

MEMBERS IN SESSION:

DR98-073 - PROPOSED RETAIL BUILDING FOR OFFICE MAX

REQUEST: Design Review of a proposed retail building for Office Max

LOCATION: Northeast corner of 17th and J Streets
APN: 006-0066-010 & 011
Central City Design Review District
Council District 3

APPLICANT:	MGA, Inc., Ted Kopecko, 481-6000 4330 Auburn Blvd, Ste. #1500, Sacto, CA 95814
OWNER:	Wells Fargo Bank, Trustee, and Art & Diane Hayashiga
PLANS BY:	Applicant
APPLICATION FILED:	6-1-98
STAFF CONTACT:	Luis R. Sanchez, AIA 264-5957

SUMMARY: The applicant proposes to demolish existing structures on the site, and to construct a new single story retail building with parking on the roof deck. Two parcels will need to be merged. The applicant proposes vehicular access to the parking off of J Street, with a truck dock off the alley on the north property line of the parcel. The Board provided review and comment on this project on July 17, 1998. The Board's consolidated comments are as follows:

1. Access was preferred off of 17th Street or the alley to avoid pedestrian conflicts with auto access on J Street.
2. The design needs to be simplified. Look at the surrounding buildings and derive the design from the context. Neighborhood reaction has not been positive for the proposed design, suggest that the applicant present the project to NAAG.
3. Attempt to overcome "big box" retailer problems with the exterior design of the building, make it urban.
4. Rooftop parking is good.
5. Need more glazing both on 17th and J Streets, the ratio of solid to glass is too high, especially on J Street.
6. Trees should be shown lightly on the elevations to show how signage will be impacted.
7. Need to do streetscape elevations to determine context issues, provide photo simulations and/or photo montage to assist in reviewing the project.
8. Several members felt that the proposed design, if kept, should be taken even further, with a Gaudi flair.

Comments from the public included:

9. Liked second level parking, but tower element needs to be refined.
10. Dryvit material proposed is not very durable, a more durable surface is needed at lower levels.
11. Provide bike parking in the sod area, and preserve street trees.
12. The exit doors shown on both the J Street and 17th Street elevations don't "feel right", seem out of place.

The applicant has redesigned the project to be more in keeping with the surrounding neighborhood. NAAG has also reviewed the new design and strongly supports the project.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff requests that the Board approve the project subject to conditions of approval and findings of fact.

PROJECT INFORMATION:

Existing Land Use of Site:	vacant, retail
Existing Zoning of Site:	C-2
Surrounding Land Use and Zoning:	
North: commercial, C-2	
South: commercial, C-2	
East: commercial, C-2	
West: commercial, C-2	
Property Dimensions:	160' X 160'
Square Footage of Building:	23,500
Height of Building:	26'-0" top of parapet, spire at 34'-0"
Exterior Building Colors/Materials:	light cream colored "Dryvit" (EIFS panels), accent colored storefront, glazing
Roof Color(s)/Material(s):	membrane
Parking Proposed:	60 spaces
Parking Required:	94 spaces

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The applicant has submitted an application for Planning Commission review (P98-067) requesting: a parking variance from 94 spaces to 60 spaces, a Special Permit modification to relocate 6 existing cellular communication antennae panels, a variance to reduce the front setback from 7.5 feet to 0 feet, a variance to reduce the street side setback from 5 feet to 0 feet, a variance to reduce the shading requirement for a parking lot from 50% to 23%, and a lot line merger to merge two lots into one.

STAFF EVALUATION: Staff has the following comments:**A. Site Design**

1. The applicant proposes to site the new building with all four walls at the property lines, with no setbacks. The Board's Design Review Guidelines Plan (hereafter referred to as the Board's guidelines) encourages setbacks from property lines for "landscaping, colonnades, plaza or showcase windows, when appropriate". However, the Board prefers that buildings be built to the property line, and surrounding buildings in the J Street urban environment typically are not set back.
2. Auto access to the rooftop parking is proposed off of J Street. The Board's guidelines state that "parking areas are encouraged to be located in the rear or side of projects rather than prominently placed at the front". Although the parking is on the upper deck, staff feels that the entry to the parking would be most appropriate off the alley or at a minimum off of 17th Street.

The applicant has indicated that they want access off of J Street for their customers, and for ease of entry to the site. The City's Traffic Engineering staff has reviewed the proposal and accepted the access off of J Street. Planning staff also supports the J Street access, and has informed Design Review staff that NAAG is also supportive of the applicant's needs to access off of J Street.

Design Review staff still prefers access off of 17th Street or the alley. However, based on input from the applicant indicating that changing the access would severely impact their project by reducing square footage, and creating design problems with the loading dock, staff is willing to support the J Street access since there is concurrence from City Traffic Engineering, Planning staff, and community groups. In addition, the applicant has indicated that the driveway width and access opening will be reduced to 24'-0" from 29'-0". This will help mitigate the opening aesthetically. Staff requests that the Board take these issues into consideration to determine if they can support access from J Street.

3. Existing street trees will be retained, and new trees and landscaping added to enhance the streetscapes on 17th and J Streets. This is in keeping with the Board's guidelines. The drawings indicate curved planters with sod. Staff recommends that the pattern common on J Street be maintained, with rectangular planters. Any walkways that are repaved, shall be in the same color and pattern as the typical historic sidewalks in the Central City.
4. A truck dock and refuse area is proposed off of the alley. This meets the Board's criteria stating that "service access should not block the flow of pedestrians", and that "trash storage should be located in a visually unobtrusive location".

5. Mechanical equipment is proposed to be screened behind parapet walls per the Board's guidelines. Backflow prevention devices, SMUD boxes, etc., should also be placed where not visible from street views, and screened from any pedestrian view.
6. The Board's guidelines encourage exterior lighting style and design to be compatible and consistent with the building design, and that the site should be adequately illuminated for safety and security. Existing historic street lights will be retained. The parking area should have complementary lighting.
7. Sidewalks should be retained or recast in the historic score pattern and concrete color.
8. All site signage must meet the Board's criteria that signage "complement the building design".

B. Building Design

9. The applicant has redesigned the building from the proposal originally reviewed by the Board. The applicant proposes a "Dryvit" clad building with a cornice treatment at the parapet line, and a tower element with a metal roof and "antennae/spire" at the corner of 17th and J Streets. Planning staff has indicated that the applicant proposes a cellular antennae acting as a spire on the tower element. Staff has not seen any details for the proposed antennae.

The Board's guidelines state that "structures should be harmonious to the existing surroundings". Staff feels that the redesigned building fits in much better with the surrounding structures in the neighborhood. The structures on the southeast and southwest corners of J Street are in the Memorial Auditorium Preservation Area, and across the alley to the north is another Listed structure at 1700 I Street (see attached map exhibit). Although staff and the Board does not intend for the applicant to copy a building design, massing and design elements can be assimilated for a more cohesive neighborhood design.

10. A stone or tile base is proposed on the main elevations at the north and west sides, with the treatment returning slightly on the alley and interior elevations. Ornamental iron elements are proposed over the auto entrance on J Street, and also at the tower element. A color and material board will be provided for review by the Board and staff.
11. Divided lights in aluminum storefront frames of varying widths are proposed in arched elements covered with metal awnings.
12. The Board requested that the applicant maximize storefront on both the J Street and 17th Street facades. Mosaic tile artwork is proposed on J Street in place of storefront where the existing stair comes down from the upper floor. Staff recommends that an awning

be provided at this bay, and perhaps a storefront system with no glazing if allowed by code (fire stair). If it must be a solid wall, an awning should still be placed to maintain the rhythm established on that facade. Staff recommends that only one mosaic tile element be kept on the 17th street facade. The one adjacent to the alley is needed because, again, an exit stair conflicts with storefront.

13. The project entries are angled and stepped back from the corner tower element. Staff feels that the entries need better definition. The Board's guidelines state that entries must be well articulated, and clear glazing utilized to create an inviting "pedestrian edge".
14. The alley/north elevation repeats the arched pattern in the dryvit. The Board's criteria encourages designs that incorporates similar design features and level of detail on all elevations. The interior/east elevation will also have similar detailing.
15. The Board's guidelines state that decorative lighting that "complements the building design" should be provided. Some lighting has been indicated on the plans, but building and site lighting details including design, size and color are needed for Board and staff review.
16. Signage should be minimized and be placed to best complement the design and character of the building. The proposed "Office Max" sign, although probably only representational, is out of scale, and too large for the proposed massing of the building. Staff recommends that the sign as indicated be reduced by 50%.
17. The parapet wall should be designed to fully screen the cars on the parking deck, and any other roof mounted equipment. Covers are proposed for the parking deck. The cover design, color and height needs to be carefully reviewed to fit into the overall project design.

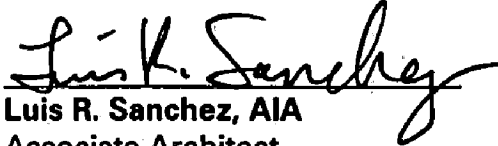
C. Public/Neighborhood/Business Association Comments

Adjacent property owners and community groups including Boulevard Park Neighborhood Association, Midtown Business Association, Mansion Flats Neighborhood Association, Fremont Park Neighborhood Association, Winn Park-Capitol Avenue Neighborhood Association, SOCA, and NAAG, were notified of this project. Staff spoke to the NAAG representative and NAAG is strongly in support of the project, including building design and auto access from J Street.

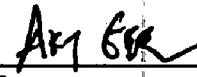
PROJECT APPROVAL PROCESS: The Board may approve or deny the project, or continue the project for more information or for redesign. The Board action may be appealed to the Planning Commission. The appeal must occur within 5 calendar days of the Design Review/Preservation Board action.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends that the Design Review and Preservation Board approve the project subject to conditions of approval and findings of fact.

Prepared by,


Luis R. Sanchez, AIA
Associate Architect

Report reviewed by,


Art Gee
Principal Planner

Attachments (Notice of Decision and Findings of Fact)

**NOTICE OF DECISIONS AND FINDINGS OF FACT FOR
PROPERTY LOCATED AT NE corner of 17th and J Streets
SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA IN THE CENTRAL CITY
DESIGN REVIEW AREA (DR98-073)**

At the regular meeting of **August 19, 1998**, the City Design Review/Preservation Board considered evidence in the above design matter. Based on verbal and documentary evidence at said hearing, the Board took the following action for the location listed above:

- * Approved the design of the proposed project.**

This action was made based on the following Findings of Fact and subject to the following conditions:

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. The project, as conditioned, enhances the surrounding neighborhood.
 2. The project, as conditioned, will complement structures in the surrounding area, and conforms with the Board's design criteria.
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CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL:

- A. The design of the site (see plans attached) is hereby approved subject to the following conditions:**
- ✓ 1. Existing street trees shall be retained as indicated on the site plan.
 - ✓ 2. Planters shall be rectangular to follow the pattern typical on J Street. Any new walkways and sidewalks shall be paved with color and design to match historic sidewalks in the Central City. The Board's landscape architect and staff shall review the final landscaping plan.
 3. The trash enclosure, transformer, and other site equipment shall be placed in the building, or screened with landscaping.
 4. All new landscaping shall be the most mature planting possible. If any trees are replaced, the minimum tree size shall be 24 inch box, with more mature shrubbery also planted.

5. All exterior light fixtures shall coordinate with the building design and style. Light standards shall be a maximum height of 14'-0". Final lighting plans shall be reviewed and approved by staff.
6. Any proposed cellular antennae shall be reviewed by staff and the Board for design, material, location, and color.
7. Bicycle parking shall be located on the site, in view from the building windows. Final design and placement shall be reviewed and approved by staff.
8. The auto access will be from J Street as proposed.
- B. The design of the building (see plans attached) is hereby approved subject to the following conditions:**
9. The building shall be constructed with smooth plaster finish, cornice treatment, and stone or tile base.
10. Final color and materials board shall be reviewed and approved by Board and staff.
11. Provide stone or tile base as proposed on the main elevations at the north and west sides, with the treatment returning slightly on the alley and interior elevations. Ornamental iron "trellis" elements shall be placed over the auto entrance on J Street, and also at the tower element.
12. Provide divided lights in aluminum storefront frames of varying widths as proposed, with arched elements covered with metal awnings. Clear glazing shall be provided.
13. The applicant shall explore the ability to provide storefront in the area where mosaic tile is proposed on J Street. An awning shall be provided at this bay. The southern mosaic tile element on 17th Street shall be replaced with storefront and awning. The one adjacent to the alley is needed because an exit stair conflicts with storefront.
14. The project entries, currently indicated angled and stepped back from the corner tower element, shall be revisited to provide greater definition to the entrance to the project and to meet the Board's guidelines that state that entries must be well articulated, and clear glazing utilized to create an inviting "pedestrian edge".
15. The alley/north elevation and interior/east elevation shall repeat the arched pattern in the dryvit.
16. Some lighting has been indicated on the plans, but building and site lighting details including design, size, location and color shall be provided for review and approval by staff and the Board.

17. Signage shall be minimized and placed to best complement the design and character of the building. The proposed "Office Max" sign indicated on the plans shall be reduced by 50% to relate better to the facade. A final signage program shall be reviewed and approved by staff.
18. The parapet wall shall be designed to fully screen the cars on the parking deck, and any other roof mounted equipment.
19. The applicant shall provide details for the proposed parking deck covers for review by the Board and staff.
20. All required new and revised plans shall be submitted for review and approval of staff prior to issuance of building permits. A set of the appropriate plans shall be submitted directly to Design Review staff. Any necessary planning entitlements shall have been approved by the Planning Commission or the Zoning Administrator prior to final Design Review sign off of plans.
21. The approval shall be deemed automatically revoked unless required permits have been issued and construction begun within two years of the date of the approval. Prior to expiration, an extension of time may be granted by the Board upon written request of the applicant.
22. Final occupancy shall be subject to approval by Design Review staff and shall involve an on site inspection.

ATTEST:

Design Review/Preservation Board Staff**ADVISORY NOTES**

APPROVAL BY THE DESIGN REVIEW/PRESERVATION BOARD DOES NOT RELIEVE THE APPLICANT OF THE RESPONSIBILITY TO MEET REQUIREMENTS OF ALL ZONING ORDINANCES AND BUILDING CODES. FINAL PLANS SUBMITTED TO THE CITY FOR A BUILDING PERMIT WILL INCLUDE ALL CHANGES REQUIRED AS CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL BY THE BOARD.

THE CHANGES WILL BE SHOWN BY DRAWING REVISIONS AND/OR BY NOTATION, WHICHEVER IS MORE APPLICABLE. PLANS WHICH HAVE OMISSIONS WILL BE RETURNED TO THE APPLICANT FOR CORRECTION AND WILL NOT BE PROCESSED. THE APPLICANT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY TIME LOST DUE TO INCOMPLETE PLANS. NO EXCEPTIONS WILL BE MADE. THE APPLICANT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY DELAYS RESULTING FROM NONCOMPLIANCE WITH CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL.