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To: [Zoning Adjustments Board \(ZAB\)](#); [Burns, Anne M](#)
Subject: Public comment on agenda items that are not a hearing or minutes and DRC, please forward to DRC and ZAB members
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Dear Chair Duffy, ZAB members, DRC and staff,

Commenting on an agendized item that is not a project hearing in my experience is a normal practice in conducting public meetings.

Normally, I do not ask to comment on an agendized ZAB item after the project hearings are over, however, tonight I had information to offer. When it comes to the DRC, I have been a close observer and attended more DRC meetings than anyone present at the July 11, 2024 ZAB meeting. I could have provided a more complete description of the DRC than was provided by staff and board members at the meeting on the evening of July 11, 2024.

In answer to board member Brandon Yung's question of what does the DRC do, the DRC is not seeking an up or down vote on whether to approve or disapprove a project. The purpose/mission as I have come to know it through years of observation (I have attended nearly every Design Review Committee (DRC) since November 2014), is to in simple language to make better projects.

The DRC is mostly concerned about the exterior of the project, the finishes of the building, how the architect's plan for the finish works long term and how well the design fits in the location within the confines of state legislation and local ordinances.

An experienced architect on DRC is of great benefit as architects with years of experience will not only look at how well the project fits the location, they will also go into the details of how products fit the building. They may question the reflectivity of a finish. They might ask what are the plans for fitting exterior products together at the corners. They will ask wood trim to be removed as it deteriorates quickly. They will suggest color and design elements to improve the general appearance and fit. They may suggest moving stairs and windows.

Usually the DRC does not comment on the interior layout unless they see egregious errors or poor planning for design livability.

The DRC landscape architect will review landscape plans with consideration to appropriateness of selected plants and planned locations. All members will contribute on the success or failure of products and designs being used for plants based on experience. Members are especially interested in the plans for trees, saving existing trees, adding trees, tree canopy, native plants, permeable surfaces.

The DRC listens to the public for concerns. Often times with recent legislation on housing, public concerns can be heard, but things like parking can't be changed. At other times, the public presents suggests and concerns that neither the architect, staff or the DRC have considered.

I often think of a project on Ashby at Shattuck that was not considering traffic flow and loading zones. The public comment regarding traffic flow and loading zones resulted in a major change in project design/layout.

Inexperienced architects or architects that are not familiar with Berkeley miss aspects of the impact of their projects and this is where the DRC and the public come in to correct and advise at the design/planning phase.

There is, of course, more to DRC than covered here.

So again the DRC is not about approving or disapproving projects. To build any project, we are using up resources and impacting the environment. We a duty to be responsible and create successful projects.

kelly hammargren