EAST PARCEL: BUILDINGS 4 & 5

Site Description and Contextual Influences

The East Parcel is located to the east of the BART platform, and is bordered by North California Boulevard to the north-east and Ygnacio Valley road to the south-west. See Figure 3.34 for key map.

At this location, the two mixed-use buildings 4 and 5, can share a common subterranean parking garage but should be detached at all levels above the podium and have unique but complementary architectural styles.

Prominently located at the corner of North California Boulevard and Ygnacio Valley Road, Buildings 4 and 5 together become a major gateway from BART and the Transit Village into downtown and the rest of the city.

Buildings 4 & 5 also frame Mt. Diablo Vista, creating the most important view corridor in the project. Mt. Diablo Vista is also the primary pedestrian connection between the BART Plaza and the intersection of Ygnacio Valley Road and North California Boulevard, leading to the downtown’s retail district.

Goals and Opportunities

a. Create a gateway experience at the corner of Ygnacio Valley Road and North California Boulevard that enhances this important intersection.

b. Create a well-defined view corridor through Buildings 4 and 5 to frame the view of Mt. Diablo from the BART fare gates and platform.

c. Create a well-defined pedestrian oriented plaza near the corner of Ygnacio Valley Road and North California Boulevard.

d. Orient units away from the BART tracks where feasible.
Key Urban Design Features

1. A “gateway” feature at Ygnacio Valley Road and North California Blvd.
2. Strong architectural feature to anchor gateway corner.
3. Tower element should help to mark arrival for BART riders to Walnut Creek.
5. Building forms to frame the BART Plaza at BART fare gates.
6. Breaks in building massing to bring light into courtyard.
7. Pedestrian-scaled elements along Mt. Diablo Vista to break down facade and articulate residential units.
8. Civic-scaled elements appropriate for major streets with significant vehicular traffic.
9. Residential Courtyards
10. Ygnacio Valley Road
12. Mt. Diablo Vista
13. BART Tracks
14. BART Plaza at the fare gates
15. The Porch

Legend
- Site Pedestrian Circulation
- Site Auto Circulation
ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BUILDING 4

Architectural Style

Building 4 is one of the gateway buildings connecting pedestrians from BART to downtown Walnut Creek. It is envisioned to be primarily residential in scale but with civic scale gestures appropriate to its location along two major arterials. The architectural articulation and detailing is envisioned to be more traditional than Building 3 and is intended to integrate some of the traditional architectural features found in downtown Walnut Creek while respecting the scale and mass of the office building across North California Boulevard.

This can be achieved by using more traditional building proportions and materials (see Figure 3.37), as well as incorporating references to the downtown district. These elements should be organized within a civic framework that helps make the transition from the finer grain, small scale of downtown to the scale of the larger commercial buildings across the site.

Building colors are to be chosen from deep earthtones, minimizing high contrast where appropriate.

Guidelines

1. Articulate the facade along Buildings 4 and 5 to support a publicly accessible, active pedestrian link connecting BART to downtown.
2. Step-back the building facade facing the BART fare gates to help articulate this public plaza.
3. Draw from downtown’s palette of rich materials and traditional use of color.
4. Use vertically proportioned recessed windows.
5. Avoid window patterns with large expanses of glass.
6. Design the ground level facing the open space near the fare gates for retail and outdoor seating to help activate this area.

Illustrative Examples:

Figure 3.37: Durable materials are encouraged at the building base

Figure 3.38: Outdoor seating

Figure 3.39: Bay windows should maximize view opportunities
Key Architectural Features

1. Traditional details blend with contemporary forms and materials.
2. Building layering to enhance pedestrian experience.
3. Traditional forms with contemporary details.
4. Bay windows to reflect traditional style while maximizing views to Mt. Diablo.
5. Vertical element to frame gateway to transit village.
6. Traditional use of materials and massing.
ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BUILDING 5

Architectural Style

Building 5 is envisioned to be the most prominent gateway building of the overall Transit Village, given its location at the corner of North California Boulevard and Ygnacio Valley Road. The design should make architectural references to downtown Walnut Creek in order to strengthen the connection from BART to the retail district. With its primary facade fronting onto Ygnacio Valley Road, the building articulation should include larger proportions appropriate to this busy thoroughfare while drawing from precedents found in downtown Walnut Creek.

The architectural style for this building should include elements with a traditional base, middle and top as well as more traditional materials and detailing found in downtown Walnut Creek, including the use of brick, formal precast bases and trim details, plaster, and cornices.

Windows should be vertically proportioned and symmetrically organized on the building façade. Building colors should be chosen from a light earthtone palette with little contrast on the major forms. High contrast accent colors can be used to highlight details, brackets and window breakups.

Illustrative Examples:

1. Create a distinctive architectural feature to mark the corner of Ygnacio Valley Road and North California Boulevard that draws on downtown's palette of rich materials.
2. Step-back the building height facing the BART fare gates to help articulate this public plaza.
3. Create an urban edge facing the BART Plaza.
4. Use windows with vertical proportions and organize them rhythmically on the building facade.
5. Use a traditional base, middle and top building articulation.
6. Design to encourage and activate at the ground level experience along Mount Diablo Vista and North California Boulevard.
7. Design the ground level facing the open space near the fare gates for retail and outdoor seating to help activate this area.
8. Buffer the ground level residential units along Ygnacio Valley Road with terraces, landscaping and other design elements.
Key Architectural Features

1. Traditional details form with contemporary applications and materials.
2. Scale of elements to work with office building and historic volume of downtown.
3. Strong architectural feature to anchor the most prominent corner.
4. Traditional architecture with clear base, middle, and top.
5. Tower element to celebrate entry to Transit Village.
6. Prominent element to anchor gateway corner.