SAUSALITO PLANNING COMMISSION Wednesday, October 26, 2011 Approved Summary Minutes

Call to Order—Joint Meeting with the Historic Landmarks Board

Chair Keegin called the Planning Commission meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. in the

Council Chambers of City Hall, 420 Litho Street, Sausalito.

Present: Chair Stafford Keegin, Commissioner Stan Bair,

Commissioner Richard Graef, Commissioner Bill Werner

Absent: Vice Chair Joan Cox,

Staff: Community Development Director Jeremy Graves

Associate Planner Heidi Burns, Assistant Planner Alison Thornberry-

Assef, City Attorney Mary Wagner

Approval of Agenda

Chair Keegin moved and Commissioner Bair seconded a motion to amend the agenda to limit the Approval of Minutes to the minutes of October 12, 2011 with the remainder minutes continued to the meeting of November 9, 2011. The motion passed 4-0.

Chair Keegin moved and Commissioner Werner seconded a motion to hear Item 3 (Jensen-Komer Residence DR/TRP/EA 11-196) first with Item 1 and Item 2 following. The motion passed 4-0.

Declarations

Commissioner Graef indicated that he had a conversation with Michael Rex regarding the Merriam Building.

Chair Keegin indicated that he had had email correspondence with Lars Jensen regarding the 38 Lower Crescent Avenue project and a meeting with Mr. Belding, Mr. Jensen's neighbor.

Commissioner Werner indicated that he had had email correspondence with Lars Jensen regarding 38 Lower Crescent Avenue.

Public Comments on Items Not on the Agenda None.

Approval of Minutes

October 12, 2011

Commissioner Graef moved and Chair Keegin seconded a motion to approve the minutes of October 12, 2011 as amended. The motion passed 4-0.

Public Hearings

3. DR/TRP/EA 11-196, Design Review Permit, Tree Removal Permit, Encroachment Agreement, Jensen and Komer, 38 Lower Crescent Avenue. Design Review Permit to construct a new single-family residential structure with a two-car parking deck at 38 Lower Crescent Avenue (APN 065-231-32), a Tree Removal Permit to remove five protected trees, and an Encroachment Agreement to construct a portion of the driveway, parking stalls and parking deck with guardrail in the Lower Crescent Avenue public right-of-way.

The public hearing was opened.

Lars Jensen, the owner, requested the public hearing be continued to the meeting of November 30, 2011.

Commissioner Werner moved and Commissioner Graef seconded a motion to continue the public hearing for the project to the meeting of November 30, 2011. The motion passed 4-0.

Comments were made by the public.

Scott Sollers, 32 Lower Crescent Avenue, indicated the following:

- He lives adjacent to the subject site.
- The prior design had an unsafe driveway. He believes the replacement parking deck is large and imposing. He has asked the applicants to consider moving it away from their common property line and eliminating a storage component on the parking deck that adds to its imposing nature.
- While he appreciates preserving the view corridor he does not look at the view as he goes down the Oak Lane steps because he is watching traffic and his footing. He asks the Commission to consider the overall dimensions of the space and the orientation of a person going down there to see if it is an issue.
- He is in favor of the current house's design, however prefers moving the footprint further from his home to reduce its affects on his privacy.

The public testimony period was closed.

Chair Pierce called the Historic Landmarks Board meeting to order at 6:44 p.m.

Present: Chair Morgan Pierce, Secretary Vicki Nichols,

Board Member John Flavin, Board Member Carolyn Kiernat

 DR/SP 11-202, Design Review Permit, Sign Permit, CMSC Ventures, LLC, 565 Bridgeway Avenue. Design Review Permit to allow for modified façade improvements, business identification signage, and landscaping at an existing non-historic, mixed-use commercial-residential building located at 565 Bridgeway Avenue (APN 065-171-02). Continued from the September 21, 2001 meeting.

The continued public hearing was re-opened.

Associate Planner Burns presented the Staff Report.

HLB question to staff:

Commission question to staff:

• The planter boxes on each of the floors in front of the windows have the logo or symbol or some kind of representation not dissimilar from the others. Are those signs? Staff responded the Zoning Ordinance does not specifically identify those as business identification signage, however it is possible to approve it as signage. The Planning Commission and Historic Landmarks Board would be able to approve multiple signs and greater sign area if they can make the findings for approval or conclude there is ample signage and not approve it.

The public testimony period was opened.

Presentation was made by Michael Rex, the applicant.

- Much of the Planning Commission's input at the last meeting was on target.
- Even though the building is traditional in character, to avoid fooling people into thinking it was built in an earlier time they added a date at the top and made a physical statement of its modernity with the fenestration by going with large sliding glass doors.
- Recessing the upper floors by about two feet softens the look and breaks up the mass and boxy feeling of the previous design.
- The only other place details were put is on the planter boxes. The designs on the planters are not signage or logos but patterns in a subtle light bronze tone to soften them. A planter box without a design looks stuck on and has a commercial feel.
- The landscape lighting will remain the same as on the previous plan.
- They will consider using all wood materials but would prefer the flexibility to go to Azek, a composite that is 50% salt, perfect for a water environment and has a 25-year warranty. It is paintable and they are proposing a soft white shade with a glossy finish.
- All the sash for the sliding doors, windows and doors would be anodized bronze aluminum, a pale bronze that is richer in color. The stanchions are subtle with a traditional cap and are a darker bronze. The signage and cast iron lampposts would also be bronze, so there would three different colors that blend well together.
- The guardrail at the top has been recessed.
- They need the standalone sign out on the sidewalk and perpendicular to the street for visibility because the building is recessed. It is consistent with the architecture.
- The building's white color is consistent with other buildings on the streetscape, although it is not a bright white but a softer white consistent with the bronze.
- They would like Condition 11, which states the only lighting will be a recessed light at the entryway, revised to allow the uplights.

Commission question to Mr. Rex:

• How would the detail be achieved on the façade if aluminum bronze were used? Mr. Rex responded the planter boxes would not be anodized aluminum but bronze painted to match the darker aluminum. Mr. Merriam would carve them, then a mold would be made, and they would be cast from a resin base and painted the bronze tone. They believe a custom planter will look more distinct than a stock box.

HLB questions to Mr. Rex:

- Did you do an analysis of the surrounding district and the features? Mr. Rex responded they started with historic character of buildings of this scale and how this type of architecture has been treated in the past. They saw that the columns create a vertical line and the windows are vertical. A vertical proportion separated with horizontal lines, almost banding, which creates a pleasing proportion defines all of those buildings. Another site-specific element is there is an incredible mix of architecture along the streetscape; just two doors away is a highly decorated Victorian with a lot of gingerbread. They think the proposed building can be unique and distinctive like the others, but they will never get away from its bulk. It was designed that way with a lot of glass to begin with, but the horizontal banding and the trees and planters will bring it all down to a more friendly human scale.
- How is this newer building designed so as not to be confused with the adjacent historic structures? Mr. Rex responded he chose the fenestration to introduce very modern elements integrated in a convincing way, because there is a lot of glass on the building. The large sliding doors is a way to introduce something new, and sends a strong message because they are such a major part of the façade. The date was added to make it very clear this is a newer building.

HLB questions to staff:

• Is the date over the building and the name of the building considered to be signage? Staff responded yes.

Comments were made by the public.

Edward Rubinstein indicated the following:

- He owns a five-plex behind the subject property that was constructed in 1865.
 He also owns a number of other properties constructed in the 1920s and 1930s.
- This project fits in perfectly with its surroundings in the Historic District. When speaking of old and new, what about the character of the community? When he walks by a property that looks old but has a sign with a recent date he knows it was built originally in another time but was totally remodeled in the year the date indicates. That is common sense. It is really the character of the building that counts. Making it apparent that this is a new building would make it look modern and hip, which will not fit in with the surroundings. This building is not supposed to stand out.

Alice Merrill indicated the following:

- Mr. Rex has done a good job, but she finds it frustrating that the City asks someone building in Sausalito to make it look old, but when they do they are told it looks too old.
- The HLB has their job to do, but it is a mish-mash down there right now with old and new.
- But the current building design is much better than the first one.

Moe Rubinstein indicated the following:

- She was the real estate broker who listed the subject property when the Merriams bought it. The previous owner did horrific damage to the building. It was gutted and was an eyesore in downtown Sausalito for almost three years.
- She heard the comments at the last meeting about how Commission members loved the brick of the building, but when she was trying to sell the building she had hundreds of people view it and everyone wanted to know when the brick was going to go away and the building made beautiful.
- The Merriams have tried to follow the many different guidelines given to them by the City.
- Mr. Rex's design is extremely attractive and well thought out from a real estate point of view. She liked the old design, but likes this new one much better and thinks the Commission should approve it.

Dennis Webb indicated the following:

- He is a Sausalito building contractor.
- This project is wonderful and should be approved. The architecture is beautiful in its mixture of the old and new. It will fit in perfectly in its surroundings and is perfect for Sausalito.

The public testimony period was closed.

HLB comments:

- The changes made since the last presentation are positive. The design will fit in with the rhythm, character and scale of the district.
- No one who is a scholar of classical architecture would mistake this building for a historic building. The general public might not be sure, but there will be enough giveaways for them to realize it is not historic.
- The biggest improvement is the top two floors being set back, creating a shadow line and taking away the modern character of the main façade, but the solid ground floor has remained, which is the most important part of the design.
- Mr. Rex's decision to have columns flanking the main entrance solidifies the ground floor and gives it weight it lacked before.
- The sliding glass doors would not be a first choice for a building of this sort, but they will be fine because they are set back in the top two stories. However a stock aluminum profile will not look right at the ground level where the profile of that window needs to be more delicate and sculpted.
- Wood or other construction materials would be preferable to the Azek vinyl.
- The representation of historical style has not been overdone, but there should be less detail on the planters, which seem a little busy.

- The scale of the trees is important. If they grow too high the ground floor would be obscured as well as the view from the second floor.
- The freestanding sign is not the type of sign used in the Historic District. It
 would be better if it could be pulled back so as not to have an encroachment
 issue.
- The signage should be approved as it is given the challenges to retail.
- There is already a precedent for freestanding signs in the neighborhood.

Planning Commission comments:

- The owner and architect have tried to achieve the balance that was discussed at the last Planning Commission meeting.
- Other than the Bubble Street sign the signage does not have a commercial quality to it.
- There is precedent to allow a few freestanding signs. This one is not too intrusive and allows people walking up from the ferry to see and locate the gallery.
- The freestanding sign is fine with the way the building is set back. Although discouraged in the Historic District, it is permitted and in fact is necessary.
- The landscaping proposal is fine. The trees have the ability to have some height, which is important in distinguishing the building, and play off against the building's design very well.
- There is more scrollwork and embellishment on the entablatures than is necessary, as it detracts from the simplicity and clarity of the façade and may even detract from the way this building will be seen relative to the artwork sold inside. Mr. Merriam's artwork contains a lot of fantasy architecture and the contrast between a simpler approach to those entablatures on that simple façade with that work would be better.
- The signage is in scale and appropriate. The freestanding sign is fine.
- The building design, while hinting at the artist within, is still adaptable for other uses in the future.
- The trees give the project some scale and green, which is nice to have there.
- The new design is an incredible improvement from the design seen at the last hearing. It is much nicer with the proportions of the building now being very elegant and strong, although the details are a little fussy and distracting.
- The freestanding sign flies in the face of what the Historic Overlay District
 Ordinance was supposed to achieve, which was to get rid of those signs. The
 fact that there are two up the street from the project site argues more strongly
 against having the sign than in favor of having it. To stack these signs on top of
 each other is going in the wrong direction.
- The relief surface on the planters is very nice and adds richness to the façade of the building without being too loud or imitating other kinds of semi-classic details, but they should be simplified a bit.

The public testimony period was re-opened.

Mr. Rex's rebuttal:

 The way the aluminum windows at the street level find the balance between old and new is the sash material is rectangular and contemporary but the

proportions of the windows are turn of the century storefront with the color being more bronze, which is found in older windows. The difference is real old windows would have pattern and not be just a rectangular shape. With color and proportion they are harkening back to a traditional style but with the contemporary clean shape. The panels at the base give it a traditional look. The sashes will relate to the upper sliding glass doors that also have a rectangular shape.

- The sidewalk sign is needed, although it can be pulled back so it does not
 overhang the sidewalk and still be visible, which they are willing to do so the
 sign can be approved at this meeting instead of needing to come back.
- They are willing to simplify the decoration a little bit, perhaps by removing the corner horns to provide more simplicity, but he encourages the Commission to embrace decoration.

HLB recommendations for additional Conditions of Approval:

- Look at natural, non-PVC materials at least for the ground level.
- Look at a slightly different window profile so there is not a stock rectangular aluminum profile at the base such as a profile that has some sort of contour with it and is more compatible with the classical detailing flanking the windows. Soften it a bit to be more compatible with the more classical character of the architecture that surrounds it.

Daniel Merriam indicated the following:

- The molding and frames that window manufacturers offer are somewhat limited, especially in colors. Putting appliqués onto the inside moldings is not necessary, create complications, and is going to make it look more traditional, which is what is being fought against.
- As the owner and person who will have to pay for it and source these items it
 creates a difficult problem for him to delve into something that is an unknown
 and it is unreasonable to ask that to him at this point. There is a place for both
 synthetics and wood. Wood is beautiful and less expensive than synthetics, but
 there are places where wood will crack and curl on a monthly basis leaving a
 constant mess to be dealt with.
- Regarding window frames, it is difficult to get anything consistent in finding
 what is needed. He prefers something that is not prescribed that he will have
 difficulty finding or it costs four times as much because it is scarce.

Mr. Rex indicated the following:

- The center doors and the windows on each side will be from the same company as the sliding glass doors, Fleetwood, so they will all have the same color and profile and look like they belong together. They prefer to stay with one company. He does not know if Fleetwood has a profile, but if they do they would be happy to explore that. If not, the concern expressed by Mr. Merriam is they would have to apply some molding to it and then wonder if it will it stay on or fall off and will they be able to match the color exactly.
- Regarding the concern that more character is needed for the ground floor, they
 will have to apply some molding to that lower panel, which will add character,

- and the door hardware can have more character as opposed to being stock modern.
- As part of the approval they would like the option to use either wood or Azek. A
 pristine building such as this one shows wear very quickly as the wood moves
 around in the weather whereas the Azek is inert and once painted cannot be
 distinguished from wood and has less maintenance.

Moe Rubenstein indicated the following:

 The windows should be matching. It would be very nice to add a little detail on the panels. The design is beautiful.

The public testimony period was closed.

HLB recommendations for additional Conditions of Approval:

- The building should have the corner horns removed.
- The freestanding sign should be stepped back behind the property line.

Commission comments:

- The materials should be left to the applicant to decide. It will all be painted anyway. If the applicant wants to use a composite material to accomplish the goals of the building, he should be able to do so.
- The consistency of the window mullion system is important. The sliding glass
 doors on the second and third floors ought to be part of the same family as the
 ground floor windows. The scale and proportion of those windows are more
 important than trying to juggle a non-standard window system.
- It does not make any difference whether the freestanding sign is where it is shown and needs an Encroachment Permit or if it is pulled back and does not need an Encroachment Permit. The fundamental issue is whether a freestanding sign is acceptable, as an encroachment or not. It should be approved with the encroachment because that is where those blade signs are all down that street, outboard of the property line.

Planning Commission recommendations for additional Conditions of Approval:

- The corner horns should be removed.
- The outboard decorative elements on the roofline should be removed.
- The outboard decorative elements directly over the entrance should be removed.
- Condition of Approval 12, which prohibits the freestanding sign, should be modified to read that the freestanding sign should be approved subject to the Commission making a recommendation for City Council approval of an Encroachment Agreement at a subsequent meeting.

HLB comments:

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- The HLB will withdraw its Condition of Approval about modification of the window frames.
- The ornamentation at the top of the building is fine, completing the corners and edges and giving it a flourish it needs.

Conditions of Approval the HLB would support:

 The removal of the ornamental horns, although reluctantly, in the four locations shown.

Committee Member Nichols moved and Committee Member Flavin seconded a motion to approve a Design Review Permit with the modifications of removing the horns from the building, approval of the freestanding sign (subject to approval of an Encroachment Agreement), and an amendment of Condition 11 that the existing floodlights be allowed to remain. The motion passed 4-0.

Commissioner Bair moved and Commissioner Werner seconded a motion to approve a Design Review Permit with the modifications of removing the horns from the building, approval of the freestanding sign (subject to approval of an Encroachment Agreement), and an amendment of Condition 11 that the existing floodlights be allowed to remain. The motion passed 4-0.

The public hearing was closed.

Chair Keegin indicated that Commissioner Graef had left the meeting.

2. DR/NC 10-377, Design Review Permit, Nonconformity Permit, Casa Madrona Hotel and Spa, LLC, 801 Bridgeway Avenue. Design Review Permit to install a glass awning above the hotel entrance, to repair portions of the William Barrett House damaged by dry-rot, and to approve after-the-fact installation of air conditioning and heating units on the exterior of the Casa Madrona Hotel. Nonconformity Permit to convert the existing restaurant to two hotel suites at the Casa Madrona Hotel and Spa at 801 Bridgeway Avenue (APN 065-063-46).

The public hearing was opened.

Assistant Planner Thornberry-Assef presented the Staff Report.

HLB question to staff:

 Does the HLB have any purview over the interior of the building? Staff responded that Municipal Code Chapter 8 states that the HLB has jurisdiction over interior modifications that affect the exterior of a designated landmark.

The public testimony period was opened.

Presentation was made by Ryan Schoen, the applicant, and Taal Rabines, architect.

- Their intent is to preserve and repair what is consistent with the historical use of the building.
- They will leave the original signage and clean it up. The awning design ties in
 with the historical building and the defined archway. The drawings show a point
 at the front of the awning that will be removed.

- They had to move forward with the HVAC units while doing the interior because there was no heating or cooling inside. Their goal is to hide the system as much as possible, although it does show a little bit on the façade.
- Deterioration has occurred to the building over a long period of time. On the
 exterior they intend to keep exactly what is there aside from a few items that
 had been added, but their intent is to bring back its historic nature.
- They recognize the importance of this building in the community, so they have hired a historical architect.
- They are using the renovation of the ground floor of the Casa Madrona and the Villa Madrona as an opportunity to clean up the façade of the Casa Madrona and improve its view from the street.
- They had a historic survey prepared and everything that is historical has been preserved, including the outer walls of the original house.
- It is only the east elevation that was not part of the original house that is being changed. They are moving the sunroom and creating a better, simpler base for the Casa Madrona to sit on as viewed from the street.

Commission question to staff:

 Can we approve something that requires a Nonconformity Permit if we have not approved the Nonconformity Permit? Staff responded a Nonconformity Permit is needed for the work to the space that used to be Mikayla restaurant that they propose to convert to hotel suites, because it is in the R-3 zone. The other exterior modifications, which are the awning changes and the air conditioning units, only need approval of a design review permit and can go forward as they do not need to be conditioned on approval of the Nonconformity Permit.

HLB comments:

- There are no objections to the Design Review Permit for the after-the-fact air conditioning and heating, because it is not in the historic building and they have done all they can to camouflage it.
- There are no objections to the Design Review Permit for the awning, because they have softened the supports to the HLB's satisfaction and are going to remove the claw-like portion.
- The applicant has done a great job of illustrating what they want to do regarding the exterior proposals. It will be an improvement, particularly in removing the sunroom area that creates an unbalanced conglomeration from the street view.

HLB questions to Mr. Schoen and Scott Mass, architect:

- Are you okay with the condition about the awning's eight-foot clearance? Where exactly might that fall on your curvature? Mr. Schoen responded the eight-foot height is actually the first strut, which is about one foot out from the building wall. It is important to note that this awning is fully within their property. They like the design the way it is and think it best represents the building and brings the scale down.
- Would you have to scale the whole thing back, because you would be starting a support upright, so your whole curvature would be smaller? Mr. Schoen

responded he does not think the curvature could be changed. Just the last glass panel would be removed, so they would round the edge just a bit into that piece. Mr. Mass responded it is not six feet, eight inches all the way out. It starts and then it slopes up, so there is a very small portion of the awning that is that low and then it slopes up very quickly to seven and eight feet.

HLB question to staff:

• Is that a hard and fast eight foot? Staff responded Section 10.42.060.B the Sign and Awning Permit regulations states the awning is required to be eight feet above a walkway.

HLB questions to Mr. Mass and Ms. Rabines:

- The stairs that will be rotated 90-degrees and enclosed by a wall, is that in the historic portion of the building and what will it look like? Ms. Rabines responded currently there is a door on the stairs going down to the lower level to separate the two levels. They are not planning to connect the top floor to the bottom floor and thought it best to rotate the bottom half of the stair to get it out of the way and preserve it inside the building rather than remove. In the future if there is a need to connect the two floors that portion of the stairs is still part of the building and in good shape.
- When the HLB looked at this project a few months ago there was severe deterioration, but the document here says the historic features are in good to fair condition. Was a full conditions assessment put together? Mr. Mass responded there actually is very severe deterioration, but not to the historic features. The redwood siding, which is the majority of the outside of the building, is in very good condition. The features that have been added on over the years are what are in poor condition.
- Can you speak about the exterior elevations of the improved space at the lower level, the composition and materials and how it is meant to feel as part of the historic structure? Ms. Rabines responded it is not mimicking the historic but is picking up a little bit on what has already been added down below. Basically they are proposing a series of accordion doors set in wood with bigger frames so they look like French doors, and they pick up on some of the other French doors that are in some of the buildings lower down. They also pick up on the proportions of the windows above, but they are not being built to look historic. They want to make it clear that above is historic and below is something that is quieter, with some of the details being simpler versions of what is up above. Other features they are looking at is using black guardrails that would disappear rather than compete with what is going on above, and the addition of planters between the higher level and the lower level of the terrace to provide greenery to soften the area.
- Is there a material proposed for those planters? Ms. Rabines responded it will probably be wood, although they do not know yet. It could also be painted fiberglass.

No comments were made by the public.

The public testimony period was closed.

HLB Board Member Nichols moved and Board Member Flavin seconded a motion to approve a Design Review Permit for the glass awning and exterior heating/air conditioning units. The motion passed 4-0.

Commissioner Werner moved and Commissioner Bair seconded a motion to approve a Design Review Permit for the glass awning and exterior heating/air conditioning units. The motion passed 3-0.

Commissioner Werner moved and Commissioner Bair seconded a motion that consideration of the Nonconformity Permit and its associated design review be continued to the meeting of November 9, 2011. The motion passed 3-0.

Board Member Flavin moved and Chair Pierce seconded a motion that consideration of the Nonconformity Permit and its associated design review be continued to the meeting of November 9, 2011. The motion passed 4-0.

Board Member Kiernat moved and Chair Pierce seconded a motion to adjourn the Historic Landmarks Board meeting. The motion passed 4-0.

Old Business

None.

New Business

None.

Communications

Staff Bar Bocce Conditional Use Permit Compliance: Assistant Planner Thornberry-Assef reviewed the staff memorandum

Planning Commissioners - None

Adjournment

Commissioner Bair moved and Commissioner Werner seconded a motion to adjourn the Planning Commission meeting. The motion passed 3-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:56 p.m.

Submitted by

Jeremy Graves, AICP

Community Development Director

Approved by

Stafford Keegin

Chair

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