



March 27, 2016

(By Electronic Transmission)

City of Alameda Planning Board
2263 Santa Clara Avenue
Alameda, CA. 94501

Subject: Proposed New Building at 1435 Webster Street (Item 7-A on Planning Board's 3-28-16 agenda)

Dear Boardmembers:

The Alameda Architectural Preservation Society (AAPS) believes that the latest design has good potential but would benefit from the changes listed below. A number of clarifications are also needed.

1. The entablature is still too small except at the corner. See Comment 2 in our attached 11-24-15 letter to Kathleen Livermore. Increasing the entablature height and projection at the non-corner locations to about half way between what is shown for the corner bay and what is now shown for the non-corner bays would be about right.

In addition, the brackets for the non-corner entablatures should extend to the base of the entablature, as is done for the corner. Two boards of horizontal siding are shown in the entablature frieze areas. These should be just a single wide board to better differentiate the entablature from the wall surfaces below.

Note: The corner bay is taller and larger scaled (including the entablature) than the other bays and some horizontal elements (including the third floor window headers) are not aligned with the other bays. In our 11-24-15 letter we had recommended that the corner bay be in the same scale as the other bays.

2. Instead of the taller corner bay, consider a tower-like roof element that could be an open framework, rather than solid, in order to articulate the corner. Comment 1 in our 11-24-15 letter also suggested a pyramidal or other type of pitched roof.
3. Increase the heights of the second and third floor windows. This will provide more verticality, consistent with the "Victorian" look that building now seems to be seeking. The 9'- 6" ceiling heights should allow for this.
4. Provide a horizontal trim board connecting the bases of the third floor windows. This is already shown for one bay on the Taylor Avenue side.

5. We need to see sections and other details of the new railing and corbels now proposed for the balconies to fully evaluate these elements.
6. The rear facade has lost much of its former articulating elements. These need to be restored.
7. The painted image on the north side wall is very good.
8. The street facades look somewhat fragmented due to the deck recesses between the bays. Consider a roof overhang with corbels at the third floor deck recesses. This will need to be carefully handled to avoid making the design too cluttered. Alternatively, continuing the main entablature into the recesses as described in our 11-24-15 letter would also be helpful.
9. Consider another tree on both Taylor and Webster.
10. Consider awnings over all the windows and doors to create a continuous "line".
11. The proposed wall signage for the first floor uses encroaches into the second floor area,. Locating the signage in the horizontal band directly above the transom windows or on the awning valances should be considered.
12. The materials on the first floor of building around storefronts are not called out. Is it stucco or Dry-vit?
13. Consider a warmer color palette with less variations of gray and dark brown.
14. Please provide the following details:
 - a) Transom window and fixed storefront window sash dimensions/specifics ---- will they match the other windows above?
 - b) Second floor sliding patio door sash dimensions and deck to interior flooring detail
 - c) Deck drainage system. Is there a visible downspout? If so, where and what size? What material?
 - d) Where are roof downspouts? What are their sizes?
 - e) The latest plans now show a Nanawall storefront door system, which appears to be wood. This looks promising, but, again, we need to see section and other details to fully evaluate this design element. How does the proportions of the size of the wooden portions of these doors relate to the proportions of the adjacent first floor windows and trim etc. We need construction details for the sill to interior floor and exterior paving relationship as well to evaluate these doors. We appreciate the applicant's efforts here, since these doors are expensive, have tricky drainage systems and require accomplished installers.
15. There is still mostly no response to the comments in our attached 11-24-15 letter. We had also attached this letter to our 2-21-16 letter to the Planning Board. Comment 6 concerning the Milgard vinyl windows (and, by extension, the Milgard sliding balcony doors) is especially important as is Comment 11 asking for better details. **We cannot fully evaluate elements such as the entablature and balcony railings without seeing these details.**

Planning Board members at the Board's 2-22-16 meeting did not agree with Comment 7 (swinging rather than sliding doors at balconies). We recommended swinging doors in order to maintain a symmetrical door configuration. With sliding doors, one door is set further back than the other and often has a screen, creating strong asymmetry. Would there be another practical way to achieve this symmetry without swinging doors?

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: AAPS 11-24-15 letter to Kathleen Livermore

By Electronic Transmission:

cc: Mayor and City Councilmembers

Debbie Potter, Andrew Thomas, Allen Tai and Kathleen Livermore Alameda Community
Development Department

West Alameda Business Association

AAPS Board and Preservation Action Committee

ALAMEDA ARCHITECTURAL PRESERVATION SOCIETY

November 24, 2015

Ms. Kathleen Livermore
City of Alameda Community Development Department
2263 Santa Clara Avenue
Alameda, CA 94501

Subject: Proposed new building at 1435 Webster Street

Dear Ms. Livermore

The Alameda Architectural Preservation Society (AAPS) would again like to thank you and the planning staff for giving us the opportunity for early review of this project.

The architectural style, variation in forms and the articulation of the building is generally appropriate to the site and its surroundings. The building's form and the relationship of the uses within the building to the street should enliven this corner and contribute to the further development of this area. However, please keep in mind that this is a three story building in a neighborhood of one and two story buildings so it is important to minimize the sense of massing whenever possible.

Here are some specific comments. Section numbers refer to sections of the Webster Street Design Review Manual.

- 1) The site is on the corner of an intersection and there are three buildings on the adjacent corners with forms that all have a strong vertical emphasis at their corners. The proposed building form does not have an equivalent complimentary strong vertical form at the corner of the intersection. A pyramidal roof or other type of pitched roof over the corner "block" is one way to address this issue.
- 2) The cornice and its decorative brackets are too small relative to the scale of the building and look somewhat kitschy. Increase the size of these elements.
- 3) The corner block has greater height, different color (and possibly different material) and differentiated horizontal alignments (overall height, main cornice and belt cornice) of the corner block relative to the rest of the two street facades. The corner block, therefore, looks overly detached from the rest of the building. The differentiation between the corner block and the rest of the building should be eliminated to provide a more integrated design.

- 4) The main cornice is used only on the projecting portions of the upper façade. This cornice should also be used on the recessed portions so it is continuous.
- 5) Provide wider window and door casings on the upper floors. This would be more consistent with the traditional architectural imagery.
- 6) There needs to be clarification on the upper floor vinyl windows. The plans show dimensions that conform to most of those shown in the Webster Street Design Review Manual, but state that the windows will be Milgard single hung. We don't know of a Milgard single hung window that conforms with all of these dimensions, but there may be a Milgard double hung that does. The proposed Milgard model should therefore be specified.
- 7) Balcony doors on the upper façade should be swinging, not sliders as proposed. And like the upper floor windows, use wood or wood-like sash. Muntins and other dimensions should conform with the Webster Street Design Review Manual diagram on page 13.
- 8) Use the slim profile storefront windows as per Section 6.10 or, alternatively, butted glass, rather than the proposed "chunky" Kawneer storefront system. See also the illustration for Section 6.15 showing a butted glass storefront without a bulkhead.
- 9) Position the horizontal canopy under the transom windows over only the storefront window as per Section 8.6 to better articulate the storefronts. It appears that portions of the canopy will be continuous in front of the ground floor solid wall surfaces.
- 10) Provide special paving at storefront vestibules as per 6.4(b)
- 11) Please show fully dimensioned section details through important elements, e.g. main cornice moldings, balcony railings, balcony doors, etc. The multi-story detail on sheet A7 is helpful, but it is too generalized and lacks dimensions except for the windows. Also, please provide material samples.
- 12) The proposed "composite" siding needs to be clarified. Is it cement fiber siding? Style (channel rustic, lap, etc.) and dimensions need to be called out. All wood and wood-like surfaces should be smooth, not textured (avoid imitation wood grain) as per Section 3.16.
- 13) The back of the upper portions of the building as seen from Taylor Ave is non-descript and needs greater articulation. The planter boxes added since the previous design are helpful, but further articulation is needed. Possible articulating elements could include:
 - awnings over the windows
 - crown molding at the top of each window

- an extended sill and apron at the bottom of each window
 -
- 14) The exterior colors shown are too monochromatic. Allow the (existing) changes in materials to also provide some variation in color.
- 15) If the existing pop-out of the sidewalk outside the 1000 square foot retail space could be relocated to the corner it would provide a more lively use of the space outside this space (especially if it were used for a restaurant) without the loss of a parking space. We realize that this is a public right-of-way issue that would require assistance from the City.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment. Please contact me at (510) 239-4455 or steveaced@aol.com if you would like to discuss these comments.

Sincerely,

Steve Aced, Board Member
Alameda Architectural Preservation Society

By Electronic Transmission

Cc: Andrew Thomas and Allan Tai, Alameda Community Development Department
AAPS Board and Preservation Action Committee

From: Sandip Jariwala [mailto:1sjariwala@gmail.com]
Sent: Tuesday, May 03, 2016 8:55 AM
To: Trish Spencer <TSpencer@alamedaca.gov>; Frank Matarrese
<FMatarrese@alamedaca.gov>; Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft <MEzzyAshcraft@alamedaca.gov>;
Tony Daysog <TDaysog@alamedaca.gov>; Jim Oddie <JOddie@alamedaca.gov>
Cc: Jill Keimach <JKeimach@alamedaca.gov>; DEBBIE POTTER
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Subject: Please Approve the mixed use project at 1435 Webster Street

Dear Mayor and Councilmembers:

On behalf of the members of the West Alameda Business Association, I am requesting you to vote in favor of the mixed-use project, proposed on the vacant lot at Taylor and Webster St., at tonight's city council meeting.

City staff and members of the Planning Commission have reviewed the parking requirements for this development and have rightly concluded that relaxing the requirement for 3 parking spaces is warranted because this is a transit-oriented, mixed use project in an urban area within walking distance of retail and service -oriented businesses.

Our studies have shown that there is ample parking on the street and in the public parking lot on Santa Clara Ave. to support this new development.

While we agree that a permanent solution to our district's future parking requirements needs to be explored, in our opinion, a parking structure similar to the one near Park Street might be the best solution. However, denying approval of this project does not in any way help us bring about this solution.

Unlike past commercial development in our historic district, this project will provide more housing units for the residents of Alameda.

The addition of new commercial space will also attract more shoppers to our district who will use various modes of transportation including bikes and AC Transit.

This project will contribute significantly to WABA's goals of maintaining a clean, safe and vibrant business district and denial of this project will send the wrong signal to potential developers wanting to help improve our district.

We urge you to vote in favor of this project at tonight's City Council meeting.

Thanking you,
Sandip Jariwala
President
West Alameda Business Association

----- Original message -----

From: Eloise Hill <eloise.hill@rocketmail.com>

Date: 4/29/16 12:49 PM (GMT-08:00)

To: Trish Spencer <TSpencer@alamedaca.gov>

Cc: Frank Matarrese <FMatarrese@alamedaca.gov>, Tony Daysog
<TDaysog@alamedaca.gov>, Jim Oddie <JOddie@alamedaca.gov>, Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft
<MEzzyAshcraft@alamedaca.gov>

Subject: Proposed building development @Webster/Taylor

Dear Mayor and Council,

I am writing regarding the proposed development at 1435 Webster Street which appears on your next council agenda.

Reducing parking does not reduce the demand for parking. Immediately adjacent to the proposed development, the front yards have been paved over for parking. In one case, this happened very recently. It was reported to Code Enforcement, but no effective action has been taken. Similarly, the front yard of the historic home at 1712 Webster Street was paved over for parking several years ago. This was reported to Code Enforcement, but no effective action has been taken. The City lacks the means to enforce its codes and it appears that anyone can pave over property for parking without significant negative consequences.

Also, the City has conducted its own study of the Webster Street area which shows that there is a parking crunch during certain times. The lot at 1435 Webster Street used to be a City parking lot. Its closure left a single City parking lot in the area. That lot is partially closed on Tuesdays and Saturdays for the farmers' market.

The City has a parking garage and other municipal parking lots near Park Street. One of the reasons for building the parking garage was to bring prosperity to downtown through increased business. Why don't those same rules apply to Webster Street? If increased parking will bring prosperity to the East End, why doesn't the West End get to share in that prosperity?

Reducing parking will not reduce the number of vehicles; they will simply impact the adjacent neighborhoods and bring more illegal parking which will negatively impact the community. I live a few blocks away on Palace Court and see this all the time. Walking past front yards with parked vehicles does not enhance the pedestrian environment. Reducing parking spaces does not reduce parking demand. I urge you to reflect on your decision and what would be accomplished by cutting parking requirements.

Eloise Hill

www.eloisehill.net

www.eloisehill.com

The Eileen McGrath Tarot Mysteries:

The Eight of Pentacles

The Queen of the Barley Moon