



# Architectural Review Board

## Staff Report (ID # 11325)

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**Report Type:** Approval of Minutes **Meeting Date:** 5/21/2020

**Summary Title:** Minutes of April 16, 2020

**Title:** Draft Architectural Review Board Meeting Minutes for April 16, 2020

**From:** Jonathan Lait

### Recommendation

Staff recommends the Architectural Review Board (ARB) adopt the attached meeting minutes.

### Background

Draft minutes from the April 16, 2020 Architectural Review Board (ARB) are available in Attachment A.

Draft and Approved Minutes are made available on the ARB webpage at [bit.ly/paloaltoARB](http://bit.ly/paloaltoARB)

### Attachments:

- Attachment A: April 16, 2020 Draft Minutes (DOCX)



**ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD**  
**DRAFT MINUTES: April 16, 2020**  
 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: Board Member Grace Lee.

Chair Baltay: Good morning. Welcome to the April 16, 2020, meeting of the Architectural Review Board. I'm Chair Peter Baltay. Given the unusual circumstances, I'm going to read a statement regarding how we'll run these meetings. [Reading] Pursuant to the provisions of California Governor's Executive Order N-29-20, issued on March 17, 2020, to prevent the spread of COVID-19, this meeting will be held by virtual teleconference only. No physical location. The meeting will be broadcast on Cable TV Channel 26 and live at Midpen Media Center at [midpenmedia.org](http://midpenmedia.org). Members of the public who wish to participate may do so by email, phone, or computer. To ensure participation in a particular item, we suggest calling in or connecting on line 15 minutes before the item you wish to speak on. For written communications, please send an email to [arb@cityofpaloalto.org](mailto:arb@cityofpaloalto.org). Spoken comments via a computer will be accepted through the Zoom teleconference meeting. To address the Board, go to [zoom.us/join](https://zoom.us/join). Meeting ID is 381564707. You will be asked to enter an email address and name. We request that you identify yourself by name. This will be visible on line and will be used to notify you that it is your turn to speak. When you wish to speak on an Agenda item, click on "Raise Hand." The moderator will activate and unmute speakers in turn. When called, please limit your remarks to the time limit allotted. A timer will be shown on the computer to help keep track of your time. Spoken public comments using a smart phone will be accepted through the Zoom teleconference meeting. To address the Board, download the Zoom application onto your phone from the Apple App store or Google Play store and enter the Meeting ID 381564707. Please follow the steps a through d. Spoken public comments using a phone. Call 1-669-900-6833, and enter Meeting ID 381564707. When you wish to speak on an agenda item hit \*9 on your phone so we know that you wish to speak. You will be asked to provide your first and last name before addressing the Board. You will be advised how long you have to speak. When called, please limit your remarks to the agenda item and time limit allotted. You can also find this information on the last page of this agenda. To better facilitate public comments at the beginning of the meeting, our meeting host, Vinh Nguyen, will identify each person with a raised hand by name or last four digits of your phone number, and request that you state your name and agenda item you wish to speak on. If you wish to speak on any item not on the agenda, please state your intent to speak under oral communication. When it is your time to speak during public comment, you will be identified and provided three minutes to speak. Any callers with block numbers will wait until the end of the speaker's portion. The host will unmute them one at a time. All will be asked to speak. Vinh, do we have any public comments?

Vinh Nguyen, Administrative Associate: Currently, we have eight attendees but no raised hands. Let's give them a couple seconds in case anyone wants to raise their hand. Okay, seeing as how there are still no raised hands, we can move on with the agenda.

Chair Baltay: Very well. Can we have a roll call, please?

[Roll Call]

Mr. Nguyen: Thank you. We have a quorum.

Chair Baltay: Very well. Thank you, Vinh.

### **Oral Communications**

Chair Baltay: Next item on the agenda is oral communications. We'll open this meeting to oral communications from any members of the public who wish to address any item that's not on our agenda. At this time, if you wish to speak on an item not on the agenda and are using the Zoom application, you may use the "Raise Hand" function to indicate your desire. The "Raise Hand" button is located at the bottom of your Zoom screen. If you're dialing in from a phone, you can raise your hand by pressing \*9. This will create a queue. The meeting host will unmute each speaker, display the timer, and alert you when you may begin. Vinh, do we have anybody who is asking to speak?

Mr. Nguyen: Right now, we still do not have any raised hands, so you can proceed with the agenda.

Chair Baltay: Okay, we're going to keep moving along with the agenda.

### **Agenda Changes, Additions and Deletions**

Chair Baltay: Next item is agenda changes, additions and deletions. Staff, do we have any agenda changes, additions or deletions?

Jodie Gerhardt, Manager of Current Planning: There are no changes at this time.

### **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: Next item is city official reports. Jodie, would you care to make that report, please.

Ms. Gerhardt: Yes. I'm going to share my screen here. I have the slide here.

Mr. Nguyen: Hang on. Alex, can you mute your microphone? I think it's causing a feedback. Thank you.

Ms. Gerhardt: It's still there, but that's okay. Moving forward, first of all, I want to say thank you everyone for attending this first virtual ARB hearing. We'd love to be holding these in person, but given the shelter in place, I think this is a lovely solution. Regarding the next items that we're going to be hearing on May 7<sup>th</sup>, we do have the Newell Road bridge replacement. It will be a second hearing of that project. We also have 3214 Porter Drive. Again, second formal for an office and R&D building. And then, we have 411 Lytton Avenue, which is a prelim. You had this project before as a larger mixed-use project, but this time around it's just adding two units to the existing historic house. Thank you.

Chair Baltay: Question, Jodie. We have been working on a series of revisions, or participating in helping the Planning and Zoning Department, revisions to the zoning code pursuant to some of the changes from last year. Has that project been put on hold?

Ms. Gerhardt: You're talking about the objective standards?

Chair Baltay: Yes.

Ms. Gerhardt: Yeah, we're still moving forward with that, so that will still be going forward. We just don't have any dates at this time. Actually, we would like to start doing some subcommittee, so we can firm that up at the next meeting. We can make sure who is going to be on the subcommittee.

Chair Baltay: Very well. And I might also ask that we put on the agenda for the next meeting, you know, some of the discussions over how these online meetings are working, and what changes might [inaudible] from the whole Board. There are issues that have been discussed, and I'd like everybody to be part of that discussion at our next meeting.

Ms. Gerhardt: Yes, because there are some things with our submittals that we may need to change, given that we're all virtual.

Chair Baltay: Okay.

### Action Items

2. PUBLIC HEARING / QUASI-JUDICIAL. 620 Emerson Street (19PLN-00326): Recommendation on Applicant's Request for Approval of a Minor Architectural Review to Allow Changes to a Previously Approved ARB Project (17PLN-00331) for the Construction of a New Two Story 4,063 Square Foot Commercial Building for the Expansion of Nobu Restaurant. The Project Includes a Large Exterior Garden Dining Area with Retractable Awning. Environmental Assessment: Exempt from the Provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) per Guideline Section 15303 (New Construction). Zoning District: CD-C(GF)(P) (Downtown Commercial). For More Information Contact the Project Planner Samuel Gutierrez at [samuel.gutierrez@cityofpaloalto.org](mailto:samuel.gutierrez@cityofpaloalto.org)

Chair Baltay: With that, we're going to move on to our first action item. This is a public hearing, quasi-judicial, for 620 Emerson Street. Recommendation on Applicant's request for approval of a minor architectural review to allow changes to a previously-approved ARB project, for the construction of a new two-story 4,063 square foot commercial building for the expansion of Nobu Restaurant. The project includes a large exterior garden dining area with retractable awning. Before we start, do we have any disclosures to make? Alex, disclosures?

Board Member Lew: No disclosures.

Chair Baltay: Osma, disclosures?

Vice Chair Thompson: No disclosures.

Chair Baltay: David?

Board Member Hirsch: No disclosures.

Chair Baltay: I also have no disclosures to make. Okay, at that point, we're ready for a staff report. Jodie and Sam, would you care to start?

Samuel Gutierrez, Project Planner: Good morning to the Board. It's nice to virtually see some of you. I will start my presentation. I am the project planner, Samuel Gutierrez, for this project located at 620 Emerson Street. The project seeks to modify a previously approved project that was previously reviewed by the Board, and I will go over some of those details and a little bit of the project history, so everyone is aware of the changes. With that said, I will move to sharing my screen. As I share my screen, I'm going to ask for confirmation that everyone can see what I'm sharing.

[Setting up screen share.]

Mr. Gutierrez: Once again, this is the 620 Emerson address. Here is a visual display of a rendering for the project that is proposed before you today.

Ms. Gerhardt: Sam, if we could maybe have everybody mute their microphones while you're giving the presentation.

Mr. Gutierrez: Sure. Everyone please mute. Has everyone muted their microphone? Okay. Moving on. Just to dive in a bit into this project. Again, it was previously submitted and approved for one design, and now we're looking to modify that approved design. The request before you today is an application to change the previously-approved design under 17 PLN-00331 for a new restaurant, 4,063 square feet, with a green roof. Again, that was the previously-approved design. This was the former site for the Stanford Florists building. The project originally involved the Nobu expansion from the 180 Hamilton hotel. That is still happening. The project did include a new trash room, and again, a green roof; backflow preventers that were hidden within some unique opening panels in the building façade. There were going to be some greenery via two street trees planted within planter boxes, and parking was provided via downtown in lieu fees for five parking spaces. Again, that's kind of an overview of the previous project. Moving forward, just to give a history of that, that previous project had two ARB hearings, the first one in February of 2018, and the second one during April 5, 2018, where the Board recommended approval with a subcommittee requirement for landscaping review. The project was appealed to City Council, and that was heard on August 20, 2018. The City Council voted 9-0 to deny the appeal and uphold the Director's decision, and the approved project started construction. The florist building was demoed. They basically have approved building permits for the approved project. Then, after the building was demoed, the applicant's team revised their project and wanted to bring forward those revisions to the Planning Department, and those were submitted on October 1, 2019. At that time, again, the building that existed – the Stanford Florists building – had been demoed, and that's where construction ceased. The site is currently vacant, but it is boarded up for security purposes. Going over the project changes – this is now jumping into the current project before you – the rooftop garden has been removed and the majority of the restaurant is now within this garden dining area. The garden dining area features retractable awnings that are proposed to be [distortion] the overall floor area of the project is very similar to the previous. It's 4,052 square feet with changes to the second floor. The previous project had a partial second floor for a small storage room, and now, the current project has a larger second floor. There's also to the public seating area... I'm sorry, can everyone still hear me? I'm getting a note that says my internet is slow. Okay, perfect. Sorry for that. So, there are changes to the public seating area, which we'll go into a comparison. They have a much larger seating area with a larger planter box, more greener at the sidewalk where the public can engage that. The street-facing façade is roughly 17 feet tall, and the rear two-story portion of the building now is approximately 25 feet tall. Another large change to the project is associated with this swapping out of [distortion] dining area with lots of tables and chairs, to this unconditioned dining area within the garden, which lowered the occupancy for the site. There's only 15 tables now proposed, where the previous had 36 and additional sushi bar seating. It's a much lower capacity restaurant. Just to show you and the public, this was the previously-approved design. Here you can see there was some public seating, and these are the two planting areas that I was talking about, with the little trees. This is the proposed project before you with modifications. You can see there's a large seating area here to the right, with a larger planter area, mimicking a lot of the same materials as the previously-proposed and approved project. This now forms kind of a gateway feature, but as you can see, it is not a traditional façade. There isn't sufficient space. Again, this back garden dining area behind the façade, the light feature. It does have a recessed entry, as you can see here, and there is a projecting awning that forms a pedestrian refuge, which continues over from the 180 Hamilton property. Just to show you some of the comparisons with the previously-approved project. You can see the large dining area here. It's a fully enclosed restaurant. Typical building. These are some conceptual renderings of the inside the restaurant. Again, you can see it's a quite full restaurant. And now, this is the proposed project changes. You can see that this area, which was once all conditioned full of tables, is now has been diminished significantly, and has this kind of river-y type hardscape pattern where there are tables distributed along that way. And here, you can see the conceptual renderings. It should be noted, there is a partially-enclosed area – that's this area here – for the restaurant, with limited seating. And then, here you can see the awnings that deploy over the garden seating area on the exterior of this area here. This is the previously-approved project roof plan. Again, this was the green roof that you could see. In the front portion, this would allow the hotel guests something pleasant to view. The hotel building next door is, I think it's eight stories tall, if memory serves correctly, and then, there's a partial second story on the upper floor of that previously-approved restaurant. And now, you can see here that the second floor plan is quite different. There is a more extensive second floor, and here's the awnings being deployed over the garden area, and then, over the conditioned area of the restaurant, there are some skylights that let in natural light. Here is the roof plan for reference, where the mechanical equipment has a louvered screen all around, again, to screen the equipment and also help with noise. You can see

another feature that has been added that wasn't previously proposed was RV thermal solar collectors for water heating and heat capture. Here's a second view, a longitudinal view. You can see, again, most of the project site is open here. These are retractable awnings. This kind of façade-like feature, that's one of the entryways. You enter the dining area, and of course, the building. And just for reference, this is the rear portion, which would be facing the alley at the rear of the project site. There have been some windows added, and you can see that, which weren't previously proposed. And in consideration of the residential property across the alleyway, the applicant has proposed to glaze the casement windows with some obscure glazing and maintain that as [inaudible] residential property's privacy. Moving on to the landscape plan, here is a zoomed-in view of the proposed garden dining area, with some photos of the proposed landscaping. It should be noted – and this is referenced in the staff report, of course – that the majority of the plants are not native, as clearly shown in the plant legend. The native plant that is proposed is, here is deer grass within the large planter area at the property line towards the street. While the others are not native, they are seeking a, kind of a Zen garden theme. However, these do include flowering trees and other plants that do flower, so they do pose potential for pollinators to utilize and for birds to possibly nest in, so they do have a suitable habitat aspect to them. Also, most of them are either medium or low-water use, as you can see in the table. The applicant is proposing a drip irrigation system to have more water efficiency in watering the plants. When staff reviewed this, we felt that it did meet the intent of the ARB finding for landscaping overall as there are native plants, there is suitable habitat, and overall, the landscaping is compatible with the architecture and the overall theme of the project. And then, with the addition of the retractable awnings, some of the non-native plants can have a partially-conditioned space and can be shielded from the summer heat and direct sunlight. That will help preserve them and maybe [inaudible]. And then, for contextual reference, I've added these photos. These are from the staff report attachment. You can see, there's the view along Emerson, and you can see there the Stanford Florists building that was previously existing, which is of course now demoed. The adjacent Category 3 historic retail building with also a restaurant component. And then, to reference further down the street on Emerson is the Pizzeria Delfina. This is an example of something that is comparatively similar to what is being proposed here at the 620 Emerson site. There is a restaurant with an outdoor dining area, and that is effectively what is being proposed now, is a large outdoor dining area with a restaurant experience with a partially-enclosed area. Contextually, there already is an example of this, and looking at the architecture of the street view, we felt that the proposal did meet the context-based finding as well. Some of the ARB considerations are Downtown Design Guidelines; the projects design in relation to the surrounding context; ARB findings, landscape overall appears to meet the intent of finding #5. And though staff believes the proposed façade is executed well and functions like a storefront façade, the ARG's feedback on the non-traditional storefront is welcome because, again, there is no conditioned space behind the front street elevation façade. It is a kind of portal gateway, but it does function like a storefront and has these large openings that you can see inside and engage the interior, like we would want to see ideally in a storefront, and down Emerson as well with the other buildings. Staff recommends that the Architectural Review Board take the following action: Recommend approval of the proposed project to the Director of Planning and Development Services based on the findings and subject to conditions of approval. Before I conclude my presentation today, I do want to note that in the staff report, there is an error. We do list the Department as Planning [inaudible] Environment. [inaudible] just a moment ago, it's Planning and Development Services. Even we forget our new name at times. Thank you. That concludes staff's presentation.

Chair Baltay: Thank you, Sam. I would appreciate it if all other board members could also turn their microphones back on. Do we have any questions for Sam? Anybody else? Alex, Osma, David? Questions?

Vice Chair Thompson: No.

Chair Baltay: Sam, I would like you to address one question. I recalled when we previously reviewed this project that we had requested the applicant provide the location for a potential future restroom on the property. Right now, as I understand it, the restrooms are provided on the neighboring property, but should that land use arrangement between the two properties go away, we felt it important that the project be capable of having a bathroom. Can you explain what's been done for that?

Mr. Gutierrez: Yes. Actually, that requirement still stands. We previously had a condition of approval, and there was a legal arrangement also set up between the City and the property owner for, in the event of

the interior connections terminating, that the 620 Emerson site would need to create bathrooms for that site. That would be a fully-functional, independent site. Within the submitted plan set, there is also that example. So, the site will be fully plumbed and ready for a bathroom. Of course, they just will not have one for the guests. It does have a bathroom actually on site, upstairs on the second floor portion of the site, but that's actually for the restaurant staff. But you referenced the submitted plan set. There is a bathroom plan, and it does show how it would share the bathrooms with the Nobu hotel at 180 Hamilton. And then, there is also the alternative plan where, if the connections were to terminate, where the bathrooms would be located. That is noted in the plan set.

Chair Baltay: Thank you, Sam. Do we have any other questions? I see that Alex and David have not turned their microphones back on again.

[Adjusting microphones]

Chair Baltay: Any questions, Alex, before we go on?

Board Member Lew: No questions.

Chair Baltay: Osma, any questions?

Vice Chair Thompson: No.

Chair Baltay: Okay. Sorry to be so literal here. Then we're ready for...

Board Member Hirsch: Wait, wait, I do have a question.

Chair Baltay: Oh, David, you do have a question. Okay, go ahead, David.

Board Member Hirsch: I've seen sort of a mixed view of the way in which you get in from the street, from Emerson, and I wonder if the gate... Is both doors open in the gate? Is that double door? Sam, maybe you can answer that.

Mr. Gutierrez: Yes, I believe they both open.

Board Member Hirsch: They both, okay. Thank you. That's it.

Chair Baltay: Okay. With that, we're ready for the applicant to make a presentation, if they'd care to. We haven't heard from them yet, but Sam or Vinh, can you help us get the applicant on board, please?

Mr. Nguyen: Sam, which applicant should I unmute to speak?

Mr. Gutierrez: Actually, the applicant has provided a video for their presentation, so I can play that directly. I don't believe they need to speak at this time.

Mr. Nguyen: Okay, go ahead and play the video, and after the video, if they need to speak to answer any questions, just let me know.

Chair Baltay: Vinh, as always, we want to be sure that we're timing this at 10 minutes. The applicant will have 10 minutes to speak or present. Let's keep track of that. Go ahead, Sam.

Mr. Gutierrez: Okay, I will share my screen with the video. Before I start it, I will ask for confirmation that the screen is being shared correctly.

[Connecting applicant's video.]

Ms. Gerhardt: Can we also unmute Greg, who I believe is the architect? Just in case he needs to speak over the video.

Chair Baltay: I would very much like for him to access if possible.

Mr. Nguyen: Sure.

Mr. Gutierrez: Can everyone see the shared screen now?

Chair Baltay: Hold on one second. Do we have Greg, the architect, on board here? Can he hear us? Greg?

Greg Stutheit: Hello, yes, can you hear me?

Chair Baltay: Very well, Greg. We're at the point where we'd like to get your presentation. We're going ahead with the video you provided. Is that what you'd like to do.

Mr. Stutheit: Sure, that would be fine. Thank you.

Chair Baltay: Okay. Let's go ahead with your video presentation. Thank you.

Mr. Gutierrez: Okay. I'll start sharing again. Can everyone see the shared screen?

Chair Baltay: Yes.

Board Member Hirsch: Yes.

[Video Playing]

Mr. Stutheit: Hi, good morning. My name is Greg Stutheit, and I'm with Montalba Architects. It's nice to see some of you again, and good to meet others, digitally. Thank you for having us back to present to you a requested design update for our project at 620 Emerson Street, especially during these challenging times. We've been asked to present you the following, which we feel are really exciting adjustments to the project that will create a very special new designation in downtown Palo Alto. As many of you will probably remember, we previously had some good discussions leading up to the approval of a new restaurant at 620 Emerson Street, a restaurant to function in conjunction with the adjacent Nobu Hotel at 180 Hamilton. You can see here on the left the previously-approved façade and program, and on the right, our requested design revision, the major difference being the transformation of interior dining room into an exterior dining garden. Where previously our façade had utilized a series of large windows to draw attention into the dining area, we have retained an architectural expression to the façade and opened it to a planted exterior dining room beyond. Here are some context photos of the site as it appears today. Obviously, we want to do better. With the help of the Planning Department, we focused our proposed façade on maintaining the design features that had previously helped support the downtown urban design guidelines listed here. Previous display areas into the dining area are still framed with architectural elements such as stone columns, and peer through a decorative architectural bronze screening element. We have maintained a generous entryway that is recessed from and pushed to one side of the façade, to help provide visual interest. In plan, you can see that this entry provides a recessed connection with the street. Signage is minimal and tasteful, its location drawing pedestrians toward the new entry, similar to our previous simple, modern arcade that provides some protection from the elements. Again, here in plan, you can see that this element extends across a section of pedestrian seating along the street. This seat is flanked by an outward facing raised planter with California native planting planned. Beyond the street planting is the garden dining area, framed by subtly lit chiseled limestone and a decorative bronze screen. Finally, the massing of the façade and its reference to the larger urban fabric is important. Where we had previously aligned with the adjacent building, our façade now proposes to align with elements of the adjacent facades on both sides. These alignments take cues from the adjacent structures, but also render them differently. Taken together, we intend these moves to extend a logical transition between the structures, while providing the variation necessary to support an active and vibrant street scape. Our exterior materials palette is understated, as

might be expected for such a small façade, but supports visual texture and interest in much the same way as our previously-approved façade. It's important to us that the element separating the street from the dining areas also support these ideals. You can see here some inspiration for this element. We're working to adjust the physical manifestation of the screen to function as a screen, which separates interior garden from outer street while also providing visual interest and the same sense of layered spaces to the garden beyond that you see in the imagery here. To provide you with a better sense of the outdoor garden dining concept, we've included a couple of images of the space, overlooking it from above. Here you can see the garden taking full advantage of the beautiful California climate. As was our intent previously with the previous rooftop garden, this also breaks up the view of dead rooftops from above and provides some visual interest to hotel guests. And, during periods of inclement weather or excessive heat, we have cloth canopies that help to shade the dining areas, as well as the garden, helping to even out temperature swings on the planting below. As part of our revised proposal, and especially in these uncertain times, it feels good to suggest a series of features that give back to our environment. We're targeting a number of ways to reduce our shared impact on the environment, beyond the obvious provision of green space. Some of these proposals actively offset impacts of the project, using soil collectors to supplement domestic water heating systems, recovering and reusing excess energy from kitchen equipment, and utilizing radiant heating to help reduce reliance on forced air and other comfort systems. Others such as solar lighting strategies, rainwater collection and passive ventilation form a multi-prong strategy for sustainability. Here, a summary of similar conditions shows the benefits of solar shading, solar lighting, and energy harvesting, as well as passive ventilation. Similarly here, during the winter seasons, solar radiation is welcomed to provide thermal light. Excess energy is harvested from mechanical sources in the kitchen, which are necessary for the operation, and then, used to augment radiant heating under the thermal floor [inaudible]. Rainwater is captured and sent to be infiltrated into the garden to the greatest extent possible. We thank you again for your time and the opportunity to show you these exciting provisions. We hope that you've enjoyed our first-ever social distanced presentation. On behalf of our entire team, we look forward to completing this great downtown project. Thank you.

Chair Baltay: Thank you very much, Greg. A very nice presentation, although I confess, I feel like I'm just getting on an airplane, heading to JFK. Do we have any questions for the applicant from the Board? Does anyone have any questions?

Vice Chair Thompson: Yes.

Chair Baltay: Osma, go ahead.

Vice Chair Thompson: The limestone material that is the façade, does that match the adjacent building?

Mr. Stutheit: Yes. The intent is that it's similar to the adjacent building. We're lighting it inside in different ways, but the intent is that it becomes a bit of an extension.

Vice Chair Thompson: So, it's slightly different, but similar?

Mr. Stutheit: Yeah, like I said, it's being rendered a little bit differently because we're lighting it differently, so it will appear a little different, especially at night. But it is the same textured limestone used on the adjacent building.

Vice Chair Thompson: Thank you. I had another question. Has there been a structural review of the span across the front, just to make sure...? I'm just curious. Just to make sure that potentially down the line, if there hadn't been, there might be further support? The span where the grate is?

Mr. Stutheit: Yes. We are working right now with our structural engineer. We're actually, you know, I guess taking the assumption that this is going to go well, and we're getting ready to re-submit documents to the City.

Vice Chair Thompson: Okay, thank you. I have one more. I noticed in the renderings, there's two types of awnings. There's one that's sort of, that has sort of a scalloped appearance, and the other one that has a flat appearance. I just wanted to understand the design intent of choosing two types of awnings.

Mr. Stutheit: Obviously, the space that is there is quite a, sort of large space. We are attempting to create this garden dining experience that we hope is going to be just a really amazing experience, and in doing so, we wanted the garden to be sort of as flexible as possible. So, there's sort of a series of coverage options where we have a long span cover that helps to protect the softscape, and then, a more, sort of smaller, simpler maybe to deploy, structure that covers the seating on more of a day-to-day basis.

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

Chair Baltay: Thank you, Osma. Any other questions from the Board?

Board Member Hirsch: Yes.

Chair Baltay: David, go ahead.

Board Member Hirsch: Looking at the plan, I note the waving kind of pattern around the seating areas that are sort of into the landscape, and some kind of connection to the doorway coming from the building. It's a little confusing as to know where people can go within the garden. It's not so much our concern, but maybe you could describe somehow how the circulation will work. Because simply coming in from the street doorway gets you into the kind of waving pattern. Does it also get you up to the linear, rectangular seating that's up closer to the building?

Mr. Stutheit: Yes. There is a pathway that connects the street façade entrance to the rest of the dining spaces. It takes you sort of on an exploratory path, if you will, through the garden in that direction, so it's not a direct connection, but it does take you.... Kind of raises up a little bit. There's a little bit of a grade difference through the garden as you approach the seating.

Board Member Hirsch: Your intention is then to use that waving pattern to get to other level of rectangular seating.

Mr. Stutheit: Correct. Someone could be greeted at the door, basically, off of the sidewalk, and then, shown the way to their table. Some of the tables may be at times out in the landscape itself, kind of along this circuitous path, and then there's a sort of block of seating and a more, sort of pseudo indoor/outdoor dining space more towards the middle of the property.

Chair Baltay: Okay, does that answer your question, David?

Board Member Hirsch: Yes, I mean, I guess that's it. Your intention here is to have an experience of garden on your way in, and not just immediately be taken to your, directly to your table. Is that the intention?

Mr. Stutheit: Yeah, that's correct. Maybe I should have said something a little bit before about, our intent with this whole change, you know, we're blessed with an amazing client who sees the benefit in something like this where, you know, we had previously kind of been struggling to bring the outdoors into the dining room with indoor planters and a large skylight. When we all saw the site open and empty, there was sort of an epiphany that happened, and we said, you know, why are we struggling to bring the outdoors in when we can create a garden that we then... Dine in garden. And wouldn't that be so much better an experience. So, yes, you got it perfectly. It's all about, kind of the garden dining experience.

Board Member Hirsch: I guess I can accept that as long as everything is of quality and experience. The circuitousness of that might be worth doing. And as long as all aspects of the inside can function that way, including the perimeter walls, as well as the ground scape.

Mr. Stutheit: Yeah, that is definitely our intent. I mean, when I think about other examples, like the Japanese garden at Golden Gate Park, the experience is exploring the garden, and if you can do that on the way to your dining table, that's great.

Board Member Hirsch: In that case, what is your intention for the treatment of the wall of the adjacent building?

Mr. Stutheit: Obviously, we will be doing what we can to improve the image of the wall of the adjacent building, but creating it as, sort of as a simple backdrop to the garden, if you will. Maybe taking it in a little more of a, sort of streamlined ideal of creating a backdrop for the thing in front.

Board Member Hirsch: The texture of it is really kind of a plaster over that surface?

Mr. Stutheit: Yes. Correct. Simple.

Board Member Hirsch: And the trees that are in front of it, which I don't think you ever showed that elevation – I don't recall, anyhow – what is your consideration for portion of trees, the wall surface there? As a backdrop.

Mr. Stutheit: I'm sorry, I'm not sure I understand the question.

Board Member Hirsch: The neighboring building, there are some trees in the garden that are on that side. I wasn't able to locate kind of the tree that would be on that side of the interior space, but I'm assuming there are some trees in the garden on that side. It's just landscaped where [inaudible] ground elements and some trees.

Mr. Stutheit: Yes, some ornamental trees.

Board Member Hirsch: Ornamental trees.

Mr. Stutheit: Yeah.

Board Member Hirsch: Have you studied that in proportion to that façade?

Mr. Stutheit: Not in great detail as far as the planting itself goes, but obviously that will be a consideration moving forward.

Board Member Hirsch: Okay. I think that's all the questions I have.

Mr. Stutheit: Thank you, David. Any other questions? Very well. With that, we'll open the meeting to public comments. Vinh, do we have anyone who wishes to address us?

Mr. Nguyen: Right now, we have 11 attendees and one raised hand. One second. We have one raised hand from a caller with the number, last four digits 1000. Let me turn on the timer. So, for this speaker, I believe they get three minutes. Is that correct?

Chair Baltay: Yes.

[Connecting with caller.]

Chair Baltay: Could you please state and spell your name for the record. Go ahead, please.

Martin Bernstein: It's Martin Bernstein [spells name]. Can you hear me okay?

Chair Baltay: We can hear you fine. Proceed.

Mr. Bernstein: Thank you. I'm the neighbor to the rear of the proposed project. My address is 617 High Street. It's a Victorian house. It's my personal residence, and I support the suggestion or the design that's proposed of the two windows on the second floor on the rear being casement, and then, being obscure glass. That will take care of the privacy concern I would have for those two windows. I support the plan as proposed. Thank you.

Chair Baltay: Thank you, Mr. Bernstein. Vinh, do we have any other people wishing to speak?

Mr. Nguyen: We have no more raised hands. Let's give everyone maybe another five or 10 seconds, to see if anyone else wants to speak.

Mr. Bernstein: Chair Baltay?

Chair Baltay: Yes?

Mr. Bernstein: I just wanted to also add that I'm speaking as an individual and not a member of any group.

Chair Baltay: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Bernstein, yes. We understand that.

Mr. Nguyen: Okay, seeing as how there are no more raised hands, we can move on with the agenda.

Chair Baltay: Okay, so we will close the meeting to public comments. As we start our discussion, is it possible to get the street elevation of the building on the screen so we can be looking at that as we talk?

Board Member Hirsch: Good idea.

Mr. Gutierrez: I can share that. One moment.

Chair Baltay: David, why don't we give the floor to you to start with our comments as soon as we get an image up. Anything you like, really, but I'd like to be looking at something.

Board Member Hirsch: Okay. Evidently, I don't have to click "Raise Hand" here, I can just speak.

Chair Baltay: Yeah, you just speak. To all the Board members, I'd prefer to keep it more informal and speak as you like with respect to each other. We'll start with Dave Hirsch, if he'd like to make comments.

Board Member Hirsch: But no image yet. Wait for the image. There it is. Okay. Well, first off, I think that it is an improvement from where the Board was before. However, I wasn't available for that particular meeting, so I'm starting from scratch here. Some parts of this are somewhat diffused because, you know, you don't look at the whole façade from this view. You're not looking at the hotel itself, which already has a kind of linear treatment, and that wasn't really discussed. I'm assuming that the linear treatment that's on the base of the hotel sort of matches up with the canopy level here. And the canopy, which runs all the way across everything, then kind of ties that together. However, it's a substantial change in material and color, which I think has a good relationship to the darker versus the lighter stone, and the brass versus the.... I guess it's some kind of textured metal, against the textured stone. The proportions there are nice, and the openness, of course, is really rather wonderful, to the street. The usefulness of the sitting area, I think if it is monitored so that people who do sit there aren't camping out there also, which is an issue with downtown, but it is, after all, close to the entry to the hotel, so I think as an entry, an entry to the hotel, I think it's going to be monitored, I assume, by the hotel itself. The grading is very nice, the fact that there are trees behind it I think is a pleasant thing. I'm concerned about the proportion of those. I mention the wall on the opposite side, that there is a consistency to the way the interior is landscaped and thought of as the view of the walls. Because the side of the adjacent building is up fairly high. I like the fact, of course, that the limestone ends at the right place on the adjacent building, and I was concerned that, in some of the elevations that I saw, it looked as if the limestone moved forward of the terra cotta patterning that's in the adjacent building. I hope that's not the case, that it aligns with the actual surface of the surround of the terra cotta on that side. As to the idea of the paving on the inside, if that's our concern at all, it is to

the extent that it comes out from the gateway to the front line of the limestone. I think that should be a really enjoyable kind of experience, seeing the material. It's going to be very tricky for you to get somebody who is good enough to make it work in the whole garden, but the fact that it is a, kind of a hand-tuned method of paving the interior space, I think could be quite an exciting experience, in fact. Tried it once myself in the rear garden of the brownstone and it does take a lot of talent to do it very well, to match up the stones and the casualness of the paving itself. And how to do that on a slope, when you're actually sloping down and back up again within the courtyard, I think may cause some problems with the way in which you treat the edges of stone, that you cut it to fit into a pathway like that. It's going to be up to you folks to figure out how to do that very well because a lot of this kind of a garden, in a lot of the Japanese type gardens, has to do with detail, and the way in which you construct it. For example, screening itself, when it meets up with a metal, Osma pointed out that there is, to keep light is one thing; to keep it structural is something else. And you will need some engineering to do that right, and you will need some careful detailing as the screening meets the stone walls. I'm assuming the limestone you're describing is smooth surface where people will be sitting there, on the top, and that the underneath area is recessed, although I didn't see that detail. Maybe I didn't see it because I didn't look enough, but there should be some recess of the limestone coming across, and the lighting that's under there, and making that work so that there will be kind of a limestone cap. The front of the seating area projects out and isn't just flush below. Typical to what you would do normally with the base. At least that's my opinion. It should be set back there so that the setting area would look a little more cantilevered than it does because it's kind of washed out by the lighting [inaudible]. I think the proportion of the limestone is good. It changes that in the proportion of the adjacent building and carries across the top and back to the main building, which is a nice follow through. My sort of biggest concern here is that, as a sort of Japanese garden, you know, it isn't really a Zen garden, that the detailing of this, and the uniformity of this canopy, is kind of overwhelming to me. It doesn't kind of meet the same scaling as other elements within this whole design. And I somehow sort of feel, although the dark and light, which I said I like before, almost would have preferred to have another material, and to see the structure of the front. But this is a personal thought, not one that others of the Board maybe would agree with. I would have seen it broken up differently. I would have liked to have seen something like a glass element as opposed to the stones. Sort of a lighter element. And I would have liked to have seen the structure of this expressed the way it is. It's a completely different design. I accept what you have done here with this material, but if I were doing it, I would have done it differently. I would have made the structure all the way through, emphasize the doorway with it, slightly bigger proportion. Maybe a different kind of a canopy here, and had a separate, kind of a glazed structure in between. The experience would have been quite different, and it would have been different relative to the hotel itself, where it isn't really only a foot or so away from the color of the hotel that extends almost as far as this canopy. That's my concern. I think this works. It ties everything together. It's a bit more of a differentiation from the hotel color itself, but I leave it to the architect to think about that as a possible alternative. It is a big change in the façade. Other than that, I think the planning of the whole thing is well thought out. The kitchen in the back and the second level now allowing for greater usefulness for the whole area. The path for serving I find a little bit difficult, and the path for connecting means that you really have to spend some time there before getting to your seat, taken to your seat. That's going to be quite an interesting arrangement with the hotel, where they only run this thing as a functioning dining hall. That's pretty much my comments.

Chair Baltay: Thank you very much, David. Alex, would you care to go next?

Board Member Lew: Sure. I can recommend approval of the project today. I think the drawing set and design have been very well designed in detail. I have a couple comments. One is on, I think, Sam, you had mentioned precedence, and had cited the Delfina restaurant. And then, there was another one, too, a longstanding one, which was the Gatehouse on Lytton. It dates back to, like, 1975. There was, like, a mid-block courtyard restaurant, and it actually had a similar cable and canvas retractable roof structure, too, similar to this proposed project. It was a very well-loved and popular restaurant in town for many years. I think that this can fit in well. I think the proposed stone façade and the alignment is actually very well done, and I think it captures the spirit of the building subplot, as well as the Delfina outdoor garden restaurant. I think materials like the bronze and stone are very high quality. With regards to the native plant finding, I think this is a very special circumstance here, where the plants really need to look good all year round, and that's hard for many of the native plants to do. I will add that the flowering cherry trees

to provide fruit that the birds will eat. I think my only comment on the garden would be, just the decomposed granite, if it's tracking out the sidewalk. But I think there are ways of addressing that with stabilizers. I don't really have any experience with that. And I do see a stone threshold at the front façade, so there is some sort of transition area, so I think that could also help as well. That's all of my comments. I think the project is very handsome.

Chair Baltay: Thank you very much, Alex. Osma, if you'd care to address us.

Vice Chair Thompson: Yes. I can also recommend approval of this project today. I do think it is also an improvement over the previous project that was proposed. I can remember going through some façade iterations for that one to try and make it a little more amenable to the street scape, and I think a lot of those discussions have really filtered here. So, contrary to Board Member Hirsch's assessment, I actually think that this update on the façade doesn't feel like a very big change. It feels very similar of the same family of what was there before, and I appreciate that it is an extension of the adjacent parcel in terms of the aesthetics. I do want to congratulate the designer on this. Especially now, you know, when social distancing is so important, it's really refreshing to see a project that really takes that to heart and sort of reduces the amount of capacity in a really thoughtful way. The only item that I'd like to bring up – and I'd be open if the rest of the Board is open to this, to review it perhaps in subcommittee – it seems that the gate, the oil-rubbed gate, it looks really great here in the rendering. The material sample just showed, like, a flat plate, and I'm sure that was just a color sample. The precedent imagery seemed like the design of that gate isn't fully designed just yet, so I think that would be something that might be worthwhile to review later on. But I see design intent here, and it's really great, so it would just be a matter of following up on that once there is a finer point on that. But, yeah, otherwise, I'm all thumbs up. I'm very excited about this project, really excited about how this could be a really great addition to the city.

[crosstalk]

Chair Baltay: Thank you, Osma. Oh, did I cut you off there?

Vice Chair Thompson: No, yeah, I just said that's it for me.

Chair Baltay: Okay, great. Thanks, Osma. I share the opinions of my colleagues. I think this is an improvement, and I'm very much in support of this project. I think it's important for us to be clear that we do think it contextually compatible. I think Alex's point out about Palo Alto actually having a history of open garden restaurants like this is correct, and quite applicable here. I think this will be a handsome addition to the restaurants seen in Palo Alto, and I'm looking forward to seeing this go in. I appreciate very much the continuing bench on the front façade. I remember us pushing for that more in the past, and this seems to be a very thoughtfully, carefully integrated bench, which is going to be quite nice. I think it both meets some sort of a civic need, but it also seems to fit right. The proportions, the material, everything is good. Alex, if I could, I'd like to point out one thing I'm concerned about regarding the landscaping. I'm in support of this landscaping as it is and do recognize that it's non-native landscaping, and I think it's okay because the overall design intent here is some sort of a Zen garden, Japanese garden type of thing, which is in keeping with the kind of restaurant they want to put in here. I think that's the special circumstance. I'm concerned, though, that if the reason for allowing this is, as you put it, just because we want to keep up year-round appearances, that seems to be a pretty big loophole for every other applicant in the future. I don't think we quite want to set that as a precedent. Do you have any thoughts about that statement? What do you think?

Board Member Lew: Yeah, it is an issue, but I think in this particular location, being downtown, I think it does warrant special consideration compared to, say, a more suburban site. And then, I think the other issue, too, is that you have a restaurant, you have lots of people out there using the space, and that's actually going to make it less attractive to wildlife.

Chair Baltay: Right.

Board Member Lew: It's just inherently, they're sort of, somewhat incompatible in a very small urban space.

Chair Baltay: Fair enough. I'm just pointing out, I don't think we want to set the precedent being just year-round attractiveness as a good reason to not use native plants.

Board Member Lew: Agreed, and I think that there are... I thought about native plant substitutions, and I think there are some that could happen. I think it is possible, but I don't object to anything that they bought here, that they are proposing. Say, for example, like the wisteria that's being proposed on the hotel wall. There is no native plant that is going to do that. Right? You might be able to find a substitution for, like, the flowering cherry tree, but, yeah, there are some plants on the list, there are no native equivalents.

Chair Baltay: Yeah. Okay. I'm in support of the project, and I think I hear a majority, if not an unanimity, within the Board. Does anyone care to make any other comments, or can we have a motion, please?

Board Member Hirsch: You know, I sounded like the one who was least favorable, but, in fact, I am favorable to the project.

Chair Baltay: I think so, yeah.

Board Member Hirsch: I was just giving thought to alternative, which really isn't our role, particularly. It's to look at the project as it is presented and say is it appropriate, or not. I would say it is appropriate. I do feel there's connections back to the building that are not 100 percent appropriate at this point, but it's hardly enough to hold up the project.

Chair Baltay: If it's any reassurance, David, we struggled mightily with what level of connection was correct. I remember vividly whether the façade material should be exactly the same as the hotel, or different, and I think the applicant has come up with a good solution. It was a bit of a process last time, sure.

Board Member Hirsch: Okay.

Chair Baltay: I guess I'll...

Vice Chair Thompson: [crosstalk] Oh, sorry.

Chair Baltay: I was just going to make a motion. If you'd like to do that, Osma?

Vice Chair Thompson: I was going to do it.

Chair Baltay: Please.

## **MOTION**

Vice Chair Thompson: I move that we approve this project subject to the conditions of approval, and also to bring the grate, when it is finally designed, back to subcommittee at some point in the future.

Chair Baltay: Do we have any seconds on that motion?

Board Member Lew: I will second.

Chair Baltay: Okay, it's been moved and seconded. Does anyone want to address that? Okay, if not, we're going to have a vote. The process for a vote will be that Vinh will do a roll call and each person will state their vote in response to Vinh's roll call. Vinh, if you could please do a vote for us.

Aye: Baltay, Hirsch, Lew, Thompson (4)

No: (0)

## **MOTION TO APPROVE PASSES 4-0.**

Chair Baltay: Okay, we have four in favor, none opposed, the item is approved.

### **Approval of Minutes**

3. Draft Architectural Review Board Meeting Minutes for March 5, 2020.

Chair Baltay: The next item is approval of the minutes from March 5, 2020. Do I have any comments regarding these minutes from anybody else on the Board?

Board Member Lew: I have one comment. Packet page 46, there is a phonetic spelling of a plant. That's rhamnus [correctly spells name of plant.] That's all.

Chair Baltay: Okay, well, be better get that corrected, Jodie. Any other comments or corrections. Okay, with that, can I have a motion, please?

### **MOTION**

Board Member Lew: I will move that we approve the minutes for March 15 [sic], 2020.

Board Member Hirsch: Second.

Chair Baltay: Second by Board Member Hirsch. Vinh, if we could have a roll call vote, please.

Aye: Baltay, Hirsch, Lew, Thompson (4)

No: (0)

### **MOTION TO APPROVE PASSES 4-0.**

Chair Baltay: Thank you very much.

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

Chair Baltay: Moving on, we have Board Member questions, comments or announcements. In the past, we've heard from Alex regarding the Ventura public process. I don't know if that's going on. Alex, do you know anything?

Board Member Lew: The March 24<sup>th</sup> meeting, as well as the April 21<sup>st</sup> meeting, have or are being cancelled, and there's nothing scheduled at this time. There was some mentioning of doing it by Zoom, but it's a very large group, so I don't know if they figured out the logistics of that yet. There is one last thing. On the dedicated website for the project, which is PaloAltoNVCAP.org, community members can fill out a survey based on the three alternate schemes that were proposed.

Chair Baltay: Thank you, Alex, for that report. Any other Board Member questions, comments or announcements? I would like to then alert my colleagues that at our next meeting, I'd like us to discuss just the mechanics of how this meeting has gone on line. One issue that has come up already is whether we need to have physical material samples for projects, or if the high-resolution photographs staff provided are adequate, or if we need to look at some other solution. If we do continue on the meetings, I suspect that would be an issue. I'd like us to not discuss it today, but to think about it over the next couple weeks, and be prepared to discuss that and other items regarding how we're doing this. If we're going to be having online meetings, we want to get the method right. Any other questions, comments, or announcements? Okay, with that, we'll adjourn the meeting. We do have a subcommittee item for Board Members Hirsch and Lew to pick up, but the rest of the meeting is adjourned. Thank you everybody.

### **Adjournment**

**Subcommittee Items**

4. 3705 El Camino Real [18PLN-00136]: Subcommittee Review of a Previously Approved Project That was Conditioned to Return With Project Changes Related to Landscaping and Minor Facade Modifications. Environmental Assessment: Exempt From the Provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in Accordance With Guidelines Section 15194 (Affordable Housing). Zoning District: CN(AH) (Neighborhood Commercial with Affordable Housing Combining District). For More Information Contact the Project Planner, Claire Raybould at [Claire.Raybould@cityofpaloalto.org](mailto:Claire.Raybould@cityofpaloalto.org)



## Architectural Review Board Subcommittee Review

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TO: Adrienne Steichen, Pyatok Architects, asteichen@pyatok.com  
 SUBJECT: 3705 El Camino Real [18PLN-00136]  
 DATE: April 16, 2020  
 FROM: Claire Raybould, AICP, Senior Planner

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The application, and plans dated March 11, 2020, was reviewed by the ARB Subcommittee on April 16, 2020 in accordance with condition of approval #6, as stated below. The ARB Subcommittee comprised of Board members Lew and Hirsch.

6. ARB SUBCOMMITTEE. Prior to the issuance of the 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. Update the landscaping plan to show, to the degree feasible, street trees along El Camino Real frontage, or other significant landscaping.
- b. Enhance the corner of the building at the intersection of El Camino Real and Wilton Avenue to make it a more visible and distinctive part of the building.
- c. Modify the color and texture of the alley-facing elevation to better relate to the rest of the building.

At the meeting, the Subcommittee agreed with the revisions presented. Additionally, the Subcommittee directed staff to work with the applicant to incorporate a mix of fescue grasses in the street planter strips instead of utilizing a single species of fescue. This Subcommittee Review letter shall be printed on the plans submitted for building permit(s).