

**Item No. 9b
Design Review Study**



PROJECT LOCATION
240 Lorton Avenue

City of Burlingame

*Commercial Design Review and Conditional Use Permit for a
New Four-Story Commercial Building*

**Item No. 9b
Design Review Study**

Address: 240 Lorton Avenue

Meeting Date: September 26, 2016

Request: Application for Commercial Design Review and Conditional Use Permit for building height for construction of a new, four-story commercial building (retail and office).

Applicant and Property Owner: DLC Lorton

APN: 029-211-200

Architect: MBH Architects

Lot Area: 7,006 SF (0.16 acres)

General Plan: Service and Special Sales - Downtown Specific Plan (Burlingame Avenue Commercial District)

Zoning: BAC (Burlingame Avenue Commercial)

Adjacent Development: Restaurant, retail, personal service, office, and residential

Current Use: Retail on the ground floor and temporary construction office on the upper floor

Proposed Use: Four-story commercial building; retail on the ground floor and office on upper three floors

Allowable Use: Retail, personal services, business services, hotels, travel agencies, government agencies, offices above the first floor, and personal trainer and assessment businesses above and below the first floor.

Project Summary: The site is currently occupied by a two-story building with at-grade parking at the rear. The ground floor space is currently occupied by a window retail business (formerly RadioShack). There are four residential units on the upper floor, and currently three of the four units are being used as a temporary construction office for the construction project at 225 California Drive. Adjacent to the south is a one and two-story building with a restaurant and offices and adjacent to the north is a one-story building with two restaurants. Across Lorton Avenue to the west is the former Burlingame Main Post Office. Hatch Lane (a one-way thoroughfare with traffic flowing south-bound) runs behind the property to the rear.

The applicant is proposing to demolish the existing two-story building and construct a new four-story commercial building with at-grade covered parking. The proposed building will contain 1,375 SF of retail space on the ground floor and 13,801 SF of office space on the three floors above. The proposal also includes 1,820 SF of roof deck areas primarily located at the front of the building. With the roof deck, the front of the building is three stories tall and the rear is four stories. The BAC District Regulations states that retail and office uses (above the first floor only) are permitted uses (Code Section 25.32.020 (a) and (g)(1)).

The retail space will be accessible from Lorton Avenue. The lobby to access the upper floor office spaces will be located behind the retail space by way of a covered walkway alongside the retail space. The office space floors have been designed as a shell to be able to accommodate either a single tenant or multiple tenants.

The building will have at-grade parking located behind the lobby and retail space on the ground floor, with access from Lorton Avenue. This includes one accessible space and 14 hydraulic "puzzle stacker" parking lift spaces. Vehicular traffic from the project would exit on Hatch Lane. Hatch Lane is one-way towards Howard Avenue, so all vehicles would exit the project to the Hatch Lane/Howard Avenue intersection.

The following applications are required for this project:

- Commercial Design Review for a new commercial building (Code Sections 25.32.045 and 25.57.010(c)); and
- Conditional Use Permit for building height exceeding 35'-0" in height (55'-0" proposed where 55'-0" is the maximum allowed building height) (Code Section 25.32.055).

Commercial Design Review: Commercial Design Review is required for new commercial buildings pursuant to Code Sections 25.32.045 and 25.57.010(c)(1). Design Review was instituted for commercial projects in 2001 with the adoption of the Commercial Design Guidebook. The project is located within the boundaries of the *Burlingame Downtown Special Plan* and therefore subject to Chapter 5 of the Downtown Specific Plan (Design & Character). Section 5.2 (pages 5-3 through 5-12) provides design guidelines specifically for commercial and mixed use areas within the Downtown Specific Plan area. Section 5.4 (pages 5-22 through 5-26) provides more general design guidelines that apply to all areas of the downtown. The relevant pages of the plan have been included as an attachment for convenience of commissioners.

The proposed exterior facades will include a variety of materials including stone on the ground floor and hand troweled polished and mottled cement plaster on the upper floors. Expansion and control joints will create rectangular shapes along the cement plaster facades. The retail storefront system and windows throughout the building will be aluminum with clear UV-coated glass. There will be a painted metal awning on the ground floor at the front of the building. Painted C-Channels are located between the ground floor and upper floors and along the top edge of the building. Recessed metal and cement plaster panels are proposed as design features on all building facades. Overhead doors to the electrical and garbage/recycling rooms will be steel. A materials board will be available at the meeting.

Along the rear façade on the ground floor, the applicant is proposing to install a vitrine (display area) for use by the Burlingame Historical Society (see Ground Floor Plan on sheet A2.0.1 and North Exterior Elevation on sheet A3.1.2). In addition, the left side wall along the rear half of the ground floor will be reserved for a mural to be installed at a future date (the adjacent building does not extend to the rear property line). The applicant has yet determined what the content of the mural will be.

The proposed project includes two roof deck areas located on the fourth floor totaling 1,820 SF; a larger roof deck at the front of the building (1,596 SF) and a smaller deck along the left side of the building (224 SF). The larger roof deck will contain various plants in planter boxes and seating areas. Please refer to the Landscape and Planting Plans on sheets L1.01 and L2.01.

Building Height: The maximum building height allowed in the BAC District is 55 feet. However, a Conditional Use Permit is required for any building or structure which exceeds 35 feet in height. As measured to the top of the roof parapet, the proposed four-story building is 55 feet in height. A request for a Conditional Use Permit for building height has been submitted by the applicant.

With the proposed roof deck area at the front of the building, the massing and height of the building transitions from three stories (44'-6" in height) at the front of the building to four stories (55'-0" in height) at the rear. Please refer to the rendering and proposed building elevations.

Off-Street Parking: The proposed project consists of 1,375 SF of retail on the ground floor and 13,801 SF of office on the second through fourth floors. Retail, personal service and food establishment uses located on the ground floor within the parking sector of the Burlingame Downtown Specific Plan are exempt from vehicle parking requirements as set forth in code section 25.70.090 (a). The subject property is located within the parking sector; therefore no additional off-street parking is required for the proposed retail use on the ground floor. The retail tenant has not yet been determined.

Off-street parking is required for the proposed office uses on the second through fourth floors (13,801 GSF). Based on the 1:300 GSF parking ratio for the proposed office use on the upper floors, 46 off-street parking spaces are required. A total of 15 parking spaces are provided on-site; 14 spaces in a mechanical vehicle lift system, also referred to as a puzzle stacker, and 1 at-grade disabled-accessible space. This represents a 31-space balance.

Land Use section 3.6.1 of the Downtown Specific Plan allows that in instances where uses proposed are not exempt from providing parking, in-lieu fees may be paid instead of providing parking on-site where there is expansion, intensification, or construction of new buildings. In this case, the proposed office use on the second through fourth floors is not exempt from providing parking. The applicant notes that the parking in-lieu fees will be paid for the balance of spaces required for the proposed project. A Parking Variance is not required, as the payment of in-lieu fees is provided as an option through the Downtown Specific Plan for projects within the parking sector. Currently, the fee is \$51,331.44 per parking space. The parking in-lieu fee for the proposed project is \$1,591,274.64 (31 spaces x \$51,331.44).

A puzzle stacker is a mechanical parking option that provides independent access to all cars parked on the system. In order to provide parking for 14 vehicles, the puzzle stacker requires a pit and one empty slot (see Building Sections on sheet A3.2.1). The puzzle stacker to be installed is a KlausTrendVario 4300 (see attached specifications). All vehicles would enter the project through a driveway entrance on Lorton Avenue, and exit through onto Hatch Lane. Hatch Lane is one-way towards Howard Avenue, so all vehicles would exit the project to the Hatch Lane/Howard Avenue intersection.

The Municipal Code does not include specifications for parking lifts, so the City currently does not have a standard mechanism for review and approval. However, as a policy the Downtown Specific Plan encourages “creative approaches” to providing on-site parking including parking lifts. The parking lifts could each be considered “creative approaches” to providing the required on-site parking. To date, the City has approved several commercial and residential projects with parking lifts.

The minimum required driveway width is 12'-0" for parking areas with not more than 30 vehicles. The site plan shows a 10'-0" driveway width at the front and rear of the property (measured from building wall to side property line). Although there is no recorded cross-access easement recorded on either of the properties, the subject property and adjacent property at 226 Lorton Avenue currently share the driveway to access their parking spaces. Therefore, a condition of approval will be added to this application requiring that a cross-access easement be recorded on both properties.

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240 Lorton Avenue

Lot Area: 7,006 SF (0.16 acres)

Plans date stamped: September 19, 2016

	PROPOSED	ALLOWED/REQUIRED
Use:	Retail on Ground Floor (1,375 SF) Office on 2 nd through 4 th Floors (13,801 SF)	Retail Use – Permitted C.S. 25.32.020 (a) Office Use – Permitted C.S. 25.33.020 (g)
SETBACKS		
Front Build-To Line:	100% of structure must be located at front property line	At least 60% of structure must be located at front property line
Side (Left): (Right):	0'-0" 10'-0"	No minimum required
Rear:	0'-0"	No minimum required
BUILDING ENVELOPE:		
Lot Coverage:	5,530 SF 78.9%	No maximum
Building Height:	55'-0" ¹ (44'-6" at front/55'-0" at rear)	55'-0" (CUP required if building exceeds 35'-0")
OFF-STREET PARKING		
Off-Street Parking:	Puzzle stacker - 14 spaces <u>Accessible space - 1 spaces</u> Total = 15 spaces ²	Office - 1 space per 300 GSF Retail - none required <u>Office: 13,801 SF/300 GSF ratio</u> Total = 46 spaces
Driveway Width:	20'-0" driveway width (shared driveway with 226 Lorton Avenue)	Parking areas with not more than 30 vehicle spaces shall have a minimum driveway width of 12'-0"

¹ Conditional Use Permit for building height exceeding 35'-0" in height (55'-0" proposed where 55'-0" is the maximum allowed building height).

² Parking in-lieu fee, in the amount of \$1,591,274.64 (31 spaces x \$51,331.44), will be submitted in lieu of providing 31 off-street parking spaces.

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General Plan/Specific Plan: The *Burlingame General Plan* designates this site for Service and Special Sales. In 2010 the City Council adopted the *Burlingame Downtown Specific Plan* (amended in 2011), which serves as an element of the General Plan. The subject property is located within the boundaries of the planning area for the Downtown Specific Plan, specifically in the Burlingame Avenue Commercial District. The Plan describes the Burlingame Avenue Commercial District as follows:

The Burlingame Avenue area is the commercial and retail heart of Downtown Burlingame. Burlingame Avenue features a mixture of restaurants, national retail stores, and many locally based retailers. The eastern end of Burlingame Avenue area near the train station has a concentration of restaurants and is active during both day and evening hours, while the western end towards El Camino Real provides more retail and is less active.

Ground floor retail or personal service use is required in the Burlingame Avenue area. Office uses are allowed on the upper levels in commercial areas. Existing residential uses on upper floors may remain and be improved, but there should not be new residential uses within the Burlingame Avenue Commercial District.

The Downtown Specific Plan includes various Goals and Policies to guide growth and development in Downtown Burlingame. The table below shows how the proposed project meets these Goals and Policies.

GOAL/POLICY	PROJECT PROPOSED
Policy P-1.3: Conceal parking areas through the use of attractively designed above- or below-ground parking structures.	Ground level parking is concealed behind retail space and lobby.
Policy P-2.1: Explore creative parking solutions including parking pricing strategies.	14-car puzzle stacker on ground level.
Policy C-2.6: Consider the needs of pedestrian, bicycles, and people with disabilities.	Building contains an elevator and a disable-accessible parking space is provided on-site.
Policy S-1.3: Streetscapes should reflect Burlingame's destination as a "tree city." Trees should be planted throughout the downtown as an integral part of the streetscape, and mature streets trees should be persevered whenever possible.	Two new 24-inch box size street trees in decorative tree grates will be planted in front of the site.
Policy S-1.7: Require new developments and major remodel projects to include pedestrian-oriented retail design treatments on all exposed elevations.	Exposed ground level building facades consist of windows and entry doors which provide a connection between pedestrians and retail space, an awning, a variety of exterior facade materials.
Policy D-3.1: Ensure that new development is appropriate to Burlingame with respect to size and design.	Building does not exceed the maximum allowed building height; project is subject to design review.
Policy D-4.1: Encourage buildings to be built out to the sidewalk, with doors and windows facing the sidewalk to create a lively pedestrian environment.	Building is built out to the sidewalk with doors and windows facing the sidewalk.

Staff Comments: See attached comments from the Building, Engineering, Fire, Parks, and Stormwater Divisions.

Environmental Review Status: The project is Categorically Exempt from review pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), per Section 15332, In-Fill Development Projects, which consists of projects characterized as in-fill development meeting the conditions described below.

- (a) The project is consistent with the applicable general plan designation and all applicable general plan policies as well as with applicable zoning designation and regulations.
 - *The Burlingame General Plan designates this site for Service and Special Sales. The site is located within the boundaries of the planning area for the Downtown Specific Plan, specifically in the Burlingame Avenue Commercial District, which designates this site for retail or personal services on the ground floor and office uses on the upper floors. The proposed project includes a retail use on the ground floor and offices on the second through fourth floors. The proposed project complies with applicable zoning regulations.*
- (b) The proposed development occurs within city limits on a project site of no more than five acres substantially surrounded by urban uses.
 - *The proposed development is on a project site of 0.16 acres and is surrounded by urban uses, including retail stores, restaurants, and office buildings.*
- (c) The project site has no value as habitat for endangered, rare or threatened species.
 - *The project site is located in an urban area and is surrounded by dense commercial and residential development. The project site is completely developed and is currently occupied with a two-story building and a paved parking lot. There are no trees, riparian habitat or other sensitive plant communities on the project site. There are no creeks or wetlands present on the project site.*
- (d) Approval of the project would not result in any significant effects relating to traffic, noise, air quality, or water quality.
 - *A Mitigated Negative Declaration was prepared for the Downtown Specific Plan, which analyzed potential impacts of new infill development and included standard conditions of approval to mitigate potential environmental impacts from projects. The proposed project is located within the Downtown Specific Plan and conforms with development assumptions incorporated into the Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration prepared for the Downtown Specific Plan. With incorporation of these standards conditions of approval, the project would not result in any significant effects relating to traffic, noise, air quality, or water quality.*
- (e) The site can be adequately served by all required utilities and public services.
 - *The project site is located in an urban area and is surrounded by dense commercial and residential development which is served by utility and public services. The existing two-story building will be replaced with a four-story building on the same lot with similar uses and therefore will be adequately served by required utility and public services.*

Planning Commission Action:

1. **Design Review Study:** The Planning Commission should comment on the design of the project as required by Chapter 25.57 of the Zoning Ordinance, Design Review, and to the following design criteria for commercial projects:
 - a. Support of the pattern of diverse architectural styles that characterize the city's commercial, industrial and mixed use areas; and

- b. Respect and promotion of pedestrian activity by placement of buildings to maximize commercial use of the street frontage, off-street public spaces, and by locating parking so that it does not dominate street frontages; and
- c. On visually prominent and gateway sites, whether the design fits the site and is compatible with the surrounding development; and
- d. Compatibility of the architecture with the mass, bulk, scale, and existing materials of existing development and compatibility with transitions where changes in land use occur nearby; and
- e. Architectural design consistency by using a single architectural style on the site that is consistent among primary elements of the structure, restores or retains existing or significant original architectural features, and is compatible in mass and bulk with other structures in the immediate area; and
- f. Provision of site features such as fencing, landscaping, and pedestrian circulation that enriches the existing opportunities of the commercial neighborhood.

Ruben Hurin
Senior Planner

- c. DLC Lorton, applicant and property owner
MBH Architects, project architect

Attachments:

- Application to the Planning Commission
- Project Description submitted by the applicant, date stamped June 23, 2016
- Conditional Use Permit Application
- Klaus Parking Lifts Product Data Sheets
- Downtown Specific Plan Applicable Design Guidelines
- Staff Comments
- Notice of Public Hearing – Mailed September 16, 2016
- Aerial Photo