Staff Report (ID # 9473)

Report Type: Action Items  Meeting Date: 9/6/2018

Summary Title: 3241 Park Avenue: New Two-Story Office Building (Prelim)


From: Jonathan Lait

Recommendation
Staff recommends the Architectural Review Board (ARB):
1. Review and provide informal comments. No formal action is requested.

Report Summary
The subject application is a request for preliminary review. No formal direction is provided to the applicant and Board members should refrain from forming and expressing opinions either in support or against the project.

As a preliminary review application, the Planning and Community Environment department has only performed a cursory review of the project for compliance with the zoning code. A comprehensive review of a future project to applicable codes, including context-based design criteria and other standards, would follow the submittal of a formal application. Accordingly, there may be aspects of this preliminary review application that do not comply with municipal regulations or require additional discretionary applications beyond architectural review.

Similarly, there has been no comprehensive review of the project to the comprehensive plan or other policy documents. Such review will occur upon the filing of a formal application.

City of Palo Alto
Planning & Community Environment
250 Hamilton Avenue
Palo Alto, CA 94301
(650) 329-2442
The purpose of this meeting is to provide an applicant an opportunity to present a conceptual project to the Board and receive initial comments. Board members may identify aspects of the project that are appropriate given the neighborhood context and consistent with city policies or areas of concern that the applicant may want to reconsider in a formal submittal. Community members are also encouraged to provide early input to the project.

**Background**

**Project Information**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Owner:</th>
<th>3241 Park Boulevard LLC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Architect:</td>
<td>Hayes Group Architects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representative:</td>
<td>Jeff Galbraith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Counsel:</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Property Information**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Address:</th>
<th>3241 Park Boulevard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood:</td>
<td>Ventura</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lot Dimensions &amp; Area:</td>
<td>149’ x 134’ approximate (irregular lot shape) 20,442 sf (0.47 acres)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing Inventory Site:</td>
<td>Not Applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Located w/in a Plume:</td>
<td>Yes, further analysis will be done with a formal application</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protected/Heritage Trees:</td>
<td>Not Applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historic Resource(s):</td>
<td>Not Applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existing Improvement(s):</td>
<td>3,456 square feet; one story; 25 feet; 1970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existing Land Use(s):</td>
<td>North: PF (Railroad Corridor), Matadero Creek Channel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>West: GM (contractor, offices), Matadero Creek Channel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>East: PF (Electrical Sub-station)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>South: RM-30 (Retail, Automotive Services)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aerial View of Property:</td>
<td>Packet Pg. 9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Land Use Designation & Applicable Plans**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zoning Designation:</th>
<th>General Manufacturing District (GM)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comp. Plan Designation:</td>
<td>Light Industrial (LI)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Context-Based Design Criteria:</td>
<td>Not Applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downtown Urban Design Guide:</td>
<td>Not Applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South of Forest Avenue Coordinated Area Plan:</td>
<td>Not Applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baylands Master Plan:</td>
<td>Not Applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proximity to Residential Uses or Districts (150°):</td>
<td>Yes, RM-30 zoning to the south, across Park Blvd.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Located w/in Airport Influence Area:</td>
<td>Not Applicable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Prior City Reviews & Action

City Council: None
PTC: None
HRB: None
ARB: None

Project Description

The site is a 20,442 square foot lot within the GM zoning district. Two sides of the property are bounded by the Matadero Creek Channel and includes a single-story structure built in 1970 with a surface parking lot that abuts the channel. The applicant proposes to demolish the existing building and site improvements and construct a new two-story 10,116 square foot building (0.49:1 FAR) at 33’-8” tall. The occupant of the building would be a General Business Service use. While the submitted plans include multiple options (on Sheets A0.3 & A3.0), the applicant prefers Option A. The proposal includes a contemporary design with pitched roofs and deep overhangs. The building materials include stone, dark aluminum glazing frames, clear glass, standing seam metal roofing and painted metal soffits. Supplemental materials include stucco. Most of the occupied space would be on the second floor, elevated above the entrance lobby and service rooms. A combined trash and recycling enclosure would be located at the northwestern edge of the building on the first floor. The lower level areas are screened from view and provide a base for the building.

Picture 1
Parking for the project would be provided at grade accessed by two driveways. A total of 40 parking spaces would be provided, with 15 spaces provided in a mechanical lift system. Short-term and long-term bicycle parking would be provided near the lobby entrance.

Source: Hayes Group Architects, 2018

**Anticipated Entitlements:**
The following discretionary applications are anticipated:

- **Architectural Review – Major (AR).** In accordance with PAMC 18.76.020, Architectural Review is required because the project includes new construction with greater than 5,000 square feet.

**Discussion**

Preliminary review applications receive a cursory review for compliance with zoning regulations and consistency with the comprehensive plan or other applicable policy documents. This information was previously transmitted to the applicant. A more comprehensive review will occur upon formal submittal, which may reveal other code or policy concerns.

At this point in project development, the ARB is encouraged to provide objective feedback to the applicant on the preliminary drawings. The Board may want to consider comments that relate to:

- Scale and mass;
- Transitions in scale to adjacent properties;
- Relationship to the neighborhood setting and context;
- Pedestrian-orientation and design;
- Access to the site;
- Consideration to any applicable policy documents;
- Architectural design, theme, cohesiveness, and quality of materials; and
- Preservation of existing native or mature landscaping or features, if any

Given the proximity to the Matadero Creek Channel, the project is subject to PAMC 18.40.140 Stream Corridor Protection. The streamside review area includes all properties abutting a stream or located within 50 feet from the top of a stream bank. As depicted in Picture 1, the project site abuts the channel. The development standards preclude development such as structures and parking lots within the slope stability protection area (i.e. 20 feet landward from the top of bank or to a point measured at a ratio of 2:1 (horizontal:vertical) landward from the toe of bank, whichever is greater). Exceptions to this requirement may be granted by the Director of Public Works where the applicant provides a geotechnical slope stability analysis demonstrating that the proposed development would not threaten the stability of the stream bank slope, require introduction of hardscape in order to maintain the stream bank slope, or be at risk of damage from future bank stability or erosion and demonstrating how maintenance and repair of the stream could be provided with the proposed development in place.

The project proposes surface parking and mechanical lifts to meet the City’s parking requirements. In accordance with PAMC 18.54.020 (a)(4), the mechanical lifts shall be located within an enclosed parking facility and all lifts and associated equipment shall be screened from public views and the screening shall be architecturally compatible with the site conditions. Most of the mechanical lift system is proposed under the building; however, a portion is exposed in the rear of the property. During the initial review of the project, it was relayed to
the applicant the desire to have the parking for the project be underground. Constraints include
the adjacency to the creek channel, a potentially high groundwater level, and soil
contamination. Regardless, as mentioned in the previous section a geotechnical study would be
necessary with a formal application and that evaluation would provide some additional
information on these constraints.

The project proposes to occupy the entire building with a General Business Services use, which
is not subject to the City’s Annual Office Limit (PAMC 18.40.210). However, subsequent changes
to the use for the floor area would need to be evaluated as necessary.

The project would be subject to the City’s Performance Criteria which includes criteria for
lighting, landscaping and other elements as further described in Attachment D. The project may
also need to adjust the site layout to accommodate a minimum five feet of perimeter
landscaping for any unenclosed parking spaces, as required by PAMC 18.54.050. Comments
from other departments would also need to be addressed in any subsequent formal submittal
for the project.

Next Steps
There is no further action required by the ARB after its discussion. The applicant may elect to
file a formal application.

Environmental Review
The subject review involves no discretionary action and is therefore not a project and not
subject to review pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). If a formal
application is filed, a CEQA analysis of the project would be performed.

Report Author & Contact Information
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ARB1 Liaison & Contact Information
Jodie Gerhardt, AICP, Planning Manager
(650) 329-2575
jodie.gerhardt@cityofpaloalto.org

Attachments:
• Attachment A: Location Map (PDF)
• Attachment B: Applicant’s Project Description (PDF)
• Attachment C: Zoning Comparison Table (DOCX)
• Attachment D: Performance Criteria (DOCX)
• Attachment E: Project Plans (DOCX)

1 Emails may be sent directly to the ARB using the following address: arb@cityofpaloalto.org
June 13, 2018

City of Palo Alto
Department of Planning & Community Environment
250 Hamilton Avenue, 5th floor
Palo Alto, CA 94303

Re: 3241 Park Blvd.

To Planning Staff and ARB Members:

Attached is Hayes Group Architects' submittal package for 3241 Park Blvd. for preliminary ARB review. The project applicant is Hayes Group Architects on behalf of our client, Mr. Dan Cunningham.

The site is a 20,442 SF lot located in the GM zone along the eastern frontage of Park Blvd, south of California Ave, wrapped on 2 sides by the Matadero Creek, and sitting immediately adjacent to an electrical sub-station to the southeast. The site was previously home to Park Avenue Motors, a Mercedes-Benz service center, and is currently overflow space for Aikin’s Collision Repair.

1. PROPOSED PROJECT

The proposed project consists of a new 2-story, 10,116 GSF building and full site improvements to replace an existing 1-story structure. The proposed design is conceived as a simple, elegant rectangular volume, with pitched roofs and deep overhangs. The majority of the occupied space is on the second floor, elevated above the entrance lobby, circulation elements, and service rooms, revealed or concealed behind a series of dynamic planes at the ground level. The ground floor elements screen the on-grade parking from view and provide a base for the building.

The massing is aligned to Park Blvd to create a strong street edge and is shifted southeast towards the electrical sub-station. The southeast edge is mostly closed, with limited openings and a shallow roof overhang, whereas the northwest end is fully glazed floor-to-ceiling, with the deepest overhang, gesturing across the Matadero Creek to make a connection to its nearest urban neighbor.

The primary building materials exposed to public view are stone in large format pieces, dark finished aluminum glazing frames, clear glass, standing seam metal roofing, and painted metal soffit panels. The structural system will be steel frame, with light gauge metal framed infill walls. Cement Plaster will supplement the material palette, particular at rear facing facades.

The total floor area is 10,116 sf, of which just below the 10,210 sf permitted under a 0.5 FAR. The proposed building is 33'-8" tall and conforms to the height limit of 35'-0".

2. PARKING & BICYCLE SPACES

Parking for the project is provided at grade, accessed from Park Blvd. in a single driveway apron. A total of 40 spaces are required and provided for the projects. 15 spaces are being provided in puzzler lifts along the northeastern side of the property.

Short-term and long-term bicycle parking will be provided on the parking island in front of the lobby entrance from the parking lot.

3. TRASH/RECYCLING

A combined trash and recycling enclosure is proposed at the northwestern edge of the building that will be accessed from Park Blvd.

4. GREEN BUILDING STANDARD

In accordance with the city’s Green Building Ordinance, the building will satisfy requirements for Cal Green-non Residential Tier 2 for the commercial.

We look forward to the ARB hearing so that we can proceed with the development of this project. Please call me at (650) 365-0600 x19 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Jeff Galbraith, AIA
Principal
cc: Mr. Dan Cunningham
## Table 1: COMPARISON WITH CHAPTER 18.20 (GM DISTRICT)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regulation</th>
<th>Required</th>
<th>Existing</th>
<th>Proposed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Site Area</td>
<td>1 acre</td>
<td>0.47 acres</td>
<td>0.47 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Setbacks</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>6’-6”</td>
<td>11’ 10”-10” Left / 10’ Right</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front Interior Side Street Side Rear</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>40’ Left / 58'6” Right Not Applicable 61’-9”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Min. yard for site lines abutting or opposite residential districts</td>
<td>10 feet</td>
<td>Not Applicable</td>
<td>Not Applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Setback</td>
<td>50 feet – see Chapter 20.08 &amp; zoning maps</td>
<td>Not Applicable</td>
<td>Not Applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max. Site Coverage</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>16.5% (3,393 sf)</td>
<td>50.4% (10,335 sf)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max. Total Floor Area Ratio</td>
<td>50% (10,221 sf)</td>
<td>17% (3,393 sf)</td>
<td>50% (10,116 sf)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max. Building Height</td>
<td>50 ft or 35 ft when located within 150 ft of residential zone (5)</td>
<td>25’</td>
<td>33’-8” feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daylight Plane</td>
<td>Initial height of 10 feet then slope of 1:2</td>
<td>Not Applicable</td>
<td>Not Applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee Showers</td>
<td>General Business Service (10,000 -19,999 sf = 1 shower)</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(1) For any property designated GM and fronting on East Bayshore Road a minimum setback of 20 feet along that frontage is established.


## Table 2: CONFORMANCE WITH CHAPTER 18.52 (Off-Street Parking and Loading) for General Business Service uses*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Required</th>
<th>Existing</th>
<th>Proposed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vehicle Parking</td>
<td>1/250 sf of gross floor area for a total of 40 parking spaces</td>
<td>31 spaces</td>
<td>40 spaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bicycle Parking</td>
<td>1/2,500 sf (80% long term and 20% short term) equals four (4) total spaces (3-Long term and 1 short term)</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>4 long term and 4 short term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loading Space</td>
<td>1 loading space (10,000 – 99,999 sf)</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* On-site employee amenity space is exempted from the parking requirements
Performance criteria are intended to provide additional standards to be used in the design and evaluation of developments in the multi-family, commercial, and industrial zones. The purpose is to balance the needs of the uses within these zones with the need to minimize impacts to surrounding neighborhoods and businesses. The criteria are intended to make new developments and major architectural review projects compatible with nearby residential and business areas, and to enhance the desirability of the proposed developments for the site residents and users, and for abutting neighbors and businesses.

18.23.020   Trash Disposal and Recycling
Assure that development provides adequate and accessible interior areas or exterior enclosures for the storage of trash and recyclable materials in appropriate containers, and that trash disposal and recycling areas are located as far from abutting residences as is reasonably possible.

18.23.030   Lighting
To minimize the visual impacts of lighting on abutting or nearby residential sites and from adjacent roadways.

18.23.040   Late Night Uses and Activities
The purpose is to restrict retail or service commercial businesses abutting (either directly or across the street) or within 50 feet of residentially zoned properties or properties with existing residential uses located within nonresidential zones, with operations or activities between the hours of 10:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. Operations subject to this code may include, but are not limited to, deliveries, parking lot and sidewalk cleaning, and/or clean up or set up operations, but does not include garbage pick up.

18.23.050   Visual, Screening and Landscaping
Privacy of abutting residential properties or properties with existing residential uses located within nonresidential zones (residential properties) should be protected by screening from public view all mechanical equipment and service areas. Landscaping should be used to integrate a project design into the surrounding neighborhood, and to provide privacy screening between properties where appropriate.

Consistency will be finalized when a formal application is submitted.
The requirements and guidelines regarding noise and vibration impacts are intended to protect residentially zoned properties or properties with existing residential uses located within nonresidential zones (residential properties) from excessive and unnecessary noises and/or vibrations from any sources in abutting industrial or commercially zoned properties. Design of new projects should reduce noise from parking, loading, and refuse storage areas and from heating, ventilation, air conditioning apparatus, and other machinery on nearby residential properties. New equipment, whether mounted on the exterior of the building or located interior to a building, which requires only a building permit, shall also be subject to these requirements.

**18.23.070 Parking**

The visual impact of parking shall be minimized on adjacent residentially zoned properties or properties with existing residential uses located within nonresidential zones.

**18.23.080 Vehicular, Pedestrian and Bicycle Site Access**

The guidelines regarding site access impacts are intended to minimize conflicts between residential vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle uses and more intensive traffic associated with commercial and industrial districts, and to facilitate pedestrian and bicycle connections through and adjacent to the project site.

**18.23.090 Air Quality**

The requirements for air quality are intended to buffer residential uses from potential sources of odor and/or toxic air contaminants.

**18.23.100 Hazardous Materials**

In accordance with Titles 15 and 17 of the Palo Alto Municipal Code, minimize the potential hazards of any use on a development site that will entail the storage, use or handling of hazardous materials (including hazardous wastes) on-site in excess of the exempt quantities prescribed in Health and Safety Code Division 20, Chapter 6.95, and Title 15 of this code.
Attachment E

Project Plans

Hardcopies of project plans are provided to Board members. These plans are available to the public online and/or by visiting the Planning and Community Environmental Department on the 5th floor of City Hall at 250 Hamilton Avenue.

Directions to review Project plans online:

1. Go to: bit.ly/PAtendingprojects
2. Scroll down to find “3241 Park Boulevard” and click the address link
3. On this project specific webpage you will find a link to the project plans and other important information

Direct Link to Project Webpage: