

# ITEM 7-B

## CITY OF ALAMEDA

### Memorandum

To: Honorable President and  
Members of the Planning Board

From: Andrew Thomas  
City Planner

Date: July 13, 2015

Re: **PLN14-0305 – 2350 Harbor Bay Parkway – Applicant: Mina Patel.**  
Public hearing for a Final Development Plan and Design Review to allow the construction of a 100-room hotel on the Harbor Bay Business Park shoreline. This project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15332 – Infill Development Projects.

### BACKGROUND

On February 23, 2015, the Planning Board held a public hearing to review the site plan and architectural design of a new five-story hotel proposed for a vacant parcel located at 2350 Harbor Bay Parkway, in the Harbor Bay Business Park. At the hearing, the Planning Board raised a number of concerns about the proposed site plan, landscape plan, and parking. The Planning Board also provided extensive comments regarding the architectural design of the building and concluded that the proposal required a number of changes to both the site plan design and the architectural design.

On April 13, 2015, the Planning Board held a second public hearing to review a revised site plan and architectural design. At that meeting, the Planning Board indicated that the applicant and staff had satisfactorily addressed all of the site plan design and parking issues, but that the architectural design still required additional work.

Since the April 13, 2015 meeting, the project applicant, Ms. Mina Patel, hired a new architectural firm to improve the architectural design of the building. The current proposal incorporates the April 13, 2015 site plan and a new design for the architecture of the building.

### ANALYSIS

The following analysis addresses the adequacy of both the proposed architectural design and the proposed site plan.

#### **Architecture:**

Since the April 13<sup>th</sup> meeting, the applicant and her architectural team have significantly revised the architectural design of the building. The revised design is shown in Exhibit 1 and is described by the architectural team as follows:

"In the new design, the building base is extended out slightly from the previous design to help ground the structure. Upwards from there, the facades have been composed to create simple groupings of rooms, and help with the hierarchy of the building, creating a definitive Base – Middle – Top. The roof extends out slightly, further from the previous design, and the corners are sculpted back to help the roof "soar". The center of the building is anchored by two towers that help articulate the entry of the building, with a new porte cochere that helps shelter visitors from the elements.

The lighter colors in the foreground help to accentuate the building and group the larger structure into smaller buildings. The darker colors have the opposite effect to help recede the main structure and help fade away the spaces between the foreground elements. The towers and the center bay are accented with composite wood panels along with metal infill panels to emphasize horizontal banding in the center of the project to help draw your attention towards the entry.

At the base of the building, select windows on the Bay side have been extended to the ground of the building to help give a storefront effect in the swimming pool, meeting room and breakfast areas. Metal shading devices have been added to upper story windows to provide visual interest to the four story elements, by casting shadow patterns on the structure. Finally above the garage a guard rail was cut into the solid parts to allow for a better view of the bay, and metal louvers were added to the garage parking area to help with ventilation along with shielding the view of cars from the Bay trail"

In staff's opinion, the revised architectural design of the building provides a simplified, understated, but dignified design to complement the other buildings in the Business Park and the site's waterfront setting. The sculpted massing of the building, the composition of simple building elements, and the color palette are designed to provide a simple, visually pleasing composition of materials and architectural elements that acknowledges the site's prominent location along the waterfront Parkway at the center of the Business Park, but does not introduce unnecessary architectural elements or colors to draw attention to the building or differentiate the building from the rest of the Business Park.

The revised design uses the two central towers, the central roof element, and the the central main entry porte cochere to define and mark the primary entry to the building and the central, main portion of the building. Changes in massing, projections, and colors reduce the apparent bulk and mass of the two wings on either side of the central portion of the building. (See page 4 of Exhibit 1) These design elements work in concert to provide an interesting rhythm of simple repeating forms across the elevation of the building and serve to break the mass of the building into a pleasing composition of smaller elements.

In contrast to the rhythm of vertical elements across the elevation, the change that were made to the horizontal elements to clearly establish and define the base, the "body", and

the roof of the building give the building a similar sense of permanence and a design connection to the other buildings in the Business Park and Alameda's more traditional and historic architectural styles, which all include articulated bases, bodies, and roofs.

Finally, staff appreciates the careful and thoughtful use of color, materials and window details that will ensure that the building is attractive from all perspectives and viewpoints. Little details like the use of 3 inch, 6 inch and 9 inch insets on the windows and the use of full length windows on the ground floor water side provide important design elements that contribute to the overall appearance of the building.

## **Site Plan**

The proposed project is consistent with the General Plan, Zoning Ordinance, and Harbor Bay Industrial Park Development Plan, approved by Planning Board Resolution No. 1203 in 1981, which establish the development standards for the Harbor Bay Business Park and this property.

Zoning and Hotel Uses: The site is located in the C-M-PD, Commercial Manufacturing, and Planned Development Zoning District. Hotels are a permitted use in this zoning district and have been approved by the City of Alameda Planning Board at other locations in the Business Park with the C-M-PD Zoning and Business Park General Plan designation.

Zoning Development Standards: The C-M-PD zoning ordinance development standards and the 1981 Planning Board Resolution No. 1203 limit the number of rooms in the hotel and the size of the structure that can be constructed on the site.

Parking: The zoning requirement for on-site parking is the primary development standard that impacts the number of hotel rooms that can be accommodated on the site. The zoning ordinance requires 1.25 parking spaces per room. The zoning ordinance also allows the Planning Board to reduce the required ratio if the Planning Board can find that a smaller ratio is adequate to accommodate the use. Historically, the Planning Board has found that hotels in Alameda and in the Harbor Bay Business Park do not need 1.25 parking spaces per room. The hotel on Webster Street was approved with a reduced parking requirement, and the recently approved expansion for the neighboring hotel in the Harbor Bay Business Park was approved with a reduced parking ratio.

The Planning Board has determined in the past that hotels in the Harbor Bay Business Park can operate effectively with a reduced on-site parking requirement based upon experience with other hotels and the free shuttles to and from the Oakland Airport, the Harbor Bay Ferry, and the Oakland Coliseum BART station. For example, in 2014, the Planning Board approved the Hilton Home2 Suites Hotel expansion at 1700 Harbor Bay Parkway, which provides 145 on-site spaces for 177 rooms yielding a ratio of 0.82 parking spaces per room. To accommodate special events, the Planning Board also required that the Home2Suites Hotel acquire a shared parking agreement with neighboring

property owners to allow the hotel to valet extra cars overnight on adjacent private, underutilized parking lots.

The current proposal provides 82 parking spaces on-site and 100 hotel rooms for a parking ratio of 0.82 spaces per room. In addition, recommended conditions of approval require:

- Acquisition of 43 off-site share parking spaces to achieve a total of 125 spaces and a room to parking ratio of 1.25;
- Operation of a free hotel shuttle to and from the Airport, Park Street restaurants, and BART;
- Provision of bicycles for hotel guests; and,
- As a member of the Harbor Bay Business Park Owner's Association, the applicant/developer and its tenant will participate in the Transportation Management Program implemented by the Harbor Bay Business Park Association that includes provision of the Harbor Bay Shuttle that serves the site and provides direct connections between the Coliseum BART Station and the Harbor Bay Ferry Terminal.

To minimize the need for large surface parking lots next to the adjacent park, the project includes 16 parking lifts. Parking lifts allow the operator to park two vehicles in one space. To eliminate the visual impact of the parking lifts from the Bay Trail and Harbor Bay Parkway, the portion of the parking area that includes the lifts is enclosed in a structure adjacent to the hotel.

Finally, a recommended condition of approval requires a four foot high decorative wall along the perimeter of the exposed surface parking areas to screen parked cars from the sidewalk and surrounding public park.

Building Height: The Zoning Ordinance and the Harbor Bay Business Park Development Plan permits buildings up to 100 feet in height. The proposed hotel will be 63 feet in height.

Setbacks: The project complies with the applicable setback requirements. Per the original Harbor Bay Development Plan, the project must maintain a 50-foot wide front setback from Harbor Bay Parkway. The proposed hotel is located on a curve in Harbor Bay Parkway and will maintain the required 50-foot setback. Per the 1982, 1989, and current standards, the parking for the building may be adjacent to the side and rear property lines if the adjacent properties provide 15 feet of landscaping adjacent to the property line, which is the case for this project.

Lot Coverage: The Zoning Ordinance and Harbor Bay Development Plan permit up to 50% lot coverage. Lot coverage measures the amount of the lot that is covered by the building footprint. At 18,629 square feet, the footprint of the building and parking structure represents 28% of the total site area of 65,796 square feet.

Floor Area Ratio (FAR): FAR is the ratio of the total floor area enclosed within the structure to the size of the lot. The General Plan and 1989 Development Agreement allows an FAR of between 0.5 and 2.0, depending on the amount of parking enclosed within a structure. The proposed development plan encloses more than 35% of the required parking, resulting in a maximum FAR for this project of 1.02. The proposed FAR is 1.01.

## PUBLIC NOTICE AND COMMENTS

Property owners and residents within 300 feet of the project's boundaries were notified of the public hearing and given the opportunity to review and comment on the proposal. Project notification was also provided to the responsible regulatory agencies including the ALUC, FAA, and the Port of Oakland.

## ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

This project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15332 – Infill Development Projects. The project meets all requirements for the infill exemption, including the following:

a) **The project is consistent with the applicable General Plan designation and all applicable General Plan policies as well as with applicable zoning designation and regulations.** The proposed project is consistent with the General Plan, Zoning Ordinance, and Harbor Bay Industrial Park Development Plan, approved by Planning Board Resolution No. 1203 in 1981, which establish the development standards for the Harbor Bay Business Park and this property.

b) **The proposed development occurs within city limits on a project site of no more than five acres substantially surrounded by urban uses.** The project site is less than two acres in size and is located within the Harbor Bay Business Park within the City of Alameda, which is at the center of the San Francisco Bay Area metropolitan area. The site is surrounded by a manmade urban park and commercial manufacturing and office uses. The subject property was designed to be, and has always been, part of the urban environment. The land itself was created in the mid-20th century to be a business park and be part of the City of Alameda. The site has never been part of the original natural environment.

c) **The project site has no value as habitat for endangered, rare or threatened species.** The small parcel for the proposed development is currently vacant and it has no habitat value for any endangered, rare, or threatened wildlife species. The vacant lot is immediately adjacent to the Harbor Bay Parkway. The proposed project will not require any work within the San Francisco Bay. A habitat assessment and survey of burrowing owls conducted by WRA Environmental Consultants concluded that no burrowing owls are present on the site and that the site provides poor quality habitat for burrowing owls. The findings are consistent with similar findings made by other Biological experts and professionals who have surveyed nearby sites for the recent developments in the

Business Park, such as the VF campus, Esplanade Waterfront development and other developments.

**d) Approval of the project would not result in any significant effects relating to traffic, noise, air navigation, air quality or water quality.**

Traffic: The project will not result in any significant transportation impacts. The Abrams & Associates traffic study concluded that there would not be impacts from a 105-room hotel that would generate approximately 61 AM peak hour and 65 PM peak hour trips. With the reduction to 100 rooms, the addition of on-demand shuttle services, bicycle services and off-site improvements funded through business park Transportation Improvement Fund (TIF), the project will not result in any significant traffic impacts.

Pursuant to the Harbor Bay Development Agreement, a portion of the property taxes and building permit fees from this project will fund the TIF. The purpose of the TIF is to fund transportation and signal improvements in the Business Park. A signal will be necessary in the near future at the currently impacted intersection of Harbor Bay Parkway and North Loop Road. The unsignalized intersection currently operates at an unacceptable level of service during peak hours. Per the Development Agreement and the Infrastructure Agreement for the Business Park, the necessary traffic signal improvements will be funded by the TIF.

The project is located within the Airport Safety Zone of the Oakland Airport and triggers the review of both the ALUC and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). The ALUC deemed the project consistent with airport land use regulations upon the FAA issuing a Determination of No Hazard to Air Navigation for the proposed location and maximum building height. The FAA has determined in its letter dated October 1, 2014, that the project will not pose a hazard to air navigation at the Oakland International Airport or in Bay Area airspace. The project, as conditioned, will comply with all regulatory requirements pertaining to airport safety.

Noise: The proposed construction and operation of the hotel in the Business Park will not result in any significant noise impacts. The site is immediately adjacent to an active airport that generates significant noise in the area. The construction and operation of the hotel will be subject to the restrictions and requirements of the City of Alameda Noise Ordinance which ensures that no significant noise impacts are generated on-site by the hotel that would impact the adjacent parcels as the result of the hotel construction or operation.

Because the Oakland International Airport creates significant noise in the Business Park and on the subject property, the hotel is designed to shield the occupants of the hotel from Oakland Airport noise. Noise levels within the hotel will be attenuated to 45 dB CNEL. A standard condition of approval for all development in the Harbor Bay Business Park is for the applicant to submit an acoustical noise study with the building permit application to demonstrate that interior noise levels can be attenuated to less than 45 dB.

Furthermore, new construction must comply with State of California Title 24, Part 2 of the Administrative Code, which will typically attenuate interior noise levels to less than 45 dB. Therefore, the project occupants will not experience any adverse noise effects from airport operations.

Air Quality and Water Quality: Construction and operation of the hotel will be subject to standard construction requirements of the City of Alameda, Regional Water Quality Board, and Regional Air Quality Board. These standards and permit requirements are specifically designed to ensure that urban in-fill projects do not result in air or water quality impacts to the environment. In addition, the landscape design and plant list for the proposal includes a mix of trees, shrubs, grasses, and other low-lying ground cover vegetation that is consistent with state and regional water quality requirements and Bay Friendly Landscaping Guidelines.

**e) The site can be adequately served by all required utilities and public services.** The project site is located within an urban business park that already has the basic water, sewer, and other utility infrastructure necessary to support the proposed hotel. The site has access to all other public services provided by the City.

### RECOMMENDATION

Approve PLN14-0305 for Final Development Plan and Design Review based on the findings and conditions contained in the Draft resolution (Exhibit 4).

Respectfully submitted,

Andrew Thomas  
City Planner

### Exhibits:

1. Marriott Fairfield Inn Alameda Design Review Package prepared by SB Architects and dated July 2, 2015.
2. Draft Resolution

On File in the Community Development Department and available upon request:

Letter from Harbor Bay Business Park Architectural Review Committee, July 10, 2014

Abrams & Associates, Trip Generation and Parking Letter, October 21, 2014

Letter from ALUC dated October 6, 2014

Letter from FAA dated October 1, 2014

Public Comment Letters

WRA Environmental Consultants, Burrowing Owl Habitat Assessment/Survey, January 7, 2015