

19 November 2012, Revised 14 December 2012



Ms. Christine Usher
Department of Community Development
City of San Mateo
330 West 20th Avenue
San Mateo, CA 94403-1388

Re: Design Narrative for Bayshore District Operations Building

Dear Christy:

As previously discussed this narrative describes how we have implemented our responses / changes to the design of the Bayshore District Operations Building for the California Water Service Company located at 341 North Delaware Street.

Feedback we received from the Community Meeting held in January, the Planning Commission Study Session held in June and the subsequent design review provided by Cannon Design Group from September brought to light the following issues that we have resolved in our re submittal and will elaborate here on how these issues have been solved:

1. Reconsider the proposed design of the perimeter fence. (Planning Commission, Cannon Design Group)
2. Provide a turn around in the visitor parking lot. (Cannon Design Group)
3. Consider repositioning the elevator to open up views into the courtyard. (Cannon Design Group)
4. Consider further the location of panel joints in the pre-cast brick veneer panels. (Cannon Design Group)
5. Make adjustments to the “heaviness” of cantilevered elements at the 2nd story. (Cannon Design Group)
6. Address concerns about the “hardness” of the materials proposed. (Planning Commission)

Item 1. Perimeter Fence

Referring to the diagrams below (figure a, figure b) you will see that we have eliminated the interior chain link fence and have replaced it with a wood fence composed of horizontal wood slats affixed to wood posts. This design solution addresses the Planning Commission’s concern about the quality and nature of the fence being sympathetic with the residential surroundings. Furthermore, the fence slats are spaced to limit visibility of the service yard, but also to facilitate the growth of vines over time. As originally proposed the location of the new wood fence is setback from the sidewalk a significant distance (figure c.) and will work with the low cable fence at the site’s perimeter to encourage pedestrian traffic to stay within the public realm and provide an acceptable level of security to the service yard itself. Additionally, property owners of the adjacent single family homes were engaged to discuss landscaping and fence treatment along the shared property line. These meetings occurred on 9/27/12 and 10/2/12 respectively. The property owners expressed support for the project and had no stated concerns with the landscape, fence or building designs.

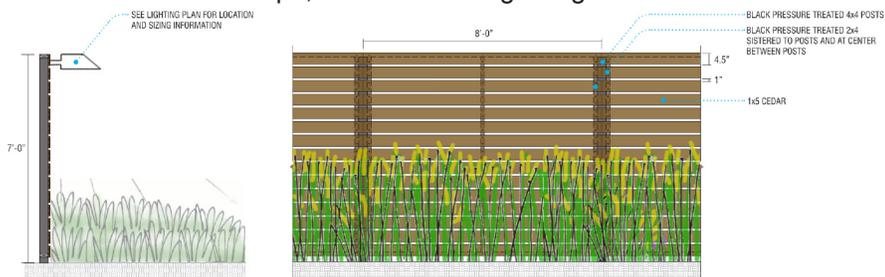


figure a.

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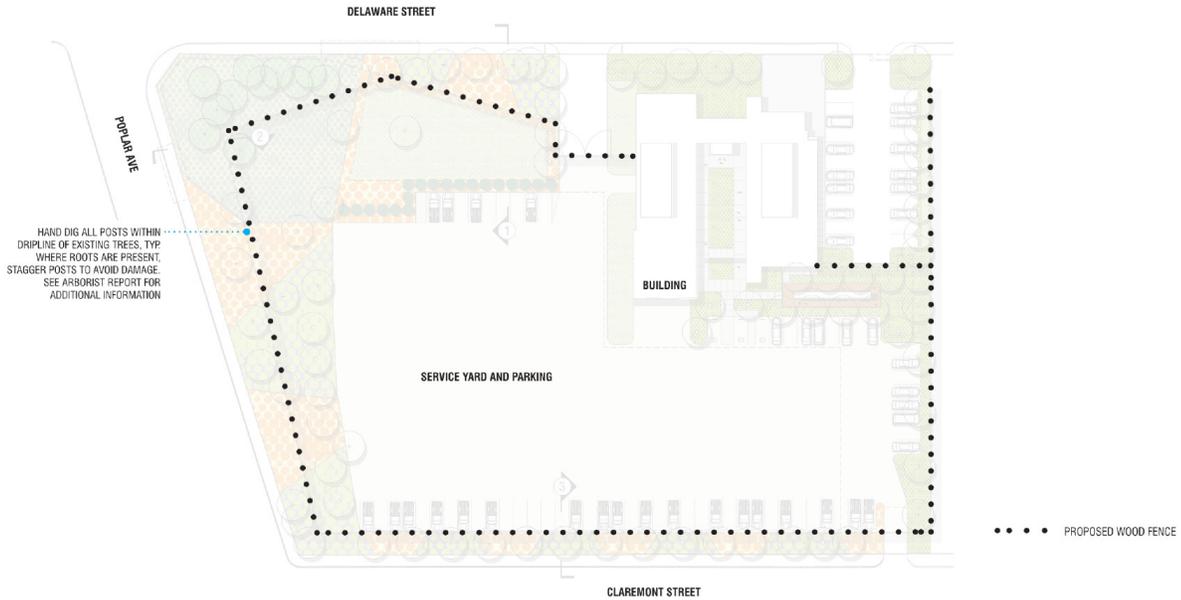


figure b.



figure c.

Item 2. Visitor Parking

Pursuant to Cannon Design Groups comment regarding the dead end condition in the visitor parking area, we will provide for a turn around as shown in figure d. below.

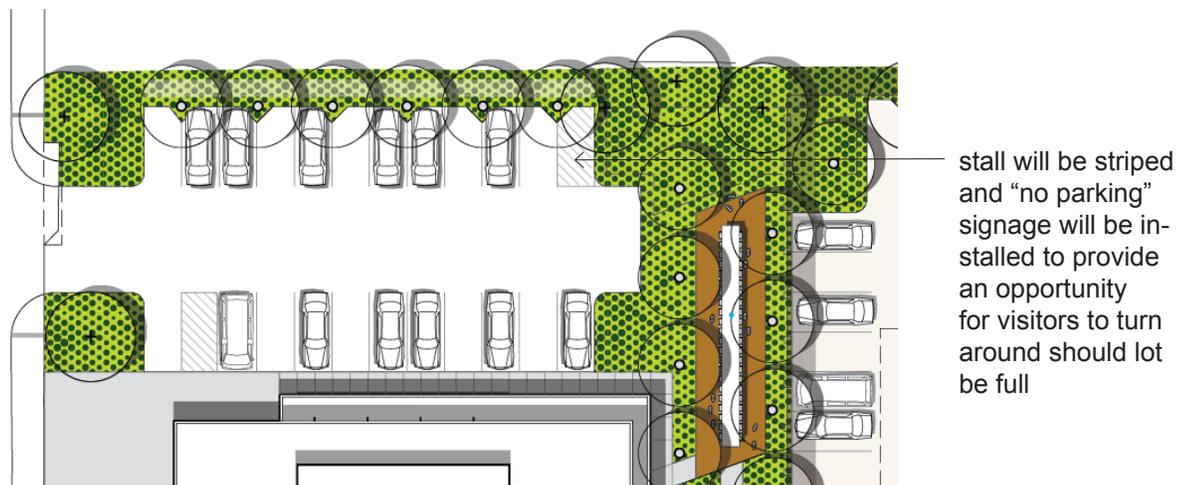


figure d.

Item 3. Location of Elevator

California Water Service Company has regularly made its facility available for use as a polling place and occasionally its media room available for community use. We have provided a mechanism to allow this public interface, but we have provided a level of security and physical access - both functionally and visually - to the building's interior courtyard that is consistent with Company concerns. The current level of visual passivity through the 2 story window wall that addresses N. Delaware is intended to provide a 'public' view into and to a lesser extent, through the building. However, the 2 story window wall is largely intended to provide a relief in the building's massing to bring it more in line with the grain of the surrounding residential neighborhood. We prefer to leave the functional solutions as they have been proposed and feel that in this configuration views and security concerns are adequately addressed.

Item 4. Brick Pre-Cast Panels

We agree with Cannon Design Group's concerns about the detailing of the brick pre-cast panels. While these panels are often used in commercial office buildings, we have discussed this issue with the Company and our general contractors and feel that using a dimensional brick veneer as opposed to pre-cast panels will provide an appropriate functional solution, but will also allow for the use of brick veneer, which will not be panelized and will, therefore, be more consistent with the look and feel of this material in the surrounding neighborhood.

Item 5. Cantilevered Elements

Cannon Design Group's review pointed out a concern regarding the proportions and depth of the roof overhangs and cantilevered elements of the design, specifically at the main entry and the 2nd level conference room, both of which directly address N. Delaware. Additionally, it was requested that we look to provide an element at the main entry to address the pedestrian scale and reduce the feeling of height at the 2 story glass expression of the main entry. Referring to figures e. & f. below, you will see that we have made changes to address these concerns.

1. We have decreased the overall height of the roof overhang elements from 5'-4" to 3'-6" at both the main entry and at the 2nd level conference room. (figure e. - after).
2. In an effort to reduce the appearance of the roof projection element as we have also created a 2'-0" setback from the edge of the parapet to the face of the wall in response to Cannon Design Group's comments. This setback continues to 'lighten' the appearance of the building's top by creating a separation with the perimeter wall. (figure e. - after, figure f. - after)
3. The projection of the roof overhang at the conference room remains at 4'-0" as originally proposed, but the projection of the roof overhang at the main entry has been decreased from 8'-0" to a dimension of 4'-0" so that the projection at both locations now match. (figure e. - after).
4. We have reduced the cantilevered dimension of the 2nd level conference room by 2'-0" from 4'-8" to 2'-8". Further reductions than the 2'-0" will compromise the functionality of the conference room space. (figure e. - after, figure f. - after).
5. We have provided for the inclusion of an entrance canopy that will define the location and signage opportunity at the public entry. This canopy responds to the pedestrian scale at the ground level and also provides protection from inclement weather. The steel and glass canopy will be in keeping with the architectural character of the 2 story glass expression and maintain a light and translucent appearance upon arrival to the facility. (figure e. after)

Item 6. 'Hardness' of Building

In the Planning Commission study session there was relatively little discussion regarding the specifics of the architectural solution for this project. Our perception was that the Commission was quite positive about the design and offered many positive comments. Commissioner Whitaker specifically expressed a concern about the 'hardness' of the building and the crisp lines within it's design. In responding to the comments of Cannon Design Group as expressed in Item 5, we feel that a good deal of attention has been paid to this concern expressed by Commissioner Whitaker. In taking that a step further, we have also studied her concerns in terms of materiality. We have proposed to eliminate the metal panel siding employed at the 2nd level of the project with warm toned cement plaster that is consistent with many buildings in the neighborhood. Additionally, with the 2'-0" parapet offset described in item 5, we are also confining the use of metal panel to the 3'-8" parapet expression at the roof top only. Additional adjustments in plan have also reduced the relative mass of the brick stair tower as well. Specifically, the entry lobby has been pulled toward the Delaware slightly and also now touches the adjacent wall of the stair tower. Furthermore, adjustments to the stair itself have allowed for the face of the stair tower nearest Delaware to be pulled in away from the street 2'-0". As a result, changes to the stair and lobby have helped to lessen the perception of the stair tower's mass, which responds directly to Commissioner Whitaker's concerns as well as Planning Staff's. We feel that on balance, these specific changes to the design and materials palette address stated concerns.



figure e. - before

- cement plaster
- 2'-0" parapet setback
- height reduced from 5'-4" to 3'-8"
- projection reduced from 8'-0" to 4'-0"
- cantilever reduced from 4'-8" to 2'-8"



figure e. - after



figure f. - before

new entry canopy

cantilever reduced from
4'-8" to 2'-8"



figure f. - after