69,469

Additional Square Feet: 387,750

Total Proposed Square Feet: 457,219

Prior DAS Review: N/A

Staff Presentation: Post office came to HRB through a single discipline review. Applicant will go over the project. Restoration of the lobby with a tower structure set back from all sides with a park at the rear. The applicant was asked to come to DAS to get feedback on the consistency with the Standards

Applicant Presentation: The site was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1980s. The client is a developer/owner of market rate housing. The project will be reviewed by SHPO consistent with any federal property being sold by the government and it will also go through the NEPA process.

We will be preserving and rehabilitating the post office's exterior. The existing post office will remain in the main lobby and it will be restored. The western side post office boxes will remain and be used by tenants. The east side post office boxes will be used by existing box rentals. The rear of the building used for sorting and warehouse will be used for the new construction. The upper floors are currently used as various offices and will be relocated. The new tower will be set back 15' from the parapet on the sides. It will stick out on the rear over the rear loading dock. A park is proposed for the rear of the building to be constructed by CCDC. The top floor of the existing post office will be converted to apartment-studio to two bedroom units. The tower, in the current scheme, uses material that is different from the historic structure. The distinction between the two is done with metal and blue glass. One of the entrances will be used for access to the apartments and one will be for the post office. The entrance for the apartments will have a glass partition in the lobby so the area still feels as it was original designed. We also have plans to restore the historic landscaping. Perimeter fencing will be removed too. A parking garage is proposed underneath the building with access off of 8th Avenue. The existing parking will also be utilized.

We are looking to subcommittee for input on the proposed design. The windows are generally in good condition and they will be repaired rather than replaced. The exterior is also in good condition and will need only minor repair and paint.

The parking garage entrance will be off of 8th avenue using existing parking

Public Comment:

| Name | Comments |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Bruce Coons, SOHO | Generally conforms with many of the Standards. Have the most heartburn over #9. The tower is not compatible; it needs to be compatible in scale, design, and structure. The design should reflect its history. Appreciate that it preserves the front portion of the building and the parking garage now going under the front section of the building. Standards say that rehabilitation should only be applicable to locally listed properties not individually listed properties. |
| John Eisenhart, Union Architecture | On the South side of the building, I would like to see a clarification of the parking area at the rear. The public |

| Name | Comments |
|--|--|
| | should be able to access the building from the rear of the building. Per Standard #4, the exterior walls are to be rehabilitated—that treatment should restore or preserve exterior walls. The elevations that will not be affected by the parking garage should be restored and preserved. The 20 story tower is not related to the existing building. I recommend that you use the soild/void pattern that is used on the existing building and use it on the new construction. The current design interrupts the spatial design of the existing building. It is better if it is rectilinear rather than an “h” shape. Streamline it to make it more compatible. |
| Paul Johnson, Johnson and Johnson Architecture | Per Standard #9, you should differentiate and make new construction compatible; the existing design with the new glass tower is not compatible. The existing building is horizontal and the new is vertical and it is not compatible. The work of William Templeton Johnson is significant and this area is a possible district with all of his work. |

Q&A:

| Subcommittee-member Issue or Question | Applicant’s Response |
|--|---|
| Alex Bethke: What is the existing rear of the building? | It was designated as office space and will become access to the park. The area is proposed as an urban park with multiple levels. |
| Alex Bethke: What will the loading dock be used for? | It will be use as seating space and retail |
| Ann Woods: Using the third floor as apartment, will it alter the appearance from the exterior? | Not significantly, we have had a discussion that maybe it should be retained as offices due to the plumbing. |
| Alex Bethke: At the rear, recommend that the building not cantilever over the space. It would adversely affect the space by cantilevered-effecting light. Important to use the rear to incorporate it into the park. | Only the end of “H” cantilevers out. |
| Alex Bethke: Light well on the interior. Could you address –apartments just below the light well. | Third floor of the building were preserving the middle of roof. Possibly being eliminated. |

Subcommittee Discussion and Comment:

| Subcommittee-member | Comments |
|----------------------------|---|
| Bethke | Agree with Gail regarding the materials. Agrees with public on the design. Completely modernize without any relationship to the original building. Elongated windows and bays should be extended in to the building. Looks like an armchair coming out of the building. Should not mimic but it needs to complement. More about design and less about materials. |
| Garbini | Likes the contrast so there is a sense of the original building. When it is too compatible then you lose the sense of historic building. Concerned about the north elevation. Looks like it is part of the new east village architecture shape is funny. Don't disagree with using a different material. Use this post office and use the entrance that is proposed for the new entrance. Love the idea of the park and the landscaping being restored. |
| Marrone | Happy medium between compatible new and old-what the public said. Interesting to see what the next design proposal would be. Seems like it is a building behind the post office rather than part of the post office |
| Woods | Agree with the public comment regarding the compatibility. Need a different plan for the tower. Needs to be more compatible. |

Staff Comment: None

Recommended Modifications: The DAS subcommittee recommends that the design of the tower is more compatible with the design of the historic building, in terms of the material, and design/shape of the tower. The design elements found in the historic portion of the building should also be present in the tower to make them compatible.

Consensus:

- Consistent with the Standards
- Consistent with the Standards if modified as noted
- Inconsistent with the Standards and needs revision and additional review
- Inconsistent with the Standards but is the best feasible alternative
- Inconsistent with the Standards

4. Adjourned at 4.57 PM

The next regularly-scheduled Subcommittee Meeting will be on March 4, 2012 at 4:00 PM.

For more information, please contact Jodie Brown at JDBrown@san Diego.gov or 619.533.6300