
Cox Cadillac – 230 Bay Place

May 12, 2004

230 Bay Place, Cox Cadillac Site: Design Review of an Amendment to an Approved design review consisting of the elimination of the residential component of the project and the redesign and enlargement of the grocery store component from a 28,300 sq. ft. addition to a 44,300 sq. ft. addition to the rear of the 11,700 sq. ft. Landmark Cox Cadillac showroom, including a two-story parking structure, with the upper level as an open, roof parking area. Historic and cultural resource issues as they relate to showroom building and new construction adjacent to showroom building. The existing Landmark Cox Cadillac showroom would be rehabilitated as previously approved, with a modification to the location of the elevator/stair circulation within the showroom, and an addition of a porte cochere.

INTRODUCTION

The 230 Bay Place, Cox Cadillac site proposal, approved by the Planning Commission on March 3, 2004, has been modified and redesigned. This revised, approved project is before the Planning Commission Design Review Committee for Design Review and comments and recommendations to the full Planning Commission. The LPAB will review the revisions at their May 10, 2004 meeting and their comments and recommendations will be reported to the Planning Commission at the May 12th meeting. Since the approval, the applicant has revised the project to eliminate the residential component of the project - up to 125 dwelling units, has enlarged and redesigned the proposed grocery store component from a 28,300 sq. ft. addition to a 44,300 sq. ft. addition to the rear of the 11,700 sq. ft. Landmark Cox Cadillac showroom, including a two-story parking structure, with the upper level as an open, roof parking area. Staff is recommending that the Design Review Committee discuss design issues and make recommendations to the full Planning Commission.

BACKGROUND

Previously Approved Project-AvalonBay

The City of Oakland Planning Commission certified an environmental impact report and approved the AvalonBay Communities Residential Project for this site on December 5, 2001. The approved project rehabilitated the former Cox Cadillac showroom for commercial uses and residents' common areas, with demolition of the shed buildings related to the showroom, and called for construction of a seven-story residential structure on approximately two acres in the Adams Point Neighborhood. The approved project contained five residential levels built above a two-level parking garage podium,

constructed to the north and east of the historic auto showroom. The approved project consisted of 176 residential units and 322 parking spaces. The project site is generally bounded by Bay Place, Harrison Street, Vernon Street, and private properties on the south and west of Vernon Terrace and the Vernon Terrace steps. The site steps upslope from Bay Place to Vernon Terrace.

Current Approved Proposal-Grocery with Residential

Subsequent to the City's approval of the AvalonBay project, Bond Companies assumed control of the project site and is the project sponsor of the project proposal, approved by the Planning Commission in March, 2004. This plan called for consideration of up to 125 residential units in a series of two- to four-story residential structures over a three-story parking garage podium. The proposal would "L" around the auto showroom and demolish the shed structures along Harrison Street. The former Cox Cadillac showroom (11,000 square feet) would be rehabilitated with an addition to the rear (29,000 square feet) for a 40,000 square foot retail grocery store use (Whole Foods Market). The parking podium would contain a total of 349 parking spaces on three levels.

CURRENT REVISED PROPOSAL

The revisions to the approved project include:

- Elimination of the residential units and podium open space;
- Enlargement of the grocery store addition from a 28,300 sq. ft. addition to a 44,300 sq. ft. (net increase of 16,000 sq. ft.) addition to the rear of the 11,700 sq. ft. Landmark Cox Cadillac showroom;
- Redesign of the addition architecture, including materials, colors, parking, landscape;
- Relocation of parking entries, truck loading;
- Relocation of the stair/elevator element in the Cox Cadillac historic showroom.

Please note that concept development drawings, including all elevations, sections, material indications, and landscape plan, were submitted in time for the packet delivery, but not in time to be reviewed by staff for this report. A color and materials board will be submitted at the meeting. Please see Attachment for previous approved project Planning Commission report and drawings.

GENERAL PLAN - HISTORIC PRESERVATION ELEMENT (Required Findings)

Historic Status

The site is a historic resource because it is listed on the Local Register of Historic Resources. Since the previous AvalonBay project, the City of Oakland designated the Cox Cadillac Showroom as an historical landmark on April 9, 2002.

General Plan

Because the auto repair sheds (which have been demolished) are considered historic properties, the City's Historic Preservation Element of the General Plan requires the City, when considering a decision on the project, to make certain findings. According to Policy 3.5 in the Historic Preservation Element, one of three findings must be made when a discretionary approval will result in the demolition of historic property.

For any property involving complete demolition of Heritage Properties or Potential Designated Historic Properties requiring discretionary City permits, the City will make a finding that:

- (1) the design quality of the proposed project is at least equal to that of the original structure and is compatible with the character of the neighborhood; or
- (2) the public benefits of the proposed project outweigh the benefit of retaining the original structure; or
- (3) the existing design is undistinguished and does not warrant retention and the proposed design is compatible with the character of the neighborhood.

This revised proposal must also meet the findings. The demolition of the sheds has moved forward under the previous project approval (Avalon Bay), subject to the required mitigation measures and conditions of approval and the Policy 3.5 findings based on the most recent proposal approved at the March 3, 2004 Planning Commission. Staff made these findings based on the March 3, 2004 approved proposal. The revisions to the approved project would also have to meet the Policy 3.5 findings.

Without more detailed drawings, staff cannot evaluate the project to determine if the above findings (#1 –design quality) can be made. The public benefits including a major new grocery store in the central core of the City, and the rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of a City Landmark could meet finding #2.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Modifications to Previously Approved Historic Rehabilitation of the Cox Cadillac Showroom

- Relocation of stair/elevator: The revision to the approval relocates the interior stair/elevator, leading from the showroom check-out area to the roof parking level above, in the historic Cox Showroom from a somewhat central location to the northeast corner of the showroom. Staff believes this location improves the interior historic space because it will not break up the interior space, due to its corner location. Since the stair/elevator is proposed at this corner, the Committee might discuss the possibility of moving the stair/elevator to the east, completely outside of the Showroom, allowing the historic showroom to remain completely open.
- Addition of Porte Cochere to the Showroom: A porte cochere to the roof level parking area has been added at the upper rear side of the building. Since the initial revised submittal this has been revised in form and height so that it does not project above the ridge of the roof. The historic analysis will discuss this addition.
- Main entry doors added on east elevation: The LPAB sub-committee reviewed the initial revised concept and suggested that this entry include double doors. This elevation was not included in the initial concept drawings. This facade elevation will be provided on the drawings to be submitted.

EIR Mitigations

Staff has outlined below two Mitigations that need review with the current modified submittal. For a complete discussion of all mitigations, see attached report.

Conformance with Secretary of Interior Standards

The certified EIR found one impact which could be affected by the revised submittal, as follows:

- E.1 The proposed project would rehabilitate the historic auto showroom. This is a significant but mitigable impact.

Mitigation Measure E.1: Final building permit plans and specifications for the auto showroom shall be reviewed and confirmed to be in conformance with the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation by a qualified historical architect identified by the City of Oakland.

Implementation of these measures would reduce Impact E.1 to less-than-significant.

Current Revisions: The Planning Commission will have the opportunity to review a revised historic resource report by the architectural historic consultant which will be submitted prior to the meeting to determine if the revisions effect this Mitigation.

Inclusion of Harrison Street Canopy-like gateway

E.2 The proposed project would demolish the Harrison Street Shed and two contributing, historic automobile service sheds to the north of the showroom building. This would be a significant and unavoidable impact.

Mitigation Measure E.2c: A canopy shall be constructed for the Harrison Street steps, and such design will be sensitive to the history of the site itself. The design will use the existing car stop at the intersection of Oakland Avenue and Perkins Alley as a Design reference.

Current Proposal: The developer of the AvalonBay project had committed to “construct a canopy-like gateway to help define the Harrison Street steps located to the immediate north of the project site. The design will be sensitive and complement both the auto showroom and the new construction.” The new developer, The Bond Companies, has committed to this mitigation measure with the approval and previous drawings. Although this detail is not shown on the current elevations, it will be required as part of the approved project.

DESIGN REVIEW (Required Findings)

Design Review is required for designated Landmarks under Section 17.102.030B of the Planning Code. Design review approval may be granted subject to the determination that the proposal conforms to 1) and 2) below or to one or both of the criteria in 3).

- 1) That the proposal will not adversely affect the exterior features of the designated landmark;
- 2) That the proposal will not adversely affect the special character, interest, or value of the landmark and its site, as viewed both in themselves and in their settings;
- 3) If the proposal does not conform to the criteria set forth in subdivisions 1 and 2:
 - a) That the designated landmark or portion thereof is in such condition that it is not architecturally feasible to preserve or restore it, or
 - b) That, considering the economic feasibility of alternatives to the proposal, and balancing the interest of the public in protecting the designated landmark or portion thereof, and the interest of the owner of the landmark site in the utilization thereof, approval is required by consideration of equity.

LPAB Comments from review of previous proposal – February 9, 2004

The Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board reviewed the proposal at the LPAB February 9, 2004 meeting. The Board unanimously recommended Design Review

approval to the Planning Commission subject to the following Board comments and Board comments/direction regarding staff concerns:

- Request historical plaques to be placed in the elevator lobby, perhaps the two photographs that were shown by the applicant at this meeting.
- Request that the applicant work with Whole Foods (grocery store) to pursue transparency for the elevator/stair assembly.
- Request to insure that the exterior stucco texture showed on the Cox Cadillac showroom.
- Request that applicant review and consider the type of roofing that is used, including looking at rolled roofing or shingle roofing as an alternate to the proposed metal roof.
- The fire exits be designed so as not to look exactly like other windows, in order to avoid false historicism.
- To locate the mechanical so that it is not visible from views above.
- To include staff's recommendations regarding signage:
 - Applicant shall submit a sign program (subject to Chapter 17.104 – General Limitations on Signs and Ordinance 12563 – New Sign Regulations Effective December 17, 2002) for review and evaluation.
 - Window signs shall be limited to Oakland's Small Project Design Guidelines Section 1.7. – Maximum window sign area is 20% of any single window, and 10% of the aggregate ground floor window area, but no more than twelve square feet per window.
 - Require that any sign lighting is directed away or shielded from view of residential units.
- To vary heights along the Harrison Street façade only if both staff and applicant see this as an issue.
- Support elevations as presented.
- Support color as presented.
- Leave discretion of computer generated wall paper vs. stenciling to the discretion of the applicants. The LPAB is comfortable with a wall paper approach.

Planning Commission Design Review – February 11, 2004

The Planning Commission Design Review Committee reviewed the project at their February 11, 2004 meeting. The Committee strongly supported the design and did not recommend any revisions.

LPAB Sub-committee comments on revisions – April 6, 2004

The major differences between the approved project and the revised project are outlined on page 2 of this report. The LPAB Cox Cadillac subcommittee (Gilmartin, Hooks, Lee) reviewed the revisions to the approval, the concept drawings, on April 6, 2004 and made the following comments.

- The port cochere height should be lowered to below the ridge of the showroom building.
This elevation/section has not been included with the most recent submittal dated 4/22/04.
- The shape of the porte cochere should duplicate the shape of the entries along Bay Place (not a hip gable shape).
This elevation/section has not been included with the most recent submittal dated 4/22/04.
- Lower height of stair/sign tower to below height of showroom. The architect should explain why there are two stairs adjacent to each other.
 - Should echo proportions of entries along Bay Place
 - Should be of different materials*The applicant has eliminated the sign tower from the proposal.*
- Add parking lot trellises with vines to break up vast expanse of the parking lot and to mark the edges of the parking lot.
This is shown on the parking lot plan dated 4/22/04. Materials, elevations, sections and integral planting details have not been submitted at the time of the writing of this report.
- There is a traffic problem with the current parking lot single entry;
A second entry has been added at the northeast corner of the site. The first floor parking area has been limited to employees only. The traffic study will analyze the new proposal, indicate any impacts, and make recommendations for modifications to the full Planning Commission for their consideration.
- What is the material along the solid bays along Harrison (should not be metal grates); Please submit catalogue cut and material sample; should be integrated with vines;
The architect has indicated that the trellises would be wood and that integral planting would be included in the landscape design.
- Signage
 - Ridge sign should be neon with antique gasses
 - Signage program to be submitted*The previous Conditions of Approval and LPAB recommendations address signage.*
- Show outdoor plaza area as shown on previous submittal.
This is included in the current submittal dated 4/22/04.
- Door along showroom east façade; show in elevation; should be double doors and centered;
This elevation has not been submitted at the time of the writing of this report.

- Show height/articulation of mechanical room on parking lot roof. How is it buffered from homes to rear? From parking lot?

This elevation has not been submitted at the time of the writing of this report.

- Although foam cornices are *standard*, this requires landmark design review findings that the design quality of the proposed project is at least equal to that of the original structure.

The applicant has indicated that the foam cornice would be covered with smooth cement plaster to imitate stone. See discussion under 'Issues'.

- Study layering of storefronts and enframing elements along Harrison Street; *The architect indicated that a typical wall section(s) would be included with the next submittal. Tile would be used for the base along Harrison. Elevations along Vernon Street would include enhancements to the blank wall to provide pedestrian interest and texture.*

- Submit catalogue cuts of proposed garage doors for three bays along Harrison Street.

The architects indicated that a color and material board would be submitted at the meeting.

ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION

Findings for Historic Preservation Element/Roof Termination

For any property involving complete demolition of Heritage Properties or Potential Designated Historic Properties requiring discretionary City permits, the City will make a finding that:

- (1) the design quality of the proposed project is at least equal to that of the original structure and is compatible with the character of the neighborhood; or
- (2) the public benefits of the proposed project outweigh the benefit of retaining the original structure; or
- (3) the existing design is undistinguished and does not warrant retention and the proposed design is compatible with the character of the neighborhood.

The current revision to the Cox Cadillac shed replacement design proposes a foam cornice. The applicant indicated that it would be finished with smooth plaster to look like stone. It is staff's understanding and experience that foam (or fiber reinforced foam) does not result in crisp, hard edges that would be derived from wood, metal or concrete; does not hold up well over time due to water intrusion, and is easily damaged. Also, the foam cornice would not be significantly differentiated from the proposed façade stucco material. It would only differ with respect to texture, as it is proposed to be a smooth plaster finish rather than a rough plaster finish which is proposed for the remainder of the façade walls. It does not offer sufficient relief to the façade. Foam is currently an overused material where many alternative choices are available. While foam cornices are used extensively on many new commercial developments and grocery stores, it should be

taken into consideration that typically these sites are viewed primarily from an auto-oriented, quick and distant view, rather than an urban pedestrian-oriented, close-up view. Both the urban close-up view and the close proximity of the historical showroom demand more attention to detail, quality, definition and variation of materials to enhance visual interest.

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission discuss the use of foam as a cornice material, especially in light of the above finding for 'quality' design. On a recent LPAB project review of a replacement building for a demolished historic resource and requiring the same findings (388 12th Street) the Board required GFRC (Glass Fiber Reinforced Concrete) for horizontal bands and cornices. GFRC is a material that has the appearance of stone. It is segmented, crisp and durable. As an alternative for the project (380 12th Street) reviewed by the Board, the applicant had proposed FRP (Fiber Reinforced Plastic) as an alternate choice, a material with crisp hard edges and a smooth finish. However, the Board unanimously recommended the higher quality material, GFRC. Staff believes that the Cox Cadillac sheds' replacement building should merit the same quality treatment, and recommends that other materials be explored where foam is proposed.

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission review this issue and give staff direction on the type of cornice material to be used.

Reuse of Historic Cox Cadillac Exterior doors along Bay Place

Previously, the Planning Commission recommended that these doors be used as main entry doors to the residential complexes at the podium level. The Planning Commission may wish to make other suggested uses or recommend that they be stored at the site for future possible use.

Protection of Existing Oak Tree at northeastern most corner of project

The previous approval required the applicant to submit a Tree Protection Plan for the existing Oak Tree to remain (at northeast corner of property), prepared by a licensed arborist, to be reviewed by the Planning Director. It is not clear from the current conceptual submittal, with the additional driveway access along Vernon, if this tree can be retained. Please see Sheet L-1 dated 2/4/04 of the previous approved project. Staff suggests that the Planning Commission discuss and give direction on whether this tree is important to retain.

Possibility of locating the stair/elevator assembly outside the showroom

The revision to the project will relocate the interior stair/elevator, leading from the showroom check-out area to the roof parking level above, in the historic Cox Showroom from a somewhat central location to the northeast corner of the showroom. Staff believes this location improves the continuity of the interior historic space because it will not break it up. Since the stair/elevator is proposed at this corner, the Planning Commission might discuss the possibility of moving the stair/elevator to the east, completely outside of the showroom, allowing the historic showroom to remain completely open.

Addition of Porte Cochere to Historic Cox Cadillac showroom

The revision to the project includes the addition of a porte cochere located at the roof parking level. Staff understands that the architect is redesigning the initial porte cochere design to lower its height below the ridge of the showroom building so that it is not visible from the front façade. The consultant's historical analysis will discuss this addition.

Review of Submittal 5-4-05 (subsequent to writing of this report)

Staff recommends that the Design Review Committee carefully review the following items to be submitted subsequent to the writing of this report to insure that the required Policy 3.5 and Design Review findings can be made:

- color, as it impacts the historic Cox Cadillac showroom;
- porte cochere height and design;
- addition base tile selection(s);
- roof parking trellises, design, materials, details, location;
- garage door selection- design, materials;
- layering of wall section and storefront enframing elements to provide pedestrian interest;
- height and articulation of mechanical on roof;
- trellis materials and design at the blank walls along Harrison;
- Showroom entry door along East façade
- Articulation and enhancement of solid parking walls along Vernon to add pedestrian interest.

RECOMMENDATION

1. Receive any testimony from the applicant and interested citizens;
2. Review and comment on the design. Review all exterior elevations, materials, color and material boards, landscape plan, and details submitted (submitted subsequent to the writing of this staff report).
3. Discuss outlined issues of concern, and recommended areas for review of developed design concept and give direction to staff on these and any other issues raised by the Committee.
4. Based on the above review and discussion, make recommendations to staff regarding the required findings for Historic Preservation Element - Policy 3.5: Historic Preservation and Discretionary Permit Approvals and Design Review.
5. Based on the above review and discussion, make recommendations to the full Planning Commission regarding the proposed revisions to the approved project.

Respectfully submitted:

Claudia Cappio
Director of Development

Prepared by:

Joann Pavlinec, Planner III
Major Projects and Historic Preservation

Attachments: A: Plans, Elevations, Sections, dated submitted '5/5/04
B. Historic Narrative
C. Staff Report 3/3/04 with Plans, Elevations, Sections