

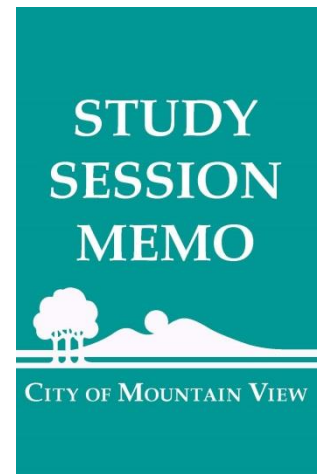
DATE: November 28, 2017

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council

FROM: Eric Anderson, Senior Planner
Randal Tsuda, Community Development
Director

VIA: Daniel H. Rich, City Manager

TITLE: **938 and 954 Villa Street: Relocation, Design,
and Parking**



PURPOSE

As a follow-up to City Council direction provided on June 13, 2017, Staff is seeking direction on a proposal to relocate the Weilheimer House (Chez TJ) for an office and restaurant development. Staff also seeks input on updated proposed design for the project and Tied House facade preservation.

BACKGROUND

The 938 and 954 Villa Street site is located one block west of Castro Street in the City's downtown area. It is comprised of two parcels, each with a separately-owned restaurant. 938 Castro Street is "Chez TJ," a high-end dining establishment in a historic former single-family home (also called "the Weilheimer House"), and 954 Villa Street is "Tied House," a brewery and restaurant in a historic commercial building.

The developer, The Minkoff Group, proposes a four-story, 41,876 square foot office building, including a 2,922 square foot ground-floor restaurant. The project is being designed consistent with the uses, intensity, standards, and guidelines of the Downtown Precise Plan.

The City Council provided initial feedback on the proposed development at a Study Session on June 13, 2017. Attachment 1, the Study Session Memo, includes additional information about the location of the site and historic criteria of the existing buildings. The following summarizes City Council direction from that Study Session.

- Council did not support demolition of the Weilheimer house.
- Council did not support acquiring the Weilheimer House for public use, but a majority did support studying its relocation to another private property.

- Several City Councilmembers requested that the applicant study options for preserving the Tied House structure or its facade, because relocation would be difficult given its size, configuration, and construction. However, several Councilmembers stated that preserving Tied House is not as important as preserving the Weilheimer House.
- A majority of the Council expressed dissatisfaction with the contemporary style of the proposed office building.

The City Council requested another Study Session to review modifications to the project in response to their comments. Since then, the applicant has found a new location for the Weilheimer House (as described below), and has developed several design studies to communicate how the Tied House facade could be preserved and how more traditional design elements could be used. The purpose of this Study Session is to obtain further direction from the City Council to make sure the project is going in the right direction in addressing Council feedback before continuing with design review and environmental review.

Downtown Committee

The Downtown Committee reviewed the proposal at their meeting on November 7, 2017, with the following comments:

- Office developments can negatively affect the sidewalk character.
- Make sure developers follow through on promises and public access.
- Consider construction disruption and the potential for an office downturn.
- Restaurants may have economic constraints (e.g., finding employees); make sure you can fill retail spaces.

Three members of the public spoke at the meeting. They expressed concern about the number of new office developments, the loss of small businesses, and the importance of consistent retail frontages to maintain public interest and activity.

Other Public Input

Since the last study session, the applicant has also met with the Mountain View Historical Association, Old Mountain View Neighborhood Association, Chamber of

Commerce, Central Business Association, and Mountain View Coalition for Sustainable Planning. Additional public comments received by staff are included as Attachment 2.

DISCUSSION

Weilheimer House

Based on Council's input, the applicant now proposes to relocate the Weilheimer House to a nearby location, 1012 West Dana Street. This property is located on the corner of Dana Street and Franklin Street, about a block away from the current location at 938 Villa Street. It is a 15,000 square foot parcel zoned R1 (Single-Family Residential).



Location Map

The site is currently developed with four vacant units, including a 2,300 square foot single-family home in the middle of the lot and a two-story triplex at the back of the lot. The existing number and configuration of units is nonconforming to the R1 development standards, which only allow one unit (plus an accessory dwelling unit) per lot, and do not allow two-story buildings so close to the property lines. The surrounding neighborhood is predominantly single-family homes in a range of early 20th Century styles, though a few newer houses are located nearby. City Parking Lot

11, across Franklin Street, is a public parking lot that may be a future housing development site.

The house at 1012 West Dana Street was built some time before 1920. While the house is old, a historic resource analysis determined that the structure is not historic per the historic designation criteria. Additions and the application of non-original stucco degraded the integrity of the structure, and archival research found no significant associations to important people, organizations, or events.



Existing Home at 1012 West Dana Street

The proposal is to demolish the existing buildings on-site and subdivide the property into a 9,000 square foot parcel at the corner and a 6,000 square foot parcel along Franklin Street. The Weilheimer House would be relocated to the corner parcel, and converted from a restaurant to a single-family home, its historic use. A new single-family residence could be constructed on the other lot; its design would be determined at a later date. The proposed demolition, subdivision, and new house construction (that is, all proposed actions at 1012 West Dana Street other than the relocation of the Weilheimer House) comply with the City's Zoning code and policies. A rough site plan is included as Attachment 3.

In addition to relocating and converting the Weilheimer House back to a single-family home, the historic structure would be modified to enhance its habitability as a

residence. This may include a new habitable basement, modifications to the attic to make a habitable second floor within the existing roof envelope, and a new stairwell for access to those spaces. Any additions would use consistent materials, and would be located to the rear of the building.

Relocating and modifying the Weilheimer House would be an impact to the structure as a cultural resource under CEQA (as described in the Study Session Memo from June 13, 2017). This is because the location of a structure is important to its value as a cultural resource, and modifications would affect its historic integrity. However, it would be reverted to its historic use. In addition, the building's architectural surroundings have changed, and it would be moved to a location more consistent with its use and character. Modifications will be reviewed by staff and the Development Review Committee (DRC) based on the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance and the Secretary of the Interior Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, and brought before Council for a final decision at the same time as the proposed office development.

Question 1

Does the City Council support the Weilheimer House relocating to 1012 West Dana Street?

Proposed Project Design

At the June 2017 Study Session, several Councilmembers commented that the proposed design was too modern, and the project should better reflect the historic character of downtown Mountain View. In addition, several Councilmembers recommended that the applicant study preservation of the Tied House facade.

The applicant has prepared three design studies showing various ways the project can incorporate the Tied House facade and various ways to use materials, window design, detail complexity, and differentiation to establish a more traditional character (Attachment 4—Design Renderings). The original submittal that Council reviewed in June is also included.

The attached concepts are preliminary and have not received thorough design review. Therefore, staff is seeking high-level feedback on the overall design direction in response to Council comments at the previous Study Session. The purpose of this discussion is to check in with the City Council on the range of potential design directions the project could take, and to receive City Council direction regarding the overall design possibilities. Council's direction will be further refined and modified through code compliance review, the DRC, and additional analysis.

Tied House Facade

Several Councilmembers asked to study the preservation of the Tied House's front facade, to see if or how it could be integrated into the proposed development. The original design submittal and three proposed ways to preserve the Tied House facade are shown in the attached renderings. Each of the Tied House facade options can be integrated with any of the building designs, so Council is encouraged to consider these two questions – facade preservation and design – separately.

The first option does not preserve the facade.

The following are ways the applicant has proposed to preserve the facade.



"Integrated" (Preservation V1 in Attachment 4) shows the Tied House facade integrated into the proposed office building volume.



"Setback" (Preservation V2 in Attachment 4) shows the Tied House facade projecting out from the proposed office building volume. A private open amenity area would be located above the Tied House. In this option, the left (west) half of the facade is set back more, better distinguishing the Tied House from the rest of the building.



“Monument” shows Tied House facade preserved only as a screen or sculptural element. The facade would be connected to the rest of the building with a trellis, and would frame an outdoor patio area for the proposed restaurant (renderings of the patio are also included in the packet).

In each of the above cases, a restaurant is proposed behind the facade. The interior space of the restaurant would be set back from the facade, creating an outdoor dining area, screened from the sidewalk by the facade. In the “Integrated” and “Setback” options, this outdoor area would be fully covered, while in the “Monument” option this area would only be covered with the trellis. Also, in each case, the only preserved structure would be the wall facing Villa Street; all other existing walls of the Tied House would be removed to construct the underground garage.

Also included in the packet (*Original Submittal* in Attachment 4) is an option without preservation. If it is not preserved, the building design, such as materials and massing, would be less constrained. Removing the facade would create a stronger connection between the restaurant and the street and may help the outdoor dining feel more open. Having strong visibility of the restaurant from the street also supports restaurant operations. However, removing the facade would be a loss of one of the City’s cultural artifacts.

Any of the proposed options would compromise the site’s historic integrity, and would constitute a significant impact to the Tied House as a cultural resource. Preserving the facade of Tied House would not completely mitigate this impact.

Facadism

Preservation of the facade only (often called “facadism”) can be controversial. On the one hand, it can preserve elements of the site’s character, materials, and design. On the other hand, the loss of the historic building and context reduces the value of the facade as a cultural resource. The level of contrast with new development can accentuate, rather than mitigate, that loss. In that sense, preservationists usually do not consider facadism a compromise, because the relic facade has been repurposed as a prop or stage set, deprived of its original value and meaning.

The photographs below show several examples of buildings utilizing facadism.



The first image is similar to “Integrated” and “Monument,” where the new building is positioned directly behind the preserved facade. The second image is more similar to “Setback,” where the new building is set back in a way that reduces the dissonance between the preserved facade and the new building area. However, this image shows a design that preserves more of the original exterior materials of the building than the proposed “Setback” option.

The bottom image shows an example from Homer Avenue in Palo Alto. In this case, the historic building’s whole exterior is minimally changed from its historic condition. The development appears as newer buildings constructed around an older building, rather than newer buildings using the older building’s facade. In addition, the newer buildings are a neutral backdrop to the preserved building. There are key differences

between the Palo Alto project and the proposal that may affect the feasibility of this type of preservation. The Palo Alto project area is larger relative to the preserved building which can affect how easy it is to design a project around a preserved building. Also, the ground floor use in Palo Alto was never proposed to be a restaurant, and, as stated earlier, restaurants perform better with more transparency.

In general, the more of the Tied House's character-defining features are preserved, the better the project mitigates the loss of the cultural resource. Among these character-defining features are the mass and scale of the building, which "Setback" best preserves from among the applicant's proposals. In addition, the contrast between old and new is less pronounced with the larger setback, and the Tied House area in "Setback" appears more like an internally consistent, stand-alone building, though not as much as the Palo Alto example.

Even with "Setback," the side and rear Tied House walls would be demolished and rebuilt to facilitate cleaning the site's soil contamination and constructing underground parking. Historic preservation Best Practices¹ do not recommend removal of historic, character-defining materials, or rebuilding in a way that did not exist in the past, such as with an outdoor amenity area on the roof. If the City Council supports the Palo Alto example above, where more of the character-defining features are preserved, the applicant may need to reconstruct similar-looking side walls and roof to clean the soil and build the parking.

Front Setback

Although the right (east) portion of the site has a large front setback to create a plaza under the two mature magnolia trees (currently in front of Chez TJ), there is some flexibility in where to place the new building volume on the left (west) portion of the site. "Setback" provides a larger front setback in order to recreate the form of the original Tied House building and visually separate it from the new building, so this issue is integral to the discussion of facade preservation.

The front setback on the left-half of the site affects more than the prominence of a preserved Tied House. In this location, a smaller setback would create a more urban feel, better enclosing the street and plaza, and lining up with other existing and potential development on the block. However, a larger setback would create more light on the street, and, if the Tied House facade is preserved, may reduce how much of the office building is visible from the sidewalk.

¹ From the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties

A smaller setback may also provide more flexibility for distributing the allowed floor area elsewhere on the site. In “Setback,” the total floor area is the same as other options by filling in balconies on other sides of the building. In effect, the design replaces multiple small outdoor amenity areas with one large one on top of the restaurant.

Question 2

Does the City Council support preservation of the Tied House facade? If so, does Council prefer one of the facade preservation options?

Other Design Issues

In addition to facade preservation, the renderings show different design approaches for the remainder of the building. If the Council chooses to preserve the Tied House facade, Council could consider how well each of the design options relate to the preserved facade in massing, scale, and character.

Traditional Design Features

Mountain View is an architecturally eclectic city, and there is not a single or dominant traditional or historic style. While the Downtown Precise Plan does not require mimicry of historic styles, it does include guidance for design treatments that complement the historic context. The Plan encourages “craftsmanship and detailing within the pedestrian’s range of touch and view,” inset windows “to provide relief, detail and variation,” and “richly detailed” building materials. Staff and the DRC will continue to work with Minkoff on the application of these guidelines throughout the remainder of the development review process.

There are some effective ways to incorporate more traditional character into the design of a building, such as using historic materials (including wood, stone, or brick); providing a regular rhythm of separate windows, mullions, and/or window trim details; and/or using cornices or other ornamentation at the roof lines. These traditional elements can be used in different ways and to different degrees.

The three alternative design studies show ways of incorporating these features.



“Original Submittal” and “Preservation V1” uses nontraditional materials, such as metal, glass, and terra cotta. The fine-grained detail in materials and shades provides interest and complexity. Windows are continuous, separated only by their mullions, which is a modern design. Roof lines are also nontraditional, including the large terra cotta “frame” on the left side. Rooftop amenity spaces and trellises are visible.



“Stone” (Preservation V2 in Attachment 4) shows a stone or tile facade, which is a more traditional material than “Original Submittal.” Though the material is traditional, the simple wall planes and minimal window ornamentation is modern. More traditionally, the windows are separated from each other in the lower three stories. The large awning at the roofline is simpler and cleaner than the visible rooftop amenity spaces from “Original Submittal.”



“Brick” (Monument in Attachment 4) shows a brick facade, which is a more traditional material than “Original Submittal,” though brick is not used in Mountain View as much as other parts of the country. The windows are separated from each other, like “Stone.” Also like “Stone,” a large awning is used at the fourth floor, but the roofs of the three-story projections are defined by a more traditional simple cornice.

Differentiation Between Sides

At 150', the project site is twice as wide as the other two sites on the block, because it would consolidate two existing 75' wide parcels. By differentiating the two halves of

the building, the project can preserve the 75' rhythm of the block, giving different character to each segment, and may create a more dynamic and interesting streetscape. The "Original Submittal" was characterized by a high level of differentiation between the sides of the building. The alternative, using the same forms and materials on both sides, would be a simpler, more internally consistent facade that may be less conspicuous. "Stone" and "Brick" proposals are minimally differentiated.

Question 3

Are the design studies going in the right direction toward a more traditional design? Does the City Council have any other feedback or preference on the design proposals, including materials, windows, roof forms, or differentiation?

Parking

The project applicant has designed the office building to be consistent with the Downtown Precise Plan and other Zoning requirements. This includes parking: they intend to provide the entire project's required parking on-site, rather than paying in-lieu fees to cover a parking deficit. However, the site has a unique history that complicates how "required parking" is calculated.

The Tied House property was owned by the City before it was the Tied House. It was sold to the current owners in 1988. One of the terms of sale was for the owners to pay the City \$243,000 as a Parking In-Lieu Fee for 27 parking spaces.² The owners paid the fee as required by the Agreement. This Agreement also provides that the In-Lieu Fee payment reduces any future parking requirement on this site by 27 parking spaces. This project's parking requirement is 121 spaces. Applying the agreement, this development would only be required to provide 94 spaces, because the remaining 27 spaces were provided for in public parking lots by the owner's previous fee payment.

After this agreement was executed, the City adopted the current Downtown Precise Plan, including parking requirements for this site (Attachment 5—Downtown Parking Requirements). These requirements include provisions for "Replacement of Existing Floor Area," when an existing building is demolished and replaced with a new building (Page 16). According to the Precise Plan, existing floor area shall no longer be credited to the parking requirement of the proposed development.³ If the Precise Plan is applied, the development would be required to provide 121 parking spaces.

² The In-Lieu Fee at the time was \$9,000 per required parking space. The 27 spaces derive from 1 space per 300 square feet of floor area, the required parking ratio for restaurants.

³ A credit of 1 space per 500 square feet existed prior to 2009, but that credit was terminated.

The 1988 agreement and the Precise Plan provide different parking requirement calculations for the project. It appears this preexisting agreement was neither known nor considered when the current language in the Precise Plan was adopted. Staff is not aware of any other such agreements.

Staff recommends the parking credit be granted based on the unique circumstances of this project, specifically the underlying agreement and the previous payment of fees. Alternatively, the City Council could choose to apply the precise plan and not allow a credit. If the City Council agrees with staff's recommendation, an exception to the Precise Plan parking requirement would need to be approved for this development.

Question 4

Does the City Council support the staff recommendation for a 27-space credit, consistent with the terms of the 1988 agreement?

RECOMMENDATION

Staff is seeking high-level City Council direction on a new office and restaurant development at 938 and 954 Villa Street. Staff recommends the City Council respond to the following questions:

1. Does the City Council support the Weilheimer House relocating to 1012 West Dana Street?
2. Does the City Council support preservation of the Tied House facade? If so, does Council prefer one of the facade preservation options?
3. Are the design studies going in the right direction toward a more traditional design? Does the City Council have any other feedback or preference on the design proposals, including materials, windows, roof forms, or differentiation?
4. Does the City Council support the staff recommendation for a 27-space credit, consistent with the terms of the 1988 agreement?

NEXT STEPS

If the City Council's comments are consistent with the general direction proposed at this Study Session, the project will continue with design review and an Environmental Impact Report. The project will return to the City Council at a later date for a final decision.

PUBLIC NOTICING

The Council's agenda is advertised on Channel 26, and the agenda and this report appear on the City's website. All property owners within a 300' radius and other interested stakeholders, including the Central Business Association, the Chamber of Commerce, the Old Mountain View Neighborhood Association, and Mountain View Historical Association, were notified of this meeting.

EA-RT/7/CAM
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- Attachments:
1. June 13, 2017, Study Session Memo
 2. Public Comment
 3. 1012 West Dana Street Proposed Site Plan
 4. Design Renderings
 5. Downtown Parking Requirements