

City of Burlingame
*Design Review Study for a
New Four-Story Commercial Building*

**Item No. 9a
Design Review Study
Follow Up**

Address: 225 California Drive

Meeting Date: September 28, 2015

Request: Follow Up Design Review for an application for Environmental Review, Commercial Design Review, and Special Permit for construction of a new 4-story commercial building with three levels of underground parking.

Applicant: DLC 225 California

APN: 029-211-080

Architect: MBH Architects

Property Owners: The Jewell Partners

General Plan: Service and Special Sales- Downtown Specific Plan (Howard Mixed Use Area)

Lot Area: 17,500 (0.40 Acres)

Zoning: HMU (Howard Mixed Use Area)

Adjacent Development: Restaurant, office, retail, personal service, auto sales, residential

Current Use: Retail (215 California Drive) and Vacant (217 and 231-33 California Drive)

Proposed Use: 4- Story Commercial Building (retail/office)

Allowable Use: Retail, Personal Services, Business Services, Hotels, Grocery Store and Markets, Financial Institutions, Multi-family Residential, Office, Travel Agencies, Government Agencies.

Background: The project was the subject of an Environmental Scoping and Design Review Study meeting of the Planning Commission on July 13, 2015. In the meeting staff provided a summary of the project and requested feedback on the scope of the environmental review and the design of the site and building for the project. A public hearing was conducted and seven individuals spoke and offered their comments regarding the project, and the Commission also provided its feedback (refer to the July 13, 2015 meeting minutes for more detail). In summary, the Commission provided the following feedback:

- The canopy makes the building seem like a five-story building
- Building needs to fit into the area
- Retail space needs to support the street
- Need to consider relationship with Hatch Lane
- Concerns over parking compliance and variance findings
- Vehicular access should be reconsidered

The applicant has submitted revised plans and renderings date stamped September 17, 2015, to respond to comments received at the study meeting. Changes to the design include:

- Revised architectural design approach
- Elimination of the rooftop canopy
- All vehicle access (both ingress and egress) from Highland Avenue; no vehicle access via Hatch Lane
- Consolidation of retail space into one location
- Elimination of automated (stacked) parking mechanisms
- Elimination of tandem parking stalls
- Car share facility consistent with provisions in the Downtown Specific Plan
- Elimination of parking variance request

Update on Environmental Review: The Planning Commission also provided feedback on the proposed scope of environmental review at the July 13, 2015 Planning Commission meeting. In summary the Commission requested the following:

- The extent of excavation in cubic yards
- Check for underground creek

- Evaluate calculation for office space per employee
- Should have peer review of traffic study
- Evaluate retail employee calculation

These issues identified by the Commission will be incorporated into the environmental document for the project. The City has entered into a contract with Circlepoint Environmental Planning consultants to prepare the environmental analysis and documentation for this project. The environmental consultant under the direction of the City has commenced on the background information of the project and has begun to evaluate other aspects of the project in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Project Summary (Updated from Prior Submittal): The subject property is located at 225 California Drive, however the property frontage is oriented to Highland Avenue (a one-way street with traffic flowing south-bound). Hatch Lane (a one-way thoroughfare with traffic flowing south-bound) runs behind the property to the rear. The site is currently occupied by a commercial building, most of which is vacant. One storefront in the building (215 California Drive) is occupied by a door and window retail business. Across California Drive to the east are an automotive dealership and a row of retail and service businesses, adjacent to the south is a two-story office building and adjacent and to the north is a two-story building with a restaurant and residential units. A small City-owned green space and a sandwich shop are situated in the space between California Drive and Highland Avenue, in front of the property.

The applicant proposes to construct a new four-story commercial building. The revised proposed building will contain approximately 1,820 SF of retail space (an increase of 70 SF from the previous submittal) on the ground floor and approximately 43,235 SF of office space (a decrease of 1,225 SF) on the three floors above. The revised proposal eliminates the 7,200 SF roof deck from the previous submittal. In the resubmittal the rooftop is more utility oriented with equipment and space to accommodate photovoltaic solar panels. The revised proposal eliminates the roof canopy element from the previous design (proposed at 65'-0"). The building height proposed is 55'-0", with parapet/roof screen at 59'-0" and elevator shafts at 65'-0".

The building would have at-grade parking located behind the lobby and retail space on the ground floor, with access from Highland Avenue (both entering and exiting). The revised proposal eliminates the exit onto Hatch Lane. The ground level includes 23 parking spaces (three accessible spaces, one car share space, five compact spaces and 14 standard spaces). The hydraulic "puzzle stacker" parking lift spaces were eliminated in the revised proposal. In addition, there would be three levels of below-grade parking, accessed through the same driveway from Highland Avenue, for a total of 130 on-site vehicle parking spaces. The G1 level includes 35 parking spaces, including two accessible spaces, five compact spaces and 28 standard spaces. Levels G2 and G3 include 36 parking spaces each, including five compact spaces and 31 standard spaces each. Tandem spaces were eliminated from the revised proposal. With the revised proposal, Hatch Lane serves the utility aspects of the building (trash, bicycle locker and electrical transformer access) but does not accommodate vehicle access.

The retail space would be accessible from Highland Avenue. The lobby for accessing the upper floor office spaces will also be from Highland Avenue. The office space floors have been designed as a shell to be able to accommodate either a single tenant or multiple tenants.

During preliminary review, Planning staff identified that the following applications are required for this project:

- Commercial Design Review (Code Section 25.57.010I);
- The application *may* also require a Special Permit for consideration of architectural features in excess of the maximum building height (see discussion below under Building Height). Such architectural features may not extend more than ten (10'-0") feet above the maximum height and do not occupy more than ten (10) percent of the roof area (C.S. 25.33.070 and C.S. 25.51). Maximum height is 55'-0" and a parapet/guardrail (roof screen) is proposed at 59'-0".

Lot Area: 17,500 SF (0.40 Acres)

Plans date stamped: September 17, 2015

	PROPOSED	ALLOWED/REQUIRED
Use	Office and Retail Uses	Office Use – Permitted C.S. 25.33.020(i)(1) Retail Use – Permitted C.S. 25.33.020(a)
SETBACKS		
Front: (Highland Avenue)	0'-0"	None Required
Side (interior):	2'-6" 4'-6" to 7'-6" in some places for balconies	None Required
Rear: (Hatch Lane)	0'-0"	None Required
BUILDING ENVELOPE:		
Lot Coverage:	17,500 SF 100%	None Required
Height:	55'-0" ¹ 59'-0" (includes parapet ²)	55'-0"
OFF-STREET PARKING		
Number of Parking Spaces:	130 spaces ³ Standard – 104 spaces Compact — 20 spaces Accessible – 5 spaces <u>Car share – 1 space</u> Grand Total= 130 spaces	Office - 1 space per 300 SF Retail - None Required Office: Ground floor 710 SF Second floor 14,240 SF Third floor 14,240 SF Fourth floor 14,045 SF 43,235 SF/300 = 145 spaces Retail: 1,820 SF = 0 spaces <u>Car share credit = 10% (145 x 0.1 = 15)</u> <u>Sub-total 145 – 15 =</u> Grand Total = 130 spaces
Drive Aisle/ Clear Back-up Space:	24'-0"	24'-0" aisle required for 90-degree parking or all spaces can be exited in 3 maneuvers or less
Parking Space Dimensions:	Standard spaces = 9' x 18' Compact spaces = 8' x 17'	Standard spaces = 8'-6" x 18' Compact spaces = 8' x 17'
Driveway Width:	18'-4" driveway width — Highland Avenue entrance	Parking areas with more than 30 vehicle spaces shall have a minimum driveway width of 18'-0"

¹ Special Permit required for architectural features in excess of the maximum height, which does not extend more than ten feet above maximum height limit and does not occupy more than ten percent of roof area (C.S. 25.33.070).

² Noted as "roof screen" on plans.

³ Project utilizes the incentive for car sharing as provided for in the Downtown Specific Plan (Page 3-12), reducing the required spaces by up to 10% (equates to 15 spaces for project).

	PROPOSED	ALLOWED/REQUIRED
OTHER		
Minimum Ground Floor Ceiling Height:	15'-0"	15'-0"

General Plan/Specific Plan and Zoning: The *Burlingame General Plan* designates this site for Service and Special Sales. In 2010 the City Council adopted the *Burlingame Downtown Specific Plan*, which serves as an element of the General Plan. The subject property is located within the boundaries of the planning area for the Downtown Specific Plan, specifically in the Howard Avenue Mixed Use Area. The Plan describes the Howard Avenue Mixed Use Area as follows:

The Howard Avenue Area is the area to the south of Burlingame Avenue and consists of a mix of uses, including retail and office along Howard Avenue, and multifamily residential uses between Howard and Peninsula Avenues. Burlingame Avenue and Howard Avenue together form the “Burlingame commercial” area. Ground floor retail use is encouraged, and housing is allowed on the upper levels above commercial uses. The interceding side streets—Lorton Avenue, Park Road, Primrose Road and Highland Avenue—will act as connector streets with the commercial uses along those streets strengthening the relationship between Burlingame Avenue and Howard Avenue.

The Downtown Specific Plan includes various Goals, Policies and Guidelines to guide growth, development, and design standards in Downtown Burlingame.

GOAL/POLICY/GUIDELINE	PROJECT PROPOSED
Policy P-2.1: Explore creative parking solutions including parking pricing strategies.	20 compact spaces and one car share parking space.
Policy P-1.3: Conceal parking areas through the use of attractively designed above- or below-ground parking structures	Ground level parking is concealed behind retail, lobby and service rooms. Other parking is provided below ground.
Section 3.6.1 – Car share parking bonus: On-site parking requirements may be reduced by up to 10% (as determined by the Community Development Director) for developments with at least one car share facility provided on-site. The car share program would require recorded easements which must be maintained indefinitely and cannot be modified without the City’s consent.	1 car share space proposed 10% reduction in total parking (10% of 145 spaces = 15 spaces)
Guideline 5.2.5.5 (Ground level treatment): Commercial space should have depth of at least 40 feet to ensure viability for a range of commercial tenants.	The reconfigured retail space is 47 feet in depth and a portion has depth of approximately 15 feet. In plan check comments applicant notes “owner is targeting small local businesses... thus keeping the size of the space adequate and financially accessible to small business, e.g. coffee shops, magazine store, etc.”
Section 4.5.5 – Highland Triangle: Create enhanced flexible zone that could accommodate vehicular traffic and pedestrian space.	Four street trees along the property are proposed, which could be included in a future streetscape project.

Off-Street Parking: The previous proposal requested a variance from the City's parking requirements for 25 parking spaces, citing a Transportation Impact Analysis (TIA) to justify the findings that there would be less of demand for parking than the strict application of the Municipal Code standards. The previous project also included a puzzle stacker lift and tandem spaces, both of which are eliminated with the revised proposal.

The zoning code requires one parking space for each 300 SF of office space. This standard is the same throughout the city. The Downtown Specific Plan reduced parking ratios for residential projects within the planning area to reflect the proximity to transit and services downtown, however the plan did not adopt reduced standards for office uses. Instead, the plan offered options such as shared parking between complementary uses, and reductions for projects with a car share program.

The applicant proposes to include a car sharing facility on-site in accordance with the provision in the Downtown Specific Plan (Downtown Specific Plan page 3-12). The provision specifies: *On-site parking requirements may be reduced by up to 10% (as determined by the Community Development Director) for developments with at least one car share facility provided on-site. The car share program would require recorded easements which must be maintained indefinitely and cannot be modified without the City's consent.*

Car sharing allows people to rent vehicles for a short period time, generally for a few hours or even a fraction of an hour. Zipcar is one of the more familiar commercial car share providers, but there are a variety of providers offering the service, and some companies choose to operate their own car sharing in the form of fleet or "pool" vehicles. In general, car sharing is one of many tools in a Travel Demand Management (TDM) strategy that cities use to reduce the impacts on the region's transportation system. Car sharing can reduce private automobile ownership, reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and help encourage the use of transit because there would be reliable transportation available once someone gets off the transit system. For example, office employees may be more likely to utilize transit for their commute if they know a car would be available for midday errands.

Utilizing the provision in the Downtown Specific Plan, the applicant is proposing 130 on-site parking spaces, representing a 10 percent reduction from the total of 145 on-site parking spaces that would otherwise be required per code. Of the 130 spaces, there would be 104 standard spaces, five accessible spaces, 20 compact spaces and one car share space. All vehicles would enter and exit via Highland Avenue.

As further information, the applicant has submitted a revised Transportation Impact Analysis (TIA) for the proposed project which includes a parking analysis. This analysis, prepared by Abrams Associates, is attached. In summary the TIA indicates that due to the project location being near transit and services, the number of trips generated would be expected to be reduced by 15% when compared to standard Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) trip generation rates (ITE Trip Generation Manual, 9th Edition). The TIA used ITE's Parking Generation Manual, 4th Edition, and when compared to the City' parking requirements the study indicates that the project would generate a demand for 94 spaces where the City's Zoning Code requires 145 spaces.

The TIA also notes the project will provide bicycle parking spaces, and is within close proximity to Caltrain and SamTrans services. The closest existing Zipcar car sharing facility is located at 888 N. San Mateo Drive, approximately 0.4 miles from the subject property.

Building Height: The maximum building height in the Howard Mixed Use (HMU) District is 55'-0". C.S. 25.08.340 specifies that building height is measured from the average top of curb and to the highest edge of a gable, hip or shed roof or top of parapet. The building height limit applies to ninety-five (95) percent of the total roof surface; the remaining five (5) percent may include projections up to ten (10) feet above top of parapet for enclosing elevators, mechanical penthouses, solar structures, antennas or other equipment.

The proposed height of the building is 55'-0" and the project proposes a 4'-0" parapet (noted as roof screen on plans) for a parapet/roof screen height of 59'-0" in height from average curb height. The project proposes that

the parapet be considered a solar structure roof screen/enclosure for purposes of the height measurement, as solar panels are intended to be mounted on the rooftop of the building and would be screened by the parapet/roof screen element. As a roof screen element, it would be excluded from the building height measurement. While the building height definition in the code provides a provision to allow mechanical enclosures to project *above the top of parapet*, it does not address an instance where the *parapet itself* is the mechanical enclosure. The Planning Commission may make that determination.

Alternatively, the parapet could be considered an architectural feature in excess of the maximum building height as allowed with a Special Permit in the HMU district (C.S. 25.33.070). The requirement is that the feature does not extend more than 10'-0" above the maximum height and does not occupy more than ten percent of the roof area. Any considered architectural feature would need to be found to enhance the design of the building and shall be reviewed as a part of the Design Review process outlined in C.S. 25.57. However if the Planning Commission determines the parapet qualifies as a roof screen element and is therefore exempt, the application would not need to include a request for Special Permit.

The project includes elevator shafts at a height of 65'-0" from average curb height, which qualify as an elevator enclosure that may exceed the height limit by 10 feet. For reference, the roof area is 14,115 square feet, and five percent of this area is 707 square feet.

Design Review: Design Review is required for new commercial buildings pursuant to C.S. 25.57.010(c)(1). Design Review was instituted for commercial projects in 2001 with the adoption of the Commercial Design Guidebook. The subject property is located within the boundaries of the *Burlingame Downtown Special Plan*, therefore in addition to the guidelines provided in the *Commercial Design Guidebook*, there are additional design guidelines provided in the Chapter 5.0 of the Downtown Specific Plan that apply to the proposed project. The site is located in the Howard Avenue Mixed Use District.

The following design review criteria for commercial development projects are outlined in the zoning code:

1. Support of the pattern of diverse architectural styles that characterize the city's commercial, industrial and mixed use areas; and
2. Respect and promotion of pedestrian activity by placement of buildings to maximize commercial use of the street frontage, off-street public spaces, and by locating parking so that it does not dominate street frontages; and
3. On visually prominent and gateway sites, whether the design fits the site and is compatible with the surrounding development; and
4. Compatibility of the architecture with the mass, bulk, scale, and existing materials of existing development and compatibility with transitions where changes in land use occur nearby; and
5. Architectural design consistency by using a single architectural style on the site that is consistent among primary elements of the structure, restores or retains existing or significant original architectural features, and is compatible in mass and bulk with other structures in the immediate area; and
6. Provision of site features such as fencing, landscaping, and pedestrian circulation that enriches the existing opportunities of the commercial neighborhood.

Staff Comments: No comments have been generated for the revised proposal. However, comments from the previous proposal are included as attachments.

Planning Commission Action:

1. **Design Review Study:** The Commission should comment on the design of the project as required by Chapter 25.57 of the Zoning Ordinance, Design Review, and to the following design criteria for commercial projects:
 - a. Support of the pattern of diverse architectural styles that characterize the city's commercial, industrial and mixed use areas; and
 - b. Respect and promotion of pedestrian activity by placement of buildings to maximize commercial use of the street frontage, off-street public spaces, and by locating parking so that it does not dominate street frontages; and
 - c. On visually prominent and gateway sites, whether the design fits the site and is compatible with the surrounding development; and
 - d. Compatibility of the architecture with the mass, bulk, scale, and existing materials of existing development and compatibility with transitions where changes in land use occur nearby; and
 - e. Architectural design consistency by using a single architectural style on the site that is consistent among primary elements of the structure, restores or retains existing or significant original architectural features, and is compatible in mass and bulk with other structures in the immediate area; and
 - f. Provision of site features such as fencing, landscaping, and pedestrian circulation that enriches the existing opportunities of the commercial neighborhood.

Because a CEQA document is being prepared for this project, it is important that any changes to the building envelope be made early enough in the process so that any changes are reflected in the environmental review.

Sheldon Ah Sing
Consultant Planner

Kevin Gardiner
Planning Manager

- c. DLC 225 California, applicant
MBH Architects, project architect
The Jewell Partners, property owner

Attachments:

- Planning Commission Environmental Scoping and Design Review Study Minutes – July 13, 2015
- Applicant's Response Letter – dated September 23, 2015
- Applicant Request for Car Sharing Provisions – dated September 23, 2015
- Application to the Planning Commission
- Revised Transportation Impact Analysis – dated September 17, 2015
- Staff Comments
- Applicant Responses to Staff Comments
- Notice of Public Hearing – Mailed September 18, 2015
- Aerial Photo