



## ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD

MINUTES: April 19, 2018 City

Hall/City Council Chambers

250 Hamilton Avenue

8:30 AM

### Call to Order/Roll Call

Present: Chair Wynne Furth, Vice Chair Peter Baltay, Board Member Alexander Lew, Robert Gooyer, Osma Thompson.

Absent:

Chair Furth: Good morning, and welcome to the April 19th, 2018, meeting of the Architectural Review Board of the City of Palo Alto.

### Oral Communications

Chair Furth: The first item on the agenda is oral communications. This is a time for the public to address any item within our purview which is not on the agenda. I don't have any speaker cards. Is there anybody who would like to speak in oral communication?

Phillip Brennan, Associate Planner: We need to do the roll call first.

Chair Furth: Nah. Roll call later. Public first. I now would ask that the staff call the roll.

(Roll call)

Chair Furth: Thank you. Sometime before my term is up I plan to do everything in order, but not today. At least I did know when you said, "Good morning, Chair Furth," you were asking me if I was here.

### Agenda Changes, Additions and Deletions

Chair Furth: Any agenda changes, additions or deletions? All right.

### City Official Reports

- 1. Transmittal of 1) the ARB Meeting Schedule and Attendance Record, 2), Administrative Staff-Level Architectural Review Approvals, and 3) Tentative Future Agenda items.**

Chair Furth: Our meeting schedule, our attendance record, tentative future agenda items. I understand they're a little out of date. Could you update us on future agenda items? I hear on May 3rd we probably won't be hearing the AT&T small cell nodes project. Is that right?

Jodie Gerhardt, Manager of Current Planning: If you'll give me just one minute, I'll pull that up.

Chair Furth: No rush. All right. While you're thinking about that, you can tell us after this hearing.

## Action Items

- 2. PUBLIC HEARING / QUASI-JUDICIAL. 2755 El Camino Real [16PLN-00464]: Recommendation on Applicant's Request for Approval of a Site and Design Review to Allow Construction of a 57 Unit Multi-family Residence at the Project Site. The Project Also Includes a Request for a Zoning Code Text Amendment Ordinance to Create a New Workforce Combining District and a Zoning Map Amendment Ordinance to Apply the New District to the Project Site. Council Will Consider These Ordinances Along With the Site and Design Review Application. Environmental Assessment: An Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) was Published for Public Comment on January 19, 2018 and Circulation Ended on February 20, 2018. Zoning District: Public Facilities (PF). For More Information Contact the Project Planner Claire Hodgkins at [Claire.Hodgkins@cityofpaloalto.org](mailto:Claire.Hodgkins@cityofpaloalto.org).**

Chair Furth: Item 2 on the agenda is a public hearing, it's quasi-judicial, and it's 2755 El Camino Real. This is a request for approval of a site and design review to allow construction of a 57-unit multifamily residence at the corner of El Camino and Page Mill. The project also includes a request for a zoning code text amendment ordinance to create a new workforce combining district and a zoning map amendment to apply the new district to the project site. The council will consider those enabling changes, as well as our comments. And those are the Planning and Transportation Commission. There was an initial study with a mitigated negative declaration prepared and circulated. That circulation period has ended. Staff report, please.

Claire Hodgkins: Thank you. Good morning, board members. Again, the project before you today is a site and design review for 2755 El Camino Real. A brief overview. Demolition of an existing at-grade parking lot at 2755 and construction of a four-story multifamily residential development with 57 rental units. Just a brief background on the project. We've gone to Council a couple times for prescreening. We've gone to PTC, and the PTC recommended approval in January 2018. We're looking for a recommendation today from the ARB, and tentatively scheduled for May/June 2018 for Council. The MND was circulated in January; circulation ended in February. Some of the key project changes addressing ARB comments. I won't go into too much detail on this because I know the applicant is planning to. But, some of the requests you guys had were to add a top to the building; to provide more detail on the landscaping design; clarify circulation and the proposed pick-up and drop-off area; further refine massing on the building by providing some more windows and some more articulation on the building; and, clarification and improvements to the ground floor units. Staff feels like all of these changes have been made and improvements have been made to the plan to address these comments. Some same key items for consideration: Consistency with the South El Camino and El Camino Real Design Guidelines; consistency with the context-based design criteria, as well as the performance criteria; relationship between the building and the street; and then, just overall massing and articulation and circulation on the project. Staff recommends that the ARB take the following actions: Consider the MND and the mitigation monitoring and reporting program, and recommend approval of the site and design application to City Council, based on the findings and conditions of approval included in the Record of Land Use Action. With that, I'll turn it back to you.

Chair Furth: Thank you. Has anybody seen the site? Okay, everybody has seen the site. Does anybody have any conversations they wish to report concerning this project? Okay, no conversations to report. Any questions before we hear from the applicant? Alex.

Board Member Lew: I have one question for staff. This is just a zoning overlay?

Ms. Hodgkins: Mm-hmm.

Board Member Lew: Are we going to have a separate opportunity to comment on the proposed zoning overlay for this? Like for the housing on public facilities? Or is this our only...?

Ms. Hodgkins: This is the only opportunity. That is part of Council's purview and will be for the PTC recommendation for the zoning overlay, is going to be forwarded to Council.

Board Member Lew: Okay. Thank you.

Chair Furth: All right. May we hear from the applicant? You have 10 minutes. And if we could have your name and its spelling for the record.

Tod Spieker: Hi, my name is Tod Spieker [Spells name] with Windy Hill Property Ventures.

Chair Furth: Thank you.

Mr. Spieker: Thank you, Claire and staff, for all the work you have put into getting this project where we are today, and thank you Board members for giving our project thoughtful consideration and feedback today and the previous two hearings. Windy Hill Property Ventures is a small Palo Alto-based development company. We primarily work in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties, with a strong focus on amenity-rich sites close to transit. I just want to get into the timing of this. This slide illustrates the time we spent working with staff and the community to come before you with this project today. This was the former VTA site purchased by Pollock Financial in 2014, and at the time, they proposed a primarily office project. As part of the feedback during their September 2015 pre-screening, a majority of Council members mentioned the need for more housing or being an appropriate location for more housing in Palo Alto. Based on that feedback from Council, Windy Hill and Pollock Financial formed a partnership in 2016, where Windy Hill would propose to entitle this studio and one-bedroom housing project. We submitted our application for a City Council study session in the summer of 2016. In September of 2016, we had a prescreening with City Council, where the majority of councilmembers gave positive feedback for a housing project on this site. In December of 2016, we submitted a formal application with the City. We were then asked to go to Planning Commission and Architectural Review Board for further study sessions. During this time, we did extensive community outreach, meeting with neighbors, respected community members, elected officials and appointed officials. In January of this year, we received unanimous approval to move forward with our project from the Planning and Transportation Commission. Based on these study sessions, public hearings and community meetings over the past almost two years, we have made significant modifications to our original proposal. We know that we did not make everybody happy, but we hope that it can be appreciated that we gave thoughtful consideration to the concerns and made changes and compromised where we could. When we submitted our changes to staff based on the comments from the previous ARB, an immediate comment we got back was we'd still like to see more native plants. Most recently, that's not shown in your packet. We are going to show you today an update with more native plants. If that's one of your comments, I'll let Paul talk to you about that. Now, I'm going to turn it over to Ian Murphy at BDE Architecture and Paul Lettieri from Guzzardo to talk about the specific changes that were made since the last hearing. Thank you.

Chair Furth: Thank you, Mr. Spieker.

Ian Murphy: First off, I'd like to thank staff and the board. Thank you for all your comments previously. We think that what we're presenting today (inaudible) those comments and really makes the project better.

Chair Furth: Thank you. Could you give us, again, your name and spell it for the transcriber?

Mr. Murphy: Ian Murphy [spells name].

Chair Furth: Thank you.

Mr. Murphy: I'm just going to skip through to a few slides here. One of the comments that we got from the Board last time was to clarify the circulation on the site. In re-addressing the project, we included this slide in the package that was given, and we expanded to show all the way up El Camino, to show that

the first lane of traffic is not actually a lane of traffic, but it's a bus parking zone and a 30-minute loading zone. And then, the remainder of the block is parking. I don't think that was 100 percent clear in our previous submittal, and I think this helps a lot to explain that people turning off of Page Mill are not turning directly onto the front of the project. There's actually a lane of separation and a bike lane before the first actual vehicular traffic lane. We also wanted to clarify how people coming to the site as pedestrians would come to the lobby and park in short-term bike parking, or come through the driveway entrance and get to the long-term bike parking for residents. I think that we've help to do that here with this slide. Again, in the overall site plan, we wanted to clarify where that loading zone that people would be coming to the, you know, drop off Ubers, or a FedEx truck, or someone dropping off a package, be able to stop momentarily for a short term, and the proximal to the front entry lobby, and be able to come into the project. We have a couple updated landscape plans. I'm going to let Paul speak to that more in a little bit, but we've tried to greatly increase the number of native plants per previous comments on the project, as well as clarify where we'll have some opportunities for vertical planting and vines that will kind of activate some of our frontages and our entry. This is the added slide that Tod was just speaking to, kind of clarifying which planting we believe qualifies as native planting, and a couple exceptions here and there throughout the project. Paul will come back up and speak to that in a second. This is the overall building plan of the roof deck. We received comments to add shading structures on the roof deck in a couple different manners. First off, we've added umbrellas to add spot shade to different seating areas, and we've actually incorporated an architectural trellis that wraps around into the roof deck area, providing a more robust and integrated opportunity for shading different seating areas. Another comment we got was to clarify how we plan to visually buffer the ground floor units on Page Mill. While the lot line falls away from the building and it's variable in depth, we've actually decided to raise the building 12 inches off the ground further and have raised plantings and have a raised sill that could be further enhanced by shades that go from the bottom, up. This provides a minimum five-foot height barrier so that the sight line of pedestrians walking by on the street is not looking directly into people's units for the most part, but it still adds a soft edge with landscaping, and it's still fairly activated. Here we have a few elevations showing before and after of what we came to ARB previously, and how we've changed the architecture to better reflect the top to the building. What we've tried to do is use color and a few more changes of material to define the top, as well as add a functional shade structure that, given the orientation of the building, should help with shading the top floors and provide interesting shadow lines, and hopefully address what the Board commented on previously. That's El Camino, adding further articulation. And then, on the back of the building, we've tried to add a lot more interest to the side facing the senior care facility. Added windows per comments, and more articulation and color change and detailing at the top level of the building, even on the back side. Previously not mentioned, the masonry walls on site are between 5 foot 6 and 6 foot 6 and in keeping with the planning standards, so we decided to remove the proposed wood fence and leave the masonry walls as is, including the tile artwork that was noted to be on the site already. We've added a couple, edited our renderings to better reflect some of the street planting, as well as the large shade structures that we've added, and some of the articulation and material changes. With that, I'm going to give the last few minutes to Paul to talk about the planting changes that we've made. Thank you.

Chair Furth: Thank you.

Paul Lettieri: Good morning. Paul Lettieri with The Guzzardo Partnership, landscape architects. Native planting is always an interesting topic because it's native to where, exactly, and all of that. This is a relatively difficult site for natives because of the nature of the project being on podium, most of it, and smaller planters. But, one of the things that we always try to look at is not just the list, which we annotated the plant list that's up on the screen with little n's for the plants that actually are native. But it's not so much the list of them, it's how you use them. We looked at this plan and the green areas are all the areas where the ground plain is native planting. The little bits of orange that are up there are the ones that are non-native. This doesn't include the trees. It's interesting, we got some negative feedback on some of the native trees we had in our plans about a year ago that we took out in favor of, Japanese Maples were suggested instead of the Cersis that we had. We don't have any native trees on the plan now, but we looked at it a bit more and we think that, there is some *Tristania* we have shown on El Camino Real that could become *Lyanathamis* [phonetic], for example, which is not technically native to

Palo Alto, but it is native to California. It would function similarly to what we were doing. We also have *Archtistapholis* [phonetic] on the ground plane now, along the edges. The right-hand edge vertically on the plan and the upper portion now have *Archtistapholis* [phonetic] Pacific Mist on it, which you don't have that on your plan now. We thought that could happen. We're trying to balance the longevity and success of the project with the idea of getting native planting in it, as well. We think with these alterations, I think it is responsive to at least the spirit of what you're trying to do, and it's not 100 percent. I think that's really the goal, but that's where we went with it. We're hoping that that is at least a reasonable response to it and something you'll find acceptable. I'm happy to answer any questions you might have about it. It says I have to stop now.

Chair Furth: If you could spell your name for our transcriber, who is very creative otherwise.

Mr. Lettieri: [spells name and name of partnership].

Chair Furth: Thank you. Appreciate it.

Mr. Lettieri: You're welcome.

Chair Furth: Any questions?

Board Member Lew: Actually, Paul, stay there. I was wondering if you could address any changes that were made up on the roof terrace.

Mr. Lettieri: There's a few more native grasses up there in the raised planters. We're always nervous about the raised planters and natives because part of the beauty of natives, they're deep-rooted, and they find groundwater. Well, there is no groundwater to be had on a podium. We've had uneven success with some types, but the grasses tend to do pretty well because their roots, you know, deep rooting for them is 18 inches or so, and that's about how far down we are. They never will become draught-tolerant on their own kind of planting in those kind of containers. We tried to balance the success going forward because we want Tod to hire us again on the next project. And also, to have it be successful because we have a pretty good portfolio of successful projects in Palo Alto, and we want to continue that. That's kind of the balance. That's really all very minimal there.

Chair Furth: Thank you. Any other questions of any member of the design team?

Vice Chair Baltay: Yes. Good morning. I have a question for the architect, I suppose, please. I'd like to know what the railing proposed on the, let's see, it's the eastern corner of the building. It's the corner along Page Mill Road seen in rendering 1.2. What I'm looking at on this rendering here is, it looks like a glass railing wrapping around that corner, and yet the parapet wall must already be the height of the railing. Is that glass wall additionally a couple of feet higher? And then, is one side of it opaque? Is that what I'm understanding? Because on your elevation you're showing some change in color and texture. It seemed like that line was doing that. What is that railing there around the tree?

Mr. Murphy: That railing is intended to be glass and it is higher due to the fact that we have a raised planter in that location, and we don't want to have the raised planter negate the raised parapet, so we'd like to keep the solid line datum of the solid material. The glass would be above that.

Vice Chair Baltay: And it's clear glass on both side?

Mr. Murphy: Yes, on the Page Mill side and the neighboring lot line side, it should be clear glass.

Vice Chair Baltay: Perfect, thank you.

Chair Furth: Anybody else have questions of the architect? Now we get to my obsession.

Board Member Thompson: Sorry, I have a question.

Chair Furth: Oh, sorry, Osma. Go ahead.

Board Member Thompson: Are the windows, the windows, they have a small panel that's operable, is that right? Or are the windows not operable?

Mr. Murphy: All windows into a living space or bedroom will have an operable panel.

Board Member Thompson: And it's the small one in the, the sort of three panels that you have?

Mr. Murphy: Yes, it's the vertical small panel for the larger window sets.

Board Member Thompson: Okay. Just wanted to clarify.

Chair Furth: Did I see exterior seating near the entrance? I'm always concerned where - I believe so - people are going to sit while they stop to chat with somebody or wait for a ride, or just need to take a break. I think it's by the entry?

Mr. Murphy: Yeah, near the main entry we have a number of planters that would act as seat walls and potential seating, that create kind of an internal U.

Chair Furth: It's not just potential seating, it's actual seating?

Ms. Hodgkins: I believe there's also a bench, or at least I saw it on one of the sheets, it does show a bench next to the planter opposite the bike racks. Right next to the bike room...

Board Member Lew: Yes.

Ms. Hodgkins: ...there was a bench.

Chair Furth: Thank you. But that's exterior, right?

Ms. Hodgkins: On the exterior, yeah.

Chair Furth: All right. Just wanted to be sure I was reading that right. Anybody else have any questions of the applicant? If not, to us. Robert?

Board Member Gooyer: Well, I think it's improved greatly from the last time I saw it. The only real problem I have with it at this point is still the whole concept of a top, especially on the two street elevations, to me are a little weak. I haven't really decided whether that deserves an up or a down vote on my part, so I'd like to see what the rest of my group has to say.

Chair Furth: Alex?

Board Member Lew: Thank you for the revisions on the project. I think they're actually very well done. I'm very happy with the building. I can support the project. I did want to comment on the zoning overlay.

Chair Furth: Should we do that after we do this project? Have a comment session on that?

Board Member Lew: I'm going to be very brief on this.

Chair Furth: Okay, fine.

Board Member Lew: I just have one issue. Many people in Palo Alto think that our 50-foot height limit is sacrosanct, but the reality is the height limit varies from 25 feet to, I think 75 feet in the hospital zone. It really stair-steps depending on the location. Knowing that the Council is thinking about housing projects downtown, and the Council also wants retail, my recommendation would be to consider a higher height limit, say maybe 55 feet, for projects that have four floors of residential and retail. The thing that I think San Francisco learned is that if you have a 50-foot height limit and the developer is trying to squeeze in a retail floor and four floors of residential, that you get undesirable retail space. They don't give the height limit. It's not everywhere. It's only particular sites. They don't give you the extra height if you're building office. It's really only that configuration of housing and retail. So, I think that they should consider that since they're thinking about it in the downtown district. On the roof terrace on the building, I think it's in the right location because it breaks up the long façade on Page Mill. I have to say, though, I think the better view opportunity is facing El Camino, facing the hills to the west. But I think where you have it is the best location, considering your neighbors and the long façade. I think we got some revised landscaping comments by email at, like, 4:30 in the morning. I didn't look at them. My comment before that, though, were that you have too many native plants. I just want to give you an example. I don't want to go in circles, but I want to give you an example. I went to where the new Children's Hospital, at Stanford, and they have a big podium garden. Right in the middle there is a huge mound of hummingbird plants, and there's only, like three species. There's the native, like a *salvia clevelandii*, which is native to California, there is a *salvia leucantha*, which is really more of a Mexican plant, and rosemary, which is a Mediterranean plant. Those are all three plants that hummingbirds love and they provide nectar at different times of the year. The danger is when they're 100 percent native plants is that, really, you're going to get a very narrow bloom period in, like, right now, April, and then it's not going to look so great all summer long. For me, the finding that we have is to use as many indigenous plants as possible, and I think the finding, the actual word the native plant people use is "endemic." And the definition of a native plant is pre-European contact in California. We're talking about going back to Indians. I think reasonable people, you know, we don't think that, that's going to be very difficult to achieve. And then, as Paul mentioned, the planters are difficult, especially rooftop planters. My take on it is on the, as you have it now, I think it's definitely approvable. I would be interested in seeing more, a wider mix of plants on the Page Mill planters, at grade. You basically have a lot of *Lulenbergia* [phonetic], a lot of it, on two levels, both at-grade and on the raised planter, and some mimulus, and I would like to encourage you to try to add a little bit more color. And they can be non-native, and they can be plants that are long-blooming. There are some hybrid salvias now that basically bloom almost all year long. Like, nine months of the year. And they're wildlife-desirable, as well. I have a couple comments for staff. I think on page 21, there's a word that says "time" and I think you mean "type." On page 25 of, I think it's on the comp plan findings - let's see - 25, on Finding 4, I would add that there's a bicycle lane being added on Page Mill. Right? It's not a whole lane, but between the traffic lanes and the right-turn lane, I think the County wanted that.

Ms. Hodgkins: (inaudible)

Board Member Lew: Okay, great.

Ms. Hodgkins: The last sentence of the first paragraph under Finding 4, I added that.

Board Member Lew: Okay. Okay, excellent. And then, on finding number 5 on landscape, I would add that all of the native grasses in there provide a design linkage to the grasses at the Mayfield playing fields across the street. And then, Finding 3, also on page 25, I would add that the brick provides a design linkage to the Sunrise housing next door. Thank you.

Chair Furth: Osma.

Board Member Thompson: Hi there. Well, so, I apologize for not being here last time to review this project. Looking at it this time, I looked through the meeting minutes and understood the concern about the base, middle and top. Truthfully, I can't say that what you've provided feels adequate in terms of the top. It looks like a shading structure but it doesn't seem to be shading very much, save the top. And even

then, the structure has all these holes in it, so it's not really shading anything, and in all the elevations that you provided, we were supposed to argue for a context, you know, base design, and the elevation showing the context, it just doesn't seem... there's some things that work, but in particular, the upper half of the project does not. In that sense, also going back to shading, you have a southeast and a southwest façade that basically has no shading, and glass. I think adding that element would not only help your project thermally, it would add to your sustainability initiatives. I think it would also add aesthetically to the project, and I think it also might actually inform your top a little bit more. I think it could develop what currently doesn't seem to aesthetically convey to me that this is an adequate top to the building. That's kind of my thoughts on that. Another item in the findings is to have a lively corner. This is a really important corner for El Camino. In the renderings, it seems like it could also use more work, so that's another point that seems to be lacking in your design. Perhaps it's something different on the ground floor, but the corner is very important. You have these intermediary bands that you're sort of using in between the floors, and those also don't have a relationship to your top, so that could also be something that you might consider to integrate the aesthetic of what you're developing, to actually make a more cohesive and coherent project for the site. Those are my comments.

Chair Furth: Thank you. Peter.

Vice Chair Baltay: Good morning. Thank you very much for all the improvements you've made. I do think the building has gotten better as it's gone through this process. I find Osma's comments insightful, and generally I agree with her comments about the top of the building, the detailing, the sustainability issues of shading. I find myself in agreement with Alex's comment about the landscaping. It seems to me to be well advised to, I know the staff pushes you hard sometimes for native landscaping, but sometimes it would work better to make sure that the roof deck works first, even if that means perhaps plants that are post-European colonization. Mostly I find myself in agreement with Robert. I'm just really on the fence on this. The building's coming there, but unfortunately for me, too many pieces just don't quite come together to make the necessary findings, as well as a ground-breaking building for higher-density housing. The bar is invariably higher, requiring an exemplary design. I just don't see this as that kind of great design. We're asking for a lot here. The parts are here, they're moving in the right direction, but this is just not a finished design, in my opinion. I'm going to leave it at that for now and see what Wynn has to say. Thank you.

Chair Furth: Thank you. I support the project as it's presented. I actually like the way it engages the corner. I think about it a lot in terms of pedestrians and other people going by. I think about, is the street just to the north Grant? It's one of the Civil War streets. Is it Sherman? Grant?

Ms. Hodgkins: Say that one more time?

Chair Furth: The street just up El Camino.

Ms. Hodgkins: It's Sherman.

Chair Furth: It's Sherman. That provides a good pedestrian connection to a very lively area. You could walk that way if you're willing to, I don't know if anybody shops at grocery stores anymore, but you could walk that way and do it, or ride your bike. I think this is a very good location. For me, it's not so much that it's transit-oriented as it's near California avenue and a lot of employment centers. I think this is a really good location for this use, and I'm very happy to see the project. I like the way you addressed the challenge of first-floor units on a very busy street. I went out with a tape measure and measured two and a half feet up from the sidewalk in front of my house, and nine feet back, and I think this works. Went and looked at some... My street is not as busy, but I think you've solved that, you've addressed that problem in a way that I think works, and that's a problem we've seen in a lot of proposed development along these major streets with ground residential. I like what we did there. I appreciate that you've thought through how this building works, how people get in and out, how their visitors get in and out, how deliveries get in and out. I think that's a lot better. On the plant selection, we're dealing with a relatively new standard and it says feasible, and it says local, and it says habitat. As somebody who firmly



hates *baccharis pilularis*, after many unhappy experiences with it my garden, and very happy experiences with other plants, I'm sympathetic to the nothing that, first of all, you have to have a plant that's going to work where you're going to put it. The second thing I want to know is that, you know, butterflies, and bees, and birds, and probably even squirrels are going to find this adding to the livable habitat in this area, so those are probably the things I look at most. And even before you made your changes, you had a high percentage of indigenous plants in your plan, and I made a note that I thought that was commendable. I think when staff pushes you, they are reflecting comments we've made, and we stand by. But thoughtful use of plants that will advance the agenda of using plants that are suited to this area, that have historically been in this area, or a modern variance on those, lots of cultivars out there, and that provide a sense that you're in California, you're on a peninsula, and it's not just humans who live here, are admirable. I agree that if you need a big more flexibility to have things that actually work, you should have it. There is that feasibility project in there. I've been working with people trying to build housing for 50 years, or studying, preparatory to doing that. There's always something wrong with every housing project. It's in the wrong place, or it's in the wrong - There's always something wrong. They're never perfect. And you're not required to make me happy. You're required to give me a project good enough to let me make the findings that we're required to make, and I can make those findings. I do have some comments for staff about the hundred-plus condition record of land use approval. Some of them are clerical, and I'll just give you those in the form of a marked-up document. Old habits die slowly. I would say that it's really helpful for me and the public to spell out. Not everybody know what Model Water Efficient Landscaping Ordinance means, let alone MWELo. If you would spell those things out, it would be more readable and understandable to the general public, which includes me. I would also ask that you not talk about targeting young tech workers. We have enough problems with age discrimination in this valley without that. I think we're targeting workforce housing, but we don't assume that people stop working at 35. On condition number 7, package page 27, I don't quite understand. This is about the enforcement of workforce housing restrictions and local preference - which, by the way, thank you for proposing that. I think it's very helpful to us. Often we build housing that simply becomes a commodity somebody purchases and doesn't occupy, or becomes short-term corporate housing. It says "Applicant shall monitor and report on the requirements as agreed upon annually for no less than five years." And then it says, "After three (5) years of successful monitoring...." I would like to know, you can clarify that. I presume you mean five. On condition number 8, you talked about reducing motor vehicle trips to the site by a minimum of 35 percent, but you don't specify the baseline. That doesn't have any meaning unless you give us a baseline. What is the baseline? ITE estimates?

Ms. Hodgkins: The baseline is from the...

Chair Furth: It's in the Hexagon report.

Ms. Hodgkins: ...Transportation Impact Analysis, and it's...let me think. We'll...

Chair Furth: Just put that in, please.

Ms. Hodgkins: ...provide clarification on that.

Chair Furth: Condition number 13 on the next page. This is about guest parking. It says, "Parking shall be unbundled" -- I'm not sure how that relates to this -- "as outlined in the TDM program. Lift parking shall be designed to accommodate at least two guest spaces." That's not really about guest parking, which I think is addressed somewhere else. I hope. My question was, with the unbundled parking, what can the project proponent owner do with parking that isn't rented by tenants? What are the permitted uses of that excess parking?

Ms. Hodgkins: We haven't talked about that too much, to be honest, the access parking. As of right now, it's understood that it would not be rented out in any way to other uses. The whole purpose of unbundled parking is just to discourage people from having --

Chair Furth: To put a price on parking.

Ms. Hodgkins: Exactly. To hopefully discourage people from owning a car at all.

Chair Furth: If the applicant could comment. I realize it's an extremely high-class problem, to have too much parking there.

Mr. Spieker: It's the idea for someone who wants to rent the unit and doesn't want to pay for a parking spot. We're encouraging people to not have a car. But then there are, as has been mentioned, when we were originally at 45 parking stalls and now we're significantly higher, if someone were to rent a unit -- a husband and wife, a couple, two roommates -- that they could buy two parking spaces.

Chair Furth: You could float it around with in the project.

Mr. Spieker: You could float it around, but only within the project. It's not like the neighbors could start renting spots.

Chair Furth: Thank you. I think that's all of my bright red ink. I used to be notorious for bleeding across other people's memos. If you could throughout it, spell things out when you need to. Let's see what my notes are here. Anyway, though I don't think you're required to make us happy, this project does make me happy. It is quite lovely. After we spend a great deal of time approving additional office space or residential project that people are valiantly trying to shoehorn into much more difficult spaces, I think you have a good project now. Would anybody want to make a motion?

Board Member Lew: It's up to the three of you, right? It's at 3-2 at the moment.

Chair Furth: You don't know what we have until you make a motion.

Ms. Hodgkins: Board members, if I may, just to remind you that this is the third hearing. This project has come before us twice before.

## **MOTION**

Chair Furth: Right. Okay. I move that we approve the project on the basis of the finding and conditions submitted in the staff report, as modified by our comments here. Is there a second?

Board Member Lew: I will second.

Chair Furth: Would anybody care to speak to the motion? Hearing nothing, all those in favor? All those opposed?

## **MOTION PASSES 3-2, WITH THOMPSON AND GOOYER VOTING IN OPPOSITION**

Chair Furth: Thank you. We have a recommendation, and this project moves on. Would the dissenters care to comment?

Vice Chair Baltay: I'd like to speak to it. Obviously, I changed the thing here. I think Wynne's comment about you can't expect every project to make you completely happy is spot on here. I'm not happy with the architecture. It's right on the edge for me. It really could be a lot better. But this is a project our community needs. This is a project that's made every effort to come together. They've been at this for a couple of years now and I really want to see it move forward.

Board Member Gooyer: Okay, I'll respond to it. The other way to look at it is that if we keep allowing projects that we're not really, think is the top quality that's available to pass through, that's going to become the norm. Because it's going to be one of these, well, hey, you passed that one last time, so what's wrong with this one? And I think we have to put our foot down somewhere and either say we want high-quality architecture...And it's not like we pulled this out of our you-know-what this time around

and said we don't like the top. We were very clear the last time as to, that's what we don't like about the building. They put a sunscreen on there, especially on the two sides. To me, that's not answering the question.

Board Member Thompson: I think there's just a lot more. It's true that the architecture is not high quality. This is such an important project, and I really want this project to go through. I think I'm with you. It's almost there. There's a little bit that just needs to be worked on a little bit more. And I think even in terms of the sustainability initiatives, shading, getting those things to be the norm, because so often these projects don't have those considerations. And then, all this extra energy used in funnel cooling and things like that, but even aesthetically it doesn't convey what the City I think is trying to strive for. I don't know. I think there's...It's so close. I think if we could have tried to come to something where, I don't know, we could see it again. I don't know.

Board Member Gooyer: Just one other item. Also, the whole thing about the top. This new building is in between two other buildings that have a top, so it is doable. So, this is going to become sort of the, oh, that's how not to do it, and that's the one that we've... I mean, I can remember coming on the Board here for the first time and the big discussion was the building at, what was it? 400 Alma? Whatever the number is...?

Chair Furth: Eight hundred?

Board Member Gooyer: Is it 800? I'm not sure. And let's face it. There were not a whole lot of cheers about how magnificent the architecture of that one was, either. I don't want this to be another one going, the first project of this type that we're doing really should be the cream of the crop, that you could say this is what we're looking for as a quality level.

Chair Furth: Okay. Well, you have heard... You want to speak? I got a comment from the member of the public about, why did I vote for something. And I said our tradition is that you speak if you are in the short end of the stick. I think you've heard our comments. You know we want tops on buildings. You know we're concerned about building frontages that reflect the fact that they're in different orientation to the sun, and that we want them to work well. But, by a 3 to 2 vote, we think this one meets our standards. Thank you. We will take a...Yes? Anything else you want from us?

Ms. Hodgkins: No. Just thank you.

Chair Furth: We'll take a five-minute break before we start the next one.

[The Board took a short break.]

Chair Furth: All right, we'll reconvene the Architectural Review Board. We are on our second public hearing.

**3. PUBLIC HEARING / QUASI-JUDICIAL. 3945 El Camino Real [16PLN-00374]: Request for Approval of a Major Architectural Review to Allow an Exterior Remodel of an Existing Two-Story Hotel Building at 3945 El Camino Real. Environmental Assessment: The Project is Exempt from CEQA per Guideline Section 15301 (Existing Facilities). Zoning District: RM-30/CS. For more information, contact the project planner Phillip Brennan at [phillip.brennan@cityofpaloalto.org](mailto:phillip.brennan@cityofpaloalto.org).**

Chair Furth: This is a request for approval of a major architectural review to allow an exterior remodel of an existing two-story hotel building known as the Comfort Inn at 3945 El Camino Real. It is exempt from the California CEQA guidelines as a renovation of an existing facility. The project planner is Phillip Brennan. Could we have the staff report? First of all, does anybody have any conversations to report? Has everybody visited the site? Okay, we've all visited the site. Thank you.

Vice Chair Baltay: I had staff email me a larger-scale plan of the second floor.

Chair Furth: Right.

Vice Chair Baltay: For what it's worth.

Chair Furth: Thank you.

Philip Brennan, Project Planner: Good morning to members of the Board, and good morning to Board Member Thompson. I think this is the first time we've met. This application, again, is for a comprehensive exterior remodel of an existing two-story hotel. There's no increase to the floor area. In fact, there's actually a minor deduction in square footage to accommodate a jogged front entry. The lot coverage is increased slightly due to the new trash enclosure, but the project is not in danger of exceeding any thresholds. The project includes removal of two guest rooms to accommodate a larger lobby. This site is dual zoned Service Commercial towards the front and RM-30 Zoning District in the rear half. A little project overview just to add some context to the subject site. If we start clockwise from the bottom left, the Glass Slipper abuts the property on the left-hand side. Merrilee Terrace apartments are located in the rear half on the left-hand side. We have the Palo Alto Children's Community Center and Ventura Community Center abutting the rear portion of the lot, and Keys Middle School campus on the right-hand side. A little more visual perspective. We have the subject site in the middle with the Glass Slipper to its left, another hotel, and Keys Middle School to the right of the subject site on the right. Again, this is primarily an exterior remodel that includes a redesigned shed-style roof replacing hipped roof forms on the lobby and stairwell towers. There is a proposed new outdoor patio seating area to serve as a guest amenity. A new covered trash enclosure that meets the current level of service at the hotel. A complete repaving and re-striping of the parking lot. And, new interior and perimeter landscaping. This overview provides the layout of the stairwells and roof forms. The x'd out stair tower is to be removed and replaced by an uncovered stairwell identified in the green circle. The highlighted roof forms on the lower picture call out the shed-style roofs and the arrows identifying the direction of the slope of the roof downward. On the left, this highlighted portion is an expanded portion of sidewalk to meet the ECR guidelines of providing an expanding public right-of-way. This connects to a 12-foot expanded portion of sidewalk provided along the frontage of Keys Middle School. The purple highlighted area is the proposed roughly 1,000 square foot outdoor patio seating area, and the red highlighted area is the larger covered and enclosed trash enclosure. One of the primary aspects of this project is re-striping the parking lot. Currently, the required parking ratio is one parking space for every guest room. Currently, there are 69 guest rooms and only 60 parking spaces. Part of this project scope as it relates to remodeling the interior is the removal of two guest rooms, again, to accommodate that larger lobby. The applicant is requesting a 15 percent parking reduction, effectively 67 guest rooms and 57 spaces. The applicant, as required, has submitted a Transportation Demand Management Plan. Part of informing that plan was hiring a contractor to perform a parking analysis. This planning contractor did an analysis on 13 comparable hotels along the peninsula, and over the course of two to three nights, peak parking demand -- which is effectively midnight -- and determined that the occupancy was at .66 occupied spaces per occupied room. The Comfort Inn was actually at 0.62. So, the projected demand was 45 spaces assuming 100 percent occupancy at the Comfort Inn. Their conclusion was the proposed 57 spaces was more than adequate to serve 67 guest rooms at peak demand. All of that notwithstanding, the applicant has agreed to supplemental TDM strategies, including offering transit subsidies in the form of monthly VTA bus passes to employees, a taxi/share-ride subsidy offering hotel guests, I believe it's a \$20 subsidy to help encourage these services to the hotel versus taking a rental car, as well as providing on-site bicycle parking in the form of nine Class II bike racks in the rear of the property. In addition to the Board's standard considerations related to consistency with the applicable design guidelines and design criteria, we are asking that the Board consider the landscape selection as it relates to the newly-proposed landscape plan. That should include native species of tree and plant species, as well as the dedicated off-street passenger loading zone and the feasibility of that. Within the past 30 minutes, I was notified by the applicant that there is actually a dedicated passenger loading zone located right in front of the lobby. This serves the Keys Middle School, but it's always a vacant space to provide that loading area for passengers, and I imagine taxis and share-rides that are dropping off guests. Overall, staff believes this

project is consistent with all the applicable guidelines and Comprehensive Plan. We believe it's a welcome update along the El Camino corridor. We're recommending the ARB approve the project for the proposed exterior remodel, based on findings and subject to the conditions of the approval.

Chair Furth: Thank you. Any questions of staff?

Board Member Gooyer: Yeah, I do. Just a quick question. To me, it looks like three rooms have been removed, not two.

Mr. Brennan: Can you tell me what page you're looking at?

Board Member Gooyer: I'm looking at the difference between page A-01.01. If you look at the demo plan, it says rooms 102 and 103 are being removed, but they're keeping 104. That leaves a remainder of eight, or that's a total of eight, then. But, if you go to the 2.0, the way I see it, what was room 104 is now the public bathrooms. It's not that big a deal. I just want to make sure that we're accurate. Are you agreeing with me, there are three rooms being removed?

Male: Well, technically...

Chair Furth: Excuse me, we're not, we'll hear from the applicant...

Board Member Gooyer: Okay.

Chair Furth: ...when they're at the podium and they can be on the record.

Board Member Gooyer: Okay, but that's my comment, so...

Chair Furth: That's a good question.

Board Member Gooyer: Sure.

Chair Furth: How many units. Anybody else? Anybody else? If we could hear from the applicant. And somebody remind me to ask to hear from the public this time. There was no public requesting to comment at the last hearing.

Shawn Alexander: Good morning, members of the Board. My name is Shawn Alexander. I'm with AXIS/GFA Architects.

Chair Furth: Mr. Alexander...

Mr. Alexander: [Spells first name.]

Chair Furth: Thank you.

Mr. Alexander: And "Alexander," much like Alexander Lew spells his name. I have a presentation to show you. We've worked very closely with staff. Not quite sure. How do I...? Just click on it? [Setting up presentation, navigating system.] You're all familiar with the site.

Chair Furth: I'm sorry, you need to speak — great.

(crosstalk)

Mr. Alexander: You're familiar with the site. You've all said you've gone by to see it. It's an existing structure. A little sad and dated. Needs a refresh. It's the owner's goal here to, one, be a responsible community member, and to try to have a hotel that's competitive in today's current marketplace. Some of

the goals here are to not only refresh the look of the project, but also to create some amenity spaces for their guests. That's the outdoor patio space that we're creating, and an enlarged lobby space, so you can actually accommodate some of the needs that guests have that they're not able to provide currently. This is a rendering of what we believe the project will look like when completed. Basically, our approach was not only to create a more, we think, contemporary and appropriate look to the building, but also to use the trash enclosure as a way of helping to hide the parking. The project doesn't have great visibility from the street, and combining both the wall of the trash enclosure and the re-do of the two-story building creates kind of a harmonious composition between the two elements, of setting up a gateway to the parking area. The other challenge that we had to deal with, when you go to the site, you'll see that the entry to the lobby actually is off of the parking drive aisle, which is pretty unsafe. People walk out the door and you have to be pretty aware of whether or not a car is coming in or out of the project. What we did was we created the new entrance that comes in off the sidewalk. That allows people to have a real entry experience from the sidewalk into the lobby. This just gives you some general perspectives of what the courtyard experience is like, trying to create a gateway for people to come into the courtyard. This shows the building in relationship to the adjacent properties, the hotel to the north and the school to the south. The site plan shows you the existing parking or the re-stripe parking in relationship to the existing hotel and the landscape areas around. We've replanted the entire site around the parking area. We put in new trees in the existing tree islands, plus added some trees to the property. We understand that there was a last-minute request to change from the plant material that had been originally in the package, to more native species. I believe you were given that information a short while ago. We seem to be stuck. Oh, there we go. Roof plan. Elevations. Street elevation on top. Side elevation as you drive into the project. And then, a section elevation looking, from the patio looking back at the lobby. And, the section to the existing two-story piece. I'm here to answer any questions that you have.

Chair Furth: Thank you. Does anybody have any questions of the applicant? Osma.

Board Member Thompson: The white material in the front, which material is that?

(crosstalk)

Mr. Alexander: The white material and the brown material that's on the two-story building is stucco. A cement plaster. Okay? There's also the use of corrugated metal that happens. If you look at the rendering, the brown stucco that's towards the patio, up above that has some integrated corrugated metal that wraps around, and then around the back side at the higher roof peak. There's also some corrugated metal used on the existing balcony that fronts El Camino.

Board Member Thompson: Okay, so the side that has the slanted roof, the white part is stucco that's painted white?

Mr. Alexander: Cement plaster.

Board Member Thompson: It's not on here, on the material board?

Mr. Alexander: I believe it is.

Mr. Brennan: If I could interject, it's on sheet A09.01.

Board Member Thompson: Yeah, I read it, but I'm wondering if...

Chair Furth: It's not on the materials board?

Mr. Alexander: Oh, on the material board.

Board Member Thompson: It's just white stucco. And then, below it, the brown stuff, is that any of this wood material, or is it a brown stucco?

Mr. Alexander: No, the wood material is on the trash enclosure and the fence surrounding the patio and the wall that separates the patio from the adjacent parking. And that wood material has texture to it. The boards are placed on the wall in such a way that you get a little bit of depth and shadow. I think the rendering reflects how it would look realistically.

Board Member Thompson: Right. And then, on the other side that has the slanted roof, the brown stuff at the bottom, is that wood or is that a painted brown stucco?

Mr. Alexander: On the building, it's cement plaster in a brown color.

Board Member Thompson: It's this stuff?

Mr. Alexander: Correct.

Board Member Thompson: Okay. And there's two woods here. Sorry, I'm just a little confused at what the materials are.

Mr. Alexander: The lighter-color wood is the wood of the fence and the cladding on the trash enclosure. The darker-color material is actually Prodema. It's a synthetic product. Kind of looks like wood. That's intended to be used on the railings. The existing guardrails are pretty unattractive. You'll notice in the elevation drawing -- let me go back to it -- along the guardrail, we're alternating with open railings and closed-off, more solid railings. There's a rhythm of going down along the walkway. The solid panel on those railings is the Prodema material, which is that darker-brown color.

Board Member Thompson: Okay. I'm sorry, what was the alternative material? The one that's not Prodema? The one that it's alternating with?

Mr. Alexander: The other wood material?

Board Member Thompson: In your drawing, you have the Prodema railing, and then you have another railing that's a different material.

Mr. Alexander: It's just a painted metal railing.

Board Member Thompson: A painted metal railing. Okay. That's like, that's the face, too. It's just like a metal?

Mr. Alexander: It's not solid.

Board Member Thompson: Oh, it's just a railing. Okay.

Chair Furth: Any other questions? The window grids, how are those created?

Mr. Alexander: The window grids, those are just windows.

[crosstalk]

Chair Furth: ...cannot touch them?

Mr. Alexander: I believe they're embedded in the insulated glass currently. We're not changing the windows on the guest rooms.

Chair Furth: Thank you. Any other questions? Any member of the public who wishes to speak? All right. Anything else you'd like to say? All right.

Mr. Alexander: Thank you for your time.

Chair Furth: We'll bring it back here. Staff, did you have a question?

Ms. Gerhardt: No, I just want to thank Board Member Thompson because I think she's picking up on the front elevation, that the building itself has sort of a painted stucco on the bottom of the building, whereas the trash enclosure has wood siding. That may be something that we want to think about.

Chair Furth: Thank you. I guess we should start talking about this then, if that's where we are. Alex?

Board Member Lew: Thank you. I'm generally in support of the project. I think it looks attractive. My minor concerns are that you may have too many materials on the building. I was a little bit hesitant on the corrugated metal railing on the front of the building. I don't mind it on the back so much, between the brown stucco Prodema and the stained wood. I think maybe there was painted wood, as well. It seemed like there was a lot, but I'm not really strongly opposed to what you're proposing now. Thank you for the revised landscape plan. I think the Bouteloua grass and stuff is a nice addition. I've been going to some lectures by John Greenlee and that's one of his favorite grasses. I was looking at it recently at a nursery and it's actually fairly attractive and not used very much in Palo Alto. On the tree substitution, I think you're proposing to change the London planes to our native oak. I might push back on that. Maybe if there's a way to split the difference on that. I think at your new patio area, I think I would not want to do an oak tree there. I think a London plane might be better in that location because, one, you get more sunlight. Two, you can prune those, whereas the native oak really doesn't want to be pruned and has a very low tree canopy. It seems to me that that would be more flexible, a London plane would be more flexible in that location. Also, too, I think at the stair tower near the back of the building, that one may be better as a more vertical tree than a native oak tree, which has a fairly broad canopy. I think that's all of the comments that I have. I think generally I'm in support of the project, and I'm curious to see what the other Board members have to say about this one.

Chair Furth: Peter.

Vice Chair Baltay: Yes, good morning. Generally, I'm in support of the project, as well, although I have a number of comments, ideas, suggestions. Let me start with the site planning. I'm concerned that as a vehicle pulls in, either somebody driving a car, a rental car, or an Uber, or a taxi, there doesn't seem to be an easy place to stop to quickly check in or to drop somebody off. There's a drive aisle 20 or 25 feet wide as you turn to the right coming up El Camino, but the front door really is right by the front corner of the building there. I know every time I go to this kind of hotel I want to stop, check in, then go take my car and park it near my room, as close as possible. I don't want to go guess where my room is, then walk all the way through the parking lot, check in, go back, and move my car. I don't know. You're under tight conditions here, but if there's some way to just make provision for a temporary spot and still be able to get the drive aisle to go through. It seems to me it's worth some effort to think about the realistic traffic flow coming into this. And now is a chance to do it, when you're remaking the front of the building. Then, on the building massing, I think it's your trash enclosure that really makes the positive change to the whole appearance of the building. I think you're spot-on, the way you're doing it, and the fact that you're putting something there. I say this mostly because it's the kind of thing that also gets cut out of a project later as a minor item, and I want it to be on the record that this is not a minor part of this. This is a major part of what shades the parking from the street, which is part of the design guidelines we have to follow. On the building itself, however, I'm concerned that you have a two-story lobby, and a two-story lobby generally is something that you can make a glass wall with a light fixture; it signals entrance, front door, this is where you go, this is the visual part of the building. Except, in this case, you've just continued the second story well of tight wall with little punched openings that are bathroom windows over the lobby. It seems to me it's a lost opportunity to create something stronger on the corner. A piece of corner glass, two-story element something like that. It also begs for, what is the detailing where you have a recessed entry? What is that ceiling like, both from the outside as you walk in, that corner of the stucco coming down and some sort of flat soffit? It's critically important to get that right. That's the first impression of people coming into the hotel. Then, inside that lobby, looking up at this sort of shelf, a



dust-collecting spot inside, especially when you've got these little punched bathroom-style windows on the El Camino façade. Really, I guess I'm saying you've lost an opportunity, or you haven't fully explored a design opportunity to really make this thing glow. That corner is your front door. That's what everybody sees. Put some glass there, put a light fixture there, do something that screams Ascend Hotel. I think, as well, that corner can then also help signal some more pedestrian activity. We're trying to make El Camino a more pedestrian-friendly street. Believe it or not, there's so much activity and developing going on in this area, it actually is becoming a pedestrian street. Put a bench there, put a recess there, make it again so, I'm waiting for my Uber as I check out of the hotel; give me a place to sit before they come. I don't want to sit in the back because they don't see the car coming. Don't make me stand all the way out on the corner. Give me a spot. And you have the recess, you're doing the right things, but follow it through a little bit more. I think your creation of what I see as an outdoor breakfast area in the back there is wonderful, and the way you've closed it off from the parking is really quite nice. I think that will be a very successful spot. Again, it's important to be cognizant that it's not a main entrance to the hotel, and yet, you've set it up so when I drive in, that's what I'm going to weave through to get to the lobby because I've already parked my car, because there's no other place to do it. So, just a little bit more revisions there would help. I share Alex's concern that you have too many materials here, and I think it's the corrugated metal, especially on the El Camino façade. Corrugated metal is one thing that architects really like. It's kind of neat, it's industrial, it's attractive-looking, and it also looks terrible when it's installed poorly and not maintained. The screws at the edge, it bends in the corners. Don't put that on the railing on the façade. Be more consistent with the rest of the building. I would also encourage you to find a way to make that brown material on the front a better material than this painted stucco. It's not a whole lot. Use one of these nicer panels you have, or wood, and be consistent with the rest of the trash enclosure. Get a consistent piece of the façade. That is the right place to spend the money on the materials, and it's not that big an area. It's not that much to do that. Lastly, I'll speak to the trees. I share Alex's concern. The oak trees are messy. I have them at my house, and my wife is very unhappy constantly because the leaves fall down, and the leaves are nasty. They have these thorns on them. It's really unpleasant. Your guests aren't going to like it. I don't think London planes are a great choice for a patio area, as well, because they get tall, and they're deciduous. Maybe a large lemon tree, a fruit tree, something that screams California. Just an idea. And then, in the parking area, as well. I don't think oak trees are a great parking lot tree. Maybe there's some other choices there. That's what I have to say. Thank you.

Chair Furth: I forget. Who hasn't spoken? Osma.

Board Member Lew: And Robert.

Board Member Thompson: Both me and Robert haven't spoken. I think my fellow Board members have made some really great points. Yes, you have too many materials. I will repeat that. I think what's really exciting about the image that's in our package is that the materials are really vague. I actually thought this was, like a swiss pearl on the white. And, yeah, this wood texture everywhere else. I was really excited by that (inaudible) of just having this wood and light play. I generally like what you've done with the remodel, the form, the architecture. It's actually really clever, and nice, and it kind of has an interesting relationship to the building next door. It also has a pitched roof. But, yeah, with the materials, it's kind of all over the place. There's two different types of wood with the Prodema and the other wood. I think I agree with Board Member Baltay. You want to put the really nice stuff in the front. I think stucco wouldn't do justice to your design here. I think you want a higher-quality material. Also, I agree with the entry of the lobby being -- Right now, it looks very schematic, but I think as you further the development, the idea of including some seating would enhance and bring more attention to the fact that that is the entrance. I think that's kind of lost initially to where the entrance was, in the drawings and such. Or just looking at the front elevation. Because while it's glassy, I just thought it was a window in the beginning. And that's, in part, due to the level of detail that's here in the drawing, but I think architecturally there's something you can do more to emphasize that a little bit more. Those are my two main comments, materials and the entrance.

Chair Furth: Robert.

Board Member Gooyer: Okay. I have to agree with most of what Peter said, although he approached it as saying those were just minor items. To me, they aren't. I think you've missed a big opportunity because there's really no, at least to me, if I'm driving by, I would have a hard time figuring out where the front door is. I mean, I'm not saying that what's there now is a masterpiece of architecture, but at least it's pretty obvious where the front door is. And when you're driving down at 40 miles an hour, you want to know where that is. Here, you've enlarged the lobby by probably twice, if not more, and yet, you've dropped from a set of double doors to a single 3/0 door in the corner, and a little, looks to be four-and-a-half-foot-wide walkway. It just doesn't seem to work. I agree that the amenity of having the patio area in the back is great, but this is also the type of accommodation that I think is dealing more to the weary business traveler that wants to park, come in there, get service, go to his room, and then the next morning, leave, type of thing. I mean, a lot of it is going to be that way. I think there ought to be more concern to the whole process of -- as Peter was saying -- pulling your car up there, you can leave it there for a while and you're not blocking the entry to the entire facility. I wouldn't want to have to park somewhere in the back or find a parking place in the back, then walk up with my stuff to check in. I know we usually don't get into the function of it, but I think in this particular case, it has a lot to do with the exterior design based on what that function is. I also agree that you've just got way too many materials. I mean, you've got a standing seam roof pretty close to aluminum louvers, to corrugated metal siding, to stucco, to wood. That's just too much, I think it is. I don't have a problem with the corrugated siding, but I don't know if it even fits on this type of design. I like the standing seam roof, but I don't know if the two metals should fight each other. I also am not a big fan -- I thought of the same thing. In the current design, the small windows are sort of hidden, but those, as Peter calls them, those bathroom windows really aren't helping the -- I'm guessing the thought is you want to uplift the perceived quality of the whole facility. This almost looks like, if you walk from the back side of the average two-story motel, this is what the back side of it looks like, with the small little windows, not the first thing you see when you drive up. And you've got a two-story space there, and you're not taking advantage of it. It's one of these things that, I think the potential is there, but it needs to be fine-tuned. By far, I'm probably the least sophisticated landscape proponent here, but I definitely agree that oak is not your best solution for this, I think. It's the type of thing, maybe if they were three or four full-grown, mature oak trees that were already there and that sort of thing, then maybe. But at this point, there have got to be other selections that I think you'd be much happier with. I think that's it.

Chair Furth: Thank you, and thank you for the presentation. You know, we have these concerns about context, and this has got to be one of the more eccentric contexts in Palo Alto, tucked between the storybook Glass Slipper, which I remember when...

Board Member Gooyer: First, I thought it was the Glass Slipper that was...

Chair Furth: Yes, that was coming in...

[crosstalk]

Chair Furth: ...historic building. It was here when I first came to Stanford, a long time ago. And the very functional Keys school on the other side. There are many things I like about your proposal. I like the widened sidewalk, which will be a big improvement. I like your idea of having this up-to-code, functional trash enclosure, which is a good screening device. I'm fine with retaining the Eugenia hedge and the Italian cypresses, and I'm glad you're adding trees, I'm glad you have good screening. I'm glad you have that outdoor space for the use of guests. I'm glad to have the unapproved units removed. I've read Hexagon's report with interest. I found it convincing. It's not that often that we get actual empirical research on what a traffic demand is, and people are very skeptical of national standards from the ITE, or whatever. I found it compelling, and certainly support the change in the parking. I think the wider parking spaces will lead to much happier people on site, which is good. I wonder if it would be possible to designate one of those spaces as the registration space, so that that would be the space you can pull into to register. It's clear, it's obvious, and you already have enough parking for overnight spaces, according to Hexagon's study. Okay. I am sorry that the need for -- to the extent practical -- regional indigenous drought-resistant plant material capable of providing desirable habitat felt like something out of left field

to you, as it's one of the findings that we have to make on this Board. As you heard from our earlier proposal, and indeed, I went and looked up the plants that you had originally proposed, and even Berkeley sedge is properly gray European sedge and is not a California native. There are lots of native sedge's, and one of them would be appropriate. So, I'm glad you're proposing changes. I think that the principal problem I have with your design is that this is a fairly high-speed road, and by the nature of your business, many people are coming here for the first time. Now, it's true that people use GPS systems, and so on and so forth, but when you get down to which building am I stopping at, you need strong visual cues. I don't think that we have that here. I agree with my colleagues that having a two-story lobby at that corner there, which could be a strong design feature, and then hiding it, is not a good idea. It doesn't let the building work to announce itself. That's one of the things that's within our jurisdiction. Generally, if you prefer a particular thing, we like to be able to support you, but I don't think the building identifies its entrance appropriately here. I also tend to agree with the assessment that there's too much going on, and the result is not a strong presence. Too many materials, too many things happening. I think that you need a different tree for the patio. I think there are trees that will give you a pleasant place to be around. Birds, or whatever. I realize they have their problems, but we want birds living in this town. You have an opportunity for fairly tall trees around your two-story building and the parking lot, and something that creates a canopy, or whatever else it is you desire in your seating area; usually a canopy. I'm not as hostile. As somebody who had to rake up the oak leaves at my parents' house through my entire adolescence, I'm sympathetic to the idea that they're difficult to maintain. But, if you have a good one, I'd be totally saying go for it. It's worth it. They're very beautiful trees. You do need seating for somebody to wait for their Uber, or Lyft, or whatever. Ride-share. And, it also can be used by somebody who needs to sit briefly while walking up and down that sidewalk, which is going to have -- and does have -- a fair amount of pedestrian access. Would somebody like to propose a way to proceed?

## **MOTION**

Board Member Thompson: I'd like to move that we continue the project to a date uncertain.

Vice Chair Baltay: I'll second that motion.

Chair Furth: Okay. Why don't I attempt to summarize what I've heard? Does staff have a comment?

Ms. Gerhardt: I'm just wondering if we may want to continue to a date certain.

Chair Furth: If you have one.

Ms. Gerhardt: We could go to the June 7th hearing, if the applicant is able to turn around plans in a couple weeks.

Board Member Gooyer: That's up to you. You know, usually it's a matter of, can you get the changes made.

Mr. Alexander: Absolutely, we can get the changes made.

Board Member Gooyer: Okay.

Chair Furth: Okay. I think if this is going to be useful, we need to be quite specific about what we're looking for. What I have in my notes is reduce the number of materials; improve the quality of materials on the front façade; show the two-story lobby from the street in some way that makes this a stronger, more eye-catching presence as one drives along, and a pleasure to pass by, as well. Add somewhere for people to sit while they're waiting for their ride-share. If it's possible, add a designated registering/loading space, passenger parking -- whatever -- space in the interior of the site. Did we ever specify how many units are proposed? That should be clarified.

Mr. Alexander: For clarity, there's 67 units.

Chair Furth: Sixty-seven units.

Mr. Alexander: Guest services. What will be there.

Mr. Brennan: Just to clarify, the existing conditions are there are 69 guest rooms. There's an office space that's located next to the guest room, and it's identified on the site plan.

Chair Furth: Thank you. And the landscaping, I appreciate your quick turnaround, but more suitable, functional landscaping that meets the City's findings, and declared findings in Finding #5 be included. Anything else?

Board Member Gooyer: I'd like to see, as Peter and I talked about, was the whole idea of a place where someone who was registering could actually park...

Chair Furth: Right.

Board Member Gooyer: ...go in and register, and then...

Chair Furth: Right.

Mr. Alexander: Correct.

Board Member Gooyer: Okay.

Mr. Alexander: My understanding is you want us to create a designated drop-off area on the site.

Board Member Gooyer: Right. Okay.

Mr. Alexander: Basically, take out some parking that would be available for guests.

Chair Furth: Whatever works.

Mr. Alexander: Overnight parking, but use that for a limited use.

Board Member Gooyer: Right. (Inaudible) lobby a little bit so it becomes a little fatter and...

Chair Furth: Yeah, when I was summarizing that earlier, what I was thinking about was that, according to Hexagon, they're still going to have too much parking, so they could afford to designate one of those spaces as a registration space.

Mr. Alexander: Thank you. Yes.

Vice Chair Baltay: But, to be clear, what Robert and I, at least, are talking about is not necessarily another parking spot with a sign that says, "Registration," but rather something right up near the front where you stop...

Board Member Gooyer: Yeah, I'm talking about pulling up right by the front door, getting out, and yet, you're not preventing, you know, you're not closing off the whole property by doing so. With the way it is right now, you're pretty much doing that.

Mr. Alexander: We're happy to work with staff and other departments within...

[crosstalk]

Chair Furth: I'm sure they'll all have input. I don't know if the accessible, spaces accessible to people with handicaps have to be right adjacent, if there can be a registration space closer, but I look forward to hearing.

Vice Chair Baltay: If I could add one last thing, which was to please provide sufficient architectural detail, especially for the front entry corner, however you do it, that we can comfortably understand what you're up to. It's not provided here, and it's a constant sticking point. Just give us a good architectural section. It doesn't have to be technically detailed, the waterproofing and stuff, but show us what your intention is - soffits, eaves, how it all works together.

Mr. Alexander: Happy to do that for you.

Chair Furth: Thank you.

Board Member Gooyer: The sketch here is better than what we had, or more detailed than what we had in the packet. We've sort of got this white area that is glass, and doors, and main entry, and it really didn't say anything. I had to sit there and sort of sketch in my assumption of what I thought it was supposed to look like.

Mr. Alexander: It's intended to be all frameless glass.

Chair Furth: Okay. Is that sufficient clarity...

[crosstalk]

Board Member Gooyer: I think so.

Chair Furth: Staff, applicant, any questions?

Mr. Brennan: Could we clarify for the applicant, are we looking for a "designated space," modifying the existing design? Or are we looking just for something called out on the pavement?

Board Member Gooyer: I'm looking for, the average place I stay at, you pull the car up under a portecochere, or somewhere right by the front door, you run in, you register, you jump back in the car, and you go to a parking spot. I don't want a place that happens to be down at the other end. Relatively close, but a normal parking spot that says, "Registration Parking." I'd like to see a place that is a 10-minute-parking type.

Ms. Gerhardt: I think in this particular case, we're dealing with an existing building, so the constraints are a little bit more, but we'll certainly look into that.

Board Member Lew: That was my question for staff. When I looked at the project, I was thinking it was a minor project. I think you're listing it as a major project. I guess the way I would see it, if it's a major project, it makes sense to push on this particular parking space. If you're considering this is mostly an existing building, it's a minor remodel, and I would not be inclined to make a major change in the parking.

Chair Furth: I would be fine with a designated space somewhere near the office, rather than realigning the [crosstalk].

Board Member Lew: Right, and I guess that's where I am, if we're thinking this is a minor project.

Ms. Gerhardt: Understood. This is a minor board-level project. It was risen to board level because of the extensive changes with the roof forms and things of that nature. But, at the same time, we're dealing with an existing footprint, so we'll work out the details. We understand your direction.

Vice Chair Baltay: Could I chime in on that, please? Several projects have come to us recently as minor footprint retention, same thing, not changing the footprint of the building. After six months, it's under construction, the whole thing is torn down. That's what's going to happen here. This front building will not be there when they start new construction. That wall we're talking about could be moved a couple feet to accommodate what we're talking about. He doesn't need to preserve the existing footprint just because that's what was there. In order to build this, they're going to have to take it down to the ground and start over. They're going to have to put in a new foundation to meet earthquake codes. We're being naïve to think that they just need to keep the footprint because it's there now. This is the opportunity to improve the building, and that's what Robert and I have been saying to you, that you can do just a little bit better, with just a little bit of a tweak, by moving it by a little bit. You know that when you get into construction, a lot of things have to change.

Chair Furth: Anything else?

Board Member Thompson: I'd be open to seeing something like that, but in case that doesn't work with the architecture -- because I actually like what you have designed right now. I think it is just like, you know, the list that (inaudible) in terms of material. Yeah, some formal change in the entry, so not just a material change to define the entry, but something formal, architectural massing a little bit. I'm not sure. I don't know that I'm sold on the porte-cochere thing. Just something to define the entry.

Chair Furth: I think you can probably figure out where we are, and we'll wish you well, and look forward to it. We need a motion. Do you accept? Do you have something more you want to say? We need to amend. Let's see, was the motion to continue to a date certain, which is...?

Board Member Thompson: I had said uncertain, but I'm open to changing that to a date certain, if you'd like to change that.

Chair Furth: And the date is June...?

Ms. Gerhardt: June 7th.

Chair Furth: June 7th.

Board Member Thompson: June 7th.

Chair Furth: A motion to continue to June 7th?

Board Member Thompson: Motion to [crosstalk].

Chair Furth: Seconder accepts that change?

Vice Chair Baltay: Sure.

Chair Furth: All those in favor say Aye.

**MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY 5-0.**

Chair Furth: All right.

Board Member Lew: You have to say "opposed." "Are there any opposed?" You do.

Chair Furth: The ghost? No, you don't. Speaking as a long-term city attorney, you do not...

Board Member Lew: I've been told that you do have to do this.

Board Member Gooyer: You have to say all those...

Chair Furth: I'm doing it to make you happy.

Board Member Gooyer: You have to say, "All those against."

Chair Furth: All those opposed? Who told you?

Board Member Lew: Robert.

Chair Furth: Nobody. Yeah, you probably think an abstention is an "aye" vote, which is also not true. Okay. Any abstentions? All right. I should summarize it, though. The vote is 5-0, all in favor, no opposition, no abstentions. Thank you. We look forward to seeing you.

Mr. Alexander. Thank you.

### **Approval of Minutes**

**4. Draft Architectural Review Board Meeting Minutes for February 15, 2018.**

**5. Draft Architectural Review Board Meeting Minutes for March 1, 2018.**

**6. Draft Architectural Review Board Meeting Minutes for March 15, 2018.**

Chair Furth: Okay, on the approval of minutes, how are we doing on approval of minutes? Alex, you were unable to read one of them?

Board Member Lew: I was going to abstain. I downloaded them, but somehow I wasn't able to actually open the files. I will try doing that again. If we're going to vote on it today, I'll abstain.

Chair Furth: All three of them?

Board Member Lew: Yes.

Chair Furth: Unless staff has an urgent need for them, I would suggest we continue that.

### **MOTION**

Chair Furth: Move to continue approval of minutes. Is there a second?

Board Member Gooyer: Second.

Chair Furth: All those in favor? All those opposed? It passes 5-0.

### **MOTION TO CONTINUE PASSED WITH A VOTE OF 5-0.**

### **Subcommittee Item**

Chair Furth: Do we have any subcommittee items? All right.

### **Board Member Questions, Comments, Announcements**

Chair Furth: First of all, there is a Historic Preservation Conference. One of the sponsors is the HRB. It's going to be right here in Palo Alto, May 17th through 20th. If anybody has an opportunity to attend, I'm sure it will be great. Secondly, at the request of staff and the City Council, I have appointed Alex Lew to

the committee -- is it a committee? -- that will study the Ventura Area Plan. You tell us, Alex. What's it formally called?

Board Member Lew: I think everybody knows it as the Fry's.

Chair Furth: The Fry site.

Board Member Lew: Some of old-timers remember it as Maxi-Mer [phonetic].

Chair Furth: Okay. It should be a very interesting community project, and we'll ask him to report to us regularly and put it on the agenda to do so. Alex and I attended the State of the City Address last night, in the upper floor of the JCC, on the fourth floor, with a spectacular view of Mt. Hamilton and the western hills, and a glass railing, what do you call it? Wall? That is a building that often gets a lot of criticism for the way it presents on the street, but from the interior looking out, works very well. It's a good community space. Staff has asked that we find a time to have a mini study session on what's the top of a building supposed to look like, dealing with our frustration with designs on El Camino, and what we would like to see. If we say things like a bit more work or a better design, staff doesn't really know what to be pushing for. As you point out, Robert, if we don't get some clear vision out there of what we think looks good, we're probably not going to be too happy with what comes before us.

Board Member Gooyer: I agree, but the biggest things, as always, it's obvious, is because, you know, to squeeze four floors in, you...

Chair Furth: Well, maybe our...

Board Member Gooyer: ...it makes it tough. One of the things I would recommend -- and that other cities have done -- is that the designation as to where the 50-foot, or whatever the top...

[crosstalk]

Board Member Lew: We talked about having a meeting...

Chair Furth: Should we do it next time, or...

Board Member Gooyer: Let me put it this way, then.

Chair Furth: You'd be in favor of that session.

Board Member Gooyer: I'd like to discuss at that meeting possibly changing where the reference point is for the height.

Chair Furth: Thank you. Anything else anybody would like to add to that agenda? Okay. Can you find us...? Actually, we don't have a very heavy agenda next time.

Ms. Gerhardt: Yes, you had asked about future agendas, so I can go over that for a second. On May 3rd, the small cell nodes will not be heard. Those will likely be heard in July. We will have the two other items, which is the 565 Hamilton and the 3406 Hillview, projects will be heard. We also have a 620 Emerson, we would have a subcommittee item for that address, so we would need members for a subcommittee.

Board Member Gooyer: (inaudible)

Ms. Gerhardt: I don't know if they've been appointed for May 3rd.

Chair Furth: (inaudible)



Ms. Gerhardt: Six-twenty Emerson.

Chair Furth: (inaudible)

Ms. Gerhardt: The annex to Nobu restaurant.

Chair Furth: Right. (inaudible)

Ms. Gerhardt: Okay. Lew and Furth for that subcommittee.

Chair Furth: (inaudible)

Ms. Gerhardt: That's fine. And then, on May 17th, again, the small cells would not be heard. Again, those will likely be moved to July. We will have the 4115 El Camino project, but the 375 Hamilton, the parking garage, so far it looks like it's moving to June 7th. And then, you were asking about a date for a study session.

Chair Furth: (inaudible) a time within one of our regular meetings.

Ms. Gerhardt: Yes. May 3rd, we have two items and a subcommittee. That's not too long of an agenda. But, we do have the subcommittee, so it might...

Chair Furth: Three-four-oh-six Hillview is a return?

Ms. Gerhardt: Three-four-oh-six Hillview, I want to say is the...

Chair Furth: It's the second half, Phase 2.

Ms. Gerhardt: ...Phase 2, yes.

Chair Furth: Okay. What are your thoughts, board members?

Board Member Thompson: It seems like May 17th looks pretty light. Should we do it then?

Ms. Gerhardt: I would agree.

Board Member Thompson: There's two items that are written here that are not going to happen, right? It's just going to be that one project.

Chair Furth: I think if we're not having the parking garage, that would be a good day. If we're having...

Ms. Gerhardt: The parking garage has been moved off to June 7th, at the earliest.

Chair Furth: All right. That looks like a good time. Is there anything else that anybody would like to be able to address at that study session?

Vice Chair Baltay: Is it possible to do a study session around a table instead of talking to nobody, like this?

Chair Furth: As long as there's adequate sound recording.

Board Member Gooyer: (inaudible) one out there? The conference room?

Board Member Lew: We've had retreats in the past that are not in this room. In a more informal setting. They are open to the public, but they are not recorded. We've done that in the past with regard to the height limit, El Camino design guidelines...

Chair Furth: Fine. Why don't you take that into consideration, that we'd like to be able to talk around a table, that we don't think that this needs somebody to go to the expense of transcribing verbatim minutes.

Board Member Gooyer: Can we do, like, start here, and then...

Chair Furth: Sure.

Board Member Gooyer: ...make it the last item, and then, move to...

Chair Furth: A conference table. Whatever gives us a good end. I would urge us to be prepared to show or reference examples of what we think works, or doesn't. I think that's helpful to us and to staff. If you want to put together essays beforehand, or thought pieces, or bullet points, feel free. You will notice that in an appropriately comprehensive way.

Ms. Gerhardt: Yes, certainly. This would be, if we're going to do any sort of pre-work for this session, it would be a collaboration of the board members and staff to pull together some materials.

Chair Furth: Do you want a subcommittee to work with on that?

Ms. Gerhardt: That's up to you.

Chair Furth: Anybody want to work with staff on preparing for this thing?

Vice Chair Baltay: (inaudible)

Chair Furth: Okay. We'll have another meeting before then, if people have other thoughts.

Board Member Lew: Jodie, I will send you some photos of mixed-use housing projects in Berkeley that all have tops, different types and different sorts, and stuff.

Chair Furth: All right.

Board Member Lew: Just as a starting point.

Chair Furth: Great.

Ms. Gerhardt: Yeah. That would be great.

Chair Furth: By the time we come back for our next meeting, we'll have a proposed agenda item text, and you can tell us if it works. Okay. Many thanks. Anything else? We are adjourned.

## **Adjournment**