



Planning Commission Staff Report

August 10, 2011
Item 6.a.

- SUBJECT:** P11-0065 and P11-0066
- APPLICANT:** Chevron and Robert Abbott (Stantec Architecture, Inc.)
- PROPERTY OWNER:** Chevron.
- PURPOSE:** Request for Design Review approval and Sign Design Review approval to change the existing building and canopy colors and to modify the sign program for the building, canopy, and monument signs for the Chevron Extra Mile (former Bernal Corners) service station.
- GENERAL PLAN:** Bernal Property Specific Plan (Commercial)
- SPECIFIC PLAN:** Bernal Property Specific Plan (Commercial)
- ZONING:** PUD (Planned Unit Development) – C (Commercial).
- LOCATION:** 1875 Valley Avenue (southeast corner of Bernal Avenue and the Valley Avenue extension)
- EXHIBIT:**
- A. Draft Conditions of Approval, dated August 10, 2011
 - B. Proposed Design Plans, dated "Received August 1, 2011" with Site Plan, Building Color Samples, Colored and Black/White Building Elevations of the Convenience Market, Pump-Island Canopy, and Carwash Building, Convenience Market Floor Plan, Monument Sign and Building Sign Plans, and Fuel Pump Signs
 - C. Approved Plans for PUD-02-04M
 - D. Ordinance 1868 for PUD-02-04M
 - E. Approved Plans for PSDR-468
 - F. Approved Plans for PSDR-476
 - G. PREV-815 Comment Letter
 - H. Photographs of the Bernal Corners Service Station and Nearby Homes
 - I. Location Map
 - J. Noticing Area
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I. BACKGROUND

Background

Chevron is the new owner/operator of the former Bernal Corners service station, and has submitted a request for Design Review approval and Sign Design Review approval to complete the service station's changeover from Bernal Corners to Chevron Extra Mile with new building colors and permanent building, monument, and fuel pump signs. The service station is located at 1875 Valley Avenue on the southeast corner of Bernal Avenue and Valley Avenue and is part of the Bernal Property Specific Plan, PUD development plan, Final EIR, and Development Agreement.

PUD-02-04M and Ordinance 1868

On September 3, 2002, the City Council introduced the Ordinance 1868 for PUD-02-4M that approved the PUD development plan for the Bernal Corners service station. Exhibit C is a copy of the approved PUD development plan and Exhibit D is a copy of Ordinance 1868. The PUD development plan included building colors and preliminary design plans for the building and monument signs, and constituted the preliminary sign program for the development.

Ordinance 1868 addressed changes to the building designs and signage as follows.

1. Condition #4:
"Any changes to the buildings' designs, heights, and separations covered by this approval including, but not limited to, materials, colors, detailing, setbacks, etc., shall be reviewed as an application for design review approval following the procedures listed under Chapter 18.20, Design Review, of the Pleasanton Municipal Code."
2. Condition #5:
"Changes to the buildings' colors determined by the Planning Director to be a significant change from this approval shall be subject to review by the Planning Commission."
3. Condition #6:
"A comprehensive signing program shall be submitted to the Planning Director for consideration under a separate application. Site signage shall be limited to one, seven-foot tall monument identification sign at the street corner and one price sign at each entrance. All building signs – carwash, canopy, and convenience market/restaurant – shall be indirectly illuminated by gooseneck lamps shown on the building elevations. Tenant signs shall be three-foot tall by eight-foot long panel-type signs shown on the approved building elevations with routed lettering and/or applied lettering, and the locations for the tenant signs shall be those shown on the approved building elevations. All window signs including temporary window signs shall be limited to an area equal to 25% of the window area. Any violations of this area limitation shall be referred to the Planning Commission."

Building and Monument Signs

The sign construction and mounting details for the building and monument signs were approved as part of the service station's construction drawings.

Building Signs

The building signs are three-foot tall by eight-foot long flat sign panels attached to the gabled building elements on the west, north, and east building elevations and attached to the west gable of the pump-island canopy. The flat panel building signs were constructed of three layers: the first layer is the applied sign copy; the second layer is the white or sign background; and the third layer was the black border. Plastic materials are used for all signs. All building signs were mounted to the building wall with a one-inch offset to address the irregular wall surface, and were indirectly illuminated by wall-mounted gooseneck-style lamps, three per sign. Although there was no written limitation on letter style or colors, the original building signs were predominantly red copy on a white background except for the Shell sign which was red copy on a yellow background.

Monument Signs

The monument price signs facing Valley Avenue and Bernal Avenue are constructed of brick materials and are approximately 5-feet, 6-inches tall by 12-feet, 8-inches long. The corner monument sign is constructed of brick and is approximately 9-feet, 6-inches tall by a length of 17-feet, 4-inches for the sign mounting areas and a length of 24-feet including the "wing" walls and the east and south ends of this sign. The design of this monument sign also includes a planter facing the service station's parking areas. (Staff approved a modification of the monument sign design from the design shown on the PUD development plan before its construction.)

Building Colors

With its review of the original Bernal Corners service station design, the Planning Commission directed the Planning staff and the project's applicants to design the service station to be residential in its appearance. The applicant's response to the Planning Commission's direction resulted in the service station's present building design including the off-white and pale yellow building color palette. The applicant for Bernal Corners proposed the pale yellow building color as a variation of the yellow color used by Shell for its service stations. A bright yellow color was originally approved with the PUD development plan; the applicant then proposed the pale yellow color that was applied to the buildings. (Staff notes that the corporate color changes required by the Shell Oil Company for its service stations after Bernal Corners was completed were never applied to the Bernal Corners service station.)

PSDR-468

Bernal Corners submitted PSDR-468, the first modification of the Bernal Corners signs, to update the Jack-In-The-Box signs and logos to then current Jack-In-The-Box corporate sign program. Exhibit E is a copy of the approved sign plans.

PSDR-476 and PREV-815

Last year Danville Petroleum, owner/operator of the Bernal Corners service station, sold the service station to the Chevron Company. Interim building and site sign modifications were then approved and installed for Chevron with PSDR-476 so that Chevron could continue to operate the service station as the new owner in compliance with California law. Exhibit F is a copy of the approved sign plans.

Chevron then submitted its request to change the building colors to the proposed light and medium beige color palette with maroon trim and to change the monument and building signs with an application for Preliminary Review. The proposed sign changes did not include changes to the previously approved Jack-In-The-Box signs. Exhibit G is a copy of the comment letter for PREV-815.

II. SITE DESCRIPTION

Figure 1, below, is the 2010 aerial photograph/location map of the project site.



Figure 1: 2010 Aerial Photograph/Location Map

Table 1, "Surround Land Uses" on the following page, describes the surrounding land uses:

Table 1, Surrounding Land Uses

Direction	Land Use
North (across Bernal Avenue)	Parking area for the Alameda County Fairgrounds
East	Fire Station No. 4, Rose Cliff Place, and the Walnut Hills development (small-lot single-family homes) by Kaufman and Broad
South	City-owned land – uses to be determined
West (across Valley Avenue)	Safeway and Pleasanton Gateway development now under construction.

Photographs of the service station and surrounding homes are attached.

III. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed project is Chevron’s request to repaint the former Bernal Corners service station convenience market, carwash buildings, and canopy structure and to complete the renaming and re-signing of the development. The proposal includes the following:

Building Colors

1. The three buildings would be repainted from their present pale yellow and off-white color palette to a new color palette that includes café-au-lait and nutmeg building, trim, and standing seam metal roof colors, and Chevron mocha trim color. A dark burgundy color (“Chilled Wine”) is used to designate the entrance to the convenience market. (Full-size color samples will be provided to Planning Commission at the public hearing.) The metal window frames will remain their present dark-bronze anodized color.

Signs

2. The existing, approximately 5-foot, 6-inch tall, brick-veneered monument/price signs at the Bernal Avenue and Valley Avenue entrances would be replaced with new 7-foot tall monument signs at each entrance including new sign panels but without the brick veneer and trim material of the existing signs. A flat panel “EM Extra Mile” logo would be located beneath the “Jack-In-The-Box” logo. The height of the Chevron and Jack-In-the-Box logos and the price signs will be increased by six-inches from the existing signs.
3. The flat “Chevron” logo panels on the monument/price signs at the service station’s entrances and on the service station’s monument sign on the Bernal Avenue/Valley Avenue corner will be replaced with new sign panels with ½-inch relief for “Chevron” and ¾ -inch relief for the Chevron logo.
4. The convenience market’s name will be changed from “The Market” to “EM Extra Mile.” The “EM Extra Mile” sign will be installed on the right gabled building element replacing “The Market” sign.

5. The existing “Bernal Corners” sign will be removed from the central gabled entry element, but the existing gooseneck lamps that were used to illuminate the “Bernal Corners” sign will remain as shown on the proposed building elevations.
6. The existing “Shell” sign on the west elevation of the pump-island canopy was removed when Chevron assumed ownership of Bernal Corners. In its place, Chevron proposes a new flat panel sign matching the PUD standards for height and length consisting of white copy on a blue background.
7. The existing sign on the south building elevation will be modified. The “EM Extra Mile” sign will be installed replacing “The Market” and “Gasoline” words. The “Jack-In-The-Box” logo will remain.
8. A new “Car Wash” sign consisting of blue copy on a white background would replace the existing sign on the north elevation of the carwash building. (Note that this sign was already installed.)
9. An internally illuminated blue and white “spanner” with the “Chevron” and “Techron” logos and pump numbers will be installed on risers elevated above the fuel pumps.

The proposed building signs will be constructed as flat panel signs matching the dimensions of the PUD development plan and the three-layer construction and off-set mounting details of the existing service station signs. No other changes are proposed to the building signs and no changes are proposed to the monument identification sign on the Bernal Avenue/Valley Avenue street corner.

IV. ANALYSIS

Staff considered the proposed building colors in the context of the Planning Commission direction for the Bernal Corners service station design and determined that the proposal was a significant change from the present color palette and, therefore, required Planning Commission review at a public hearing. Staff had suggested that Chevron consider pale versions of its proposed building colors in order to accommodate the corporate colors that Chevron uses for its Extra Mile Service Stations within the context of the City’s approval of the Bernal Corners Service Station and to revise the monument price sign designs to retain the brick trim material. Unfortunately, staff and the applicant were unable to achieve consensus on the building colors and monument sign material and the application is now before the Planning Commission as a public hearing item for the Commission’s review and action.

Building Colors

The proposed light- and medium-beige building colors reflects Chevron’s corporate color palette used on their EM Extra Mile service stations. Chevron also chose the proposed building colors to compliment the building colors that were used on the nearby Walnut Hills development by the Kaufman and Broad Company.

Chevron's EM Extra Mile service station is located on a Gateway Entrance to the City on a site that is part of the Bernal Properties Specific Plan and PUD Development Plan. High levels of design quality were expected of the individual Bernal Properties developments. With its review of the Bernal Corners service station, the Planning Commission provided specific design direction as to building colors and signs: the building design was to achieve a residential appearance; the building colors and sign designs were to avoid a garish appearance while at the same time accommodating corporate identity. To achieve the Commission's directions in these areas, Danville Petroleum retained the Dahlin Group, architect for the Walnut Hills development, to prepare the service station drawings that were reviewed by the City and approved by the City Council.

Staff, therefore, reviewed the applicant's proposal in the context of the Commission's previous directions, and recommends the following revisions to the proposed building colors and their application on the buildings to reflect the previous Commission's direction:

1. The proposed light and medium beige building colors should be substantially lightened in tone, reflecting the Commission's previous directions. Staff notes that the homes of the Walnut Hills development were also painted in light, warm tones colors. Therefore, staff's direction would also follow the Commission's direction for the appearance of the service station more closely complimenting the appearance of the nearby homes.
2. All window frames, sills, and the building trim and eaves should be painted a contrasting color to the beige body colors, such as off-white, cream, or a similar color. The contrast created by lighter trim colors would add visual interest to the service station's appearance.
3. The existing standing seam metal roof material on the north and west sides of the convenience market building should be painted a color that contrasts with the proposed body color such as forest green or a comparable color. The resulting color contrast would further enhance the appearance of the development.
4. Staff concurs with the applicant's request to use the "Chilled Wine" trim color to designate the entrance to the convenience market.

Building Signs

Staff supports the proposed changes to the building signs. The gooseneck lamps on the gabled building element that illuminated the former Bernal Corners sign will be retained and used to light this entrance to the building.

Monument Signs

Staff supports adding the EM Extra Mile logo and replacing the flat Chevron panels on the two monument/price signs and the flat Chevron panel on the corner monument sign, but does not support increasing the height of the monument/price signs and deleting the brick material. The brick materials were used on the three existing monument signs and on the columns supporting the covered walkway in front of the convenience market

building. The brick material is a detail element that ties together the monument signs and building designs; therefore, it should be retained.

Fuel Pump Spanners

Staff supports the proposed spanners on the fuel pumps provided that the illumination is not too bright; video screens will not be supported on the spanners at any time.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT

Public notices were sent to all property owners and tenants within a 1,000-foot radius of the project site and to all owners within the Walnut Hills development. Exhibit J is a copy of the noticing area. Staff has not received any verbal or written communications from the noticed property owners and/or tenants as of the writing of the staff report. Any comments or concerns from the adjacent owners or tenants will be forwarded to the Planning Commission.

VI. CONCLUSION

The original Bernal Corners project is an attractive, well designed, and beneficial to the area by providing fuel, food, and convenience market items to nearby residents. Staff has worked closely with the service station's new owner/operator to accommodate their proposed building colors and sign requirements in a manner consistent with the previous City directions and approvals and consistent with the service station's location on this gateway entrance to the City. The draft conditions addressing building colors and signage will maintain the high level of visual interest and quality, will continue to implement the intent of past City direction, and will come close to meeting the applicant's corporate appearance for their facilities.

VII. ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

The proposal is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality ACT (CEQA) under Class 1 Categorical Exemption, Section 15303(a) (g), Existing Facilities, of the CEQA Guidelines. The Class 1 exemption covers exterior alterations to existing structures and new copy or modified copy to on-premises signs. Therefore, no new environmental document accompanies this staff report.

VIII. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Planning Commission approve Case P11-0065 and Case P11-0066 subject to the draft conditions of approval listed in Exhibit A.

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P11-0065 and P11-0066
Exhibit A, Draft Conditions of Approval

Chevron EM Extra Mile
1875 Valley Avenue
August 10, 2011

1. The proposed building colors and their application shall be in substantial conformance to the building elevation and color samples, Exhibit B (Revised), dated "Received, August 1, 2011," on file with the Planning Division, except as modified by the following conditions. Minor changes to the plans may be allowed subject to the approval of the Director of Community Development.
2. To the extent permitted by law, the project applicant shall defend (with counsel reasonably acceptable to the City), indemnify and hold harmless the City, its City Council, its officers, boards, commissions, employees and agents from and against any claim, action, or proceeding brought by a third party against the indemnified parties and the applicant to attack, set aside, or void the approval of the project or any permit authorized hereby for the project, including (without limitation) reimbursing the City its attorneys fees and costs incurred in defense of the litigation. The City may, in its sole discretion, elect to defend any such action with attorneys of its choice.
3. The proposed building colors shall be revised as follows:
 - a. The light and medium beige building colors shall be substantially lightened in tone.
 - b. All window frames, sills, building trim and eaves shall be painted a contrasting color to the beige body colors, such as off-white, cream, or a similar color.
 - c. The standing seam metal roof material on the north and west sides of the convenience market building shall be painted a color that contrasts with the body color such as forest green or a comparable color.

The applicant shall submit revised colored building elevations with color samples showing these changes to the Community Development Director for review and approval before the repainting begins.
4. The existing monument price signs facing Valley Avenue and Bernal Avenue shall remain. The applicant may only add the "EM Extra Mile" logo to the monument price signs in a location beneath the Jack-In-The-Box logo. The installation shall be submitted to the Community Development Director before installation.
5. The internally illuminated "spanners" may be installed on the fuel pumps; video screens shall not be supported on the spanners at any time.

6. All conditions of approval shall be attached to all permit plan sets submitted for review and approval, whether stapled to the plans or located on a separate plan sheet.
7. Planning Division approval is required before any changes are implemented in site design, building design and colors or materials, sign designs and mounting, etc.
8. Any changes to the existing signs shall be reviewed under a separate application for sign design approval.
9. The building permit plan check package will be accepted for submittal only after completion of the 15-day appeal period, measured from the date of the approval letter, unless the project developer submits a signed statement acknowledging that the plan check fees may be forfeited in the event that the approval is overturned on appeal, or that the design is significantly changed as a result of the appeal. In no case will a building permit be issued prior to the expiration of the 15-day time-period.
10. The approved building colors and sign materials and colors shall be stated on a revised set of building design plans before repainting begins and on the sign design plans submitted for issuance of a building permit.
11. All demolition, construction, and repainting activities including inspections, material delivery, staff assignment or coordination, etc., shall be limited to the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. No construction shall be allowed on State or Federal Holidays or Sundays. The Director of Community Development may allow earlier "start times" or later "stop times" for specific construction activities, e.g., concrete pouring. All construction equipment must meet Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) noise standards and shall be equipped with muffling devices. Prior to construction, the hours of construction shall be posted on site.
12. The haul route for all materials to and from this development shall be approved by the City Engineer prior to the issuance of a permit.
13. Any damage to existing street improvements during construction on the subject property shall be repaired to the satisfaction of the City Engineer at full expense to the project developer. This shall include slurry seal, overlay, or street reconstruction if deemed warranted by the City Engineer.
14. The applicant is responsible for implementing the following Best Management Practices (BMPs) for the repainting work to be done on the buildings covered by this approval:
 - a. Use tarps on the ground to collect fallen debris or splatters that could contribute to stormwater runoff pollution.

- b. Never clean machinery, equipment, tools, brushes, or rinse containers into a street, gutter, or storm drain.
- c. Ensure that the building preparation and/or painting operations do not discharge wash water into the street or into any gutter or storm drain.

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