### November 1, 2012

I, Joan Reid strongly oppose, do not support and urge the Architectural Review Board and the city council NOT to support/vote for/recommend Arrillaga's 27 University Avenue project.

To Arrillaga this project represents philanthropy, for those of us voting and tax-paying public who lives on fixed retirement incomes and modest means this project represents greed and self-aggrandizement in the guise of philanthropy.

This city does not need office towers 103-161 feet high and this city does not need to subsidize Stanford University. It is pretty nervy to take "public" land and give a steady income from the highest paying renters to Stanford University, an already rich and bountiful private university. This is not a trade-off. This is greed and thievery.

This project is in direct contradiction to the charm and integrity of our city. Palo Alto is a pleasant city with a sweet downtown. TheaterWorks has space in Lucy Stern and the Mountain View Performing Arts Center, Varsity Theater stands empty-is that not usable? Will Arrillaga teat that down too?

Arrillaga needs to find other things to do with his enormous wealth. Maybe he should build his own university on the Stanford campus. Maybe he should consider tearing down Hoover tower, connect the space between Hoover tower and the oval, build 103-161 feet office towers, collect rent give the rent to Palo Alto schools and save himself some space for Arrillaga university.

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### French, Amy

From:

French, Amy

Sent:

Thursday, November 01, 2012 5:24 AM

To:

**Robert Moss** 

Cc:

Williams, Curtis; Aknin, Aaron; Tamale, Diana

Subject:

RE: Building Heights in Palo Alto

Thank you for sending this, Mr. Moss. It will be at places for ARB and was sent to them via email as well. I will also include it with the attachment of correspondence to the CMR to Council for the 11/19 meeting.

I am sure you are correct about 288 feet being wrong, I do not think City Hall is taller than 101 Alma. FYI, we are having height distances measured via laser, to include that information in the Council report.

From: Robert Moss [bmoss33@att.net]
Sent: Tuesday, October 30, 2012 3:20 PM

**To:** Architectural Review Board **Cc:** Williams, Curtis; French, Amy **Subject:** Building Heights in Palo Alto

### ARB members:

When you consider the "unofficial" proposal for 27 University you should be aware of how few buildings over 90 feet now exist in PaloAlto, and how dispersed most of them are. To concentrate four buildings over 100 feet on one site is totally out of scale and inappropriate. The parking proposed is inadequate, and the number of workers added will clog traffic well beyond the intersection of El Camino and University. Also despite the comment made at the study session, the housing needs for Palo Alto determioned by ABAG does take into account our jobs-housing imbalance. In Santa Clara County housing goals are assigned by city, not parceled out on a county-wide basis as they are in San Mateo County.

I found a site that lists the tallest buildings in Palo Alto, although it fails to give building heights for some of them, especially those four stories or less. However it does give heights for most of the taller buildings. I also found an article from Palo alto History about 525 University. They are not fond of it.

## Regards, Bob Moss

Palo Alto Building Heights – Over 50 Feet - In response to questions by Commissioner Lippert

Address	Year	Floors	Height – ft.
250 Hamilton City Hall	1970	10	288 ?
525 University	1966	15	212
501 Forest Towers	1965	13	152
101 Alma	1958	11	140
Palo Alto Square	1971	10	141
850 Webster Channing House	1962	11	142
4250 El Camino Crown Plaza		8	95

850 Webster Channing House	1962	11	142
4250 El Camino Crown Plaza		8	95
580 Arastradero		8	93
2600 El Camino Stanford	1966	6	84
Financial			
480 University President Hotel	1929	7	80
360 Forest Casa Real	1930	7	70
300 Hamilton	1964	5	69
285 Hamilton	1971	5	66
400 Hamilton	1983	4	50
544 Hamilton	1971	3	56

100 Tallest buildings in Palo Alto <a href="http://www.emporis.com/city/paloalto-ca-usa/existing-buildings">http://www.emporis.com/city/paloalto-ca-usa/existing-buildings</a>

The reported height of City Hall seems unrealistic. It is not twice as tall as 101 Alma. Maybe there is a typo and it should be 188 feet. As for 525 University, it is not well regarded by PaloAltoHistory:

## The Palo Alto Office Center: A Modernist White Elephant

Out-of-fashion wardrobes can always be put in the back of the closet, but the unfortunate architecture of past generations are here to stay --- at least for a while. Case in point: Palo Alto's tallest building, the Palo Alto Office Center --- a modernist cinderblock about as out-of-style as perms and platform shoes.

Completed in 1965, this 15-story "suburban skyscraper" recalls the dominance of the city's once powerful commercial establishment, which had dreams of making Palo Alto into the region's premiere business center. In fact, original plans called for twin 15 story structures with a much larger central plaza featuring fountains, promenades and additional upper walkways. But in the late 1960s and early '70s, anti-growth "Residentialists" took control of the city and scuttled other proposed emblems of a growing downtown --- notably, an 18 story hospital project in 1970 and the twin-towered "Superblock" commercial project the following year. By 1974, a residentialist-dominated Council had put a 50 foot height limit on all Palo Alto buildings. Today the Palo Alto Office Center stands as a lonely, oversized monument to a path not taken, an alternate vision of what Palo Alto never became.

The boxy vertical grid of the Palo Alto Office Center is also symbolic of another era of the past --- that architectural age when modernists seemed to hold the nation hostage with concrete and grid designs (one waggish critic said the variety of skyscraper designs in those years "ran the gamut from A to B"). ... Le Corbusier and the German architects of the influential Bauhaus School believed that a building was a "machine for living," much as a car was a machine for driving. Rejecting an architectural history of motifs, ornaments and other flourishes they deemed as "unnecessary detail," the modernists based their architectural philosophy on form following function through sleek lines of simplicity. And because the modernist wave coincided with the building boom of the post-war years, most cities are now saddled with scores of these gray and austere boxes. Palo Alto has its share including City Hall and Channing House downtown, the twin boxes of Palo Alto Square and the slab of concrete called Stanford Financial Square on El Camino Real. As part of a streetscape, gargantuan towers like the Palo Alto Office Center dwarf both pedestrians and surrounding buildings.

From:

French, Amy

Sent:

Thursday, November 01, 2012 3:10 AM

To:

Tamale, Diana

Subject:

Fwd: November 1, 2012 - Staff Report, Item #4 - 27 University Avenue ... Not

downloading

Please print this for ARB today at places. Thank you, Diana.

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: "French, Amy" < Amy. French@CityofPaloAlto.org>

**Date:** November 1, 2012 3:07:19 AM PDT To: Martin Sommer < martin@sommer.net>

Cc: "Lee, Elena" < Elena. Lee @CityofPaloAlto.org >, "Aknin, Aaron"

<<u>Aaron.Aknin@CityofPaloAlto.org></u>, Kevin Gardiner <kevin@mplanninggroup.com> Subject: Re: November 1, 2012 - Staff Report, Item #4 - 27 University Avenue ... Not

downloading

Thank you for your input, Mr. Sommer. Planning and Transportation commission has held two evening study sessions - one on the City's height limit and one on the urban design and transit circle concepts for 27 university. There will soon be FAQs published about the potential project and process, and a public outreach planning effort is underway, so you can expect additional evening meetings to be scheduled following today's ARB session. Elena Lee is correct that this is not a project yet (nothing filed by an applicant). With environmental review and submittal of a formal application, there will be an extensive public review process. Please know that your email correspondence will be shared with ARB, and with council in a packet for its November 19 meeting.

Sent from my iPhone

On Oct 31, 2012, at 4:06 PM, "Martin Sommer" < martin@sommer.net> wrote:

Thanks Elana and Amy, here are a few concerns for the record:

- 1) Its tough to give public input, when the meetings are during normal work hours. For the high speed rail discussions, we actually did evening and weekend sessions, and they were well publicized in advance. Perhaps we can do the same for this project.
- 2) Abitare Condominiums, located over the city parking lot Q (between Alma and High Streets), would be devastated by any buildings over the 50 foot height limit. Our complex was built in 1985 (with full cooperation of the city), around the

concepts of natural light, privacy, and views. To put tall buildings across the street/tracks, would remove all three.

3) The development project as a whole, which incorporates open public space, better transit, and cultural activities, is good. We just need to keep it under 50 feet.

Please add this to the record.

Thank you, Martin

On 10/31/12 3:06 PM, Lee, Elena wrote:

Martin,

This item is a study session and there is actually no project on file yet. So no decisions or formal recommendations can be made yet regarding the 50 foot height limit for this project. If you are unable to attend, you can always submit a letter for staff to distribute to the ARB and to include in the formal record. Formal hearings where decisions will be made will be scheduled after the project is formally applied for. Substantial amount of analysis/study will be required prior to any formal hearing. I am copying Amy French, the Chief Planning Official, who is working on this project to let her know of your concerns.

Elena

----Original Message----

From: Martin Sommer [mailto:martin@sommer.net]

Sent: Wednesday, October 31, 2012 2:53 PM

To: Lee, Elena

Subject: Re: November 1, 2012 - Staff Report, Item #4 - 27 University Avenue ... Not downloading

Thanks Elana, I got it.

So, I'm working in SF, and trying to determine the need to be at tomorrow morning's meeting. I had no indication of the planned October 24th meeting, until it was too late.

From:

Jim Goddard <jgoddard@hppavilion.com>

Sent:

Wednesday, October 31, 2012 4:58 PM

To:

Architectural Review Board

Subject:

27 University

I live at 341 Ramona St. I am strongly opposed to the height and density of the proposed development. The City should continue to adhere to and apply the 50' height limit.

From:

ELIZABETH B FRAZE <bethfrz@me.com>

Sent:

Thursday, November 01, 2012 9:52 AM

To:

**Architectural Review Board** 

Subject:

Re: I oppose the development at 27 University Ave

On Nov 1, 2012, at 9:40 AM, ELIZABETH B FRAZE wrote:

- > I oppose the development at 27 University Ave for the following reasons.
- > !. It is way out of scale for Palo Alto, the beauty will be destroyed, the traffic worsened, it will encourage more exceptions.
- > 2. The proposed height is a trick to get a lower but above code height so as to appear to be compromising. There should be no exceptions to the limitation.
- > 3. Stanford University can not oppose this project because the Arrillaga Corporation has donated multi millions of dollars to the University.

Sincerely,

**Elizabeth Fraze** 

Palo Alto

From:

RICHARD LANDES < landesr@sbcglobal.net>

Sent: To:

Wednesday, October 31, 2012 11:01 PM

**Architectural Review Board** 

Subject:

27 University Ave

To: Members of the Architectural Review Board

I am unable to attend your meeting on Nov. 1 so I am writing to express my opposition to the proposal to build high-rise buildings at 27 University Ave. I consider it a waste of time for you and the City Council to even give consideration to such a monstrosity that would further destroy the character of Palo Alto. There is a good reason for the 50 foot height limit. It is to keep Palo Alto from becoming San Francisco or downtown San Jose. There is already insufficient parking around University Ave and a great deal of traffic. That's why I rarely go to restaurants or shop downtown as I once did. We don't need another influx of hundreds or thousands of cars every day. The taller the buildings, the bigger the influx of workers. As I am sure you are aware, ABAG is already pushing for Palo Alto to add a few thousand more housing units for the existing work force with no logical place to build them. Do we need to increase that problem?

While some business interests may support turning Palo Alto into a big city, and some in the city bureaucracy may envision an increase in their responsibilities, those of us who have lived here a long time and witnessed the degradation of roads and parking and utilities and open space and the quality of life that has taken place in this city over the years most certainly do not support it. I hope you will return this development proposal to the City Council with a recommendation that it not be considered until the buildings are scaled back to the 50 foot maximum that is allowed and that it include adequate parking and open space. Only a proposal of that nature should even be considered and analyzed

Sincerely, Richard Landes 3613 Arbutus Ave.

From:

Pat Marriott <patmarriott@sbcglobal.net>

Sent:

Wednesday, October 31, 2012 4:41 PM

To:

**Architectural Review Board** 

Cc:

Council, City; Planning Commission; Keene, James

Subject:

For the record on Arrillaga Project

**Importance:** 

High

#### **ARB Members:**

Please enter this email into the public record as a comment for your November 1<sup>st</sup> meeting on the 27 University Avenue Arrillaga project.

I am unable to attend this meeting and I am sure most people who work will not be able to attend, given that it is being held at 8:30 am on a weekday.

I have grave concerns about the way this project is being rammed through at unprecedented speed. It took 4 years for the Stanford Hospital expansion to be approved, yet Arrillaga's office building is like a juggernaut rolling through City Hall, mostly to the applause of Council, commissions and city staff.

Apparently Arrillaga approached the city about the office towers in June 2011. TheatreWorks management became involved in discussions in the fall of 2011.

The public heard nothing until March 2012 when Steve Emslie got approval from the council to spend <u>public</u> money on studies for a <u>private</u> development.

Six months later – still with no public input – local newspapers published articles about a 10-, 9-, 7- and 6-story office complex, complete with architectural sketches.

I am frankly suspicious of the way this project is being handled:

- 1. The city has approved spending \$286,000 of public funds on studies for an office building project. Arrillaga is a billionaire. Why is he not paying for these studies on behalf of his project?
- 2. Former planning commissioner Owen Byrd said of the proposed Arrillaga project, "The offices are a public benefit themselves." (Daily Post 9/21)

He is echoing city council members Greg Scharff and Nancy Shepherd, referring to the Lytton Gateway office building as a public benefit: "I think this is a prime site and having an office building ... is itself a public benefit," Scharff said. Councilwoman Nancy Shepherd shared his view .... She said she considers the building itself a contributor to the public-benefit package. http://paloaltoonline.com/news/show\_story.php?id=25377

There is no way a private, for-profit office building can remotely be considered a public benefit.

- 3. Two members of the city's land-use boards, former Planning and Transportation Commissioner Daniel Garber and former Architectural Review Board member Heather Young, conveniently resigned earlier this year to work on this unofficial project. The city has since conveniently approved a Contract with Fergus Garber Young Consultants in the Amount of \$85,000 for Urban Design and Architectural Services. Garber just happens to be on the board of trustees of TheatreWorks, an obvious conflict of interest.
- 4. Council members have said they would get "advisory votes" on whether the city should amend the comprehensive plan and zoning code and on the exchange of parkland. But an advisory vote is not binding. It's a way to get voter

- opinions. Councilman Burt has said he would abide by the voters' will, but he's only one of 9. Council could still do whatever it wanted to do.
- 5. Calling the project an "Arts and Innovation" district is pure PR hype. A theatre does not an arts district make. This is a huge office complex with a theatre shell thrown in to get around zoning restrictions. And there's no way anyone can guarantee that office renters will be innovators.
- 6. While the office project studies are being done, Council is negotiating with Arrillaga in closed session, for the sale of city land. Yet this land has never been publicly declared to be surplus. Why is the city considering selling this parcel? There has been no open-session policy discussion, as required by law.
- 7. From PA Weekly Editorial September 28, 2012: "The public was inexcusably given just four days to absorb a long staff report prior to Monday's meeting, a breach of the policy goal of providing at least 10 days' notice before meetings on major and complex projects.
  - "... the city staff has done the public and the City Council a disservice in prematurely giving up its role as impartial professional adviser. The staff report reads more like a sales pitch than a careful articulation of the challenging policy issues posed by the proposal and the very significant traffic problems that come with a development of this size."

The lack of transparency, the speed at which this enormous project is being rammed through, the incestuous nature of the relationships, are all cause for alarm.

Your responsibilities as an ARB member are to:

- Promote orderly and harmonious development of the City
- Enhance the desirability of residence or investment in the City
- Encourage the attainment of the most desirable use of land and improvements
- Enhance the desirability of living conditions upon the immediate site or in adjacent areas
- Promote visual environments which are of high aesthetic quality and variety and which, at the same time, are considerate of each other.

In my opinion, the Arrillaga project as proposed is antithetical to all of these goals. Please slow the process down!

Thank you,

**Pat Marriott**