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STAFF REPORT

Item # 8B

To: Lemoore City Council & Planning Commission
From: Holly Smyth, Planning Director
Date: December 29, 2010
Subject: Examples of Site Plan Review since the 2030 General Plan Adoption

Background:

Since May 2008, planning staff has been reviewing new development projects utilizing the policies contained in the 2030 Lemoore General Plan, as it is the overall guiding policy document for the City. Some of the policies in the General Plan do not have specific implementation direction in the Zoning Code and therefore the review process has been more difficult to implement. In order to better understand what level of review is involved and what policies are utilized in the review of various Site Plans, attached are four examples of projects submitted and a summary of key approval points.

Most projects that are "Categorically Exempt" under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) are approved by the Planning Director while higher threshold projects are reviewed by the Planning Commission. Appeals are available to all applicants to the next higher approving body. Over the last ten (10) years, only one appeal/revisiting of a project application has occurred from all the staff, Planning Commission, or City Council approvals (which was on the Hauck site church conditional use permit Council determination).

In order to better serve the business community, staff has tried to utilize the Categorical Exemption under CEQA as often as possible to avoid the $2,000 plus fee required to be paid to the County and forwarded on to State Department of Fish and Game and the additional time to process. Categorical Exemptions take about 2 weeks to process versus a 6-week minimum to process a Negative Declaration under CEQA due to minimum review periods. Staff generally processes projects that are Categorically Exempt as "Administrative Site Plan" reviews rather than "Site Plan Review" reviewed by Planning Commission which saves both time and money. Planning Commission reviews take 45-60 days before a Commission meeting for a decision/approval versus 30 days or less for a staff approval. Fees for Site Plan Review before Planning Commission are at least $355 more expensive than the staff administered approval.

In a nutshell, the underlying thought process implemented by the Planning Department in all development review is maintaining the small town community character, which has been the community's number 1 reason to enjoy living in Lemoore. This character is often based on a relative balance of design elements including streetscape, proportions and correct placement of circulation corridors, scale/massing/placement of buildings within their surrounding environment. The implementation of this character requires good design implemented from good plans and clear/well calibrated standards which the Zoning Ordinance Update intends to incorporate.

Budget Impact:

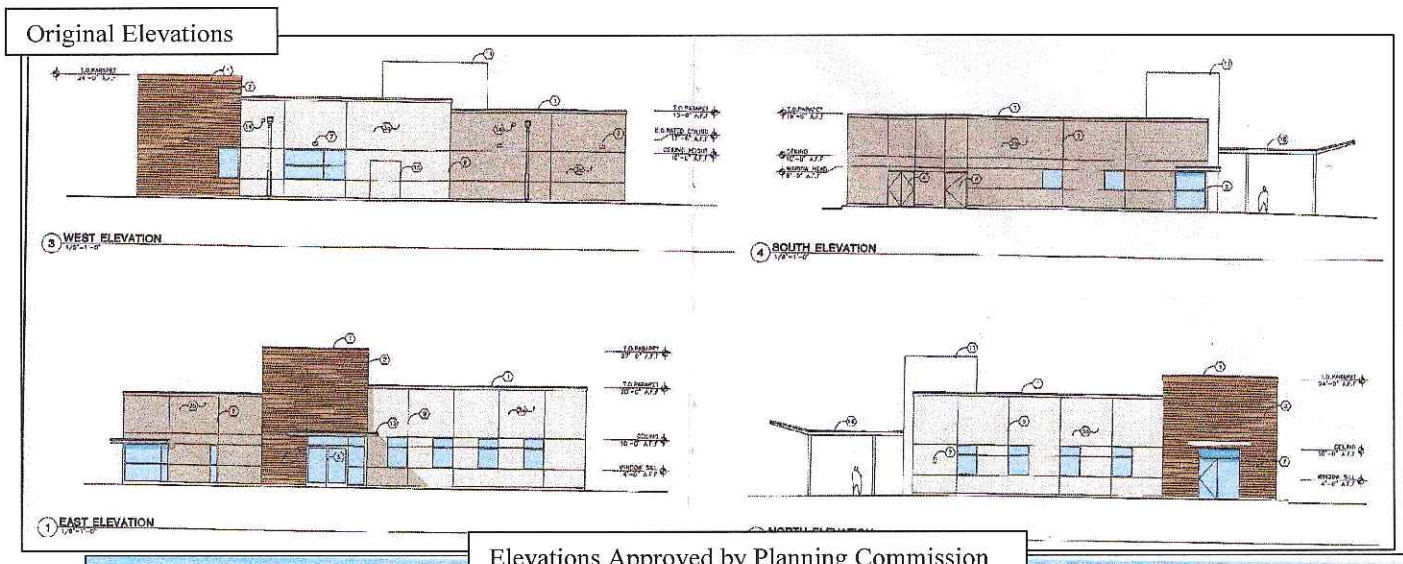
None.

Recommendation:

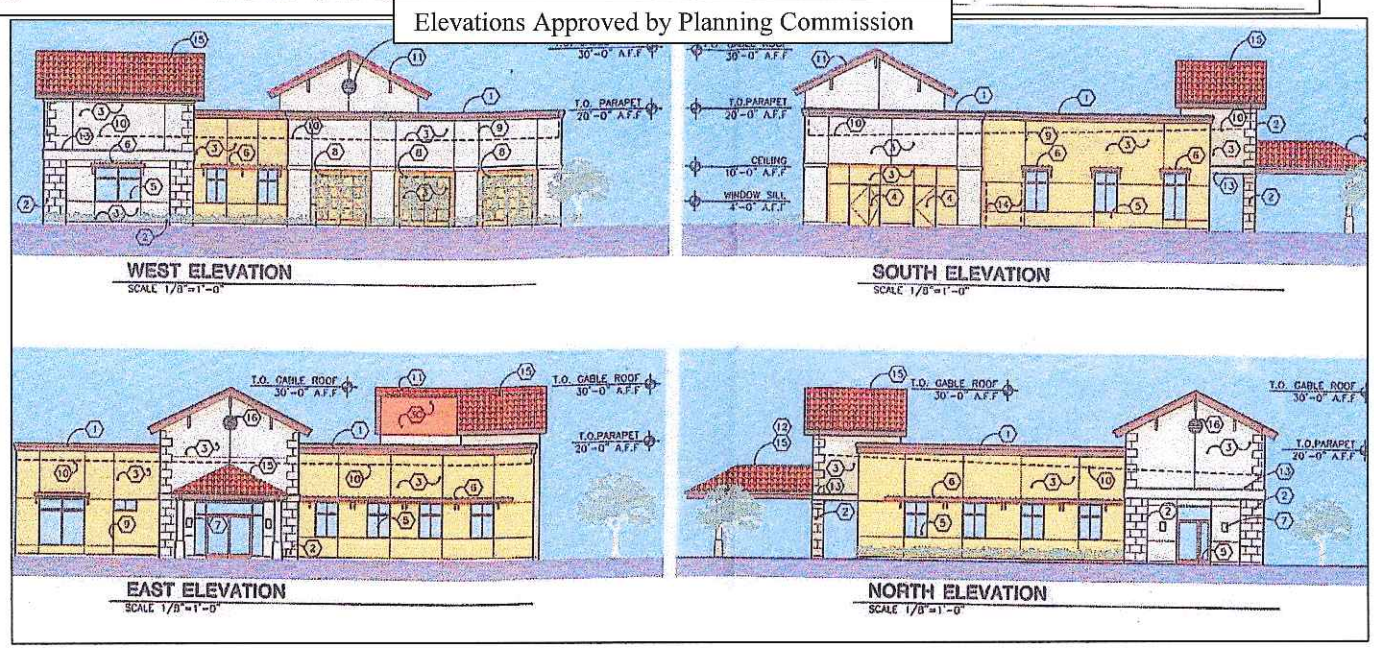
For discussion purposes only.

SITE PLAN REVIEW & PARCEL MAP APPLICATION FOR DAVITA DIALYSIS CENTER – APPROVED BY PLANNING COMMISSION

Original Elevations

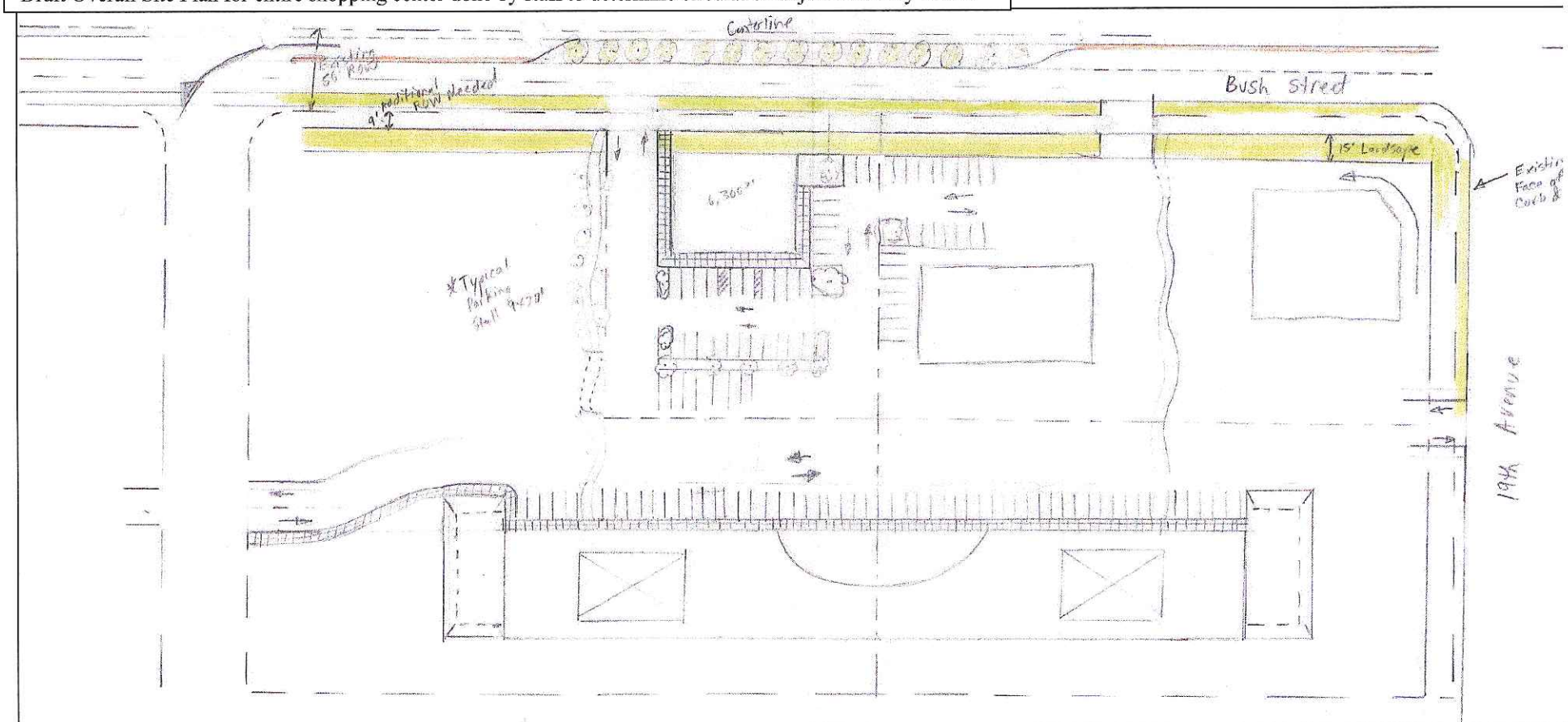


Elevations Approved by Planning Commission



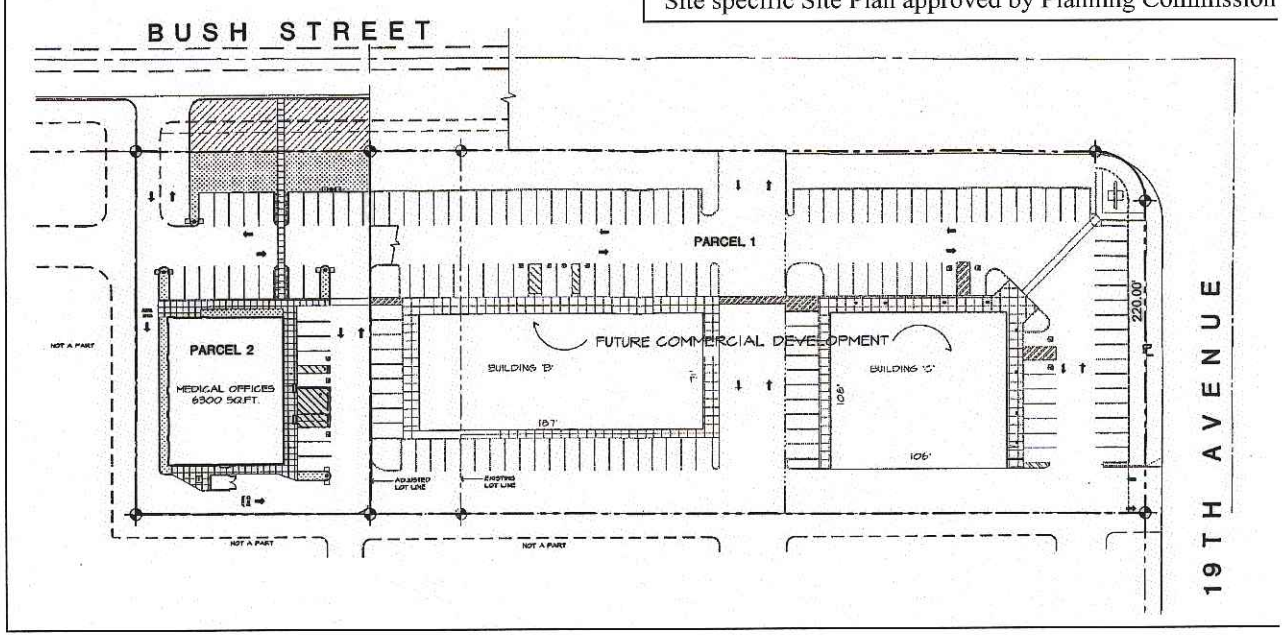
- 6,300 square foot building
- Site Plan Review could have been done administratively by staff if Parcel Map not involved
- General Plan (GP) policy CD-I-34 "require(s) design of building in neighborhood centers to be consistent with Lemoore's small town character" and further addresses style, color, height, and landscape that should be incorporated.
- GP policy CD-I-36 "required continuous street frontage" with "no building setback from street unless a canopy or roof structure provided to maintain continuous sidewalk" as well as incorporating "centrally-located pedestrian access" which was accomplished with a pedestrian trellis versus building next to landscape buffer area shown on the Site Plans below
- Building canopy was not required by Planning but was part of Building Code for the type of use

Draft Overall Site Plan for entire shopping center done by staff to determine circulation adjacent to City streets



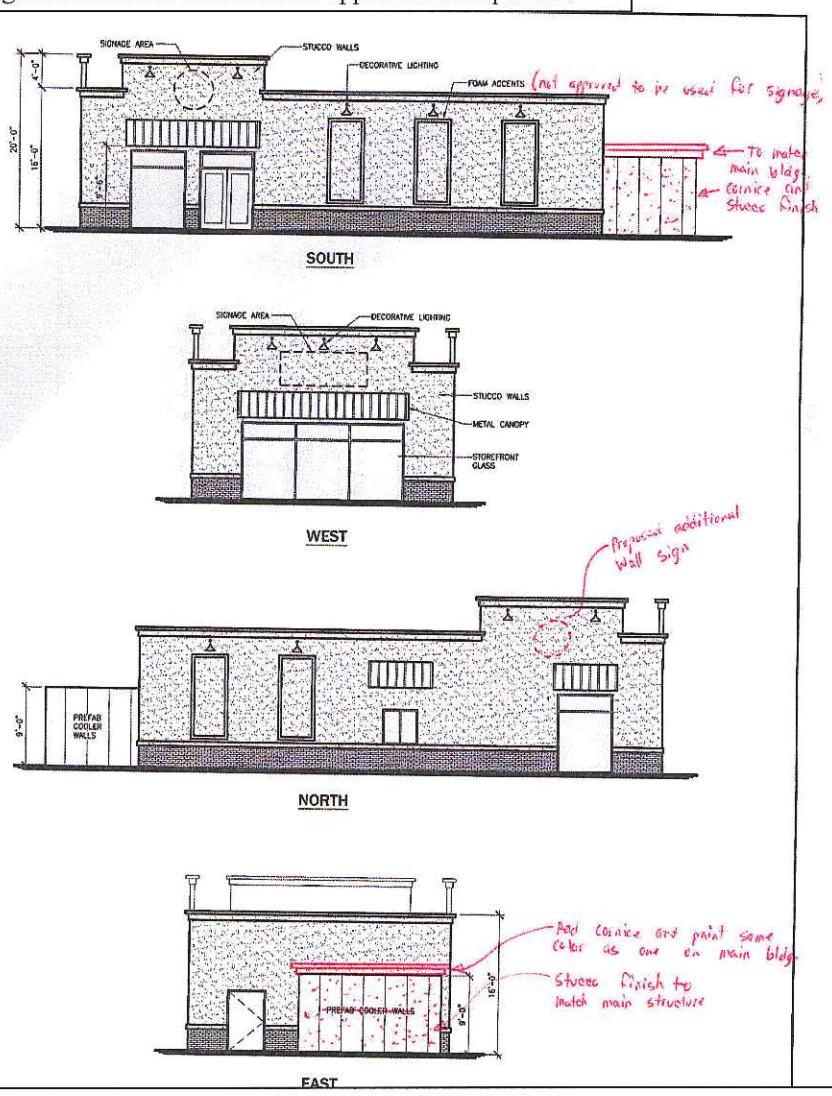
- Deferment allowed for median, paveout, bikelane, curb, gutter, parkway, and sidewalk as these improvements would be problematic in the near term across just this site. However, 8' right-of-way dedication and 10' public utility easements required to be given to the City prior to occupancy.
- GP goal **C-G-4** states "maintain acceptable levels of service and ensure that future development and the circulation system are in balance." This requires staff to review overall layout of entire shopping center to identify permanent long-term access points into the shopping center and ensure the flow within the shopping center will work in future years with the proposed near-term development.
- Flexible conditions put in place to allow for "cross-access" for utilities if the developer could get from adjacent property owner to reduce the lineal footage of utilities and thereby the costs

Site specific Site Plan approved by Planning Commission

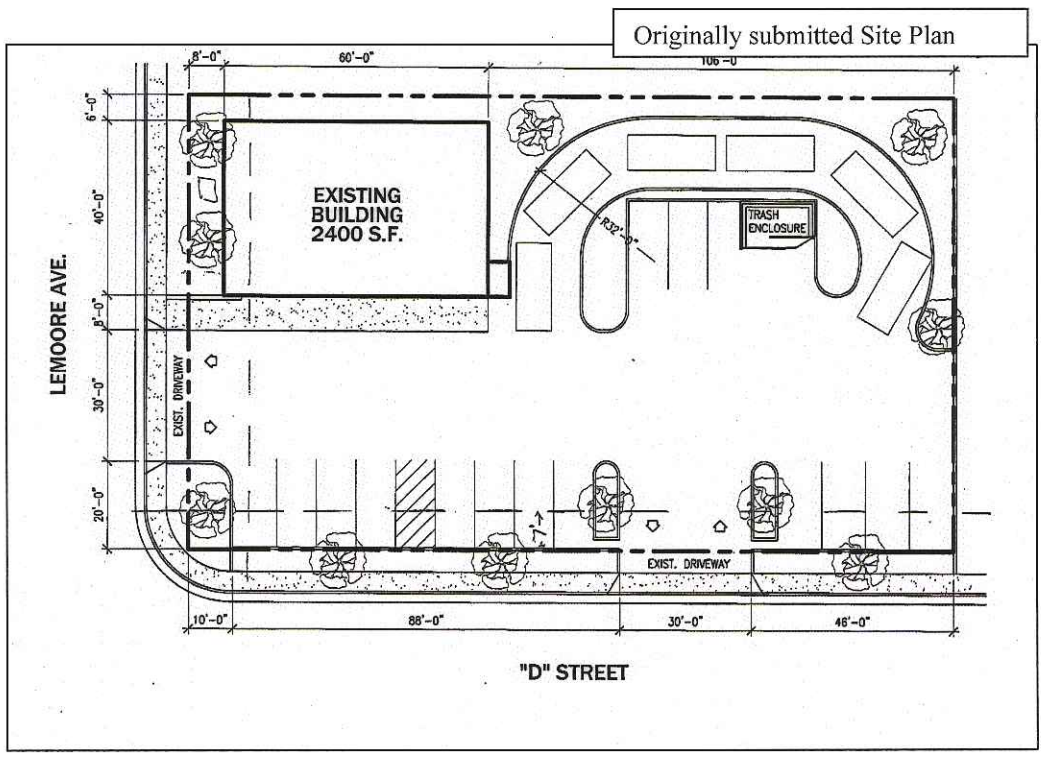


SITE PLAN REVIEW APPLICATION FOR POPEYE'S – APPROVED BY PLANNING DIRECTOR

Original Elevations with redlined approvals incorporated

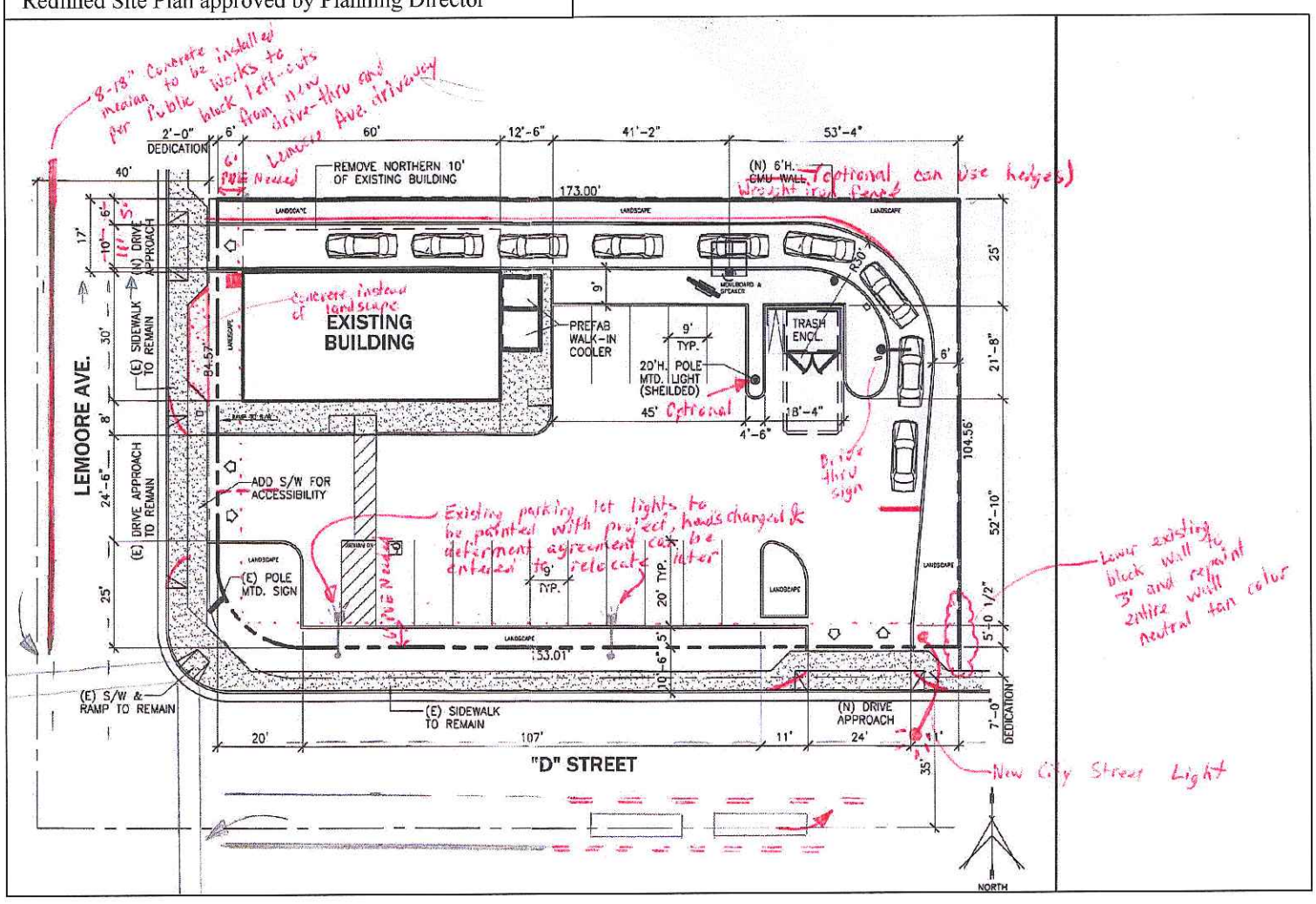


Originally submitted Site Plan



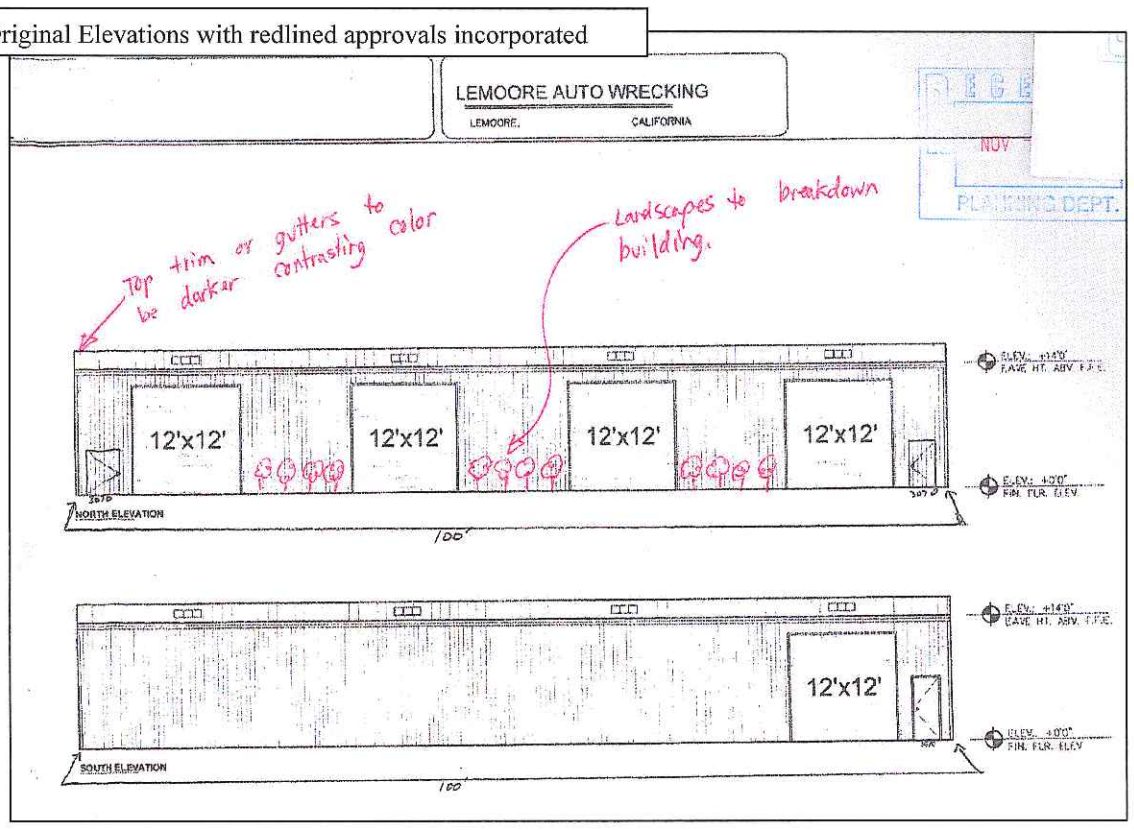
- Project involved converting 2,400 sq ft existing retail building (the old Auto Zone) into an 1,800 sq ft restaurant with drive-thru
- Original Site Plan layout fit less than 10 cars in the drive-thru with awkward layout that had potential to backup onto "D" Street westbound as well as eastbound turn pocket. Staff asked draftsman to configure to allow for at least ten car stacking based on problems experienced at other drive-thru locations. Resubmitted site plan with the back 10' of the building removed to accommodate utilities and drive thru lane for 10 car stacking on-site, and move the "D" Street driveway easterly to allow some stacking in turn pocket to allow left-turn into site.
- GP goal **C-G-4** states "maintain acceptable levels of service and ensure that future development and the circulation system are in balance." GP policy C-I-1 states "adopt street standards that provide flexibility in design,….and revise right-of-way standards where necessary….*some existing areas may require additional right-of-way to accommodate buildout traffic demand, or may be constrained by existing land use, which may limit the City's ability to meet the standards…".* GP policy C-I-2 "requires(s) all new development to provide right-of-way improvements consistent with the General Plan street designations and street cross-section standards…"Previous traffic study done for St. Peters church project showed most of Lemoore Avenue needing to be channelized to reduce left-turn traffic movements (which generally means the installation of concrete or landscaped medians in heavy traffic conflict areas). Additionally, per General Plan Figure 4-4 shows "D" Street in front of the project as a future re-aligned Truck Route once adequate right-of-way is obtained. Median and right-of-way costs are not part of the impact fee program, nor do existing sites that are not adding additional building square footage subject to impact fees, therefore any traffic impacts caused by the "project" need to be addressed by the applicant directly.
- Based on the above policies and given the constraints adjacent to the site, right-of-way dedication of 7' along Lemoore Avenue and 2' along "D" Street prior to occupancy with existing monolithic sidewalks remaining but the improvements to the street will be handled with future City street widening projects which are included in the City's impact fee study. However, should the project cause traffic backups onto adjacent arterial streets in the future, the conditions of approval state the owner will need to resolve through one of many various options to keep initial project costs low. Concrete median required in Lemoore Avenue to avoid left-out from drive thru which would be a traffic hazard.
- General Plan goal CD-G-2 states "enhance key city entrances on primary vehicular corridors". Therefore trash enclosure that was going to be visible to incoming traffic enhanced to have a stucco coat over the blocks and add a cornice topper to match the main building structure.
- General Plan policy CD-I-8 requires a 15-foot landscaped front setback area along all arterial and collector streets outside Downtown, as sites are developed or major renovations undertaken. 10' landscaping being incorporated in near term with future ability to remove 5' front portion of landscaping.

Redlined Site Plan approved by Planning Director



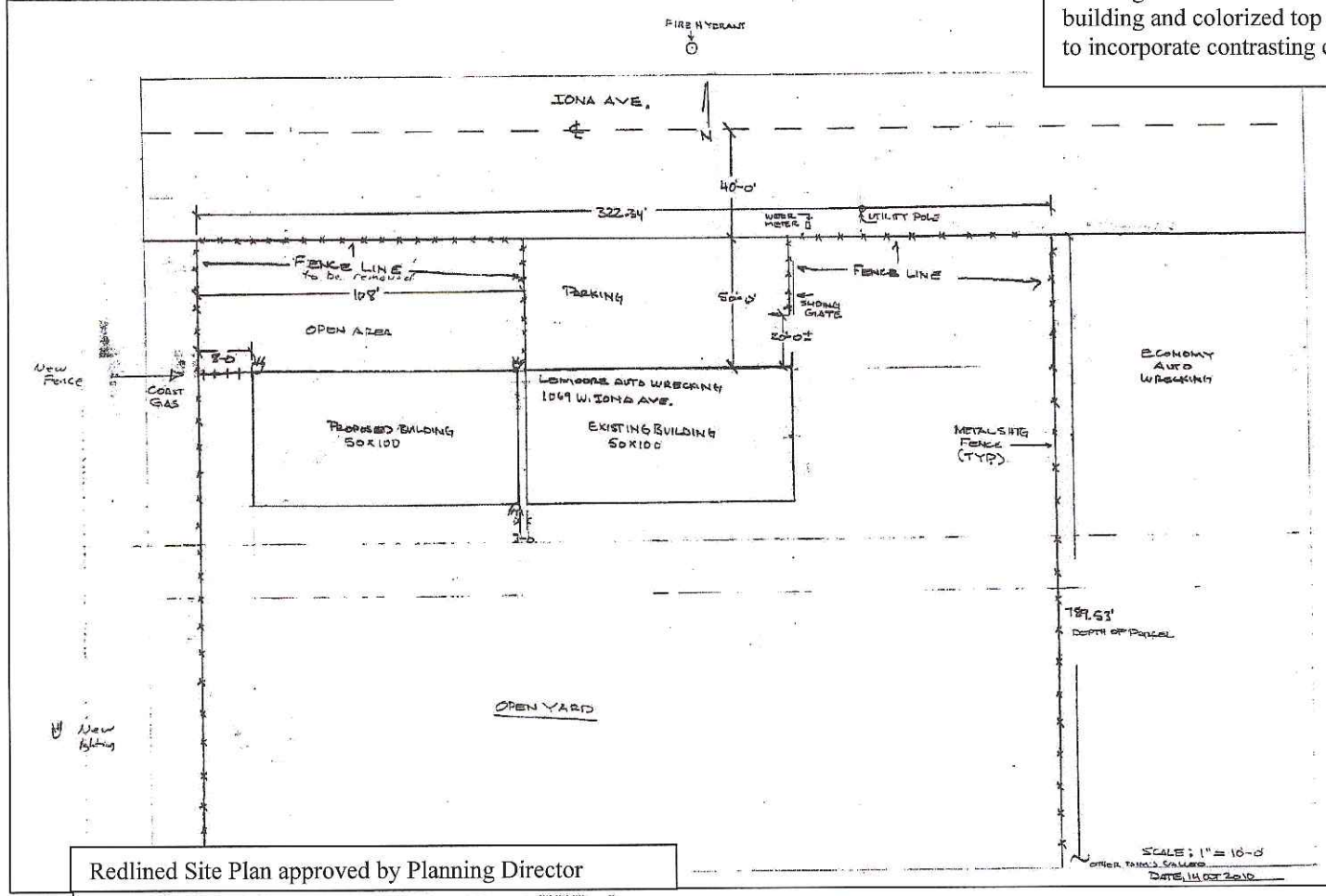
SITE PLAN REVIEW OF LEMOORE AUTO WRECKING – APPROVED BY PLANNING DIRECTOR

Original Elevations with redlined approvals incorporated

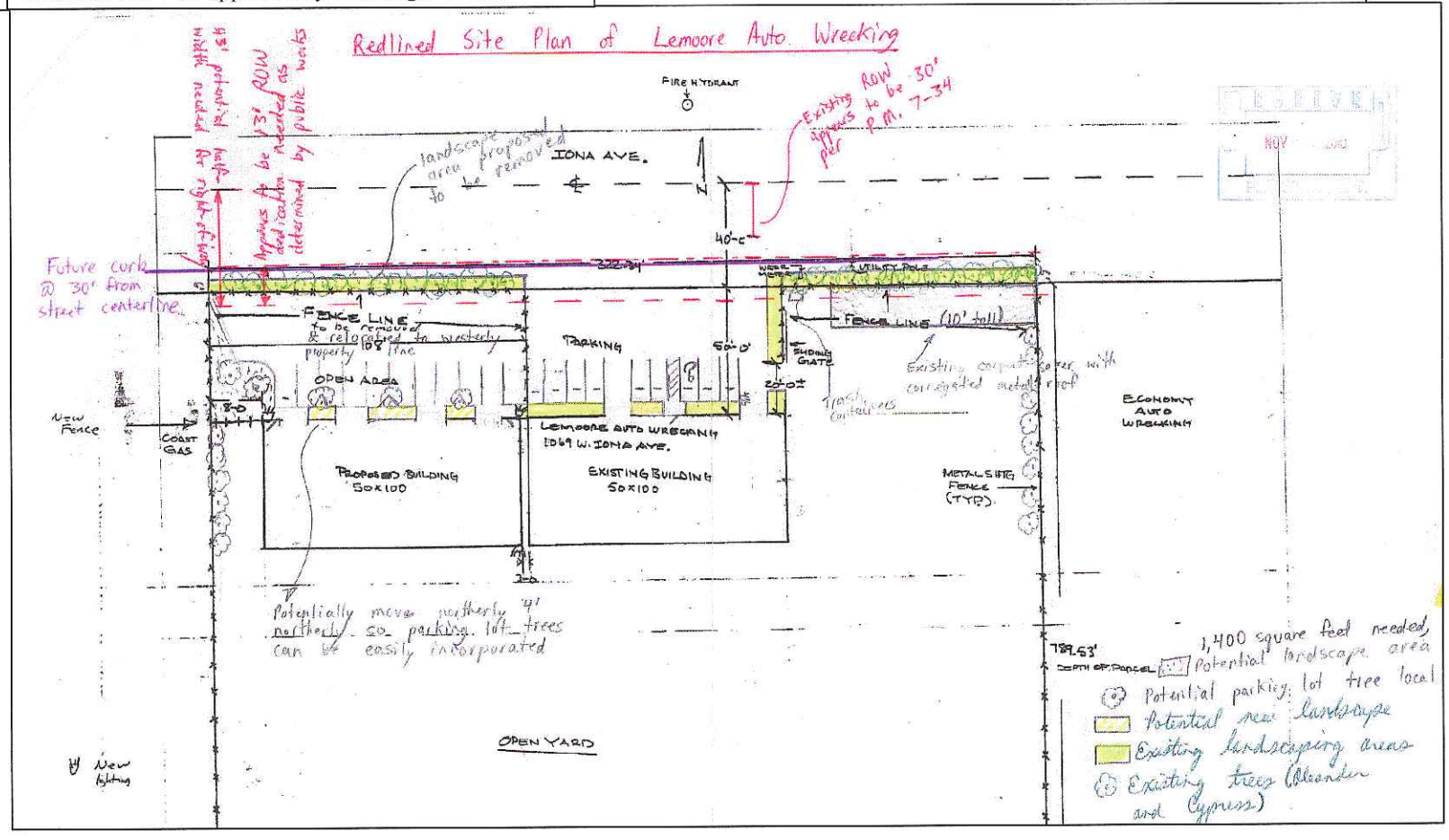


- Project involved the addition of a 5,000 sq ft storage building
- Original site plan didn't show all existing facilities, so staff went out to the site, took measurements and added information to base site plan to be complete versus giving back to applicant which would have significantly slowed down review (seams like the "smaller businesses" without draftsman struggle with development process more than others)
- In reviewing GP figures 4-1, 4-2, 4-3, 4-4, 4-5 and Table 4.3 regarding street improvements along with GP policies CD-I-7, CD-I-40, and CD-I-42 for landscaping, the requirements were very unclear, so one condition allowed for City Engineer to further determine right-of-way up to a 13' dedication if needed, another condition allowed more time to finalize the specific landscaping so staff could have a study session with Planning Commission, allowed for the deferral of several street related improvements.
- General Plan (GP) policy CD-I-20 "ensure that non-residential building façades are visually attractive, with windows offering views into buildings and architectural articulation; prohibit large blank walls facing the street unless screened by landscaping. *These standards will be incorporated into the Zoning Ordinance and be applicable to all new development or major redevelopment along Iona Avenue.".* Therefore, landscaping added to northerly side of building foundation as well as westerly wall of building and colorized top trim/gutter of the building to incorporate contrasting color.

Originally submitted Site Plan

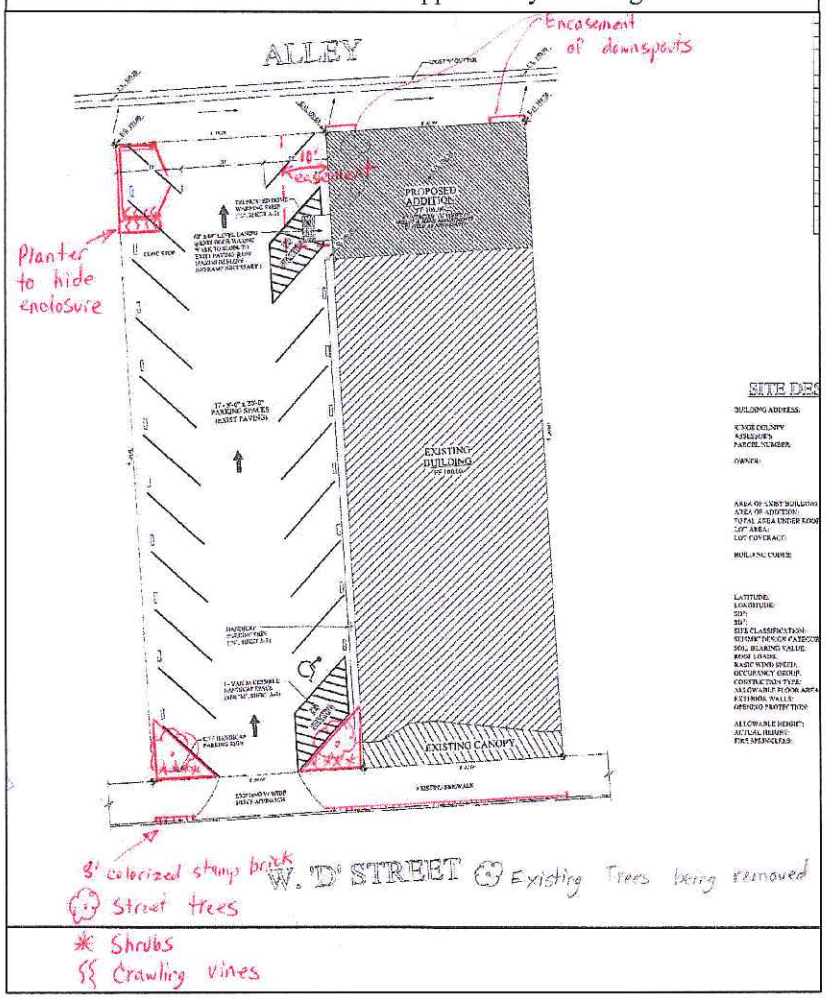


Redlined Site Plan approved by Planning Director

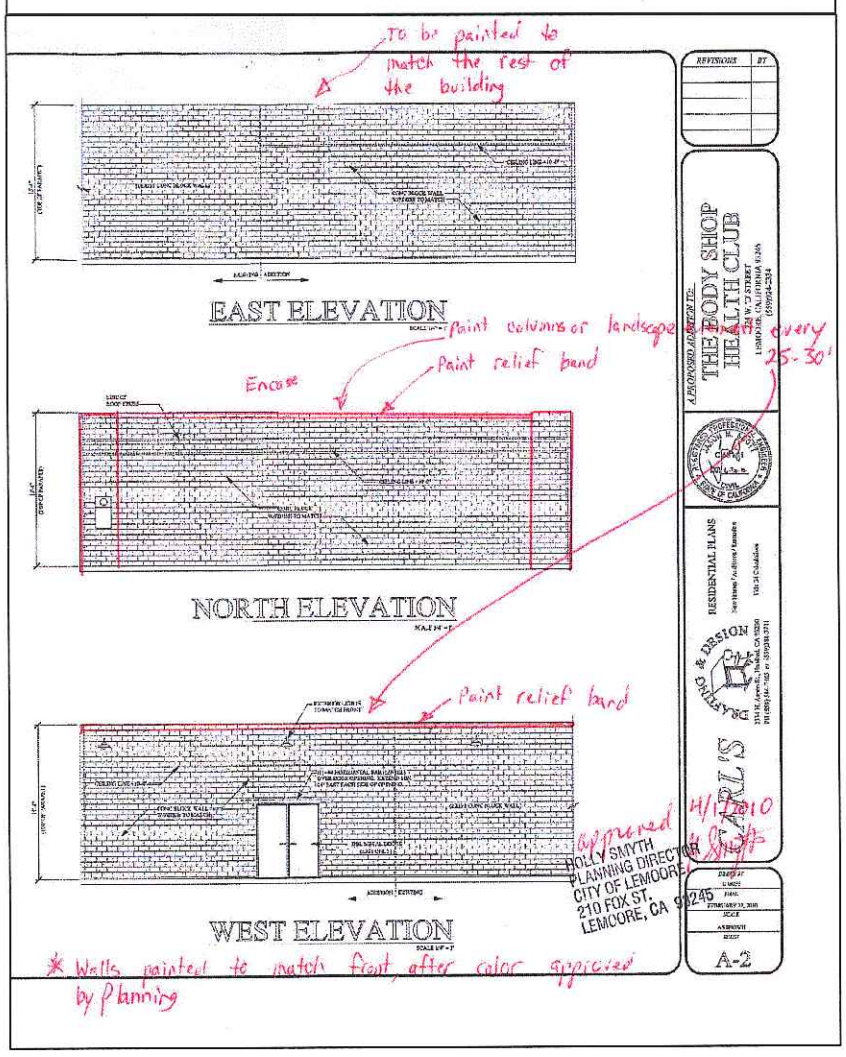


SITE PLAN & 2 ARCHITECTURAL REVIEWS FOR BODY SHOP – APPROVED BY PLANNING DIRECTOR AND ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE

Redlined Site Plan for rear addition approved by Planning Director



Original Elevations for rear addition with redlines incorporating Architectural Design Review Committee's modifications



REAR ADDITION PROJECT:

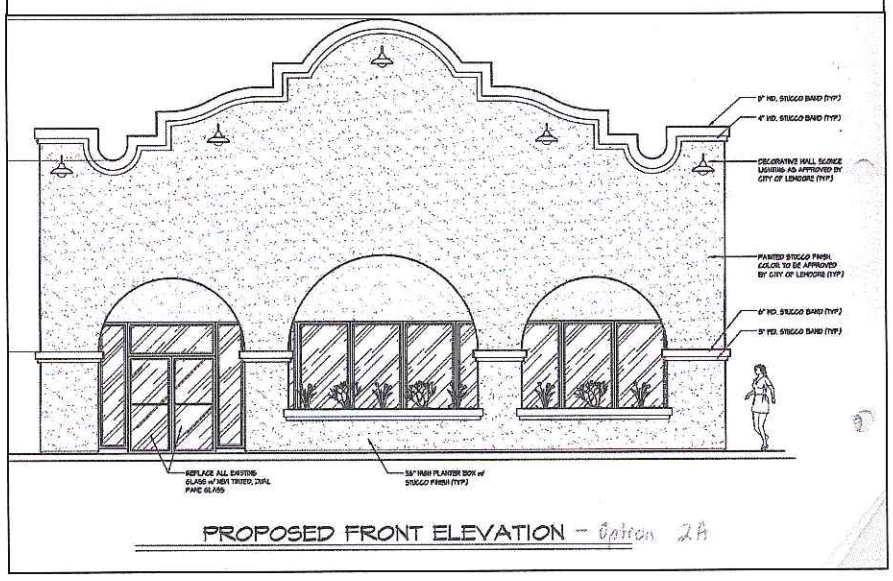
- Project involved the addition of a 5,000 sq ft storage building
- Applicant proposed painting of cement blocks around entire perimeter to cover old graffiti and help the new and old blend.
- Because new addition created a 150' long blank wall, either painted columns or landscape to be installed every 20-30' in line with General Plan policy CD-I-24 "….Massing…building must follow the rhythm of bays found in the district, each spaced approximately 20 to 30 feet apart". Relief band to be painted at top of building in lieu of cornice detail being added to meet relief banding policies on page 13 of the Downtown Design Guidelines. Neither of these paint details have been installed yet and are anticipated to be complete with the front façade project.
- Because of the long building length and closing off of the old alley exit on the north of the building, the new secondary entrance required 10' access easement be recorded on the parking lot. Due to inability of owners draftsman to draft appropriate legal description and recordation documents Planning Director drafted and City Engineer's office helped finalize for owners signatures and then took for recordation.
- Page 17 of the Lemoore Design Guidelines state that "Landscaping, garden walls, and fences should be used to screen undesirable areas such as trash bines, loading areas…" and therefore landscaping was incorporated in front of parking area and trash enclosure.

FRONT FAÇADE PROJECT:

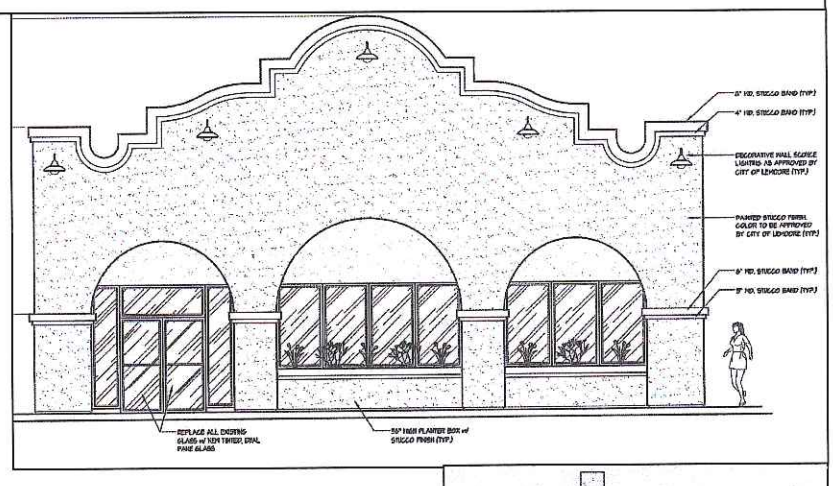
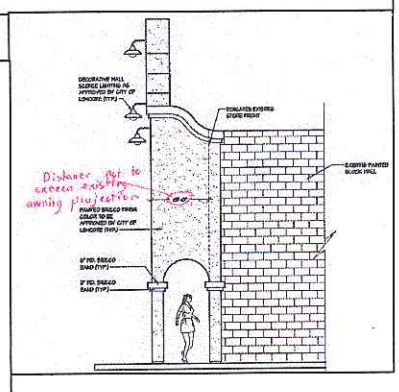
- Initial application was only for the front building façade, without any addition which came as a separate application about 8 months later, and therefore only subject to Architectural Design Review (ADR) because the site is in the Downtown Historic District
- Wainscoting at bottom of column bases were asked to be lowered to provide pedestrian scale as shown in Figure on page 12 of the Architectural Design Guidelines that this treatment brings human scale to environment.
- Because applicant wanted to mimic old Lemoore High School, staff suggested center archway be slightly higher than outside archways
- During construction the contractor/owner determined that the building height needed to be lowered, which Planning Director approved shortening as it still had the look substantially approved by the ADR.
- Colors used by the owner to be from the historic color palette, as no colors were brought before the ADR who could approve colors outside the color palette if appropriate.

Initial façade elevations done by draftsman with staff's colorizing and redlining added should the front windows be replaced (which was initially discussed by owner but ultimately too costly to incorporate into the façade)

Revised façade elevation option 2A submitted if City allowed construction of façade into the public right-of-way. This option denied by Public Works as it conflicted with ADA access and needed openings in between the columns



Revised façade elevation option 1A submitted to either be in-line with the property or into City right-of-way if allowed. This option approved by Public Works as it maintained ADA access openings in between the columns.



Approved side view of façade elevation with better tie-in back to the building which allows façade to permanently encroach into City right-of-way through the issuance of an encroachment permit. New Draft Downtown Form Based Code Ordinance better describes allowances for things to be in the right-of-way in the future.