



ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD
MINUTES: October 17, 2019
 City Hall/City Council Chambers
 250 Hamilton Avenue
 8:30 AM

Call to Order/Roll Call

Present: Chair Peter Baltay, Vice Chair Osma Thompson, Board Members Alexander Lew and David Hirsch.

Absent: Grace Lee.

Chair Baltay: Good morning. Welcome to the October 17, 2019, meeting of the Palo Alto Architectural Review Board. Staff, could we have a roll call, please?

[Roll Call]

Jodie Gerhardt, Current Planning Manager: Board Member Lee is excused today, so all four are here. Thank you.

Chair Baltay: Thank you.

Oral Communications

Chair Baltay: First item on our agenda is oral communications, if any members of the public wish to address the Board on something not on the agenda. I believe we have one speaker card, for Mary Sylvester. Thank you. You'll have three minutes for your comments, please. And if you could please spell your name for the record.

Mary Sylvester: Sure. My name is Mary Sylvester, like the cat. [spells name] I live at 135 Melville, which has been my home for 42 years. My husband and I raised our two children there, and we and our grown daughters consider it our family home. I have the dubious pleasure, though, of living equal distance between Castilleja school and the Caltrain tracks, one-half block either way. We are looking at significant diluting of our urban canopy with both these projects over the next 10 to 15 years. Castilleja is proposing cutting down several old grove redwoods, along with mature oaks, to build an underground garage. Caltrain and the City are looking at taking up a significant amount of foliage on Alma Street for construction of whatever will be the new design for our high-speed railroad. One of the things I've always valued about living in Palo Alto is our urban forest, and I thank all of you for your report to the City Council for the October 21st meeting, particularly your comments on preservation of trees and inclusion of appropriate, robust and ample landscaping in all development projects. You go on to state that recent development trends towards underground parking and the replacement of single story structures with multiple story buildings can cause conflict with the preservation of trees. I would like to say that one of the values of trees is not only our community's mental health, there are also measurable economic benefits for having our urban forest. Talk to any real estate agent and they will tell you the value of having a mature grove tree on your property. It also reduces the strain on infrastructure, and again, when we're looking at traumatic climate change impacts, to have that canopy is significant for all of our health and quality of life. I have a number of other remarks, which I will make over the next few months. Thank you all for your service, it's deeply appreciated, and for your commitment to preserving our urban canopy. Thank you.

Chair Baltay: Thank you.

Agenda Changes, Additions and Deletions

Chair Baltay: Next item on our agenda is agenda changes, additions and deletions. Staff, do we have any changes? No.

City Official Reports

1. Transmittal of 1) the ARB Meeting Schedule and Attendance Record, and 2) Tentative Future Agenda items and 3) Recent Project Decisions

Chair Baltay: Followed by City Official Reports. Do we an ARB schedule, coming up? Tentative future agenda items to discuss?

Ms. Gerhardt: Yes. As noted on the schedule, Board Member Lee knew that she was going to be absent today. We also have, for future items, on November 7th, we will be talking about the Macy's Men's redevelopment. That will be the third hearing. They are looking to take out the one building so that we can possibly approve the rest. And then, we also will be talking about, there's going to be a joint meeting with City Council, so we will start to talk about topics that we want to speak with them about.

Chair Baltay: Do we have any subcommittee items pending? Beyond today?

Ms. Gerhardt: For today, we do have two subcommittee items, and then, for next hearing on November 7th, there would be the 565 Hamilton, would be on subcommittee. We will need people for that, as well. Five-six-five, yes, just up the street here.

Chair Baltay: Oh, yes.

Ms. Gerhardt: Yeah, the housing with the small amount of office.

Chair Baltay: Right. I wonder if I could appoint board members Lew and Hirsch to that subcommittee?

Ms. Gerhardt: Okay. Thank you.

Chair Baltay: Thank you. Okay, on to our first action item.

Action Items

2. PUBLIC HEARING / QUASI-JUDICIAL. 2342 Yale Street [18PLN00233]: Recommendation on Applicant's Request for Approval of a Major Architectural Review to Allow the Demolition of Two Existing Residential Units and Construction of a New Two-story Duplex Building. Environmental Assessment: Exempt From the Provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in Accordance With Guideline Section 15303 (New Construction). Zoning District: RMD (NP). For More Information Contact the Project Planner Emily Foley, AICP at efoley@m-group.us

Chair Baltay: Number 2. It's 2342 Yale Street, recommendation on applicant's request for approval of a major architectural review to allow the demolition of two existing residential units and construction of a new two-story duplex building. Staff, do we have a report, please?

Emily Foley, Project Planner: Good morning.

Chair Baltay: Good morning.

Ms. Gerhardt: And before Emily starts, I did want to introduce her as now a full-time employee. We're excited to have her on staff now. Thank you.

Chair Baltay: Congratulations, Emily.

Ms. Foley: Thank you. This is the hearing for 2342 Yale Street.

Chair Baltay: Excuse me, Emily, could I halt you for one second? I'd like to do disclosures. I keep forgetting that. Do we have any disclosures to make on the Board regarding this project? David?

Board Member Hirsch: No.

Chair Baltay: I'll disclose that I visited the site. Osma?

Vice Chair Thompson: I visited the site when the first formal hearing happened.

Chair Baltay: Alex?

Board Member Lew: Yes, I visited the site this morning.

Chair Baltay: Thank you. Okay, Emily. Thank you.

Ms. Foley: We're here to do a second formal architectural review. This is a proposed duplex development that proposes two attached units with a shared attached garage. They would demolish two existing detached residential units, and in addition to the structures, there would be one shared uncovered parking space, as is required in the RMD zone. Each unit are three bedroom units in size. This is located in College Terrace, RMD Neighborhood Preservation Overlay. The surrounding neighborhood has a mix of single and two family uses, as well as neighborhood commercial offices and multiple family residential. As we noted, this is the second hearing. The first hearing was on February 21, 2019, and there were the following items that were identified to be revised. That includes the parking and circulation, the materials, the size of the unit as it related to the size of the lot, the definition of the entry features, landscaping, and open space, which I will touch on how those were improved as we continue. On the left is the previous site plan, and on the right is the proposed revised one.

Chair Baltay: Emily, I'm afraid it's not showing on the screen.

Ms. Foley: Sorry. Got ahead of myself. The two units now have the shared garage in the middle, which improved circulation in the original plan. There wasn't necessarily appropriate back-up or turnaround space for the parking spaces, especially the uncovered space. In the revised plans, the uncovered space is at the end of the driveway, and the entrance to the garage area can be used for turnaround space. With regards to the size of the units, the basement that was previously proposed has been removed, and the previous basement included a bedroom and an office. Now, each unit is three bedrooms with no basement proposed. With regards to circulation, the driveway has been widened and now fully paved with pavers, as opposed to the Hollywood strip idea. Overall, the open space is better defined. The front unit has a defined front yard area; the rear area has a defined back yard area. The perimeter has more full landscaping. And the entrances, as you'll see when I get to the elevations, have more formal porch areas. One concern from the previous design was the materials. The applicant now proposes to have siding on the top floor and stucco on the bottom, as well as adding natural wood trellis to the front and rear deck areas. The proposed balconies are also more defined. In the previous design – which I included for reference later – the balconies were in the middle and more or less walled off. This way, the front one has view of the street. The rear one had limited views related to privacy, but it's more of a useable space. These are the side views. As you can see the garage is in the middle, and the side entries are more defined. That was one of the concerns. The side entrance on the front unit is more of a secondary entrance. The one on the rear unit is more of a primary entrance, so the door is facing towards the street, so you can't necessarily see the door in this view, but it's to the right of the garage. These are the previous elevations, included for reference. In relation

to the findings, the project is generally in compliance with the required findings. However, the landscaping will need to be discussed because there is minimal California native species. However, most of the landscaping proposed is low water use, and the reason for this is because, because it's in the RMD zone and there are adjacent single-family residential, it is required to be in compliance with the IR guidelines, and the individual review guidelines call for tall screening landscaping. We could not identify a native California species that would provide the appropriate level of screening. With regards to the CEQA, this project is exempt. Staff recommends that the ARB recommend approval of the project. Thank you.

Chair Baltay: Thank you for your presentation, Emily. Next, the applicant will have an opportunity to present, if you'd like to come up. You'll have 10 minutes. If you could state and spell your name for the record, please.

Amer Ismail: My name is Amer Ismail [spells name]. I think Emily pretty much covered all the modifications we did. The only thing I think she probably missed was that now the windows are framed in wood siding, in wood casing, in a white finish, both for the lower and upper windows and doors. And, we have increased the pitch of the upper roof to match more closely with the surrounding buildings. We definitely made the outdoor space more functional with the addition of the deck and trellises. And then, this wasn't brought up last time, but one of the things we're planning to do is construct the building as an all-electric building, to make it more efficient and environmentally responsible. That's it. Everything else, she covered.

Chair Baltay: Do we have any questions for staff or the applicant? Alex?

Board Member Lew: Thank you for your presentation. I have two quick questions. These are nit-picky items. I think the trash and maybe the mechanical units are shown differently in the landscape plan versus the architectural site plan. I was wondering which one is correct.

Mr. Ismail: The architectural site plan would be the correct one.

Board Member Lew: Great, thank you. My second question is, I see that the City has a condition for above-ground backflow preventers, which is sort of unusual. I think normally they're underground. I was wondering, what was the unique circumstances regarding that?

Mr. Ismail: I'm not familiar with what you're talking about.

Board Member Lew: It's on the... I'll try to get to the page. It's in your plans.

Mr. Ismail: Oh, yeah. [crosstalk]

Board Member Lew: ... site plan.

Mr. Ismail: Yeah, that was a note from Public Works, for us to add it there. The backflow preventer is for the domestic water, as well as the irrigation.

Board Member Lew: Okay. I think it's just unusual for me to see the above ground on a house-like project. Okay, so that's coming from Public Works.

Mr. Ismail: Yeah, they're small units. I think on the spec, the way the... A-12 shows them.

Board Member Lew: Yeah. Thank you for that. That's all the questions I have.

Chair Baltay: Any other questions?

Vice Chair Thompson: Sorry, I missed the resolution. Where does the trash live?

Mr. Ismail: It's in the back.

Board Member Lew: There's the trash can here. In the landscape plan, they're shown in a different place, a different location.

Vice Chair Thompson: The landscape is correct?

Board Member Lew: No, the architectural site plan is correct.

Chair Baltay: Next, we have a...

Vice Chair Thompson: Sorry, I have one more question.

Chair Baltay: Okay. Go ahead, David.

Board Member Hirsch: There's an element next to the front door that's showing, sort of a step. I don't understand what it is. Maybe you could explain?

Mr. Ismail: It's like a decorative roof bracket, just to kind of define the entrance. We have a detail of it on sheet A-11. Detail 4.

Board Member Hirsch: A.-11? Oh, okay. Alex spoke about the garbage storage. There's an area where the garbage is located? Is that on the site plan?

Mr. Ismail: Yeah, it's right next to where the uncovered parking spot is.

Board Member Hirsch: What page, again?

Mr. Ismail: It's A-1. Towards the back.

Chair Baltay: [inaudible]

Board Member Hirsch: From the back of the lot?

Chair Baltay: It says "trash enclosure" right there.

Board Member Hirsch: Okay.

Chair Baltay: [inaudible] Just to be clear, the trash enclosure is shown correctly on the site plan, Sheet A-1. It's in the back right-hand corner of the property.

Mr. Ismail: Correct.

Chair Baltay: Thank you. Okay. Are there more questions about the trash? All three of us see the same thing.

Vice Chair Thompson: Not about the trash.

Chair Baltay: Osma, another question?

Vice Chair Thompson: Yes. Do we have material samples?

Mr. Ismail: No, we don't.

Ms. Foley: We had a previous one, but we didn't have an updated one.

Vice Chair Thompson: And the change mainly was the siding, and everything else was the same?

Mr. Ismail: Right. We have a picture of the siding on the elevations.

Vice Chair Thompson: Okay.

Mr. Ismail: Just a basic square channel profile.

Vice Chair Thompson: And you mentioned that the windows, you said they were painted white, or black?

Mr. Ismail: They're white. The frame of the windows is black, but the casing around them will be white.

Vice Chair Thompson: To match the siding and the stucco?

Mr. Ismail: Correct.

Chair Baltay: Okay. David?

Board Member Hirsch: Yeah. The windows, they're awning windows? Is that what you're showing?

Mr. Ismail: They're mostly casement. The only awning are the large windows in the stairway, where the bottom panel is an awning.

Board Member Hirsch: So, the horizontals in the other windows represent what? Muntins, or...?

Mr. Ismail: Yeah, exactly.

Board Member Hirsch: The casement is a double-hung casement window? Is that what you're saying?

Mr. Ismail: No, just casement... Where, which...?

Board Member Hirsch: Casement, they're going to turn in, out? What happens?

Mr. Ismail: They'll turn out.

Board Member Hirsch: Turn out. Okay. Fine.

Mr. Ismail: They'll swing out.

Board Member Hirsch: Swing out.

Chair Baltay: Are we all set there? I'd like to get to, we do have a member of the public who would like to address us. Taylor Brady? You will have three minutes. If you could state and spell your name for the record, please.

Taylor Brady: Yes. My name is Taylor Brady. [spells name] I'll also say for the record that I'm a resident of 2342 Yale Street, and a licensed professional civil engineer in the state of California. My license number is C-88968. Primarily, my biggest opposition to this project is its incompatibility with the City's comp plan provisions for the maintenance of affordable housing. In the staff report even, there's a critical little bit of information [inaudible]. It's saying [reading]: *As a key component of a diverse, inclusive community, allow and encourage a mix of housing types and sizes, integrated into neighborhoods and designed for greater affordability.* That's pretty much the main point of that. There are precedent projects in the neighborhood, actually one just down the block at 555 Oxford, which was completed in construction just earlier this year. It was a duplex, somewhat similar to this. Instead of two three-bedroom units, it was a four-bedroom unit, a two-bedroom unit. The four-bedroom unit went on the market for \$12,000. The two-bedroom unit went on the market for \$6,000. The two-bedroom unit was rented out, and the four-bedroom is now listed at \$10,000 per month. If you contrast that with a unit like we have, which is currently rented out for \$4,300

per month, it's really difficult to understand how destruction of perfectly sound housing that might require some sort of retrofit constitutes maintenance of affordable housing, especially when in the RMD (NP) provisions, the City specifically created the RMD (NP) zone in which this project falls, in order to, let's say, maintain visual and historic character of existing neighborhoods. And it was established to encourage the retention of existing single-family structures, inclusive of 2342 Yale, and to foster to addition to existing structures in lieu of complete demolitions. Especially given that the applicant has been given notice that, you know, most of the residents will, at a point in 2020, complete their terms in the city of Palo Alto, which is a perfect opportunity for renovations, I don't see why the applicant shouldn't be coming to the Board with something compliant with an RMD (NP) provision, i.e. something that doesn't demolish an existing single-family structure, and something that instead maintains an affordable housing unit in the city of Palo Alto. Thanks. That's my time. Also, I have a petition signed by 39 neighbors of the College Terrace Residents Association.

Chair Baltay: If you could give that to staff, please. And thank you for your comments. We have one additional speaker card on this item. Pria Graves, please? I'm sorry, my eyesight...

Pria Graves: Pria Graves [spells name].

Chair Baltay: Thank you.

Ms. Graves: I live at 2130 Yale, a couple blocks down, and I'm very, very familiar with this piece of street. I want to echo what my neighbor said about the purpose of the RMD (NP) zoning. It is an extremely dense piece of the neighborhood, so we do have a lot of small houses in the area, and destroying, as he says, a perfectly useable house that maybe needs some updating and renovation, and sending that all off to landfill so they can build a big, new thing that strikes me as a bit stark compared to the neighboring houses. The color image on the plans is sort of not really black and white, which is what has been described. I think if you put a black and white house in that location, it will contrast too starkly with the neighboring houses, which are in softer tones and are smaller. I'd like to push back on this one, as my neighbor has. I don't think it's a good fit for the neighborhood. The design is not particularly bad for the neighborhood, and I appreciate the fact that it has been shrunk, but I still think it's perhaps too much, and too stark in appearance. Thank you.

Chair Baltay: Thank you. To the applicant, you have an opportunity to rebut the comments that have been made, if you wish. Okay, if you're not interested, it's up to you, but we're legally required to offer that. Very well, then. Let's bring this issue back to the Board. Perhaps, Alex, you could start us off. No? Thank you, Alex.

Board Member Lew: Okay, so, we have... I think the public speakers have raised a good issue with the RMD (NP) zone, and we've only had a couple projects come before the Board that have been presented to demolish existing structures. I think we had one here downtown on Ramona Street, and my recollection is there's another one somewhere else. I can't remember offhand, off the top of my head, where it is. The RMD (NP) also does allow replacement of buildings, and it's up to the Board, and there aren't really any standards for us to use, so it's a tricky one. I would say, you guys are saying that the buildings could be retrofitted, and I think that's probably correct. It seems to me, though, that the buildings are only, like, the existing building is only two feet away from the neighboring building. I'm guessing that that's not built to any fire standards. I think there's probably water draining between properties, which actually is not allowed. And then, the rear unit on the property is a soft story, like, a unit above a three-car garage, which is considered, seismically, hazardous, typically. I don't know all the specifics of the existing building, but typically those are the ones that are the weakness in earthquakes. It's a tough one. I can see your argument, but also, I think the proposed project is an improvement to the neighborhood. I can recommend, I'm thinking of recommending approval today. I would throw out to my Board members, I think there are a couple things that I think could be better, and I think maybe there's some odds and ends that should come back to subcommittee. One is, I think where the garbage cans are, I think my recommendation would be to make the driveway wider and lose a little bit of the landscaping. It's hard to get the garbage cans and the car and passageway through, the walkway through all of that, in 10 feet. You can do it, but it's

really tight. I think 11 is better. Two, I think we should have more information on the colors and finishes, specifically for the wood trellis. I think it's labeled as "natural." I think I do want to see more information about that. Those are pretty high-maintenance items. Also, possibly consider finishing the eaves on the project. And that's a big "if," I would say. I understand that it's not normal in many new buildings, but it's fairly typical in older buildings. And then, I think lastly, I would say your bracket detail at the rear unit, I'm not opposed to the bracket in the front unit, but I'm thinking that maybe the rear unit could have a better porch design, a stronger design element to that. But I do like that you've tried to do the bracket and tried to do something distinctive on your building. I think I can recommend the native plant, or the plant palette as proposed. There are lots of native plants that grow 10 feet high, but they are also 10 feet wide, and it's hard to do skinny and tall. And under findings, I think under 2.e, I think I would recommend adding that the project is removing two hazardous conditions on the site. One is the proximity of the building, the existing building to its neighbors, and also the rear unit, which is a soft-story unit above a garage. That is all that I have.

Chair Baltay: Thank you, Alex. Osma?

Vice Chair Thompson: I had a question, actually, about one of your comments, about the driveway width. Are you suggesting the entire driveway get wider, or just that top corner that's shown on A-4?

Board Member Lew: I don't have actual dimensions. If it actually is wider than...

Vice Chair Thompson: I think it's only showing like that on A-4 because that's where the trash goes, but...

Board Member Lew: I was looking on a different sheet.

Chair Baltay: A-4 seems to show an inconsistency. The driveway is wider, yet there is a tree planted in the driveway.

Board Member Lew: Okay, well, okay, this is a detail. I would just say for my own house, I have, like, 11 feet, and there's no landscaping, so it doesn't look very good. And I need all of that to get the car and the big trash can... The little ones are fine. It's the big composting one that's hard to fit in there without having to move all the cars out of the driveway to get it through. If it actually can work with what is drawn, then I'm okay with it, but I don't have any dimensions, and I didn't scale it.

Chair Baltay: Okay.

Ms. Gerhardt: If I may clarify. The trash cans also need to be covered, and I think that might be missing from here. There's going to need to be at least a little shed roof or something. Otherwise, the trash cans need to be in the garage because... For stormwater pollution prevention, is why that needs to be.

Chair Baltay: I'm sorry, so, the requirement is that trash cans be covered, and the applicant in front of us doesn't show them as being covered?

Ms. Gerhardt: That's correct. We can add that as a condition of approval. I think that's something that staff can handle. We could handle it at a subcommittee also, if we needed to.

Chair Baltay: Thank you. David, do you care to bring us along in this discussion?

Board Member Hirsch: Yes.

Chair Baltay: Please do.

Board Member Hirsch: First, I just want to say that this is a considerable change from what was shown to us the first time, and I'm appreciative of that effort, however it was achieved, with staff, etc. In the driveway, there's the AC, from the front entry, kind of right there on the side wall, and I'm wondering if

you could find a somewhat better place for that. The rear unit I think has a good location, and the front unit does not. The element over the door, it strikes me as a strange piece of construction. I think it's kind of a leftover from an earlier scheme, as well, but I personally find it, you know, it's a gesture that, I don't know if it's really necessary. That's my personal comment. You've answered the question about the muntins of the windows, because I was inclined to look at those windows and say that they ought to be awning windows perhaps, rather than casement windows. To have those muntins there, I'm not sure that they are particularly useful. I understand they create a bit of scale, but if it's a casement window, it could be just a single pane casement window. Again, that's my personal preference. I don't know what the rest of the Board would say. The garbage always at the rear of the lot, it's always kind of a problem, but it looks like there isn't any real choice in the matter on that, so the enclosure is... And using that piece of the rear yard seems like a reasonable idea. Stepping stones in the yard and access to the bicycle storage, those bicycle storage elements are usually pretty ugly as well, so neighbors are going to have to see something that's just kind of an ugly box. But if that's all that is available. I think we've seen, actually, in another project that's being proposed for us today, somewhat better-looking bicycle storage. I would like to see you try to work on that a bit, just not an ugly box. The stucco and horizontal siding, I think is proportional, and a good idea on this project, you know, to separate the two levels. There don't seem to be any railings on the porches. The porches are above grade, so, I don't know if it's required to have a railing on something that is two steps up. Maybe with planning, you could consider that, because if the porches are going to have a railing, that will be an element that we would probably want to look at. I'm a little concerned about lighting areas around the garage. I didn't ask you to address that before, but I think just having appropriate lighting at the garage is kind of significant for cars coming in or going out. That's a big garage door that covers the two. It's a nice-looking entry to a garage, and I'm assuming that that's an automatic garage door? Okay. I was even kind of wondering if it weren't possible somehow to locate the actual garbage location within the garage, but there probably isn't enough space. I think if you looked at that, could consider that, it's kind of convenient to both units, rather than at the back of the lot, the way it was shown. Those are my considerations of the design elements. In terms of the comments that were made earlier, that kind of creates a dilemma for us, when a project is a, a sort of private sales of condos within a neighborhood that has a certain character. I think it's, just speaking in general terms, with this opportunity to speak about it, it doesn't seem to me that it's always possible to answer those kind of community issues of affordability in a project like this. I don't think a project like this should be held to that kind of restriction, in answer to the comment that was made. Neighbors will vary in the people who live there. You know, market rate people versus people who are renting. I would see that it's a big issue that both the Council and the City have to address. I think they're struggling with it at this point, but not successfully so far. Just a general comment about what you are requesting of this particular owner. I don't see it as legitimate in all cases. Marketability, etc. And the prices of properties. That's my comment.

Chair Baltay: Before we go on, David, staff had expressly asked us to address the issue of the non-native plantings. Did you have an opinion about that?

Board Member Hirsch: I usually leave that to Alex.

Chair Baltay: Well, Alex expressed a non-opinion, so I'm wondering if the rest of us have a [crosstalk]. I just want to be sure we've addressed something they clearly want us to focus on.

Board Member Hirsch: Well, as I say, I don't look at it that carefully because I'm not knowledgeable enough. I really leave it up to Alex, who is. But I see the effort to do landscaping here and create certain privacy in the lot. I think it's shown pretty well. I didn't look at the detail of the plantings themselves.

Chair Baltay: Thank you. Osma?

Vice Chair Thompson: All right. Thank you for the application, thank you for your presentation, and thank you to members of the public for voicing your concerns. It seems like this has been going for a while. I'm noticing on this petition here, this is a date... This has kind of been since 2017. Well, you know, the design in front of us is certainly an improvement from what we saw previously, so, in that sense, I wanted to thank the applicant for listening to our feedback. I was actually ready to approve this project until we

realized there was no material board. Unfortunately, that's a really important part of determining whether what you have here is appropriate for the neighborhood, and typically, we get that on the hearing day. In other projects that have been quite expansive, much bigger than this project, that's sort of been a deal-breaker. Because this project is smaller, I guess I would like to ask the rest of my board how they feel about not knowing what materials are going to be here, if we feel like it could be a subcommittee item or if it's so important that maybe it can't be. Site planning-wise, I do think it's an improvement. It's nice that it sort of has a little bit of distance from neighbors. Landscaping, again, having sort of... I know Alex has more knowledge about landscape than I do, but if it seems that these plantings that are non-native are typical for screening that are low use... I saw there were a few medium water usage plants, but if they're mainly low, then that's okay. Maybe we can review the mediums as well, separately. That's sort of a dilemma. I think otherwise, everything else that we've asked has been satisfied. If we're going to talk about the bracket, about the entry for the roof, I'll echo Board Member Lew's note, that I do think it's nice to add that level of detail. Any kind of small-scale detail is really important for a residential neighborhood like this. I'll just leave it at that. I'm sort of conflicted at this moment.

Chair Baltay: Thanks, Osma. I share your comments. I came into this meeting thinking this project was a slam dunk, and not seeing the materials board is just a big issue for us. I'm afraid that we start to set a precedent that isn't a good one. I'll say the same comment about the native plantings, that I'm sympathetic to the need to get good privacy planting. I'm in support of our code, which says that we need to follow native plantings, and I think that that's a pretty wide-open door. If you just start to say that native plants can't be used for privacy purposes, then half the applications we see are going to be looking for exceptions to that rule. And that concerns me deeply. That said, I do hear what Alex is saying about it being difficult to get some of these privacy requirements met with, when the planting set are native. That led me to start looking at the balcony in the back, on the second floor. It's a fairly generous-sized balcony, which is 20 feet, 15 feet from the back property line, which across that fence is the neighbor's back yard, albeit a small yard, but their only yard. My understanding in Palo Alto is that we take those privacy concerns seriously, and the only mitigating factor in this case is that they are proposing to put a bunch of strawberry trees back there to get privacy. It's a real conflict, again. It's a tight, confined neighborhood, but this balcony, I believe, will definitely impact the privacy, or require us to use non-native species for landscaping, which is a conundrum. Well, I guess we have to come up with an answer. I'm uncertain where to go with that. My opinion is that the non-native landscaping is going to be fine in this case. I don't think they have a choice. I think the privacy issues will be okay with the non-native landscaping, so that will resolve itself that way. The material board is a significant issue, and I'm afraid we can't approve it without the materials board, without seeing the full application here, at least in my opinion, so I think that just pushes us on to getting one more hearing with the full application in front of us. I'm sorry. Unless my colleagues feel that we should put this to a subcommittee. I'm just very concerned about precedent here. Does anybody else have any opinions on those issues? Alex?

Board Member Lew: Just some follow-up. One, on the plant finding, native plant finding. Several of the plants, I would put in the category of wildlife-friendly, meaning they have berries, or they have flowers that are attractive to bees, so that would be the strawberry trees on the back. Also, the hedge, the prunus Carolina. And also, I think pittosporum tobira, which is like an Australian or New Zealand plant. But that's actually fairly desirable by bees, and it's fairly fragrant, too. And it's used widely. These plants are all used frequently in our plant palettes that we see in town. I think they are fairly normal plants. And then, I think the materials should come back to subcommittee. To require a sample board for, like, wood or stucco, to have a whole third hearing for it, seems really excessive to me. What precedent are we...? We require all these things, and we can do it on a case-by-case basis. It doesn't mean the next application is going to blow off the application requirement. I mean, it just seems crazy to me. We're supposed to be trying to encourage housing, improving site conditions. I don't know. I just don't see what we get out of it. Do we not know what wood siding looks like?

Ms. Gerhardt: Just from a staff perspective, I do appreciate, you know, we should have a materials board here. We certainly will make sure that's known to all of our applicants in the future. I mean, that's already been the case, but we will reemphasize that because it is an important thing. I think regarding the planting, as Board Member Lew said, you know, we certainly emphasize the natives, and where we can't do the

natives, then we start emphasizing the habitat quality and the low water use of those plants. Those are the different, sort of levels of preference that we try and go through. All of these projects are also reviewed by the Urban Forestry team, so it has already sort of made it through their review. We just ask your opinions on that, to see if there's anything that we have missed. We do appreciate, you always find things we've missed. Just the trash enclosure that we will get fixed up. But I do agree that subcommittee seems to be the right level for this type of project.

Chair Baltay: Osma, any further thoughts about the material board?

Vice Chair Thompson: I see Board Member Lew's point. I think it's true on a case-by-case basis, especially, like I mentioned, in gigantic, big projects where this material is getting used everywhere, it's really important to know what it is. Because it's smaller, I think a subcommittee would work. And I don't know, it's not that we don't know what wood siding looks like, it's just it's always so subjective. Sometimes you'll see something that really doesn't work, and it's good to know that beforehand, before knowing that we're approving this. I'd be open to doing a subcommittee for materials and the trash enclosure.

Chair Baltay: David? What do you feel about the material board?

Board Member Hirsch: I agree with previous sentiments about it going to committee. I don't see a small project like this having to be held up for those elements. But, of course, I think we need a materials board. As pointed out, that even from the community comment, that some of the colors are somewhat harsh, so there's good reason to have a board to respond to that, to see just what those colors are. You can't do it on these kind of drawings.

Chair Baltay: Okay, so...

Board Member Hirsch: But I have some other comments that my Board, the Board didn't talk to the idea of the muntins. A lot of the detail here, the bicycle storage rack, which I commented on, the passage of the bicycles to the front of the house, which I really didn't mention in detail, require some additional lighting so that you can get a bicycle in and out of that area. And the paving, I'm not so sure that the paving is going to be conducive to moving bicycles back and forth from that particular area. I think there's a lot of little detail issues that should be addressed in our next meeting, and would hope that you would recognize some of those, including some of the comments I made about muntins and other details within the drawing, that don't seem to me to respect the purpose of the drawings. I say that, saying that I think it is a vast improvement from the earlier design, and respects the neighbors in its scale and its proportions, and the proportions of the building itself are quite pleasing. I think it will fit in well in this community as a general design, so I'm not saying that I think anything is really terribly wrong with it, except some of those details mentioned. Thank you.

Chair Baltay: David, we're looking for a motion, and what I've heard so far is that the Board will be in support of sending this to subcommittee with a recommendation for approval, asking them to re-look at the trash area to make sure you can get pedestrian passage past it; to provide a material and color board with suitable materials. There's two comments about Finding 2.3, which I don't think anybody has an issue with. Do you want to try to crystalize what your other thoughts are, so we can all get a sense...? I'm afraid I feel it's a little bit vague, and I want to understand more specifically what we'd like them to do. Can you do that?

Board Member Hirsch: Motion?

Chair Baltay: Well, just, how are we going to tell them about the muntins in the window, for example? What is it we're trying to say?

Ms. Gerhardt: I can list out some items, as well, because I did have, from Board Member Lew, there were details on the wood trellis.

Board Member Hirsch: Yes.

Ms. Gerhardt: Is that...?

Board Member Lew: I would put that in with finishes. Colors and materials?

Ms. Gerhardt: With colors and materials?

Board Member Lew: Yes.

Ms. Gerhardt: Colors and materials for the wood trellises, as long as everything else. There was a question about finishing the eaves?

Board Member Lew: That was to the Board.

Board Member Hirsch: Mm-hmm.

Ms. Gerhardt: Okay, so that's one possibility.

Vice Chair Thompson: I could be in support of that.

Chair Baltay: For what it's worth, gang, this is basically a house, and this kind of detailing is stuff that you generally leave to the owner, the applicant, the architect, to work through how they're going to finish the detail over the front door. And I understand that it's important sometimes, but is it really important in this case, to this design? That's the question I ask you before we dive in too deep on this. I think the things that we did mention are important, the trash location and stuff, but I want to give them a really clear direction to go if we want additional changes on the exterior.

Board Member Lew: On the windows, I don't support removing the muntins because there are places where they are trying to do clear on the upper part and opaque on the lower part, for privacy to the neighbors. So, you do need somewhere to break it. They also showed, in the previous scheme, they had windows without any, and I think the Board thought it was too out of place in the neighborhood. I think this one fits in better. Also, the other issue is that we had bedroom window requirements, and awning windows don't comply with that code requirement.

Board Member Hirsch: I think I went along with casement windows. I wasn't suggesting awning windows.

Chair Baltay: Yeah, I didn't hear anything about awnings. I've heard questions about the window muntins, about the trellis and brackets over the doors, and about the location of the air conditioning unit, and something about the bicycle location parking, David.

Board Member Hirsch: No, it wasn't.

Chair Baltay: I'm sorry.

Board Member Hirsch: It was just the quality of a box, of an element on the side of the building. It could be detailed...

Chair Baltay: Oh, for bicycle storage on the back side, yeah. Okay. More detail on that.

Vice Chair Thompson: I think that's an off-the-shelf product. The bicycle storage. I don't think it's an architectural box, as such. I'll also echo Board Member Lew. I'm not in favor of removing the muntins. I think it brings a necessary scale to the building.

Ms. Gerhardt: I think on the bike locker, it is located behind the garage there, but there is a back door to the garage. I'm assuming maybe people would travel that way, but they could go around the house, as well. I mean, there's no harm in bringing back some details on that, because I think you talked about lighting as well. That would certainly be a good thing to look at.

Chair Baltay: Okay. Who wants to summarize this in a motion? Alex or David, one of you. Alex?

MOTION

Board Member Lew: I'll make a motion, that we recommend approval of the project as conditioned in the staff report, with the following additions. One is that it return to subcommittee with the trash enclosure roof. Two, that we amend Finding 2.e. to mention the existing hazard on the site, which is the proximity of the existing building to the neighbors, as well as the soft-story construction of the rear unit. Three is for the colors and materials board to return to subcommittee. Four, that consideration be made to the bike lockers, access and lighting to the bicycle lockers.

Vice Chair Thompson: I'll second.

Chair Baltay: Okay, moved and seconded. David, do you have any friendly amendments you want to squeeze in there? I want to be sure you have a chance to put your things through.

Board Member Hirsch: Yeah, yeah, thank you. I agree with this, but disagree with the muntins. However, I caved in.

Chair Baltay: You don't have the support on that one, David. But if you'd like to fit something in about some of these other items you mentioned, please do so now.

Board Member Hirsch: I'm satisfied.

Chair Baltay: Okay, so, the motion is moved and seconded. Before we vote, I want to come back and address the issue two members of the community brought up, about affordable housing. I don't think that should affect this project, but this is a good chance for us all to say a piece if we'd like to. And I would like to say that I think it's a real shame that we're tearing down perfectly good housing – that's what this is – just to make place for the exact same amount of housing that's just more expensive. It's not an issue the Architectural Review Board can address. It's an issue the City Council is trying to address, as Board Member Hirsch said. And I think it's important that we express a strong opinion, at least, about it. If anybody else would like to mount something, now is the time. David?

Board Member Hirsch: Yes. I like the fact that you've made a consideration to rehabilitation when it's possible. It probably was possible here. Maybe didn't pan out monetarily for the site, but we can't go into that, as you noted. But I appreciate the fact that you added that piece to that discussion.

Chair Baltay: Anybody else?

Vice Chair Thompson: Not knowing the full details of the existing structure, it's hard, personally, to form an opinion that this shouldn't have been demolished. There could be other things that we don't know, reasons, seismic reasons, other reasons why this building shouldn't stay up. In that sense, I don't want to express an opinion whether this building should be demolished, or not. Affordable housing is definitely something that City Council is trying to make a priority, and that is, you know, there are a lot of theories on how to amend prices and such, so, I'm all in favor of trying to make Palo Alto more livable. But it is a case-by-case analysis. Like you guys said, it's not the purview of our board to know that.

Board Member Lew: I think maybe at the Council, Planning Commission and Council level, they could review the RMD (NP) zoning requirement. If the intent is really to retain it, then we need to sort of put in a better mechanism for reviewing existing structures, and we don't really have that in place now. We don't really

know what to do because we've had no information and no way to judge it. Perhaps we need to, the Planning Commission could review it and see if there are other cities that are doing something to foster retention of existing buildings that are not historic.

Chair Baltay: Okay, thank you, Alex, and everybody. With that, we have a motion on the table, moved and seconded. All those in favor, aye. Opposed? Very well. The motion carries 4-0.

MOTION TO APPROVE PASSES 4-0.

Chair Baltay: Thank you very much. We will take a five-minute recess at this point. Thank you.

[The Board took a short break.]

Chair Baltay: Okay, we're going to bring the Board back into session, please. Next item is number 3, an action item. However, before we start that, I'd like to put out to everyone, we have a scheduled earthquake drill at 10:17 this morning. What we will do is, the first half of this project where we take all the testimony, statements from the applicant and such, and then, we'll just break for a recess while the earthquake drill is going on, so we can all comply with the safety requirements. It's just something that's been scheduled on us.

Vice Chair Thompson: Do we know where we go for the earthquake...? Or do we just...? Is it duck and cover?

Ms. Gerhardt: No, so, we do need to vacate the building. Staff will be headed towards the library. That's where we need to meet up. I just need to make sure all of you get out of the building, but if you want to go to coffee after that, you probably could.

Chair Baltay: Any idea, Jodie, how long the drill lasts, typically?

Ms. Gerhardt: It's usually only, you know, maybe 15 minutes or so. It's just a matter of getting everyone out of the building, and then, getting everyone back, is usually... The fire department usually does a quick scan of the building, and that's about it.

Chair Baltay: Is it going to be possible to establish a time to re-adjourn in advance, do you think? I hate to see us start without somebody here, or be waiting. We just don't know, do we?

Ms. Gerhardt: Yeah, there's no perfect timing. You could say half an hour and probably be safe, but that's a fair amount of time, too.

Chair Baltay: I'm going to say that we're going to adjourn 20 minutes after the drill starts at 10:35. All else being equal, unless we can't get into the building. Just so everybody has their own [crosstalk].

Ms. Gerhardt: Okay, so, we'll be back at 10:35.

Chair Baltay: It's only a 20 minute break, essentially.

Vice Chair Thompson: Can we get some...? Is duck and cover not a thing anymore? Do we not...? I don't actually know what we do with the drills. Is there, like, a siren that goes off, and then we all go?

Ms. Gerhardt: There's a siren that goes off, and we need to vacate the building, yes.

Chair Baltay: Okay.

3. PUBLIC HEARING / QUASI-JUDICIAL. 3585 El Camino Real [17PLN-00305]: Consideration on Applicant's Request for Approval of a Major Architectural Review to Allow the Demolition of an

Existing Structure and Construction of a New Three-Story Mixed-Use Building. A Consideration of a Variance to the Parking Lot Perimeter Landscaping Requirement. Environmental Assessment: Pending Mitigated Negative Declaration in Accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Zoning District: CN. For More Information Contact the Project Planner Sheldon S. Ah Sing, AICP at sahsing@m-group.us

Chair Baltay: Action item number 3 is a public hearing regarding 3585 El Camino Real, consideration on applicant's request for approval of a major architectural review to allow the demolition of an existing structure and construction of a new three-story mixed-use building. A consideration of a variance to the parking lot perimeter landscaping requirement. At that, do we have any disclosures? Alex?

Board Member Lew: I visited the site yesterday.

Chair Baltay: Osma?

Vice Chair Thompson: I visited the site this morning.

Chair Baltay: I have visited the site as well. David?

Board Member Hirsch: I visited the site this past week.

Chair Baltay: Okay, thank you. Could we have a staff report, please?

Sheldon Ah Sing, Contract Planner: Yes, thank you. Good morning, I'm Sheldon Ah Sing, contract planner. The applicant has brought in a model to observe. Also, there is a materials board. There is an updated actual color materials there that are essentially detached from the board. With that, I'll start my presentation. This is a formal review of a development of a three-story mixed-use building with approximately 2,500 square feet of office space, three dwelling units, on a 6,000 square foot lot. The request includes a major architectural review and a variance. No recommendation is sought at this time because we are in the middle of doing environmental clearance of the project. The site is a corner lot that backs into an alley, a service alley, and it's parallel with El Camino Real for about three blocks. Two other sides of the property are streets, El Camino Real and Matadero. The site was formerly an automobile use site and is subject to remediation for hazardous waste, although that has been cleared by the County of Santa Clara. Generally, buildings in the area are one to two stories. There's vacant property across the street, so it is an area that is in transition. [inaudible], but this is truly one area. The Comprehensive Plan and zoning allows for mixed use. One thing, though. If they do mixed use, then they have to do multi-family, which under the definition is a minimum of three units. This is a photo of the site from the rear perspective, looking at the service alley and Matadero. This shows the service alley in the context of adjacent residential, is multi-family. There are some constraints that the site has, and I think this is a good photo. It will get to some of the various issues that we want to talk about later on. You can see there the overhead utility line, and there's a guy wire that comes onto the property. You can see really how small this site is. It does include a major architectural review, which is demolition of the existing former structure that is set back pretty far on the property. Dwelling units are broken down into two one-bedroom units and one two-bedroom unit. The office space is located on the first and second floor. Residential is on the second and third floor. Parking is provided by two means. One is a mechanical puzzle lift that's under the building, within the building, at grade, and also, covered service parking in the rear. There is a single driveway off of Matadero Avenue that would lead to the mechanical parking, as well as the covered parking space. The variance is for the perimeter parking lot landscaping. We'll go a little bit into that. There's a five-foot requirement for that, and the project can't meet that as proposed. This just shows the site plan. Fifty percent of the site essentially is covered by the building and the other half is what supports the building with respect to the driveway, the covered parking spaces, the electrical transformer, the covered trash and recycling. There's also some ADA surface parking requirements, and that access has to be paved in front of the parking spaces. All that takes up some of the potential areas for landscaping. You've got also the covered bike locker there that's along the service alley. This project does use a contemporary design. I'll let the applicant go into that in more detail. It is a floor above other structures in the area. It also helps to

look at Sheet A3.11 in your packet. That includes a context study with a three-dimensional proposed building, shows kind of how this would be in relation to everything else in the area, as it currently stands. This is your elevations of the building. It shows the adjacent building there that is one story above. Again, this is from Matadero, elevation. It's taken from the gas station across the way. And then, you have the service alley view here. And this is the part that there is some concern because of the perimeter landscaping. The requirement is five feet, so there are limitations there. This is taken of the opposite side. You can see the cut-through of the adjacent building. That's pretty much at the [inaudible] setback. These are the findings for variance, and these are typically for something that is unique about the property that's causing the constraint, that's not imposed by other properties in the area. A classic example is an irregular shape lot, or you have a creek that runs through it, or a large boulder. In this case here, really, the issues are, we have a small lot. There are other smaller lots within the area, but if you look at what is there now, and you have to quantify it, that it was an automobile use, I don't think you could put that back today, just given everything else you'd have to do. You could certainly take into consideration the applicant needs something that will pencil [phonetic] out, probably not something that the City really looks like, but the consideration when you look at these properties [inaudible]. That's a consideration of a small lot. It is bound by streets or alleys on three sides, so there are actually setbacks there. The service alley in the back, you have overhead utilities, and you've got a line that comes down onto the property, so there are some limitations with respect to the types of vegetation that you can put underneath those overhead lines. The electric department is not going to allow tall trees or trees with canopies that have to be maintained or worry about. Other issues you have, these trash enclosures have become really significant structures over time because of water quality regulations in and of itself, infrastructure that we have to look at to be compatible with the building. There are space requirements required for maintenance of these, including the electrical transformer, bicycle parking – all these things put into a site where, if you did have a multi-family project, you have to do at least three units, so that adds parking. So, they have a lot of considerations. There certainly are things that we're open to hearing from the Board regarding how to get out of this, if the variance is something that's not supported. I did bring that up to the applicant in terms of potentially moving the footprint of the building five feet towards El Camino Real. Maybe that might provide some benefit there. They would have a smaller office footprint, for instance. CEQA is currently underway. We are anticipating a mitigated negative declaration, so the next time we come back, I probably will have some draft of that. In conclusion... We do want to come back to, we want to complete the CEQA document, come back to the ARB, and we want to consider the proposed project and provide feedback on the project design to staff and applicant, and then, continue to a date uncertain. With that, I conclude my presentation. The applicant does have a PowerPoint or a PDF presentation. Thank you.

Chair Baltay: Thank you, Sheldon. Any questions for staff? I have two, if I could, Sheldon. One is, I want to understand clearly, staff supports the request for a variance, the rationale being that the property is bounded on three sides by drive aisles, and that's the reason that the property is unique? I just want to understand clearly what the logic is.

Mr. Sing: I think we're not entirely... I wouldn't say we're entirely support... I mean, we're open to finding, maybe some other solutions that we can get out of a variance, but those are just some things that we noted that are potential means for considering the basis of approval of a variance.

Chair Baltay: And then, maybe this is later, for the applicant, but what I'm seeing on the site survey is the public utility line seems to cross the private property, and yet, I don't see any mention of an easement on the private property. Are you aware of that kind of conflict, or am I just missing something here?

Mr. Sing: I'd have to look into those.

Chair Baltay: You're not aware of any...?

Mr. Sing: Not off the top of my head, no.

Chair Baltay: Okay, thank you. Any other questions? If not, the applicant, would you care to make a presentation? You will have 10 minutes. If you could state and spell your name for the record, please.

Yan Sun, KSS Management: My name is Yen Sun. I am representing KSS Management, one of the owners for this...

Chair Baltay: Could you please spell your name for the transcriber?

Ms. Sun: [spells name]

Chair Baltay: Thank you.

Ms. Sun: Good morning, everyone. I'm representing KSS Management, and I'm very excited to be here. I also feel very lucky to have my architect here with me. We worked really hard, almost two years, to get to this point, and there are so many different revisions of the design, with variance, and with design, the size of the home, the property. We also feel really lucky to have Sheldon to be really supportive and responsive when we have any questions. As you see, this part of El Camino Real is really old, and a lot of businesses looks like not taking very good care of. I hope our project is the new look of the neighborhood and bring value to the neighborhood as well. I really appreciate your support, and hopefully we can work together to make the community better and better. Thank you.

Chair Baltay: Good morning.

Joseph Bellomo, Architect: Good morning. My name is Joseph Bellomo. I'm an architect on University Avenue. I've been in this town for more than 40 years. We're just... Pratima Shah will be talking. She's the project architect. We are just thrilled to be working on this project. I've designed quite a few projects on El Camino, shopping centers, hotels, mixed use. We actually did one of the first mixed-use buildings in Sunnyvale. If you have any questions for me, please let me know. And then, Pratima will be presenting. Thank you.

Pratima Shah, Architect: Good morning, ARB members and city officials. My name is Pratima Shah, and as the project architect, it's my pleasure to present the design proposal for 3585 El Camino Real. I just wanted to mention, the design proposal that you see today is not an overnight solution, but it has evolved after a work of over one and a half years. We did consider and explore different programs, worked with consultants and city officials, to fulfill all the requirements of the City of Palo Alto and building codes, and make the project viable for our clients on that 6,000 square foot **micro [phonetic]** site. With the possibility of one-story office building, two story office building with on-grade parking, three-story mixed-use building with parking on grade, and the traffic demand management plan to avoid conflicts, all other options were ruled out because they were not able to fulfill the code requirements, and needed a variance or are not financially feasible. The project has become feasible only after implementation of housing incentive plan, so we are taking advantage of the incentives the City of Palo Alto is offering. The site is located in CN District and Barron-Ventura area, with 60 foot frontage on El Camino Real and 105 foot on Matadero Avenue, served by alley [inaudible]. The property is neighboring two-story commercial building on El Camino Real, a gas station on Matadero Avenue, and a residential complex and alley. As mentioned in the South El Camino Design Guidelines, in Barron-Ventura area, the buildings do not have well-executed architectural design. This proposed building do not have any prominent architectural design context. We take this as an opportunity to revitalize the corner as neighborhood node, and enhance visual appearance. Here are pictures of the context, and it shows the alley. We have seen those as presented by Sheldon. The program. We proposed three-story mixed-use building with 1,250 square foot office space on first floor, 1,000 square foot office and a 12,000 [sic] square foot one-bedroom residence on the second floor, and two residential units on the third floor. The one-bedroom residence on the third floor is around 900 square feet, and two-bedroom is 1,200 square foot. The proposed office square footage is 2,500 square foot, which is 600 square foot less than the permitted, and the total residential square foot is around 4,200 square foot, which is, I strongly want to mention, is 5,000 less than proposed [inaudible] residential square footage. The site plan. The planning and siting of previous functions in the building on site create an intimate sense of order, and provide a desirable environment for occupants. Pedestrian activity and commercial uses are located in front along El Camino Real, and based on the entrance from Matadero Avenue, the service is located along the service alley. The building is set back four feet from the property line on El Camino Real and five feet on

the Matadero side, creating the desirable 12-foot sidewalk. The layout eliminates existing 30-foot [inaudible] entry and a curb cut on El Camino Real. It creates a cohesive street scape, as well as promotes pedestrian [inaudible]. The entry to the ground floor office space is on the corner of El Camino Real and Matadero Avenue, while the entrance to the stairway up to the second and third floor is on Matadero Avenue side. The pedestrian entrance to the building is located towards the corner of El Camino and Matadero, while vehicular entrance is on the Matadero side, providing good separation between pedestrian and vehicle environment. A 12,050 square foot office space on ground floor is enclosed by 10 foot glass door fronts on El Camino, maintaining the rhythm of the existing storefronts on the neighboring buildings. The building requires 14 car parking spaces, which are provided in the rear half corner, rear half part of the building. Out of 14 cars, 11 car parking spaces are provided on two level mechanical car lift system, manufactured by Klaus Parking. The residents and employees will have assigned car parking spaces, with charging stations if required. There will be three covered car parking spaces on grade, including van accessible parking space, and a charging station. Short-term bicycle parking provided near the ground-floor office building entrances as desired, and long-term bicycle parking provided towards the alley. The trash enclosure is located on the northwest corner of the property, with on-site access for the residents and access from the alley for the trash management company. There is existing utility pole on the northwest corner of the property, with a guy wire support and overhead power lines along the alley. On the second floor, the proposed office space is on the El Camino Real side, and one-bedroom residence on the alley side. The office has two landscape terraces, which can be used as break-out [phonetic] spaces and informal meetings. We are proposing a vertical screen garden in the balcony of the office of El Camino Real. The vertical garden screen can assist of a metal cable trellis, which will form a guide for the creepers. This garden screen has many advantages, and it will filter natural light, will act as a passive measure is reducing solar gain from southwest façade. It will mitigate noise and dust from six-lane El Camino Real. It will create beautiful view from inside and outside and will make urban space more livable. The one-bedroom residence on the second floor has covered landscape terrace and a balcony. Open floor plan, northeast frontage, operable doors and windows, and landscaped private terraces will make this unit desirable and livable space. The third floor has two residential units, two-bedroom residential units facing El Camino Real, while one-bedroom residence is facing the alley. The two-bedroom residence has been set back from El Camino, creating beautiful terraces for outdoor use and more privacy for interior spaces. Now, we'll go through the pictures of the model, showing different views. The building design comprises of overhangs, recesses, balconies and terraces, which articulate the building façade. The play of light and shadow enhances the building composition, while 3form cladding accentuates the exposed concrete. The natural landscape elements like garden screen wall make the building more organic. The building has exposed structural composition. The first and second floor will have reinforced concrete structure system, and second and third floor slabs will be of reinforced concrete. The mechanical system will be placed on the roof. The building material is composed of sustainable building materials. Primary material of construction is concrete. The proposed concrete mix consists of 70 percent replacement of cement with slag, which is a byproduct of iron extraction process. It makes concrete mixture more stronger and more impermeable to water. The environmentally-friendly, as it reduces the use of cement, which is significant emission polluter during the refinement process. 3form coating XT is a human-made, renewable polycarbonate material. It is weatherable, durable, long-lasting, and recyclable translucent building material. The cladding avoids the paint on the exterior of the building, and thus reduces the required building maintenance. It also has a strong ultraviolet stabilization technology and maintains the aesthetic of the project. To conclude my presentation...

Chair Baltay: Could you finish this up, please? We'll give you one more minute, okay?

Ms. Shah: Concluding, yes. I just wanted to mention that after working for one and a half years on this project, we, the owners and architects, are pleased and satisfied with the design proposal. The design solution has evolved with discussions with owner, consultant, city officials, and product vendors, contractors, possible future users. We think we have a win/win design situation. I request your support to proceed and not lose the opportunity to revitalize the corner, which has been empty for the last 27 years. Thank you.

Chair Baltay: Thank you for your presentation. I'd like to see if we have any questions from the Board of the applicant. I think we might. Osma, do you want to start us off?

Vice Chair Thompson: Yes. Question on your materials. Is this replacing the one on the left here?

Ms. Shah: It is addition to that...

Vice Chair Thompson: In addition?

Ms. Shah: ... it only shows the color of the 3form. The larger piece is the custom-made order, like, this is what the material will look like.

Vice Chair Thompson: So, not this?

Ms. Shah: No. That is just for the material, not the color, no.

Vice Chair Thompson: Okay. And is this the color of the concrete?

Ms. Shah: Yes.

Vice Chair Thompson: The concrete is showing just in the floor plates and the columns, and this color is, what is...?

Ms. Shah: Cladding on the wall, which is shown [crosstalk]...

Vice Chair Thompson: Everywhere else.

Ms. Shah: Yeah. On the model.

Vice Chair Thompson: We don't have a glass sample, correct?

Ms. Shah: No. We are planning to use caramel exterior glazing, which is double insulated low-e glazing for energy efficiency.

Vice Chair Thompson: And, so, the railings are like a frosted...?

Ms. Shah: Frosted glass, yes.

Vice Chair Thompson: Okay. Okay. That's all my questions.

Chair Baltay: I just want to follow up on the material. I'm just not understanding the paneling I see on the façade of the building, at the top. Is it this material...?

Ms. Shah: Yes.

Chair Baltay: ... or is this color?

Ms. Shah: Yes.

Chair Baltay: This is a, like, sea glass of some kind?

Ms. Shah: It is a polycarbonate material.

Chair Baltay: And you're showing sharply mitered corners. Is that something you can do with this material?

Ms. Shah: Yes.

Chair Baltay: Without any issues on chipping or anything like that?

Ms. Shah: We have used this material at 102 University Avenue, and used [inaudible] material in the back of the 3form, which allows for expansion and contraction of the material. And it is possible to have the edge of the [turns away from microphone, inaudible. Conversing with someone off-microphone.]

Chair Baltay: I'll give you some latitude, but I'm skeptical, and would like to see, as we really approve this, some evidence of how this stuff meets at corners and things. It shows very nicely in your renderings.

Ms. Shah: May I send some existing pictures of the building cladding, like, the use, at a couple of our projects?

Board Member Lew: Actually, you have the house, too, right near Hamilton, and I think after your University Avenue presentation, I actually did look at the house. There are local examples to look at.

Chair Baltay: I believe Joe Bellomo when he says it, but I just want to see it, at the same time.

Ms. Shah: Sure, we can make a sample, like, mock-up, too.

Chair Baltay: One other question for you, before my colleagues. You're showing a number of concrete structural floor plates, look like about 12 inches thick. You're bound to have some sort of lights and other fixtures on that surface. Your intention will be to recess them into the surface, so it's all poured in place, so there's no surface conduits or any other finishes on that surface.

Ms. Shah: Okay.

Chair Baltay: Okay. I just want to be sure that's the intent. We've seen other buildings of this design style by other architects where that detail wasn't followed, and it doesn't look so good. Okay. Any other questions?

Mr. Bellomo: We've been doing exposed concrete for a while.

Chair Baltay: I'm aware of that.

Mr. Bellomo: Okay.

Chair Baltay: I just want to be clear for the record what we're looking for. That's what makes this work, is that clean-looking frame. Alex?

Board Member Lew: I have a question on the 3form as well. You're showing it on the property line condition, like, a zero lot line. Is it fire rated?

Ms. Shah: Yes, it has two Class B fire rating.

Board Member Lew: Okay. I just want to... I'm sort of concerned about that. As long as the building department is okay with that, I'm okay with it.

Ms. Shah: Okay. This Koda XT is for external use only, but there are other [inaudible]. But it has Class B fire rating.

Board Member Lew: Okay, thank you. I've looked into 3form, but not into the Koda. I've just looked at the regular 3form for interior uses. And then, on the perforated mechanical screen, perforated metal, do you have a particular one that you're...? Like this? I'll go into it later when we get to comments, but I do have

a concern that, when you select ones that are open, relatively open, versus closed, that you can actually see through the...

Ms. Shah: Sixty percent of opening and 40 percent coverage, yeah.

Board Member Lew: And have you used that one before?

Ms. Shah: Yes, on 116 University Avenue roof, yeah.

Board Member Lew: Okay, thank you. I'll take a look at that project.

Chair Baltay: Any other questions? David?

Board Member Hirsch: No. But the screening is used... Yeah, actually, okay. The screening is used on the top of the building, mechanical enclosure. There's a bit of screening also used in the southeast corner, and it's the same material for screening in that area? Against the aisle that's adjacent to the...?

Ms. Shah: No.

Board Member Hirsch: Is that correct?

Ms. Shah: It's not the same screening.

Board Member Hirsch: Same kind of screening.

Ms. Shah: It's not.

Board Member Hirsch: It's not?

Ms. Shah: The main reason we have screening on the southeast corner is for visual... It's a corner for vehicles to... yeah. For visual clarity. It will be more open screen than what we have for perforated.

Board Member Hirsch: We don't have a sample of that?

Ms. Shah: We don't, yeah.

Board Member Lew: I have one more question. Are you planning to incorporate public art into this project, or are you thinking about paying the fee in lieu?

Ms. Shah: I treat the whole building as public art. I we need additional features, we can really think of...

Board Member Lew: We just have a City...

[crosstalk]

Board Member Lew: ... Yeah, we have a City requirement, and I think usually the applicant, you can decide to pay the fee...

Ms. Shah: [crosstalk].

Board Member Lew: ... or to incorporate the art. And I think you have to...

Ms. Shah: Actually, it's for more than 10,000 square foot...

Board Member Lew: Building? And this is under. Thank you for that.

Chair Baltay: Can I then shift away from the building to the back of the property? I asked that question earlier about the power line. Do you have any further information for us about that?

Ms. Shah: Overhead power line?

Chair Baltay: Yeah. Staff seems to be pointing that a partial justification for your variance request might be the power lines being on your property as a unique condition. The survey, I believe, shows the power line crossing the back corner of your property.

Ms. Shah: Yes.

Chair Baltay: Is there an easement or some official...?

Ms. Shah: There's no easement recorded right now, but since there are lines, we will have to record these.

Chair Baltay: Your intention – maybe this is more to the owner – is to grant the City an easement for existing power lines that are on your property? It seems unlikely.

Ms. Shah: Yeah, we will have to, the electrical engineer from the City of Palo Alto mentioned we will have to record it if [inaudible].

Chair Baltay: You have to grant them an easement.

Ms. Shah: Yeah.

Chair Baltay: Okay, because then, that would start to be an issue that would speak to a variance. That's certainly an unusual circumstance, to say the least. Any other questions from the group here? I have just one final question, then we're going to take a break. And this is to the owner. You don't have to answer this, but I'd like to know if your intention is to retain Bellomo Architects to finish this project through, to do the construction drawings. Could you speak to the microphone about that?

Ms. Sun: That's for sure.

Chair Baltay: Thank you. That's wonderful. I just wanted to hear that put into the record. Thank you.

Ms. Sun: We have been working really hard. We're super satisfied with their work, yeah.

Chair Baltay: Thank you. Any other questions for staff? Any other comments? With that, we're going to take a recess until 10:30 today, to allow for the earthquake drill.

[Video and audio ceases briefly.]

Chair Baltay: ... the meeting. Seeing we have no one left. I just don't think it makes sense to speak for seven minutes and get broken up on it. So, we will adjourn until 10:35 today. Thank you.

[The Board took a short break for an earthquake drill.]

Chair Baltay: Okay. Good morning. We're going to reconvene back in session. Thank you everybody for your patience. We were discussing project 3585 El Camino Real. We had just finished taking public testimony and hearing from the applicant, so I'd like to bring the issue back to the Board for discussion. I'd like David to start us off with his comments about this project. David?

Board Member Hirsch: Well, we usually start off by saying "thank you" to the applicants here, for their application. I spent a lot of time looking at the building as its drawn, looking at that corner and thinking this is a section of Palo Alto that's desperately in need of blocks of work. And I want to thank you because

I think you created the high bar on which maybe some other developments along the street will catch fire and do something. I guess I'm a little concerned about some of the uses, which is not what we normally talk about here, because you have ground floor office space and upstairs office space. I know a little bit about the community's desire for some retail commercial nearby because there isn't much in their neighborhood. I didn't ask the question before, but I would hope that maybe it's possible somehow that some of that gets solved. It may not be this building. That's an open question, I think. To typify what I feel about the building, it's kind of a rough, high-tech building, kind of a wonderful mixture. I'm happy about that aspect of it. I think the scale of it is pretty terrific. I'm a little confused about the solar collectors on the roof. I've seen them up there, but I don't know how far you've gone with that, so I would ask you to talk to that a little bit. It seemed to me that there were some at one end, the north end of the building, but not on the rest of the rooftop. What is the use of the solar collectors for this building?

Ms. Shah: We will be using solar panels for solar energy. Right now, I have shown the indication of where we want to have the solar panels. We will make sure they are not visible from the pedestrian level, and after we do detailed calculation and find out how many panels we need, then we will show an accurate...

Board Member Hirsch: It's in progress, in other words.

Ms. Shah: Yes.

Board Member Hirsch: Okay, thanks.

Ms. Shah: But we intend to use solar panels.

Board Member Hirsch: Good.

Ms. Shah: [inaudible] solar panels.

Board Member Hirsch: Okay. While you're up there, I have another question for you. What's the use of the aisle in the southeast corner of the building, of the lot itself? It's called an aisle, and it's adjacent to van-accessible parking. There's sort of two aisles.

Chair Baltay: Which drawing are you looking at, David, please?

Board Member Hirsch: Drawing A1.2.

Ms. Shah: One is van accessible charging station, which needs aisle on their passenger side, and other is van accessible parking. That also has eight foot aisle on the passenger side. It also has access to the building [inaudible].

Board Member Hirsch: Is it sort of...? There's some space in the southeast corner, and there's a van accessible charging station. I see that written on that drawing, but I don't understand exactly what's happening either side of parking spot 14. What is...?

Ms. Shah: That's the aisle for accessible space. Like, loading/unloading zone for accessibility.

Board Member Hirsch: Access.

Ms. Shah: Yes.

Mr. Sing: That would be the path of travel, part of the code. They need that to get around the vehicle safely, and that goes from the parking lot to the entrance of the building.

Board Member Hirsch: Yes. I know it's a direct access to the building. I really don't have all that many questions to ask about the building. I think the documents you provided are very thorough all the way

through, so there aren't very many questions that I have that weren't really answered in the drawings, in the presentation. I would like to say that I think that you notice right away in this lot that the sidewalk is pretty damn small, and I appreciate the fact that the building was set back a bit, and that it's a gesture towards the street that I hope everybody will pick up on and do exactly the same kind of setback from El Camino. I think it is critical to make a softer corner so that squeezing trees in somehow is absolutely critical all the way around this property, including the alley, which, although it's just an alley, has entrances to units, residential units, and is used by the community as a kind of through-way to get downtown, or whatever, because El Camino isn't so friendly right now in that area. Hopefully in the future it will be. The best you can, with comments about the overhead being an issue with the trees, or whatever, the amount of trees in the back, I don't know if you've been so specific about what kinds of trees, bushes, whatever, will be there, but the fact that you simply show them is important in the alley. I guess, you know, I struggled in looking at these drawings to figure out, is that the best place for the garbage? It's so far from the front door to the building. But then, it's not a big lot, and I guess people will just have to go there, and that's it. It is kind of concealed in a building of some sort there, which is nice. It won't be...

Ms. Shah: Transformer size and position was the main constraint for the position of trash.

Board Member Hirsch: It will be closed in with a door...

Ms. Shah: Yeah. Trash enclosure.

Board Member Hirsch: There's a lot of different things happening in the back of the lot, all of which I can see are necessary. You did the best you could on that. It isn't such a friendly area, but then again, you certainly made it friendlier towards the corner by plantings, etc. I really appreciate the fact that you have this kind of rough/smooth juxtaposition with the stone, stones within that graded wall. I've seen some good examples of that, you know, and they're really a scale of themselves, you know, that provide a friendlier attitude, rather than simply a block wall, or even a stone wall. I think the scale is very nice when you break it down like that. And, of course, the lifts work well, to answer the issue of parking. They also do require you to have a very tall floor-to-floor on the first floor, but I guess one has to accept that. I would hope that the City could work with you and provide all of the approvals that are necessary to make this building work. And I really want to commend you on one aspect that I really liked a lot, and that's the concrete frame itself, stopping at the second level, except when it turns the corner and provides entry to the upstairs floors. Setbacks are very nice off the street. So, I think it will be a very successful building, and as I say, I think it's the high bar for the area.

Chair Baltay: Thank you, David. Osma, do you want to bring us along?

Vice Chair Thompson: Sure. All right. Thank you for your application, thank you for your presentation. Unfortunately, I have a bit more of a critical perspective than my fellow board member. I mean, we're missing a few materials, like the fence on the back. It's really important that we get the materials that we're going to be experiencing, like the planters. What are the planters made of? I don't need a stone sample from the gabion, but it's good to know these things that are, like, standing out. Because this project is fairly minimal, the materials are so important. The rendering and the material board, the rendering is kind of showing the concrete having this texture, which I don't foresee if this is the finish. It's not really going to look like that. I have an issue with the way that... These renderings are perceded. In general, I would say, like, this model is so beautiful, and thank you so much for making it. It's so helpful in understanding what's happening. When I'm looking at the renderings, the amount of relief in the façade doesn't feel like it's enough. It feels very smooth and slick, and I'm a little worried that it might feel like too much of a block as a result. I think there's more detail you could put, and maybe that's in how you treat the planters in the front. But in general, the design seems a little bit too... It needs a little bit more relief than it has right now. In general, though, in terms of the shape, I like that it's compact. In terms of your site planning, it seems to make sense with what you have. It's too bad the zoning only limits you to 35. You were talking about the affordable housing problem. This could be a high-rise, and that would solve a lot of stuff. This might not even be a bad spot for that, actually, given that it's kind of in this sort of up-and-coming area that's probably going to see a lot of change. In that vein, I wonder if there's opportunities

here for kind of prepare for the future. I was learning a bit about mass timber a little bit ago, which is a building construction type, and with mass timber, you can build three stories, four stories, and then, later on, if you want to add another six stories, you can. It kind of has this design that's ready for the future. Concrete is not as sustainable as wood. I'm not saying that you should change your material, but there's a lot of opportunity here to be, like you said, the face of what the new, what this area is going to become, because it's going to evolve. When you guys come back to us, actually, I think it would be really helpful to kind of understand your parti a little better. I thought your parti was these floating floor plates that kind of stick out, but I think the gloss... Sorry. What am I saying? Not the gloss. The frosted glass really kind of derail your floor plate parti, if that is your design intent, that you want these floating things. It kind of blurs it a little bit. Your floor plates aren't reading as strong as it could, and you could use a different material to have that pop out. I do think it needs a little bit of work. I'll stop there. Thanks.

Chair Baltay: Thank you, Osma. Alex.

Board Member Lew: I'm generally in support of your project. We do get complaints from other property owners in the neighborhood that the zoning doesn't allow them to build enough, and that's why nothing has been happening there. I'm glad to see that you're taking advantage of the housing incentive program here. I think everybody in the City is trying to figure out ways of adding more housing, so I will support the project in that vein. I think there are a couple things I'm looking for. One is, if the site plan could... Your contextual site plan. If it could show a little more information with regard to the multi-family building next door, across the street from the alley, which I think is 482 to 488 Matadero. When I was on the site visit, I did see four doors right on the alley, just maybe like four or five feet or something from the alley. I do want to know if those are, are those front doors? Or are those just back service doors? What's happening? Because your project is going to affect the site. Terrible as it is now, the existing condition. I just want to know, what are we dealing with there with regard to privacy to those units? I think I echo some of Osma's comments on the building. Some of them. I guess when I look at your existing project on University Circle, I do appreciate many of the things on those buildings. But I also do think that I'm looking for more. To me, one of the weaknesses I see in that one is maybe on the landscape and the vines growing up in the building, with the rebar. I am looking for the details on that. And you're showing some with the vines, and I think I support what you're showing at the moment. But, to me, I think that's sort of the critical piece, the way I'm looking at it. I think the weakness in this project is we don't have ground floor retail. We have office, and it's allowed. Also, that the high-performance glazing, you know, with, like, the low-e glazing, it's kind of dark, it's kind of reflective, it's not that great from a pedestrian point of view. Like, if I walk along University Circle, at least to my eye, it's not that interesting, so I think all those planters and things that you're doing are really critical. Any level of filigree and detail and interest, to me, is really critical. I think the staff report didn't mention the South El Camino Design Guidelines, but we've talked about this before on other projects – the top, middle, base issue. There is sort of a guideline to not screen windows on the second floor. I think in this case, I think the planters that you're doing are desirable. But I think the intent of the design guidelines was to prevent screening as in one of your neighbors. I think there's one maybe two doors down. I think that's sort of the thing that we're trying to avoid. Like, shutter kinds of things on the windows. I think we're also looking for pedestrian-friendly amenities. I think you're showing a bench, but it's also in bamboo, so I'm not sure if I'm reading the plans correctly. But I think we're looking for more detail, you know, sophisticated design, to make it really attractive for people. And I think the project, you'll get there. It's just I want to see more. I'd like to see more information on that. I think that's all that I have on this project. I think you're off to a very good start, and I think the staff report is right, and I think we do have to look at the variance findings along the back property line, and the perimeter landscaping. Okay. That's all that I have. And I do support Peter's previous comments about recessing light fixtures and stuff. When you have these reinforced concrete buildings, everything has to be planned out in advance. And we have other projects – who will remain nameless – where stuff was tacked on. It was not thought about, it does not look good, and it's just a shame because it just has to be... It's just better design if you can integrate everything in from the beginning. Okay. I'll pass it along. Thank you.

Chair Baltay: Thank you, Alex. Okay. I think this is an incredibly handsome building. I think it's really beautiful. It's one of the nicest things I've seen recently come in front of us as an artistic composition. It's attractive, it's logical, the scaling, the massing, all works. I'm very highly favored by it. I have a couple of

questions, and then, I'm not so positive about the parking and the whole situation in the back. But I really, as Osma was bringing up, I just need to understand better the materials. How is that concrete going to look next to the frosted glass railing, which is flush? How is this other material up on the roof level going to meet the concrete at the corners and stuff? I'll grant, you guys have a great track record, you've done it before, but every time, we need to understand what's going on. On the building design, I do have one significant concern, and it's not so much, I think, to do with the artistry of your architecture, but rather the requirements of the zoning ordinance, and in this case, the South El Camino Real Design Guidelines, which require buildings to have a distinct base, middle and top. I don't think this building has that. I'm sorry to say that in this case, but I do think that that's the standard, that's the rule, and that's what we're here to enforce. We've done that with other projects. I guess what I can say to you is to please try to take seriously that requirement. We're trying to create urban boulevards with buildings that are background, creating large public space in front of it. Buildings then have this distinct bottom, middle and top to help create the walls of that outdoor space. We're not looking for a series of sculptural, one-off masterpieces. We're looking for buildings that create a better urban fabric. I'm just giving you the thought process behind that requirement. And we're here not to debate the merits of that, but rather to enforce that, so I would ask you to take that to heart and show us how this building does have a base, a middle and a top. It's a requirement; we need to see it. Right now, I'm afraid, as much as I like the concrete frame and the grid and all that, it doesn't meet that requirement. I don't know how much more I can say about it than that, but it's there. If I could address the issue in the back. Alex put his finger on something I think is very important. Across the alley, you have a building with quite a few people living there, and their front door, so to speak, is right on the alley, and it's more or less across from your garbage area. It seems to me little thought has been given as to how your building will impact other people in the alley. I'll grant you, theirs is not the most beautiful situation. Nonetheless, they are there, and we do need to work with them. It leaves me wondering if you wouldn't have been better off trying to bring in the traffic and the access from the alley, not from the street. I know that's a big design shift, and I'm not trying to design for you, but I'm just thinking as a thought process that went through my head, that there might be a way to mess around with that. I am equally concerned about the requirement for a variance. I don't see the justification for it here. I don't think you have a unique and different situation. Just being a property with an alley in the back is not unique and special, at least not enough. And the variance requires that. If you can't meet that, there must be some way you can meet this landscaping requirement and meet these parking requirements. Right now, I don't think you're meeting that requirement, and I think you have to. I'm sorry. It's a tight lot; it's a challenging situation. You're trying to please a hundred masters here. I think the rules are the rules, and it's not for us to say, "Well, it's good enough." Especially on things like variances. You've got to work with staff on that. That's how I see it, at least, that we need to be able to make those findings. Right now, in the back, it seems that there might be other ways to configure that other parking business to meet the needs of the building and be a little better integrated on the alley, and not to need a variance. I don't have any additional comments to those. Does anybody else want to chime in with anything else? I think we'll be continuing your project because we need an environmental report anyway. And you're hearing something of a mixed set of inputs, I think, from us up here. Does anybody want to add anything, given what everybody else has been saying?

Board Member Hirsch: Well, you know, listening to Peter, I'd like to make a couple of comments on some of his comments. I really think it would be an error to have the entry to the parking from the alleyway, my reason being, for one, we're talking about the adjacent buildings. That certainly will not improve them in any way. You're going to be looking at an in-and-out situation on a very small, tight alley between a residential building and the back of this building. I don't think it would help us to have an entry to the parking lot. I think the dimension of the area between the parking spaces provides an obvious entry to it from Matadero, rather than from that alleyway. You know, I looked long and hard at the back areas, which seemed to be the most problematic of this building. I would have wished somehow the trash were somehow rearranged, but to look at all the restrictions that are there to deal with all of that, it's a tough problem at that point. That's perhaps the toughest problem on this site. And thinking about alternates, I just couldn't come up with any reasonable one. This seemed like the best solution, the way it's drawn. And it's also recognizing the fact that this is a pedestrian alleyway, so the corner of it has as much planting as you can manage to squeeze in. I agree that we need to see more about that. We really need to see what is going to be there in more detail. But I would think that you've already thought about it, so I think you can solve

it. The parking is what it is. I mean, I think City planning is accepting the parking at this point, are you not? Can I address that to Planning? It is what it is. You've made the best of it that you can, out the back. You know, in this day, with all the Ubers and what-not, you really wonder if all the parking is going to be necessary, especially if it's adjacent to a commercial block and bus services, etc. Public transportation is there. I think you've done the best you can do with the back of this building, so I want to support the design effort here. I think it's admirable. I would like to comment on, kind of the negative feeling about... And this idea of it requiring the design recommendations of El Camino, as it having a bottom, a middle and a top, not all buildings require bottom, middle, tops. This commercial block, I think, would be the wrong place to do that. I think it has to be a different kind of expression here. If I disagree with standards, I'm sorry, but I disagree with standards. Then let's change the standards, because this particular demonstration here with a two-story frame is more in keeping with the scale of the block right now, so why not just continue with that idea? It's strong enough by itself. I don't see a bottom, a middle and a top having any meaningful relationship to El Camino here, at all. I want to emphasize that very strongly, that I think we shouldn't be guided by that kind of a principle on this block. And that's really my comment.

Chair Baltay: Thank you, David. Would anybody else like to add anything? Osma.

Vice Chair Thompson: Yeah. Just to respond to that. I do understand the frustration sometimes to deal with those guidelines. However, I am more in keeping with Board Member Baltay's assertion that the base, middle, top is something that we should enforce. The only reason I feel that way is mainly because, kind of what I was mentioning before. The building as it stands right now feels like it is lacking a little bit, and potentially adding that kind of structure would give it more visual interest. I say it's potentially an opportunity to make the building better. I also agree with Board Member Baltay, that that landscaping, we should try to retain the landscaping that would be required along the perimeter. I don't know that the variance is merited.

Board Member Lew: I have nothing else. I would just comment that the variance findings are the purview of the Planning Director. You can always comment, but the Planning Director will be the arbiter of that.

Chair Baltay: Absolutely. That's right. Okay. With that, does the applicant have any questions of us? Our objective is to try to give as clear a set of directions as we can. I think, in this case, it's a little bit uneven, what we're saying to you. Can we help clarify anything for you?

Ms. Shah: Do we get to respond to your comments right now, or...?

Chair Baltay: Well, that's sort of what I'm asking you, if you have any questions. We're not looking for an argument; we're looking for clarification. Please go ahead.

Ms. Shah: No, yeah, to have a clear direction moving forward, I have some explanation regarding findings or variance, the entry from alley side, or landscaping on the rear. That's what I want to mention. I'm not trying to defend or argue here. I'm trying to find solution for the next meeting. Sheldon has mentioned about the findings for variance. Here are my suggestions. We need to consider why this site is unique. One is the lot size...

Chair Baltay: Excuse me. I do not want to go through again the arguments we just presented. I'm asking if you have questions about what we have said. We really don't want to debate the points of the variance. As Alex mentioned, it's up to staff anyway. Do you have any questions about the comments anybody up here has made?

Ms. Gerhardt: Are there any questions about how to address the base, middle and top?

Chair Baltay: Architect Bellomo, do you care to address this? I mean, we are torn by the requirement, but it is a requirement.

Mr. Bellomo: I'm confused with base, middle and top. It's a holistic building.

Chair Baltay: Surely you've looked at...

Mr. Bellomo: There are obviously tops, and middles and bases, but I, you know, we're trying to have an organic approach to the building. It's cast in place concrete. It's what we're good at.

Board Member Lew: Why don't we go through that, for the next meeting, why don't we list some of the El Camino Design Guideline....? And they're guidelines, right? They are not zoning requirements. Why don't we list them all out, and then we can actually rate them....?

[crosstalk]

Ms. Gerhardt: Yeah, so, in the next staff report, we can certainly beef up the discussion about the El Camino guidelines. I'm just wondering about the, you know, usually it's the base and the top that need to be emphasized to bring more of that character out. On the base here, there does seem to be, on the first floor, over the top of the windows is not actually windows. I don't have the language for this; maybe you do. But maybe there's a paint color that would help above the windows there, that would help enhance the base. I'm just trying to give them some direction on how to enhance the base.

Vice Chair Thompson: Not sure quite what you were pointing to. Also not sure that the stuff is paintable, in general. There are El Camino guidelines, you can find them on line. We had a study session last year about a base/middle/top, what that means, what we're looking for, which I think staff can probably provide you. In general, it's just that there is a strong delineation between, like, architecturally between the base, middle and top, and right now, your top is kind of inset and in the back, kind of hidden, so when I'm looking at your building, I don't see a top, basically. But, again, there are other ways to address it, and there's kind of... I don't know. I hope that's helpful.

Chair Baltay: Okay. Yes, Alex, please.

Board Member Lew: Another thing that has come up on other project is, like, where do commercial tenants place their signs? We're looking for things that where, in the future, different tenants, that they can actually add to the architecture of the project. Are there awnings, or some sort of sun shades, or canopies, or armatures? Or is there a sign program for the project where there are, like, small blade signs that are pedestrian-friendly? We're looking at all those things that you see downtown. Things like that that can help the project. I want to make the distinction that, like, downtown, we have very specific regulations, and we don't have them for El Camino. But I think the guidelines point to those things that we're looking for, some of those elements, even if it's not literally in the code. And it seems to me that, I think that Peter and Osma have it correct. I think there is room for improvement here. And I will acknowledge David's point. We have mid-century buildings on this block, and I think the bottom two floors of your building do complement the neighborhood buildings. I get that. But, looking forward into the future, where many sites on El Camino, that they're going to have, like, four-story buildings. We have a new hotel coming that's actually five stories. In those cases, we really do need a base, middle and top to break up the monotony of the building. This building is only three stories, 35 feet high. It's not quite as critical on this one as it is for the taller buildings, but I think we are still looking with an eye to the future, of bigger buildings. We just need more, more design and more detail looking ahead. I will make a motion that we... We're done? No?

Vice Chair Thompson: I just wanted to respond. I totally agree with what you're saying, Alex. You just reminded me, there's another point that I forgot to bring up, is that this elevation that we're looking at here is the south elevation, where, you know, we're in a temperate climate, so you have some overhangs on one side, but you have a full glass-enclosed circulation space here that's not shaded. And in your top story, you're showing glass shading, but I don't really think that's going to help you on a solar temperature thermal comfort perspective. As you're kind of looking at how to address this top, maybe you'll integrate something that will help thermally by integrating shading. It would probably satisfy the requirements that we're asking for, and also make your building more ecological.

Board Member Hirsch: If I could jump back in for just a second. I thought Alex brought up some interesting points, that there's enough good ways in which one could take that ground floor and distinguish it by imagining some future use of commercial, office, whatever, and emphasize somehow that it is the main floor. If you had an overlay of this particular building. And change the scale of it at the same time in order to... Well, it should be the same scale, but there could be other emphasis on the ground floor that would give it a distinct look as a ground floor. And it doesn't mean that you have to, in my opinion, change the basic concrete frame of the building, which I think will carry through on this particular block, especially because of the neighbors as you show them, you know, which don't have that strong personality, but certainly are two stories high and facing the street. There could be some improvements in that area, although I really do agree with the shape of this building. And as Alex points out, it's a three-story building, so it's not exactly the same as other buildings that do require a base, a middle and a top. Or a base, in any case, that's emphasize. There are more things that you could do to answer the Board's issues. I don't think it should vary much in the frame, the way the frame is created here, but in the detail on the ground floor.

MOTION

Board Member Lew: Okay. If we're done, I will make a motion that we continue this project to a date uncertain.

Chair Baltay: Thank you. I'll second that. Move and seconded. All those in favor, say aye. Opposed? Motion carries 4-0.

MOTION TO CONTINUE PASSES 4-0.

Chair Baltay: Thank you very much.

Study Session

Chair Baltay: Moving right along, we have a study session on the agenda, but I don't believe we have anything to study, do we? Perhaps that's a good point where we could bring up a report from Board Member Lew regarding the Ventura design process.

Board Member Lew: Do you want to do the minutes, too? For September 5th? But if we want to do the board member things, board member announcements, we can do that.

Chair Baltay: Yes, I'm sorry, you're right. I didn't see that down at the bottom. Very well. Study session, we're not going to do.

Approval of Minutes

4. Draft Architectural Review Board Meeting Minutes for September 5, 2019.

Chair Baltay: Approval of minutes. We'd like to review the draft Architectural Review Board minutes from September 5th. Any comments, or can I have a motion, please?

Vice Chair Thompson: I'll move that we approve the minutes for September 5, 2019.

Board Member Hirsch: I'll send that.

Chair Baltay: Moved and second. All those in favor? Opposed? Hearing none, motion carries 4-0.

MOTION TO APPROVE PASSES 4-0.

Chair Baltay: On to subcommittee items. How can we do that? We're going to shift the subcommittee items to after board member questions.

Board Member Questions, Comments or Announcements

Chair Baltay: Now we're going to go to Board Member questions, where we would like to have Board Member Lew give us a report on the process with the Ventura design review committee. Alex?

Board Member Lew: Okay, so the next meeting for North Ventura is on October 29th at 5:30 in the lobby conference room at City Hall. My understanding is the agenda has not been announced yet, but my understanding is that discussion will be different, the different possibilities for housing density. I'm actually collecting images of projects in the Bay Area of different densities, like 40 units an acre, 60 units an acre, 100 units an acre. Berkeley, over the last 10 years, has been building projects in the 150 units per acre density, generally within the 50 to 55 foot height limit. Anyway, I'm collecting images on all of those, so if you have a particular project that you think is a good model for Palo Alto, please send them to me and I will try to get them into the presentation.

Chair Baltay: Thank you, Board Member Lew. Any questions of Alex?

Board Member Hirsch: Alex, could you talk a little bit [adjusting microphone]. Could you talk a little bit about what...? I was there, so, you know, just an observer at these meetings. There was a big, long discussion from **Subrado [phonetic]** about what their intentions are on the lot. Could you speak to that?

Board Member Lew: Well, I'm not sure I should rephrase everything. I think it's all captured on the recordings. Generally, they bought a building that is very expensive to bring up to current codes and standards, but the office rents are so high that they think that it's, in the near term, that it's okay to keep the Fry's site, the Fry's tenant in there empty, and the office rents will cover the cost of the building. They don't necessarily have an incentive to tear down the building and build housing in the near term, at least at the densities that are allowed under the current zoning, which is... I've forgot if it's RM30 or RM40. But they are long-term landowner, and they also do see residential, a residential use as a complement to their commercial real estate portfolio. There are different trade-offs if you're doing, like, office development versus residential, and they are looking to balance their portfolio.

Board Member Hirsch: Just one other aspect to that. I wonder if you could speak to the resistance they had to the thought of this being a significant residential site. In particular, they already, I think, have decided – Jodie, you might answer this one – decided not to go ahead with the other project that they have that's adjacent, where's Mike's Bike is. Pull that back. Is that true?

Ms. Gerhardt: I don't know that there has been anything official, but I have not seen very much action on the 3001 El Camino project, correct.

Board Member Hirsch: Yeah. So, you know, I think they are resisting because of their discussion about marketability, right? Of housing. Could you talk about that?

Board Member Lew: Well, they have very high construction costs now. And also, after he made that comment about the 3001 El Camino project, I did pull up the plans for that again, just to refresh my memory on it. And compared to what I'm seeing in other cities, it's a very small project. It's, like, 44 units on a huge site, and part of it is only two stories. And if you see the housing projects being built in our neighboring cities, they are doing seven stories of housing. I think it may point to the fact that it's... It may not be penciling out now because there's not enough covering their costs. I mean, that's their business, not mine. I think it would be interesting to do a comparison of what's happening elsewhere in the cities. And I will point you, I went to a lecture at, **at spur [phonetic]** and San Jose, and there's an organization called the Turner Center for Housing Innovation at UC Berkeley, and they've done a white paper on building market rate housing, and they're trying to do... They have a building prototype that they sent out to bid, and they've done it for Sacramento, the East Bay, and San Jose. They're just trying to daylight all of the costs, including area housing costs, parking costs, and just give it daylight so that government officials understand what the private developers are actually dealing with. I can forward it to the Board.

Board Member Hirsch: Thank you.

Board Member Lew: Generally, I think the findings of the report is that changes in, like, affordable housing requirement and the parking, like, seemingly small things, if you add up several of those things, it will make a project infeasible. And it also gives some information on what the greedy developers are actually having to do. Like, they won't get a project financed if there isn't a profit incentive for the banks. It just won't happen. It's just trying to give information, you know, information and daylight about that. It's an interesting report. I don't have my notes in front of me, but I think it was coming up with \$500,000 per unit in San Jose, not Palo Alto, and that's with no extra fees, if the City has a special open space tax, any of that stuff. It's free of all of that. Or infrastructure, off-site infrastructure requirements. That's the bare minimum base prices. When we get to Palo Alto, we're looking at something more like \$800,000 per unit, minimum, so it's expensive to build a unit. That's why the rents are going to towards \$6,000 a month for a two-bedroom.

Board Member Hirsch: Right. Thank you. That's illuminating comments there.

Chair Baltay: Thank you, Alex. Okay, with that, our meeting is adjourned. We will reconvene with the subcommittee up front here. Thank you, everybody.

Subcommittee Items

5. 3265 El Camino Real [15PLN-00312]: Subcommittee Review of a Previously Approved Project That was Conditioned to Return With Project Changes Related to Louvre Window and Stair Well Trellis Mesh. Environmental Assessment: Use of Mitigated Negative Declaration Prepared for 15PLN-00312. Zoning District: CS (Commercial Service). For More Information Contact the Project Planner Adam Petersen at apetersen@m-group.us
6. 180 El Camino Real [19PLN-00114]: Subcommittee Review of a Previously Approved Project for L'Occitane in Building C at the Stanford Shopping Center That was Conditioned to Return With Project Changes Related Facade Plaster Sample, Relocation of Facade Camera, Column/Circular Planting Box Details, and Storefront Mullion Color. Environmental Assessment: Categorically Exempt from the Provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) per Guideline Section 15301. Zoning District: CC (Community Commercial District). For More Information Contact the Project Planner Samuel Gutierrez at Samuel.Gutierrez@cityofpaloalto.org.

Adjournment



Architectural Review Board Subcommittee Review

TO: Bob Iwerson, 444 Spear St # 105, San Francisco, CA 94105
SUBJECT: 3265 El Camino Real [15PLN-00312]
DATE: October 24, 2019
FROM: Adam Petersen, Consultant Planner

PLANNER'S SIGNATURE:

The plans dated September 17, 2019 were reviewed and approved by the ARB Subcommittee on October 17, 2019 in accordance with condition of approval 2, as stated below. Board members Osma Thompson and Peter Baltay comprised the ARB Subcommittee.

- The louvre window screen on the elevation fronting El Camino Real shall be designed to have a better opening and filtered light consistent with the El Camino Real Design Guideline Goals.
- Rework the mesh around the stairs to make it less oppressive.

The ARB Subcommittee approved the louvre window design at the August 1, 2019 hearing, and requested more information about the metal mesh around the stairs, including construction drawings and renderings. The applicant supplied construction drawings and renderings, which demonstrated the spacing of the metal railings, the material used in the stair enclosure, and illustrated the proposal in renderings.

At the meeting, the Subcommittee discussed the proposed landscaping, coating on the metal mesh, and approved the proposal at the October 17, 2019 hearing. No conditions were added.

The applicant shall ensure these changes are incorporated into the design and this Subcommittee Review letter shall be printed on the plans submitted for building permit(s).

Copies sent to:
Project File



Architectural Review Board Subcommittee Review

TO: Jason Smith, 122 N Harbor Blvd Ste 204, Fullerton, CA 92832
 SUBJECT: 180 El Camino Real [19PLN-00114] L'OCCITANE EN PROVENCE
 DATE: October 17, 2019
 FROM: Samuel Gutierrez, Planner

PLANNER'S SIGNATURE

The application, and plans and material samples dated received on October 3, 2019, was reviewed by the ARB Subcommittee on October 17, 2019, in accordance with condition of approval #3 as stated below. The ARB Subcommittee comprised of Board members Peter Baltay (Chair) and Osma Thompson (Vice Chair).

ARB SUBCOMMITTEE: Prior to the issuance of building permits, the applicant shall return to the ARB Subcommittee for approval of the following items, to the satisfaction of the Director of Planning and Community Environment:

- a. Relocation of the camera on the exterior façade.
- b. Provided a finished plaster sample with the proposed yellow paint for the upper façade
- c. An alternative design for the circular planter that increases the soil volume for a more viable environment to allow the proposed plants to thrive.
- d. Provide a storefront mullion material sample.

At the meeting, the Subcommittee reviewed the following revisions presented by the applicant.

- The updated plans note the removal of the façade camera. This camera was redundant will not be replaced on the subject façade.
- The applicant provided material samples for the façade plaster and the storefront mullions and the plans were updated accordingly.
- The revised plans include a larger planter box (8" width, 6" depth) around the exterior column.

The Subcommittee agreed with these changes as presented. The applicant shall ensure these changes are incorporated into the design and this Subcommittee Review letter shall be printed on the plans submitted for building permit(s) and that a reduced 6" x 6" material sample of the yellow plaster be provided for the application file.