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Art Installations Coming to Downtown Projects

By Cathy Tyson

After reviewing the resumes and works of five well-known public artists, the Lafayette Public Art Committee selected Roger Berry as their first choice to design a piece for the busy corner of Mt. Diablo Boulevard and Pleasant Hill Road. A 24-unit townhouse project was approved for what will be the former site of the Hungry Hunter restaurant.

The developer of the townhome project, Signature Development Group, is required to pay for the public art to satisfy the Public Art Ordinance that is equal to one percent of a larger project's building valuation. At a recent meeting of the City Council, both the recommended selections for the Signature Properties project and Merrill Gardens, noted below, were unanimously approved.

After getting the lay of the land and the look of the townhouses, Berry created and presented five ideas to the Public Art Committee back in May. With unanimous approval, they went with a Corten steel sculpture called "Over Easy" and recommended the City Council approve it.

Nope, the title does not refer to eggs. "It's a dynamically balance form conceived to reference the experience of travel...Over Easy will be visible to pedestrians and drivers alike from both roads. As one passes by, the sculpture will appear to wind and unwind presenting a different profile from each vantage point," said Berry in a description of the artwork.

The Merrill Gardens project is a mixed use development with 72 assisted living apartments, a 17-bed memory care unit and roughly 6,000 square feet of retail space on the ground floor, located on the corner of Mt. Diablo Boulevard and Second Street.

This installation is a bit different from the Hungry Hunter townhomes; it's a functional divider that visually separates a portion of the inner courtyard closer to the building from the more public expanded sidewalk section fronting Mt. Diablo. A long curving pool will be the base for the sculpture elements, at six feet wide by 23 feet long, the pool is fairly substantial. Six silicon bronze wavy exclamation points ranging from 6' 6" to 9' 6" will have hand-textured surfaces and patinas, along with a cast stone seat that invites shoppers and residents to sit and relax.

Attention Art Lovers:

There's a new exhibit on display in the Community Hall of the Lafayette Library and Learning Center through mid-August - a poignant collection of black and white photographs by Lafayette resident Blake Farrington that document HIV/AIDS issues in a small community in Eastern Uganda.

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