



SCOTTSDALE DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE ROOMS 1, 2, AND 3
7447 E. Indian School Rd., Ste 105
SCOTTSDALE, ARIZONA**

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2009

RETREAT MINUTES

PRESENT: Tony Nelssen, Council Member
Michael Edwards, Vice Chairman
Jeremy Jones, Design Member
David Ortega, Design Member
David Brantner, Development Member
Eric Gerster, Development Member

ABSENT: Eric Hess, Planning Commission Member

STAFF:

Steve Venker	Brad Carr
Tim Conner	Connie Brawders
Bob Wood	Hut Wade
Lusia Galav	Bryan Cluff
Greg Bloemberg	Keith Niederer
Meredith Tessier	Eddie Lamperez
Adam Yaron	Jesus Murillo
Doris McClay	Louisa Garbo
Dan Symer	Greg Williams
Annie To	Joe Whitaker
Kim Chafin	Tim Curtis
Don Hadder	Bob Hults
Lorraine Castro	Chris Dominguez

GUESTS: Ron McCullagh, Vice-Mayor
Christopher Jones, incoming Design Member
John Packham

CALL TO ORDER

Councilman Nelssen called the meeting of the Scottsdale Development Review Board to order at 1:02 p.m.

ROLL CALL

A formal roll call was conducted confirming members present as stated above.

INTRODUCTION

Mr. Venker noted that the presentation was a response to questions and concerns expressed during Board meetings. He encouraged staff in attendance to offer comments where appropriate.

Mr. Venker introduced Chris Jones, landscape architect appointed to serve as a design member upon the completion of Jeremy Jones's term on the Board.

STAFF APPROVALS

Mr. Venker explained that staff approvals are items that the Zoning Administrator has the authority to approve administratively; higher level items are presented to the Board in order to obtain any feedback or concerns prior to approval. Applications that fall into the administrative approval category do not require public notice. Eighty percent of applications have fallen into the administrative category over the past five years.

Mr. Venker provided examples of exterior finish color changes, minor building additions and landscape improvements, signs, site plan revisions, minor development applications, and Type 1 and Type 2 wireless communication facilities that have been recently approved administratively.

Board Member Jones suggested that since incoming Board Member Christopher Jones is a landscape architect, he be consulted on landscape cases that can be approved by staff.

Councilman Nelssen commented that with all cases it would be beneficial to see photographs of projects as they were actually completed and a comparison to what was approved.

Staff provides guidance to applicants to ensure appropriate implementation of requirements. Mr. Venker showed one example where staff sketched proper terracing plans for a windy residential access drive.

Mr. Venker noted that staff anticipates minor subdivisions because large tracts of land are becoming scarce in the Scottsdale.

Presenting two examples of recent cases, Mr. Venker asked for feedback regarding discretion for staff to determine if a development application is minor. One example was the American Audio building, which had been altered, separating a portion of the building and modifying the footprint while maintaining appropriate edge treatments. The second

example, the Republic West Phase 2 building which was a twin to a building previously approved on the same property, was brought to DRB after much staff debate.

Board Member Jones felt it was proper to bring the Republic West application to the Development Review Board because the possibility always exists that the site would be better served if the design was not identical. He also noted that in some cases the Applicant might prefer a different design but come forward with a duplicate because they want an administrative approval.

In response to a comment by Board Member Ortega, Mr. Venker noted that because of the current economic conditions, staff has had conversations regarding extending time frames for original approvals by the DRB or having a second round of extensions administratively. The Code provisions currently allow project approvals to remain valid for 12 months; however at the request of the applicant, the Development Review Board can allow additional time as a condition of the approval. Board Member Jones recalled an applicant who requested an extension in hopes of increasing the value for resale; the Board should be aware of ulterior motives sometimes associated with special considerations.

In response to a question by Councilman Nelssen, Mr. Venker explained that the One Scottsdale project entitlements have been established through the City Council action. Individual building approvals have yet to be DRB approved.

Mr. Venker mentioned a project proposed by Costco for an addition of a car wash to their site. Because the car wash would be located to the east side of the building where the employee parking is currently and would not be visible to the street or surrounding properties, it is being considered for staff approval.

Board Member Brantner felt that staff had been a good judge of deciding when it would be appropriate to present staff approvals to the Development Review Board for comment. If a doubt exists on a project, the most appropriate option is to bring it to the Board.

Board Member Gerster agreed that staff is capable of determining whether or not a project fits within the context of an area and whether or not the DRB would have interest in reviewing the case.

Board Member Jones opined that having a DRB member meet with applicants early in the process would be beneficial for many reasons, including calming concerns in cases where a choice might have been made to simplify the design in order to obtain staff approval because they assumed that obtaining DRB approval would be challenging; once applicants obtain a better understanding, they can be expedited through the process.

Councilman Nelssen recalled an applicant that was combative during his presentation and accused staff of having misled him during the application process. In fact, the applicant had been properly guided through the process by staff, but because of his behavior the public perception was that he had been mistreated. Having a DRB member meet with the applicant early in the process would circumvent accusations of being misguided.

In response to a comment by Board Member Ortega, Board Member Jones noted that applicants cannot move to study session until they have met the minimum parameters and the zoning requirements. The case in question had not met those requirements and insisted on being permitted to move forward to a full review.

Board Member Gerster agreed that meeting with a DR member early in the process would be beneficial and should be offered to applicants as an option. He noted that although the option is currently available, as an applicant prior to his Board appointment he was never informed that a personal meeting with a Board member was an available option. The only applicants that have contacted him asking for a meeting are ones that are experienced in the Scottsdale process. Applicants that are less sophisticated are the ones that would benefit the most from a one-on-one meeting.

Mr. Conner noted that many times when an applicant is not providing an adequate response, staff will bring the item to study session to make sure that they are on target with their concerns.

Vice-Chairman Edwards commented that a full application may not be necessary in order to bring an item to study session because if a design is in need of being redesigned it would have to be reengineered to fit the zoning ordinance drainage and grading. He noted that significant cost is involved in bringing a full application to study session on the chance that major adjustments might be suggested.

Board Member Ortega noted the difference between the processes for conforming and non-conforming applications. Because of rezoning involved with non-conforming uses applicants receive significant Board feedback during the process; the same opportunities should be given to applicants who have a conforming use as those with non-conforming uses.

Councilman Nelssen summarized that the consensus was that a meeting with a representative from the Development Review Board should be offered to each applicant as a routine part of the application process.

SENSITIVE DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Councilman Nelssen commented that defining and applying sensitive design principles as a benchmark at the beginning of the process would eliminate confusion.

Mr. Wood noted that the original document created in August of 2000 and modified in 2001 essentially serves as the City's philosophy on design and community values. The underlying principles include the core guidelines of the sensitive design program.

In response to a question by Councilman Nelssen, Mr. Conner explained that staff references the principles as a basis for concepts and suggestions for their proposal.

Councilman Nelssen noted the first sentence of the statement: "Development should respect and enhance the unique climate, topography, vegetation, and historical context of Scottsdale's Sonoran Desert environment" is the basis for guidelines for each area of Scottsdale. He felt that many projects do not in any way meet those criteria.

Mr. Conner commented that staff strives to ensure developments fit the character and connect the different areas while still responding to the desert community. Discussions reference concepts that encourage sustainable desert architecture

Board Member Jones commented that with the popularity of the LEED program and other sustainable programs the trend has moved towards better enforcement of sensitive design principles as a City policy rather than a guideline.

Councilman Nelssen expressed concern that policy-makers do not understand the meaning and importance of the policy document. They should understand that the principles apply to the entire city, not only the northern areas. It is staff's responsibility to instill the importance of the sensitive design principles in the policy-makers.

In response to a question by Councilman McCullagh, Mr. Conner noted that the sensitive design principles were developed by a group made up of City Council, Planning Commission, and DRB members as well as with the Great Sonoran. The Development Review Board provided final approval.

Mr. Conner noted that the document has been strengthened through references in the Downtown Plan update and the urban design elements; it will also be an element of the General Plan update.

Board Member Ortega recalled that the sensitive design principles were approved during the time that he served on City Council. He noted that the intention was to encourage architecture, shading, and landscaping appropriate to the desert while unifying Scottsdale and maintaining the individual styles of each area.

Councilman Nelssen agreed that the philosophy of design was important. He felt that the style of certain areas has become distorted by inappropriate design and needs to be redefined.

Mr. Conner noted that areas such as the Arcadia district and McCormick Ranch have historical context for Scottsdale but might not fit within the Sonoran Desert environment. Councilman Nelssen argued that the foundation is Scottsdale Sonoran Desert environment, not historical context of specific developments. He opined that it would be simple to evaluate the community to determine whether buildings met the criteria and find a common ground for requirements moving forward.

Principle 1: The Design Character of any area should be enhanced and strengthened by new development.

Mr. Venker presented photographic examples of areas in which new development has been successfully integrated into existing areas. He stressed the importance of maintaining similarity in size and elements as well as providing connectivity and relationship. Mr. Conner noted that the buildings and designs should consider the distinctive qualities and character of surrounding context as appropriate and incorporate those qualities into the design, and the building design should be sensitive to the evolving context. He stressed that current context is not always appropriate for future development.

A good example of evolving context is the Black Rock Studio on 5th Avenue. The building is a contemporary infill located mid-block amongst stucco buildings. It is a transitional piece located in an area of Downtown that is transitioning. Another example, located in Phoenix, depicted new developments flanking a site that is in its original condition. Board Member Jones commented that there is a difference between historic and old; development should stay within the acceptable character of an area without copying the existing buildings that are not good design. Mr. Wood noted that one question to ask is what does evolving context mean to the character of an area?

Principle 2: Development through appropriate siting and orientation of buildings should recognize and preserve established major vistas as well as protect natural features such as scenic views of the Sonoran Desert and mountains and archeological and historical resources.

Mr. Venker presented photographs of Downtown development orienting towards Camelback and of viewsheds and large scale landscape areas, noting that views of natural features are important to help define place.

Using The Doors sculpture located in front of the P.F.Chang's restaurant as an example, Board Member Jones noted the importance of establishing anchor points and landmarks within the City.

Principle 3: Development should be sensitive to existing topography and landscaping.

Councilman Nelssen noted that DC Ranch had a difficult time obtaining an approval, even though they were in conformance with the topography and landscaping requirements.

Principle 4: Development should protect the character of the Sonoran Desert by preserving and restoring natural habitats and ecological processes.

Board Member Jones and Councilman Nelssen noted that the green/gray colors were more befitting to the desert than the beiges and browns commonly used.

Principle 5: The design of the public realm, including streetscapes, parks, plazas and civic amenities is an opportunity to provide identity to the community and to convey its design expectations.

In response to a question by Councilman Nelssen, Mr. Conner noted that if City Council provided instruction it would be easier to enlist more capable design teams. Mr. Wood added that additional guidance would benefit the green building and LEED movement towards desert architecture.

Councilman Nelssen commented that the last few City Councils have not been qualified to make design decisions that will fit within the guidelines. Staff professionals should take responsibility for bringing information forward to guide City Council in the right direction.

Mr. Conner mentioned the importance of having support from the Development Review Board. It is important that the City understands that the majority of government facilities and structures have an anticipated 100-year lifecycle, which magnifies the importance of

making up-front investments in the property. The legislative implications could be eased by the support of the design professionals teamed with staff.

Mr. Venker noted that when staff has the ability to show areas in which the City has applied these principles, it adds validity and confidence when suggestions are made to applicants.

Board Member Jones added that 90 percent of the buildings that will be in the City in 2020 are already built, which enhances the importance of ensuring the quality and sustainability of new development. No new construction should be considered neutral.

Principle 6: Development should integrate alternative modes of transportation, including bicycles and bus access, within the pedestrian network that encourage social contact and interaction within the community.

Mr. Venker provided examples of opportunities for alternate transportation currently available in the city.

Principle 7: Development should show consideration for the pedestrian by providing landscaping and shading elements as well as inviting access connections to adjacent developments.

Mr. Venker highlighted the importance of pedestrian landscape shading elements and connectivity. Mr. Conner noted that shading elements should be kept in scale with the pedestrian users; scale can be achieved in many areas through various landscape palette arrangements.

Principle 8: Buildings should be designed with a logical hierarchy of masses to control the visual impact of the buildings height and size and to highlight important building volumes and features, such as the building entry.

Board Members discussed the evolution of the 4020 building, which was recalled by City Council following the original Development Review Board approval. The design was improved to create an appropriate transition between Old Town and Downtown based on comments from the public about the visual impact of the building. Board Members commended the architect for adjusting the design in response to the context and desires of the community to create an acceptable transition.

Better design can be achieved through setting and enforcing standards. It must be made clear to applicants that certain requirements must be met in exchange for amended development standards.

Mr. Conner noted that that Planned Unit Development is being developed as a tool to provide additional flexibility to design and less of a zoning envelope. The PUD is currently going through the public outreach phase.

Principle 9: The design of the built environment should respond to the desert environment.

Mr. Conner noted that the LEED program and energy efficiency requirements provide tools to encourage an appropriate response to the desert environment. Desert

architecture should extend outdoors both physically and visually where appropriate. A variety of natural materials and textures provide visual interest and richness, particularly at the pedestrian level. Materials should be used honestly to reflect their inherent qualities. Shade features such as deep overhangs and recessed windows should be incorporated as a tool for shading and energy conservation.

Board Member Ortega commented about the ornate design of the Fire Station on Indian School; he felt the money spent could have been better utilized towards installation of photovoltaic and other environmental solutions. Tax dollars should be better spent when constructing civic buildings. More critical attention should be paid to City projects.

Mr. Conner noted that the pipes on the Indian School fire station are actually part of a water harvesting system. He described several amenities incorporated into the station, which is LEED certified. Ms. Galav added that the fire station was a mixed-use facility because it also offered community facilities

Mr. Conner mentioned that prior to Board Member Ortega's appointment a civic project sparked discussion regarding utilitarian architecture in Scottsdale. The Board felt that civic architecture should represent design qualities expected from private development in the City.

Mr. Christopher Jones commented that some of the world's greatest and worst architecture has been civic, because governments either are willing to invest or they are not.

Board Member Ortega reiterated his feeling that many buildings are using too much glass for the desert environment.

Board Member Jones agreed that City buildings should represent an ideal strived for by the City. He felt that the fire station was appropriately designed in response to the area context while dramatizing the environmental aspects of the building.

Principle 10: Developments should strive to incorporate sustainable and healthy building practices and products.

Mr. Venker noted that the Granite Reef Senior Center incorporated photovoltaic canopies and recessed windows. Other examples of buildings utilizing sustainable building practices are SkySong, Loloma, and Taliesin.

In response to a question by Councilman Nelssen, Mr. Conner explained that one major feature of the SkySong buildings was the recessed windows.

Board Member Jones reviewed efforts of the DRB in approving the SkySong project, including requiring a reorientation of the canopy feature through the implementation of stipulations. Recommendation for approval was ultimately made because of the importance to the City of Scottsdale and ASU. He commented that there are times that the DRB has to radically change the design in order to ensure buildings are acceptable.

Principle 11: Landscape design should respond to the desert environment by utilizing a variety of mature landscape materials indigenous to the arid region.

Principle 12: Site design should incorporate techniques for efficient water use by providing desert adapted landscaping and preserving native plants.

Mr. Conner commented that when water features are used in the desert environment they should celebrate pedestrian areas. Water features can facilitate social interaction and become landmarks.

Principle 13: The extent and quality of lighting should be integrally designed as part of the built environment.

Mr. Venker presented photographs of 5th Avenue and the Galleria to depict how light can enhance architecture.

Mr. Conner noted the importance of lighting quality. Color, glare and the surrounding ambient lighting environment should be taken into consideration. For example, different lighting solutions are used in the Downtown area and in the northern areas of Scottsdale.

Principle 14: Signage should consider the distinctive qualities and character of the surrounding context in terms of size, color, location, and illumination

Mr. Venker noted the importance of ensuring that signage relates to the character and quality of the surrounding context. He provided examples of signage in the downtown areas and on larger roadways. Mr. Conner commented that the Development Review Board is often involved in approval of master sign programs.

Councilman Nelssen commented that that signage related to City infrastructure should be the starting point for signage. He felt that a character should be created for Scottsdale and carried out in signage throughout the City. An appropriate standard for light poles and traffic signs should be established and carried out throughout the City as improvements are needed, in the fashion of a master plan, in order to create an additional value for Scottsdale. He noted that good design does not have to be costly.

Board Member Ortega agreed that a standard could be established and implemented over time that would be accepted and embraced by the City, citizens, and developers.

Councilman Nelssen commented that the goal should be to create a distinct Scottsdale. It is important to maintain the tourism edge that Scottsdale currently enjoys.

A discussion ensued regarding techniques that would establish a distinctive look through signage and lights. Utilizing the hash knife cowboy emblem throughout the city on light poles as an identifying symbol was suggested. It was suggested that universal directional symbols could be designed as a type of mental mapping and placed on street signs in lieu of directional signs. Colors and graphics representing Frank Lloyd Wright's stylistic approach could be implemented throughout the City as an identifying symbol for Scottsdale; Board Member Jones noted that the burnt orange terracotta color was a trademark of Frank Lloyd Wright.

In response to a comment by Board Member Ortega, Councilman Nelssen noted that landscape improvements in Downtown areas were designed as part of a social

engineering scheme to encourage pedestrian interaction. Businesses will be clearly visible to pedestrian traffic.

Councilman Nelssen commented that discussions about sensitive design principles are pointless if they are not implemented in a meaningful way. He supports staff being more forceful with implementing guidelines and educating policy-makers.

Vice-Chairman Edwards suggested that a statement regarding sensitive design guidelines be added to the purpose statement read at the beginning of each Development Review Board hearing. The Board agreed that the addition would reinforce to applicants that sensitive design principles are both DRB and City policy.

DESERT ARCHITECTURE

Board Member Jones presented photographs of projects that have represented successful, unsuccessful, and controversial situations faced by the Development Review Board during his tenure.

When Scottsdale City Hall was first designed it was controversial because a more international style was popular at the time. The design utilized techniques that were not popularly accepted. However, over time the building has become a popular backdrop to the City. He noted that styles and tastes are going to change and there are a number of ways to create lasting quality and design.

Presenting recent examples of cases that returned several times to the Board in addition to individual Board Members meeting with the architects, he noted that there will be times that the DRB will have to reject a design. The Board cannot pass a case simply because the applicant has failed repeatedly in their response to Board Member suggestions.

Presenting a photograph of the Henkel Building, Board Member Jones noted that people will never agree on unique, striking buildings. The Henkel Building is very complicated and tries much harder than most buildings in the City. He noted that the architect took advantage of the opportunity to be creative and innovative, although he was unable to achieve approval on all aspects of the design. He mentioned aspects of the building that are commonly perceived as positive and negative, including the mechanical enclosures which were not highlighted during the approval process. He stressed that when a really good architect is innovative and stretches the limits there will never be 100 percent approval; daring communities will allow the development to move forward.

The Board should be aware of use of materials being applied in ways that will be viewed as fake such as artificial stone atop of stucco with a space left between the brick and the ground. Native materials such as adobe should be applied only in appropriate situations.

It is the Board's responsibility to recognize basic errors commonly made by architects. Changing color in the middle of a building elevation, and the use of pop-outs and stick-ons are a few techniques to be mindful of when reviewing an application.

Board Member Jones presented an example of a poor use of scale. Noting that to the untrained eye the building was attractive, he pointed out errors in scale on a project that had been approved by the Board because the drawings were difficult to understand.

Board Member Jones presented examples of pseudo-historic and picturesque buildings that should not be approved.

He presented photographs of inconsistent pedestrian treatments. Photographs depicted covered walkways for several areas in Downtown and Old Town next to a building with no covered walkway. Mr. Venker noted that the uncovered walkway was a work in progress.

Board Member Jones noted the importance of being mindful of crumbling infrastructure.

Board Member Jones noted the importance of the implications of geometry and what people perceive. It is important to consider whether a design is a decorated box or has been taken to a higher level. He provided examples of architecture that uses shapes, shadows, and landscaping to create interesting design.

Board Member Jones discussed the consideration of the context of the future and relation versus context. Very modern buildings can fit with historical context.

Presenting a photograph of the building and pillar structure on the corner of 78th Street and Indian School, Board Member Jones stressed that one important responsibility of the DRB is to ensure that elevations are understood and that the building fits within the context of the area.

It is important to allow developers to take a chance. Although the DRB did not have approval authority, the Valley Ho is unique and clearly a regional use of historical landmark.

Board Member Jones reviewed cases, such as the pump station, that he was personally involved with and the challenges that were faced by his firm during the process.

The Appaloosa Library offered an opportunity to take desert architecture to a higher level. He described the materials used in the design, including a metal material that appears to change color from different angles around the building and is completely reflective when in shadow. The library is a good example of new ways to use desert architecture based on solid design principles.

Mr. Venker presented photographic examples of desert architecture concepts and ways in which they can be achieved.

Board Member Jones noted that the DRB members have been recently encouraging applicants to steer away from using artificial stone.

Board Member Jones noted that value and experience are sometimes of higher importance than function. The Arabian Library is a good example of place, sculptural value, and experience. Board Members discussed the initial public opposition to the library design and the evolution that has occurred. In addition to having been recognized for design and environmental qualities, the building is now considered a community landmark.

Board Member Brantner inquired about requiring 3-D renderings as part of application process. Mr. Venker noted that if staff feels that the two-dimensional drawings do not sufficiently convey the design intent, they have the authority to request additional clarifying information. Board Members discussed the benefits of the Revit program, which is commonly used by architecture firms. Board Members agreed that a 3-D rendering does not have to be computer-generated, but would be helpful in gaining a complete understanding of designs.

Councilman Nelssen referenced the Solis substation relocation and the affect it will have on the neighbors who were promised a gateway in that location. He noted the importance of having continuity in the process that will endure through changes in government. Broken promises breed disgust in the process and undermine the goals of the City.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, the retreat of the Development Review Board adjourned at 3:59 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
AV-Tronics, Inc