



March 26, 2018

(By electronic transmission)
Planning Board
City of Alameda
2263 Santa Clara Avenue
Alameda, CA 94501

Subject: 1825 Park Street (Item 7-D on Planning Board's 3-26-18 agenda)

Dear Boardmembers:

Although the project is not in the Park Street Historic District and not in proximity to historic buildings, the Alameda Architectural Preservation Society (AAPS) is commenting on this project since it is in the "Gateway" subarea identified in the North Park Street Specific Plan and zoning regulations and provides the main gateway to the Historic District.

As noted in the staff report, the project is intended to be designed in the Streamline Moderne style, which is one of the architectural styles contributing to the Park Street Historic District. AAPS finds the design somewhat uninspired and insufficient for this highly prominent gateway location. We generally agree with the design improvements set forth in the following recommendations in the staff report:

The Streamline Moderne style emphasizes curved forms, long horizontal lines, corner and clerestory windows, eyebrow overhangs, and smooth stucco wall surfaces and can include vertical marquees or accents. A prominent feature of Streamline Moderne style is strong horizontality in the design. From staff's perspective, the design can be improved by reinforcing and strengthening the horizontality of the design. Specifically, the hotel proposal features vertically alternating colors in cement plaster and brick veneer, which, in staff's opinion detracts, rather than supports, the architectural motif. Staff recommends eliminating or minimizing the vertical elements and reinforcing the horizontal lines of the building in keeping with the Streamline Moderne style. This adjustment may be accomplished by rotating the colors on the building to have a horizontal orientation, rather than a vertical orientation.

In addition, the windows above the ground level feature a mix of individual metal fins, decorative horizontal bands, and a large overhang on the fourth floor. Staff suggests enhancing the uniformity and emphasis of the long horizontal lines on the building by reinforcing or improving the horizontal elements that run along the building above each window.

Here are some additional design enhancements that we recommend:

1. Although it is good that a high-quality material, such as brick, is being proposed for the ground floor, a material more characteristic of the Streamline Moderne style should be used instead, such as glazed terra-cotta, Vitrolite or stainless steel or natural aluminum with closely spaced horizontal grooves.
2. The upper floors are very plain and could be enhanced by natural aluminum or stainless steel accents, such as: horizontal banding; natural aluminum or steel sash windows with horizontal muntins; and additional stainless steel or natural aluminum detailing.
3. It is questionable whether the proposed upper floor vinyl windows will be successful as part of the Streamlined Moderne design concept. Section details through the windows are needed for evaluation and window type (fixed, sliders, casement, etc.) need to be identified. Sliders should not be used.
4. Provide more horizontal emphasis to the upper floor window openings and better integrate the ventilation louvers for each room into the overall window design. As designed, positioning the louvers at the base of each window, gives the windows an “upside down” look. Treating the louvers as spandrels, rather than as part of the window, should be considered. Detailed elevations and sections of the spandrels are needed for full evaluation.
5. A round corner with a radius that is larger than the one shown here would be more typical of the style.
6. The scale of the "H" signage element could be increased to be more typical of the style. Consider also providing this element on the Clement Avenue side.
7. The blank end walls that will be seen from Park and Clement need to have some articulation.
8. Provide more ground floor entrances on the street elevations to relate better to the Park Street Business District’s pedestrian character.
9. The ground floor sidewalk planters are an unnecessary 2’ encroachment into the sidewalk area resulting in a 10’ rather than 12’ wide sidewalk, and should be deleted.
10. The street trees should be modified to improve consistency with Alameda’s Master Street Tree Plan, as amended for Park Street in 2012. Although the proposed Brisbane Box (*Lophostemon confertus*) street trees are used elsewhere on Park Street, the 2012 Plan calls for them to be used only at intersections with alternating Silver Lindens (*Tilia tomentosa*) and Red Maples (*Acer rubrum*) elsewhere. We therefore recommend that the two southern trees along Park Street be changed to Silver Linden and Red Maple, resulting in three species along the Park Street frontage.

The relatively new building at 2451 Shattuck Ave. in Berkeley, designed in the Streamline Moderne style (see attached Google Street View screen shots) is a good example of the techniques recommended in the staff report and in Items 1 and 2 above. See also the “Starbucks building” at the southeast corner of Park Street and Santa Clara Ave. for a historic Alameda example of this style and similar techniques.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. Please contact me at (510) 523-0411 or cbuckleyAICP@att.net if you would like to discuss these comments.

Sincerely,

Christopher Buckley, President
Alameda Architectural Preservation Society

Attachment: Google Street View images of 2451 Shattuck Avenue, Berkeley

cc: Mayor and City Council (by electronic transmission)
Andrew Thomas, Debbie Potter, and Linda Barrera (by electronic transmission)
Downtown Alameda Business District (by electronic transmission)
AAPS Board and Preservation Action Committee (by electronic transmission)

2451 Shattuck Ave - Google Maps

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