



MEMORANDUM

TO: ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

FROM: ANDREW PEREZ, ACTING PLANNING MANAGER

SUBJECT: SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION NO. 2
AGENDA ITEM 8.B – FEBRUARY 7, 2022 ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
COMMITTEE MEETING
REVIEW OF ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS ASSOCIATED CONDITIONAL
USE PERMIT 21-005; CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW COMMERCIAL
BUILDING AND ESTABLISHMENT OF AN ART GALLERY AND WINE
TASTING COLLECTIVE; LOCATION – 211 E. BRANCH ST.;
APPLICANT –ERIC AND GILLIAN VON BERG; REPRESENTATIVE –
JENNIFER MARTIN, JENNIFER MARTIN ARCHITECTURE AND
DESIGN

DATE: FEBRUARY 7, 2022

Attached is public comment received for the above referenced item after the publication of the agenda.

cc: Assistant City Manager
Community Development Director
City Website

City Of Arroyo Grande
Architectural Review Committee

RE: Conditional Use Permit 21-005
211 E. Branch

Dear committee members,

I have watched this project work its way through a somewhat difficult and circuitous review process. As a long time resident, 30 year architect, and former ARC and planning commission member, I want to applaud the applicant for their continued effort to bring a strong addition to the downtown. I support the projects concept and design direction in its revised form with a few limited areas of concern.

I have the following concerns about the revised design which I request the ARC to consider.

1. The dark bronze pre-cast cornice detail draws you eye upward and emphasizes the height if the building. This stark contrast is not consistent or compatible with how plaster cornices are treated in the village. Furthermore, it amplifies the issue of perceived height on this already elevated building pad.
2. Corten planter and water features are not a material consistent with or appropriate for the historic district.
3. While the selection of the two materials, galvanized zinc or painted metal grey both are in the neutral grey range which help to minimize the impact of the stairs and trellises, a galvanized zinc have a very reflective quality. I recommend the color be limited to the painted grey.
4. The iron accents, awnings, and shadow boxes should be removed from the design as a material inconsistent with the village material palette and the design guidelines. This includes the brick to stucco iron detail
5. The plans call attention to the metal expansion joints. While expansion joints are common to be included in stucco application, they are not typical of a historic application of cement pilaster. As drawn on the plans, they do not adhere to the plaster and drywall systems manual installation recommendations but appear to serve as an additional architectural detail. The even vertical spacing and apparent width portrays a contemporary style detail inconsistent with the village character. I recommend a condition that limits the industry minimum and to be colored to match the stucco.
6. The corten (rusted steel) planter at the cornice level is an unauthentic application of steel. (elevated) it is material and modern style inappropriate for the district and site. It will have the additional issue of creating rust streaks down the face of the brick and stucco and patio.
7. The drawing appear to indicate a cable railing at the roof deck. If the planters are detached from the building and effectively furnishings not under the purview of the ARC, drawings should be reviewed without the furnishings obscuring the railing so a proper review on color and material can be conducted. Metal cable railing would not be an acceptable material in the village core and would require an exception and findings.
8. The roof deck trellis really elevates the perceived height. When there are vines or colored awning fabric on these, the height and scale will be imposing

My primary concerns are the roof trellis, the use of a cor-ten steel planter at the roof, the dark cornice color, and general color choice that seems incompatible with the existing building and makes it stand out. It is hard to argue the need for a the bright color for visibility then put a vine planted trellis in front of it. There is a general concern about whether this is of a compatible mass and scale and excessive height. Considerations of the above may help mitigate these issues.

Below are references to the Historic village design guidelines which I perceive as relevant to the discussion and should be considered as part of the review

Very Truly Yours

Randy Russom

Historic Village Design Guideline Background and Applicability

The project did not appear to have received proper review and guidance with respect to the village design guidelines. The document ensures CEQA compliance through proper review. In particular, the reviewing body is tasked with reviewing projects to

“Enhance the visual character of the City and the Village by preserving and promoting diverse and harmonious architectural styles and designs that reflect historic character and stages in the development of the City. “

“Ensure that new construction and renovation of existing buildings are compatible with the historic character of the Village area and surrounding neighborhoods.”

Most notably the document states *“The intent is to increase visual elements that buildings have in common, and stress a “sense of fit” for both new and renovated buildings.”* Sense of fit is the key subjective term that allows for a broad scope of review.

The project is in the village core and accordingly the section in the design guidelines addressing the village core states

“In order to preserve and enhance mixed use, the character of any new building or renovation shall be consistent with the surrounding area.

*The following building elements **shall** NEITHER overpower the project or detract from the visual continuity of the streetscape or neighborhood NOR produce redundancy in feature or pattern that is discordant with the historic character of the district:*

- *Building scale*
- *Building form*
- *Building façade*
- *Building entrance*
- *Roofline*
- *Fencing, rails or trellis*
- *Archways, columns or towers*
- *Doors and windows*
- *Signage or feature designed for sign placement*
- *Colors “*

The only allowed exception from the GUIDELINES are clearly stated in two items which both must be satisfied to support the exception..

1. *The alternative design or materials do not detract from adjacent buildings or the historic character and diversity of the Village area.*
2. *The mass and scale of the project is appropriate to the location considering the history and diversity of the area and the concept of the Village area.*

Additionally, exceptions from STANDARDS are clearly stated and requires the below 5 findings to be met and a Minor Exception Permit obtained. To date no minor exception permit has been applied for to my knowledge.

1. *The strict or literal interpretation and endorsement of the specified regulation would result in practical difficulty or unnecessary physical hardship;*
2. *There are exceptional circumstances or conditions applicable to the property involved, or to the intended use of the property, that do not apply generally to other properties in the same district;*
3. *Strict or literal interpretation and enforcement of the specified regulation would deprive the applicant of privileges enjoyed by other property owners in the same district;*
4. *The granting of the minor exception will not constitute a grant of special privilege inconsistent with the limitations on other properties classified in the same district and will not be detrimental to the public health, safety or welfare, or materially injurious to properties or improvements in the vicinity;*
5. *The granting of a Minor Exception is consistent with the objectives and policies of the General Plan and the intent of this title.*

I believe the applicant has done a fine job of working toward the objectives of the design guidelines and standards in the most recent iteration but I am encouraging the ARC to give the required proper review of the previously publicly unvetted revision.

A few noted areas of concern which I hope are addressed.

1. Materials of the time the historic commercial buildings in Arroyo Grande were built include stone, brick and wood.

*“Future renovations and development within the Village Core **shall** use similar materials and color to fit within the historic character of the Village.”*

*All new projects **shall** use materials that fit within the character of the Village (see following examples). Using similar materials or replicating these materials on all projects and restorations will extend the existing character extended throughout the Village.*

2. Cement plaster (including stucco) is not as common as wood or brick, however some of the commercial and residential buildings within the Village have plaster exteriors. **Cement plaster buildings require detailing that gives them a historic “Village” feel.** Buildings with plain plaster walls and no ornamentation are not appropriate for The Village.
3. Doors **should** be made of wood or a material that resembles an older style wooden door. For commercial areas, large industrial style glass doors and windows with metal frames are not appropriate. Doors with wood trim and windows with wood framing should be used. **Aluminum and other frames that have a modern metal look are not appropriate for the Village.**
4. *The height of new buildings shall not exceed development standards allowed in Title 16 of the Municipal Code. Scale and massing of any building within this area shall be consistent with that of the neighboring buildings, as described above in “Similarity in Height, Scale and Massing”.*
5. *“While bright colors may be used for limited accent, their use is subject to review by the Architectural Review Committee (ARC). “*

“Accent colors used for ornamentation, awnings, dentils, friezes or other details shall harmonize with the predominant building color.

“Color palettes shall complement the majority of the neighboring buildings and be consistent with the historic period.