



General Public Comment

Name of Sender	Distributed prior to hearing	Distributed after the hearing
1. Richard Closson	x	

From: [Richard Closson](#)
To: [Community_Development_HLCsecretary](#)
Subject: 1225 Anacapa St. - Review After Final - Power Transformer
Date: Saturday, January 08, 2022 3:30:45 PM

EXTERNAL

Happy New Year to the Commission and thanks for the work you've done in 2021.

I've just had an opportunity to view the video of your December 12 meeting. While I was reveling in the spirit of the season, you were hard at work. I was energized just watching the constructive discussion of this project as it dropped in your laps.

Let there be no mistake: the design of this project was always going to be extremely difficult, a fact perhaps not appreciated in 2015 when it was given Final Approval. The 2021 perspective - 6 wise years later - from a thousand feet above shows this area now to be the primary crossroad between important civic amenities: the 1) Public Library, 2) new Library Plaza, 3) Museum of Art, 4) La Arcada, and 5) public parking from which visitors, patrons, and customers flow. In addition, visitors to the County Courthouse across Anacapa Street park in this lot; they might be drawn to commercial shops in La Arcada and the Museum with a better visual invitation. With due respect to the Commissioners in 2015, an opportunity was missed to require better treatment for this central throughway.

I take several points from your thorough discussion.

1. The transformer you bought (or thought you were "buying") is not the transformer you got. This is either a flaw in the system where esthetic design approval can be granted without presentation of important specifications, or misdirection on the part of the applicant or transformer supplier. In this case, size, bulk, and scale (of the transformer) should have been a more important issue.
2. Everybody else got a crack at design features before the Commission, thereby limiting your options for constructive input. In this case City engineers, the City Parks and Recreation Department, the Museum of Art, and the Library Foundation all had input to the final configuration prior to construction, certainly before this Review After Final. In this case (let me guess), City engineers picked the placement because it's on City property (easy for them). Could there have been a more visually intrusive spot? I doubt it. City Parks and Recreation chimed in that they had no money for landscaping or irrigation (am I right?). Good thing because the Library Foundation doesn't want plantings, anyway. In 2021 the Museum is at a disadvantage due to a change in personnel, but they were not well served in 2015; did nobody at the Museum in 2015 say, "Hey, this is our main patron entrance from a major parking lot. It needs to give a good impression"? Commissioner Lenvik waxed philosophic with, "Ugly seeps into you" and an ugly transformer will be seeping into the consciousness of visitors before they reach La Arcada, the Museum of Art, or the Library Plaza.
3. Vice Chair Hausz referred to the adage about putting lipstick on a pig. Unfortunately, the Commission's options for this project have been whittled down through prior passive compliance (or intentional deception) to selecting only the shade of the lipstick.
4. Public commenter and Library Foundation member, Lauren Trujillo, implored the Commission to consider the "space in its entirety" and I heartily agree. Commissioners Drury and Lenvik have seen the future and it is now. Projects including utility structures

(in this case an electrical transformer) will only increase and the Commission must “consider the space in its entirety.” Take both the pedestrian perspective and the 1000 foot overhead when approving projects in the public right of way or views within El Pueblo Viejo. Being complacent or too compliant now will result in regretted decisions later. Nobody wants future visitors to look at a structure or venue and wonder, “What were they thinking?”

Regards,
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