

**MEETING MINUTES OF THE  
HERITAGE PRESERVATION BOARD  
September 5, 2019**

**ROLL CALL**

Chair Storek called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Present: Board Members: Knorpp, Storek, Hobbel, Lanctot, Culhane, Cappelletti (arrived at 8:15 PM)

Absent: Board Member(s): None

Staff: Planning Director Neal Toft, Kristin Teiche, Senior Planner/Recording Secretary

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

**PLANNING STAFF'S ORAL REPORT**

Sr. Planner Teiche informed the Board that 116 and 126 Magnolia Avenue may be up for sale in the near future.

**PUBLIC HEARING ITEM**

**1. DR/DP/CAP/UP/V/HTEX/GP/LLA #17-05; Richard Perlstein, Polsky Perlstein Architects, Applicant; Archdiocese of San Francisco, owner; 120 King Street, Larkspur; Assessor's Parcel No.: 020-261-15, 34, 35 & 36; R-3 (Third Residential) and SD (Storefront Downtown) Zoning District.** The applicant is requesting permits to allow construction of a new two-story Jr. High School building totaling 14,109 sq. ft. (9,406 sq. ft. above grade, and a 4,703 square foot subterranean basement) on the St. Patrick's School campus.

Sr. Planner Teiche presented the staff report.

Board Member Lanctot asked about the historic district boundaries and whether the ratio of contributing and noncontributing buildings is a concern.

Sr. Planner Teiche responded that in her discussions with the State Office of Historic Preservation, the actual ratio of contributing verses noncontributing buildings in a district is less an issue than inappropriate new construction along the street corridor that visually disrupts or substantially alters the existing character of the district. Alternations of that nature are what could cause the District to become unqualified to remain on the National Register.

Board Member Culhane asked for clarification on whether they can consider views of the building from the Locust Street frontage.

Sr. Planner Teiche indicated that the Locust Street frontage is outside of the historic overlay and the SD zoning district, which are the two district in which the Board has review authority.

Planning Director Toft noted that this is an unusual circumstance, as only a small portion of the building extends into the SD/H zoning districts. This small projection is the reason the project is subject to Board review.

Board Member Lanctot asked again about contributing verses noncontributing structures. She thought the State requires up to 80% of the historic district to be contributing structures. In the future, will the district be in jeopardy if more noncontributing structures are added along the street corridor.

Sr. Planner Teiche responded that in her discussions with State of California preservation staff, it is not specifically a numbers game. Once the historic district is established what would disqualify the district would be inappropriate in-fill additions that substantially impact the quality and character of the corridor.

Board Member Lanctot questions if the building would not count as in-fill because of its distance from the Magnolia Ave frontage? Planner Teiche responded that the City's historic architect concluded that it would not have a significant impact on the historic corridor.

Board Member Culhane asked for more clarity on the limits of their review authority. If this building were completely in the R-3 zoning district, but still visible from Magnolia Avenue would the Board have review authority?

Sr. Planner Teiche responded that if the structure were outside of the SD/H overlay zoning district, but staff found there may be an impact on the historic district due to its visibility from Magnolia Avenue, then staff would raise this issue with the Planning Commission as part of their review.

Planning Director Toft informed the Board that the application is complete and the City has initiated a review process that is subject to a time-line to comply with Permit Streamlining. An initial study has been prepared and this document, as well as the project, will be publicly noticed for a hearing date of October 22, 2019.

There being no more questions of staff, the Chair then asked for a presentation by the applicant.

Mr. Ron Pattani, project director for the St. Patrick's School project, provided the Board with an explanation of how they got to this application.

- This is the first time the school has expanded since 1960's;
- Critical for the vitality of the school and to meet the needs of the school, as well as the needs of a modern education programs for K-8;
- A separate middle school will provide middle school kids the ability to see they have stepped up and moved on;
- The intention is to be complimentary and compatible with the existing structure;
- Wish to be a respectful partner with the City while meeting the needs of the school;
- They have made every effort to be transparent. They have offered to cap the proposed enrollment;
- The design elements reflect the needs of the school, teaching staff, and desires of the parents.
- This project will be funded 100% by the school, not the archdiocese. The interior spaces, which add to the volume and height, are all considered to be essential must have elements for the school.

Richard Perlstein, project architect made the following comments:

- He identified the extent of the project that extended into the H/SD zoning districts;
- The design began with understanding the needs of the school and the limits of the site;
- A main design factor is the relocation of the primary entry to Locust Ave;
- New design improves circulation on site with new stairways outside and inside the building;
- Building is split level to work with the grade change of the site;
- Massing of structure is influenced by 12-foot ceiling heights, which are needed to provide natural light to the classrooms;
- Building design is intended to read similarly to existing school structures, but also add a modern, open, light filled, main entry;
- The placement of the structure completes the upper parking/play yard and makes it feel more like a square. The school has daily assembly in this area;
- It was the desire of the school to add landscaping. New landscape area is added at the proposed main entry.
- Did not wish to “ape” the existing school, but be a “good neighbor”.

Chair Storek asked if any Board Members have questions.

Board Member Lanctot asked for clarity on the concept of the square at the upper parking lot.

Board Member Culhane asked for clarity on the portion of the structure that requires the requested height exception and what the height of the structure would be when viewed from Magnolia Avenue.

Board Member Knorpp requested staff explain how height is measured. He then asked the applicant to explain what “take-a-ways” they had from the comments provided during the previous study session with the Heritage Board.

The applicant and Mr. Patani indicated they did not take any clear direction from the study session, and therefore made no changes in the design. Board Member Knorpp disagreed and indicated he believed the Board provided some clear direction. Mr. Patani stated they were not given any direction from staff to make specific changes. He apologized for the misunderstanding.

Board Member Lanctot asked if there would be a basement in this design. The applicant confirmed a below grade basement is proposed.

There being no more questions, Chair Storek asked for comment from the public.

Eric Miller, 117 King Street (across the street from the school). He referenced a letter from his neighbors to be sure the Board received it. The Board confirmed they did.

Mr. Miller then provided the following comments:

- This is a substantial building that will have a substantial impact on the downtown;
- He is upset that there was no outreach at all from the school with the immediate neighbors;
- He was surprised that there was a prior study session as it was not noticed;
- This is not an attractive building;
- It's made to mimic the unattractive school building, and could be a lot better;
- He objected to the height exception that exceeds permitted height by 5 feet;

- He asked how the Board could view this without story poles;
- Understands this is a school and the school must function, but poles could have been installed in the summer;
- He thought the building should be redesigned before it goes forward.

Ron Patani responded to Mr. Miller's comments by noting that he personally delivered an outreach notice to properties located immediately around the school, and the school held a meeting to present the project. He felt they did everything they did could to be transparent.

Mr. Miller noted he and his neighbors did not receive this notice.

Board Member Knorpp noted the applicant was out of turn and asked that the applicant wait to respond until after all public comment has been provided.

Marilyn River, 120 Pepper Avenue, and owner of 131 King Street.

- This is the first she has heard about this project. Delivering notices to a home does not mean the property owner will receive it, as some do not live in their homes;
- She is concerned that the proposed building will impact her view over the top of existing church buildings to the hills beyond;
- She is disappointed to not have story poles to make a determination;
- She hopes the design will be compatible with historic district while still being visually identifiable as a new structure;
- She is concerned about an increase in the parking requirements, as the school tends to use much of the parking lot as a playground.

There being no additional public comment, the Chair asked if the applicant wished to respond to the public comments.

Ron Patani made the following comments:

- They tried to let everyone know. They received the mailing list from City staff and he personally walked around King Street and Locust and placed a notice in individual mail boxes;
- The school is trying to be transparent.
- He noted they are going through the process as directed by the City. Story poles will happen. The school respects the neighbors.

Planning Director Toft added that the City is about to begin the more formal notification process for the Initial Study and project hearings. This will include advance notice of the story pole schedule.

The Board Members then questioned the applicant on the details of their effort to conduct public outreach.

Chair Storek asked if there were any additional public comments. Being none he closed the public hearing portion and brought the discussion to the dais.

Board Member Culhane commented on the study session on October 17 and her recollection was that the design was a work in progress. She has looked at the building location from Magnolia and determined the building will be visible. She also notes that the primary item that screens the structure

is a tree, which will not last forever. She is concerned about the height of the building when viewed from Magnolia Ave.

Board Member Knorpp indicated that he has personally been involved in several development projects for schools and is supportive of them, understands the challenges of fundraising, and the applicants have an excellent architect.. He noted that his recollection (of the study session) was that the Board provided some fairly clear direction regarding the proposed design being incompatible with the historic building on-site and the historic district. He was disappointed that the applicants have not modified the architecture to address their comments.

Board Member Lanctot also stated she remembered providing comments asking for more compatibility with the historic structures on site and in the vicinity. She felt that there was too much effort to be compatible with the existing school building, and a greater effort to bring in elements of the historic structures would make the design more interesting.

Board Member Hobbel agreed the site is challenging due to the various dimensions they are trying to accommodate. He does not see that there will be a direct impact on the historic district. His concerns are related more to traffic and parking.

Chair Storek also noted he remembers the Board providing suggestions for modifications to the architectural design. He is concerned that the public process feels rushed, and that the Board is holding a design review hearing with no story poles. He also finds that the building design does not defer to the historic structures in the vicinity. He is also concerned regarding the environment of the school itself for the students. He likes a lot of things about the proposed landscaping and building, but believes it could make more effort to work with the historic structures in the district.

Board Member Knorpp noted he could not recall if there had been any transportation study or parking study completed for the school. He recalls that during the study session, the Board had asked if there was any possibility of the church/school allowing commercial parking on the school grounds in the evenings after the school is closed, to better support the downtown merchants. He asked if staff had a clearer recollection of this discussion.

Senior Planner Teiche indicated she had a vague recollection this was brought up, but did not really recall the discussion.

Board Member Culhane commented that she agreed with the other Board Members and that it would be beneficial for the building to visually tie into the historic character of its surroundings. She again pointed out the east facing elevation, which she found would be most visible from Magnolia Avenue, and stated she sees it as a wall and it would appear “pretty stark”, or “bleak”, facing toward the downtown district.

Chair Storek addressed the findings required for a positive recommendation on the project. He felt Finding 1 and 4 were relevant, and he was concerned about these findings with regard to the buildings compatibility with the historic downtown.

Board Member Knorpp asked about Finding No. 5 for clarity. Senior Planner Teiche noted that the Historic Architect had determined she did not find the location and design to conflict with the National Register Standards. If the Board did not agree with her, they could take this finding up as well.

Architect Richard Perlstein addressed the evaluation by the historic architect, and noted it appeared the Board must determine if they agree with the historic architect or not.

Chair Storek read a portion of the letter and noted that she states that the building would “not appear to have a large negative impact on the historic district”, which he found to be “faint praise”. He further noted that she also concluded that it would be preferable to have a design that is more compatible with the historic church, but that the “district is not largely impacted by the project”.

Board Member Culhane stated that based on the wording of her conclusion, the Board has room to address the issue of its compatibility with the historic church buildings on the site.

Board Member Lanctot asked if the architect considered options for a more historically compatible design.

Architect Richard Perlstein responded by stating that during their early design considerations, they opted not to “ape” the historic design but only to echo certain elements so the design would be compatible. He was not sure that architecturally matching the church design was the best approach. He cautioned everyone about designing a horse by committee. He is not sure that mimicking the church is the right precedent.

Chair Storek agreed that “aping” the church building is not the goal. The sentiment he is hearing is that the building is falling short of owning up to its neighbors.

Board Member Knorpp pointed out that this would not be the first time, or last, they did not directly follow the conclusion of the historic architect during their deliberations. The Board is offering clues to make the building more compatible in its current location. During the study session they asked about possible locations outside the SD/H overlay district. He believes the comments raised would not be terribly costly and would result in a more compatible design.

Board Member Culhane noted that the building is oriented toward the west and Locust St. She is concerned that the plain blank 30-foot wall of the east end feels like the building is backing up to the historic district. She feels their charge is to insure the integration of the building into the historic district. It does not have to “ape” the building nearby, just be part of the downtown.

Chair Storek reviewed the options for a recommendation by the Board. Planning Director Toft provided clarification on how the Board may approach their recommendation with regard to the required findings.

Board Member Lanctot noted it is difficult to describe how the Board would like the building to be more compatible with the church and rectory in some level of detail.

Board Member Knorpp stated he is uncomfortable recommending approval. He believes the schools intentions are worthy, but the design needs modification to gain a recommendation for approval.

Board Member Hobbel stated that he believes the Board is finding an issue with compatibility with the historic district. He suggested the recommendation could be that the Board can make Finding 2-5, but Finding 1 is not met.

Board Member Knorpp suggested the recommendation be modified to indicate neither Finding 1 or 4 have been met. He believes 4 is equally important and applicable as 1.

Board member Fran Cappalletti joined the Board at 8:15 PM.

Board Member Lanctot agreed that Findings 1 and 4 are in question. She again expressed concern about the east facing wall.

Board Member Knorpp stated he will try a motion:

He moved that the Board neither recommend approval or denial of the project, but suggest that the applicant consider changes consistent with the feedback from tonight's meeting that would address concerns with respect to compatibility to adjacent structures, to the possible loss of landscape treatment, that the primary facades of concern are the eastern, northern façade and the height of the building as it enters the historic district, and that the applicant should consider appropriate treatments, that would be more compatible with the architectural character of the district that would make it more compatible with structures of historic quality. He then stopped and asked if his motion was correctly identifying the concerns of the other Board Members

Board Member Hobbel stated he was in general agreement but questioned the wording with regard to historic compatibility with other buildings.

Board Member Knorpp stated that he only meant that it should not match the existing school building.

Board Member Hobbel then asked if the building should have historic character, or that it blends in with the historic character around it.

Chair Storek stated that he believes the Board Members are looking for an architectural design that respond to historic structures in the close proximity, better than it does now.

Board Member Lanctot noted that this sounded like a simpler motion and asked if the Chair like to try a new motion.

Board member Hobbel agreed it's simpler but less instructive. He asked if the motion could be more specific and provide guidance to be more helpful to the applicant.

Board Member Knorpp asked for guidance from the Planning Director. The Planning Director noted that the motion was started, but the additional commentary was making it hard to track where the motion is going. He recommended that someone restate the motion.

Chair Storek asked if the applicant would like to offer any information for this discussion. Planning Director Toft asked the Chair for clarification on what he was looking for from the applicant. Chair Storek suggested the applicant may be able to address a specific issue and respond, which may help the Board formulate a motion.

Architect Richard Perlstein noted there are many ideas going through his head. He did not wish to obstruct the classroom design inside or change window locations. He was open to evoking aspects of another historic building, but he is not sure how to guide the Board. He then re-reviewed the reasoning for the existing building location and design. He noted there are things they can do with surface, texture and shadow. He hoped to hear the Board offer some ideas that they could go with.

Board Member Culhane asked about the placement of a second floor closet at the northeast corner. This is a visible portion of the building from Magnolia and they have placed a closet there. She asked if the architect could offer a more interesting design feature, such as a window to break up the blank wall plane.

Architect Richard Perlstein expressed interest in the Board providing suggestions and asked that they provide specific ideas that they can take a look at.

Board Member Culhane asked for additional guidance from the Planning Director. Director Toft explained the various design details and program aspects the Commission may consider. Director Toft noted that if the Board does not wish to provide specific suggestions for design amendments, it is acceptable to indicate that the Board does not find the building meets certain findings and then state why so the Commission can consider if they agree and the applicant and Commission may explore ways to address the Board's concerns.

Board Member Culhane noted she believes the Board is generally in favor of the project with some modifications. The board can identify the changes they recommend and the Commission can incorporate their Board recommendation into their decision.

The Board then further discussed the aspects they wished to address in their motion.

Board Member Knorpp then withdrew his previous motion and made the following new motion:

*M/s Knorpp/Hobbel moved and approved 5-1 (Board Member Cappelletti abstained), that the project is not yet ready for the Boards approval and the Board recommend the applicant consider alterations to the east and north elevations that would address concerns stated herein tonight with respect to articulation and fenestration to address concerns regarding historic compatibility, the potential loss of landscape resources that would open views of the building from the street, and consider if the proposed 4.5 foot height exception is appropriate in the historic district. Further, the Board finds that the design does not meet Findings 1 and 4, therefore, the Board does not provide a formal recommendation of approval or denial.*

Planning Director Toft stated that the project will be publicly noticed for the upcoming hearing and availability of the Negative Declaration and Initial Study. The public notice will inform the public that the story poles will only be installed for a two week period.

## **BUSINESS ITEMS**

### 2. Board Member Reports.

- Jon Hobbel provided the board members with identification badges he prepared to assist the Board Members in identifying themselves during the course of their duties.
- Chair Storek also announced that Board Member Cappelletti posted historic interview videos on Vimeo which is linked to the City website.
- Board Member Culhane provided the Board with an update on the video project to film a short portion of the walking tour offered by Richard and Sue Cunningham. The videographer should have more time after October.
- Window replacement in historic buildings. Planner Teiche asked for guidance from the Board regarding home owner requests to change out windows. She explained the policy she typically provides. Her question was whether the Board is open to allowing replacement of historic windows on any elevation with energy efficient windows that are designed to match the historic detailing. Planning Director Toft noted that City's are currently attempting to address

climate change and reducing the carbon footprint of homes through improved energy efficiency. He stated it is hard to defend the retention of inefficient windows. Board Member Lanctot noted that the City has replaced the majority of the historic windows in City Hall with matching energy efficient windows, so she thinks it would be appropriate to approach individual residential resources in a similar manner. Board Member Knorpp indicated he has personal experience with this matter for his home and commercial building. He agreed that the Board should take an approach that allows the applicants to retain the historic character and design details of the windows, but allow for new energy efficient windows. Chair Storek also agreed. Board Member Hobbell asked about cost, then agreed in concept with the Board. Board Member Knorpp indicated that he believes the Board should be somewhat “slavish” in insisting on appropriate replications. Board Member Hobbell agreed but clarified that generally he wanted the home to have more leeway for non-visible windows.

- Solar Panels – Planner Teiche asked the Board to provide staff with a policy regarding solar panels. Chair Storek stated that solar panels should be permitted where they are needed. They should be located away from the visible façade of the building if possible, but otherwise, they are allowed if visible. The other Board Members were in agreement.
- Board Member Knorpp asked the Board to ask for a moment of remembrance or support for Board Member Sink, whose son passed away unexpectedly.
- Board Member Hobbell announced that he contacted a firm to have the Board's book Larkspur Past and Present digitize the board's book. They take apart a bound book and scan it page by page. The full cost is approximately \$100+.

*M/s Knorpp/Culhane moved, and the Board approved 6-0 to authorize an expenditure of up to \$500 for the scanning of the historic book.*

- Board Member Lanctot announced that she is working with past Board Member Marilyn River to requesting funding from the Community Foundation to pay the cost of updating the second floor lobby which serves as the historic room. She is working with City Hall on how to get the painting completed.
- Board Member Culhane asked if there is a naming policy

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES** April 15, June 4<sup>th</sup> 2019.

*M/S Lanctot/Hobbell moved, and the Board approved 5-1 (Board Member Knorpp abstained) the April 15 and June 4<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes as drafted.*

#### **NEXT MEETING DATE**

Chair Storek noted that December 5, 2019 was the next possible meeting date.

Board Member Hobbell moved to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristin Teiche, Senior Planner/Recording Secretary

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing minutes were duly and regularly adopted during the February 24, 2020 meeting of the Heritage Preservation Board.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kristin Teiche". The signature is written in black ink on a white background.

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Kristin Teiche, Senior Planner/Recording Secretary