



**City of Santa Barbara**  
**ARCHITECTURAL BOARD OF REVIEW**  
**SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES**  
**MARCH 4, 2024**

1:00 P.M.  
City Hall, Council Chambers  
735 Anacapa Street  
[SantaBarbaraCA.gov](http://SantaBarbaraCA.gov)

**BOARD MEMBERS:**

Lauren Anderson, *Chair*  
Dennis Whelan, *Vice Chair*  
David Black  
Steve Nuhn  
Richard Six  
Will Sofrin

**CITY COUNCIL LIAISON:**

Meagan Harmon

**PLANNING COMMISSION LIAISON:**

Sheila Lodge

**STAFF:**

Tava Ostrenger, Assistant City Attorney  
Ellen Kokinda, Design Review Supervisor  
Carly Earnest, Assistant Planner  
Joanie Saffell, Commission Secretary

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**CALL TO ORDER**

The Full Board meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m. by Chair Anderson.

**ATTENDANCE**

Members present: Anderson, Whelan, Black, Six, and Sofrin

Members absent: Nuhn

Staff present: Ostrenger; Allison DeBusk, City Planner; Kokinda; Megan Arciniega, Senior Planner; Earnest; Mariah Johnson, Commission Secretary; and Saffell

**GENERAL BUSINESS**

A. Public Comment:

No public comment.

B. Approval of Minutes:

Motion: Approve the minutes of the Architectural Board of Review meeting of **February 20, 2024**, as amended.

Action: Six/Anderson, 5/0/0. (Nuhn absent.) Motion carried.

C. Approval of the Consent Calendar:

Motion: Ratify the Consent Calendar of **February 26, 2024**, as reviewed by Board Members Whelan and Sofrin.

Action: Whelan/Black, 5/0/0. (Nuhn absent.) Motion carried.

- D. Announcements, requests by applicants for continuances and withdrawals, future agenda items, and appeals:

No announcements.

- E. Subcommittee Reports:

No subcommittee reports.

### **(1:00PM) NEW ITEM: ONE-TIME PRE-APPLICATION CONSULTATION**

1. **3805 STATE ST (Macy's Site)**

Assessor's Parcel Number: 051-010-013  
Zone: C-G/USS  
Application Number: PRE2022-00216  
Owner: Nettleship Family Trust  
Patricia S. Nettleship, Trustee  
Applicant: Flowers & Associates, Inc.

(Proposal to demolish an existing three-story commercial building and associated asphalt parking lots and landscaping. The project includes a lot split to create an 8.79 acre parcel (gross). Three mixed use buildings are proposed providing 642 apartments and 27,748 square feet of commercial space. The project utilizes the Average Unit Size Density (AUD) Incentive Program and California State Density Bonus Program, proposing 5% very low-income units and 5% moderate-income units and a 20% density bonus, allowing the proposed base density of 62 units/acre. The proposed buildings vary in height from two stories to six stories, with a maximum height of 76.5 feet. Proposed parking for the project includes two levels of sub-terranean parking serving residential uses, two ground level parking garages for commercial uses and 13 surface loading spaces. ROW improvements include new sidewalks and parkways on State Street and Hope Avenue meeting the Pedestrian Master Plan requirements and a new right hand turn lane from State St. to Hope Ave. On site improvements include a vehicular connection from Hope Ave. to the western edge of the property (connecting to the off-site drive to La Cumbre Rd), a new Class 1 bike lane connecting State St. to Hope Ave., new permeable paving, landscaping, and plazas and paseos that will be available to the public.

**This review is for comments only. No final appealable decision will be made at this hearing. Project will require submittal of a formal Planning Application subject to compliance with the Project Compatibility Findings, Urban Design Guidelines, Upper State Street Area Design Guidelines and Outdoor Lighting Design Guidelines.**

Actual time: 1:05 p.m.

Present: Patsy Price, Project Planner, Confluence Land Use LLC; Jim Taylor, MCP La Cumbre; Brian Cearnal, Cearnal Collective; Christine Pierron, Cearnal Collective; Daniel Simons, Principal, David Baker Architects; Chelsea Johnson, David Baker Architects; Vicki Li, EPT Design; and Megan Arciniega, Senior Planner, City of Santa Barbara

Public comment opened at 1:55 p.m.

The following individuals spoke:

1. Assad Mora
2. Nicholas Storr
3. Michael Rassler
4. Bonnie Elliot
5. Alex Gravenor
6. Sullivan Israel
7. Steve Fort

Written correspondence from Kathy Patmore D.D.S., Nina Meyer, and Steve & Celia Fort was acknowledged.

Public comment closed at 2:04 p.m.

#### Board Comments:

1. Board Member Six is overwhelmed by the size of this project. Technically, the project's massing reflects what is allowed per the new housing rules. However, this site's area and frontage dwarfs most of the sites in the area and thus the resulting mass dwarfs the rest of the neighborhood. Board Member Six is prepared to stretch the past Architectural Board Review (ABR) sense of compatibility per the new housing rules but he expected to stretch it more typically sized sites throughout the city. To see such massing increase on one large site is uncomfortable. He wishes the project had more balance between compatible massing and maximizing unit count. The design team has done an admiral job so far in managing the bulk, but it is not there yet. 2. The ABR is also responsible for seeing that projects include high standards of livability. A lot of the inspirational images presented of other public spaces involved one to three story buildings with wide plazas. However, building sections show much narrower paseos along six and five story buildings, creating deep shade and issues of privacy between buildings. He does not sense the livability the Board is to encourage. 3. He understands the project is trying to generate vitality with the internal distribution of retail but is disappointed in the project's weak connections to the remaining surrounding retail: the strip retail along Plaza Avenue, and the entry to the existing retail spine to the west. 4. He suggests finding more differentiation and concentration of unit types among buildings that allows some buildings to have denser unit count and smaller in size, adding that space to the paseos and open areas. 5. The applicant should not be so careful to hide five and six story buildings internally. There are 5&6 stories such as the Balboa Building, 820 State, and others along lower State Street. If a limited number of 5 and 6 story buildings (narrow and distinct) were to be closer to the street it could help open the internal living spaces. Compatibility is a transitional process, there will be more five and six story buildings proposed along upper State that will have more limited frontages that will not be able to hide the height. Allowing 5&6 stories closer to the street frontages will ease future compatibility. 6. As evident in the rendering of the corner of State Street and Plaza Avenue, the massing has not been broken up enough especially on the 3rd&4th floor. The paseo openings, building masses, and fenestration are very homogenous, and more variation is needed. There should be more variation in setbacks, paseo widths at street, building heights (including limited 5&6 story as mentioned before). He suggests making fenestration less regimented by grouping openings of side-by-side units as to read as one opening. Consider limited use of unique architectural styles and/or materials (like the Granada brick) to have a different older look. Perhaps 1 or 2 perimeter masses at angles to add character. 7. The length of Mediterranean language of (Building C2) is stretching that vernacular too far. He is delighted that it will be shorter due to the park. In addition, he suggests

considering a significant gap for the remaining building and have part Mediterranean and Contemporary. He likes Chair Anderson's idea to move the park up Hope Avenue so that it is more central and provides a significant break in the street elevation. 8. If the park is moved east, the western end of Building C2 could be a good place for a narrowed-down version of the Balboa Building. It would be less an imposition on internal living spaces. 9. The roof deck on Building C, level 5, adds mass to the building at the street. The roof deck should be eliminated or relocated deeper in the project. 10. Consider opportunities to further dig State Street frontage down below sidewalk level like Building C1.

2. Vice Chair Whelan is in general agreement with the comments of Board Member Six. To review a few of the fine points from the Upper State Street Guidelines, the project should enhance the Santa Barbara building environment and possess its own identity within the context of Santa Barbara character. The project should be pedestrian friendly along the street scape. The project does not seem to be there yet and is not an enhanced pedestrian experience along State Street. Ultimately, the site and project are overbuilt despite complying with all the zoning and state laws. The project should present an integrated appearance, that does not mean hybridizing the neighboring buildings, it should be complete and integrated in and of itself. The buildings to the west are not admirable to the Santa Barbara spirit or the City Charter which calls for a certain expression that relates to our history and tradition. The project should integrate harmoniously with the immediate neighborhood and that is open to interpretation and a dialogue with the clients. The project overwhelms the adjacent buildings to the west and to the south. He is concerned about Plaza Avenue where the eateries are popular and have pedestrians scampering across from the parking. There is a very weird intersection at Plaza Avenue and Bristol Farms that he hopes the project could resolve. There may be more compatible uses for project buildings along that site that mirror the commercial projects across the street and off the site. The project overwhelms the existing building to the south with the proposed 5-6 stories adjacent to the 1.5 story commercial building. It does not seem compatible. He was pleased to see the example of Granada, Spain but cautions interpreting in two dimensions rather than three dimensions. Building A3 calls out the 35 feet wide paseo and is 75 feet tall. This is not in the spirit of Granada. In the open and community spaces there would not be a big tree and seating in the middle of public spaces, the plazas are meant more for assembly. Building A3 may completely overshadow the plaza, and the project needs to consider daylighting these spaces for livability. He would like to see the public spaces developed in a more personal and habitable way and could have a completely different identity than the rectilinearity that is happening now. The pedestrian entrance from State Street needs a stronger expression either in buildings or gateway. The Hope Avenue elevation gets it right and reflects the Santa Barbara style, but he would like to see that extended to State Street. He would like to note the proposal is twice the allowed floor to area ratios of the Upper State Street Design Guidelines.
3. Board Member Black likes what he sees in the variation of architectural styles from Hope Avenue to State Street. He is overwhelmed by the size, bulk, and scale of the project. Imagine all the center buildings to be as tall as Macy's tower, and that is a huge impact. However, if the project is well done and serves the purpose of providing housing that is as important. The paseos are very valuable, and he appreciates the integration of public space, without them you would not have a project. He is concerned about the primary plaza surrounded by six story buildings and that this space would be in the shade all the time. However, this could be balanced with a judicious use of rich materials that is typical of Santa Barbara. Despite the reservations one may have about the size, bulk, and scale, if the project is well done with the richness of materials and the project fulfills the necessary commodity of housing, then this will be a good and more palatable project for many.

4. Board Member Sofrin stated that problems are opportunities, and this is a great opportunity, and there is a lot of great work going into this project. The project feels homogenous, the jump between Building C1 and C2 and the architectural difference between A1, A2 and A3 are very far. At the same time, he loves seeing a mix of architecture. Comparing the project to West Village in New York City, it is a popular neighborhood with tall buildings and tight streets like paseos that continues to be reinvigorated. This project is an opportunity to create a village on Upper State Street that does not exist. In regard to neighborhood compatibility, there are a lot of different architectural styles. This project has a wonderful opportunity to redefine Upper State Street and set an example that will ultimately impact the opposite side of the street. North of this project, the property owners will see this project and there can be a tremendous shift. The mass, bulk, and scale are acceptable for what it is. This is going to be a new neighborhood and a new community. He likes the sixth story setback from the street. He likes the village idea, like Palisade Village in the Pacific Palisades, where there is a created community and a neighborhood with retail, residential, and restaurants. He appreciates how timeless Santa Barbara is and there should be more articulation in the building finishes, spaces, and a mix of architectural styles that can make the project interesting and feel more timeless. The project should look built over time and have a character like it has always belonged. He recommends breaking up the continuity of vertical and horizontal lines on the State Street elevation to add articulation.
  
5. Chair Anderson agrees with Board Member Sofrin. She does not have a problem with the height and feels it is necessary for this project. Applicant to study and manipulate where the five and six stories are placed to add interest as the Board is looking for variation of the elevations. The idea of adding the park is great but the applicant should study how to integrate it into the Hope Avenue elevation to break up that building and how long it looks. It is thoughtful to have specimen trees as the gateway to the paseos instead of just using architecture. However, architecture can also be used for gateways to the paseos, by considering articulation of the corners. Another way to study the variation of the buildings would be to look at varying the floor heights to help with fenestration and avoid monotonous lines along the elevation of State Street. Introducing the green pockets is great. Continue to study program adjacencies, specifically with the introduction of the park, dog wash station, and gym and how they interact together to create a neighborhood feel. On the plans, differentiate the live work units because it does feel like the development turns it back on its neighbors when in reality the project is thoughtful, but might need to be relayed in a different way. This is a great project that is going in the right direction. The different architectural styles are great and what we need.

**\* MEETING ADJOURNED AT 3:36 P.M. \***