

MEMORANDUM

DATE February 26, 2019

TO Holly Smyth, Planning Director, City of Hercules
Robert Reber, Adjunct Planner, City of Hercules

FROM Bruce Brubaker, Associate Principal, PlaceWorks
Sarah Gronquist, Associate Principal, PlaceWorks

SUBJECT Bayshore Block M,P, & O Design Review and Conformity Analysis – Outstanding Design Issues

This is a summary of Design Review and Conformity issues for the Block M,P & O Development Entitlement Package Progress Set submittal dated February 12, 2019, presented at an “All Hands Meeting” on February 13, 2018 with the Applicant team and staff from Fire and Police as well as City of Hercules Planning and Public Works.

1. COMPLETENESS REVIEW

Staff and consultant reviewed the Applicant’s submittal dated January 10, 2019 for completeness. A letter listing outstanding items was sent January 30, 2019. Many, but not all, of the outstanding items were responded to in the February 12 drawings, and discussed at the All Hands Meeting.

2. GENERAL DESIGN ISSUES FOR BUILDING LAYOUT AND SITE DESIGN

A. General Comments

1. Break between Block M and Block P: the regulatory document for this project is the Waterfront District Master Plan (the Form Based Code, or FBC). The Street and Circulation Standards in the FBC shows a block structure that does not divide Block M and P with a street, and the proposed project does not include a street in that location. However, the implication in the FBC from the Village Neighborhood sketch and other illustratives, is of two buildings at M and P, with a gap between. The applicant shows a gap between the buildings but it begins at Level 3 and continues upward. The gap is occupied by one floor of a “library” structure at the podium level. A photo simulation looking up Loop Road into that gap from a distance would help get an understanding if the library is visible from a distance, and therefore the gap is not as prominent as desirable. Such a photo simulation is requested to determine if the library should be located elsewhere.
2. Fire Access at Northeast Side of Block M and Block P: this space is 25’ wide and extends the entire length of the two blocks, about 510’. The applicant proposes to close off public access at the ends of this fire access with gates. The gates would be unlockable by police and fire, and smaller gates would be equipped with a pedestrian exit only device. The goal of the Master Plan is to have a

walkable and interesting neighborhood, and discussion centered around the drawbacks and benefits of closing off that side of Block M and P. The arguments against public access are that the space will not be a pleasant environment, that residents of apartments facing that direction would be concerned about security if access were public, and that police representatives also feel it would potentially be a place where crime could happen. For these reasons, the recommendation is to allow it to be closed to public access. Note – Sheet A06.2 shows apartment access out to the EVA – this is an error and will be corrected.

3. Street Parking. The police were worried that there could be calls if there is not enough parking and residents start using the street to park long term.
4. Limit Places to Hide. The police suggested that the plans should be reviewed to identify places where people could hide. Plans should clarify how CPTED principles are being met for planting and maintenance of landscape in public places to prevent hiding spaces. Shrubs/perennials should be under 3' height, tree canopies over 10' height, lighting should be glare free and evenly distributed so there aren't dark corners.
5. Retaining Wall. The retaining wall at the EVA at the northeast side of Block A was discussed. It is shown as a dashed line on Sheet A09. It will be as high as 19' at the highest portion, with a 42" guardrail above. An elevation of this retaining wall should be shown in the plans. If parts of this wall will be visible (from the Library, for example) some decorative treatment may be appropriate.
6. Fencing. Fencing and gates are shown on Sheet L2.01A and L2.01B. In this submittal the fencing is actually quite minimal, with fencing and gates only at the podium entries and the EVA as discussed above. The design and scale of the gates appear to be appropriate to the design of the buildings. The fencing at the top of the podium stair is well handled, with the fencing pulled in to create an attractive landing area at the top of both stairs. Police and Fire will need access to Knox boxes with keys for access at all gates including the parking structures. Fire department has Opticom capability to wirelessly open gates – this should be accommodated where fire vehicles will have access.
7. Addresses. The building address will be near the building entry on the ground floor. Applicant to confirm whether Block M and P will have one address or two.
8. Building Elevations. Block O is generally well designed. However the southeast façade along the Loop Road at John Muir Parkway is the least well designed, and it is very visible to those coming into the area on John Muir Parkway. The façade has a high percentage of blank walls and looks utilitarian. The applicant should apply more thought to making both sides of the south corner attractive.
9. Courtyard Elevations. The applicant is still working on architectural elevations at the podium courtyards. They will be submitted in the next round.
10. Pergola/Trellis at Block M. Sheet A.06.2 Plan Level 2 doesn't show the trellis at the waterfront side of the podium.

11. Trash Pickup. Republic Services said they anticipate 4-yard front loading containers for trash and recycling. The street needs a concrete apron under the front wheels of the truck in pick up locations. In the future green waste may need to be collected.
12. Internal Garage Circulation. At Block O there is a garage entry perpendicular to the top of the ramp up from the lower level garage. This appears as though it may lead to conflict between cars coming in and cars coming out. Added to this is the potential conflict of cars backing out of three perpendicular parking spaces at this same location. Applicant will review potential solutions. Note – the Traffic Analysis dated January 21, 2019 by Fehr & Peers states that there will be no more than one car at each driveway queuing. However, this doesn't answer the question about conflicts from vehicle movements.
13. Neighborhood Park. The applicant is required to provide a Neighborhood Park at the Bay side of Block M. The Master Plan calls for unstructured and passive recreation. City staff asks that a play area be incorporated, as there are many residents to be moving into this neighborhood but no play areas planned yet. It could be a play area with a naturalistic quality designed for limited climbing and similar play rather than a formal play structure. The developer is concerned about liability.
14. Landscape at Neighborhood Park. The EVA access is an awkward radius from the side of Block M turning onto the Bay Trail. The drawings show seamless turf at the EVA extending into the park, but there are concerns about maintenance and appearance of this difficult transition. The EVA access is ramped, with side slopes that do not allow for many common park activities. There should be a larger unified flat area in the park for a fuller variety of activities. The berms are good wind protection for the park, but they could be designed to provide more usable flat space. In addition, the grade transitions could be handled more creatively, with sheltered seating at retaining walls, for example. Planting in this area should relate to the park's proximity and connection to the Bay Trail, with a more naturalistic shoreline character and some native plant materials. More elevated seating with views to the bay, over the railroad tracks should be considered. Note - a site section that extends from face of building to water's edge should be provided prior to Commission hearing.
15. Western Elevation on Block M. This important façade is facing the park, and the design would be helped by making the walls at the podium a dark color to merge with the park. This would also enhance the visual connection between the park and the podium.
16. Neighborhood Square. The neighborhood square at the corner of the loop road is nicely designed, but it needs to have crosswalks to cross the street at that corner. This is an opportunity to use a different surface (or colored paint) related to the paving in the neighborhood square for the crosswalk, which would make the design of the square feel bigger and enhance safe crossings of the street.
17. Lighting. The lighting at the Neighborhood Square and Paseo should consider relating to existing public street lighting to enhance the "public" nature of these project areas. Also, lighting on the

Bay side at the Neighborhood Park should limit light trespass onto natural resource areas, and should meet “Dark Sky” standards for shielding.

18. Redwoods on Bio-Rad property. The weight of the redwood trees, when mature, as proposed by Bio-Rad will impose a significant load on the retaining wall. Applicant should give consideration to this factor in engineering the wall.