



Architectural Review Board

Staff Report (ID # 11215)

Report Type: Action Items **Meeting Date:** 7/2/2020

Summary Title: 4260 El Camino Real: Facade Change to Existing Office Building

Title: PUBLIC HEARING / QUASI-JUDICIAL. 4260 El Camino Real [19PLN-00142]: Consideration of a Minor Architectural Review to Allow for Façade Renovation to an Existing Structure. Scope of Work Includes Removing Existing Wood Siding and Replacing it With new Stucco and Metal Siding, new Paint and Metal Cable Railing Along all Stairways. Environmental Assessment: Exempt. Zoning District: CS (Service Commercial). For More Information Contact the Project Planner Emily Foley at emily.foley@cityofpaloalto.org.

From: Jonathan Lait

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Architectural Review Board (ARB) take the following action(s):

1. Recommend approval of the proposed project to the Director of Planning and Development Services based on findings and subject to conditions of approval.

Background

Project Information

Owner:	Juliana Lee
Architect:	Kanler Architects: Rajiv Agarwal and Rucha Shah
Representative:	N/A
Legal Counsel:	N/A

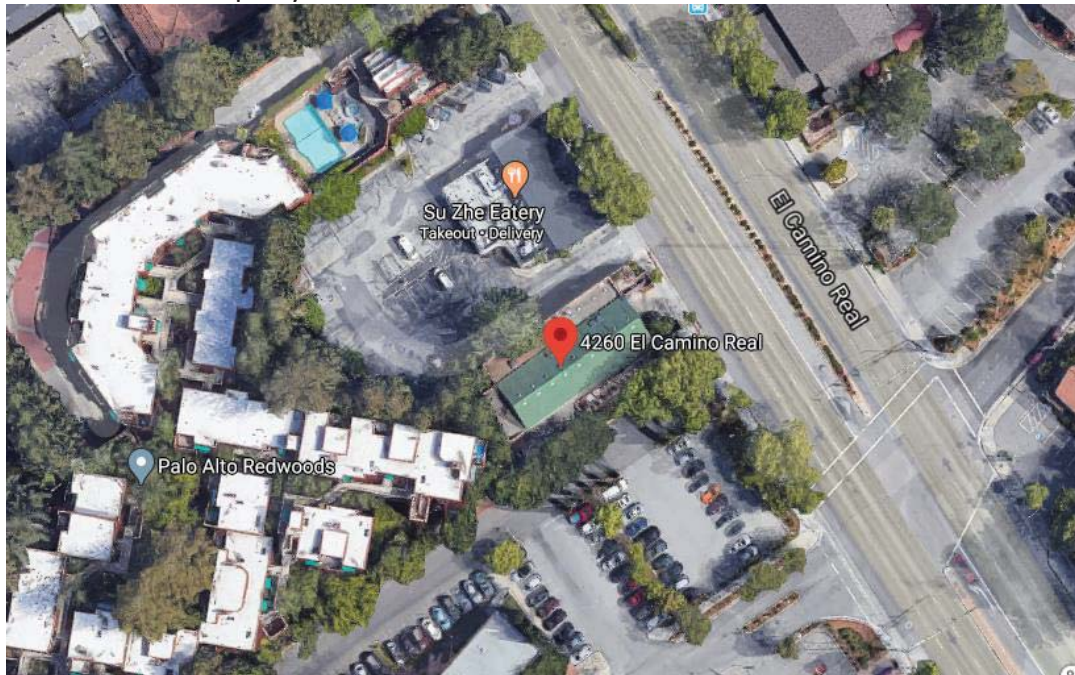
Property Information

Address:	4260 El Camino Real
Neighborhood:	Palo Alto Orchards
Lot Dimensions & Area:	49.9 feet wide, 150 feet deep, 7,490 square feet
Housing Inventory Site:	No

City of Palo Alto
 Planning & Development Services
 250 Hamilton Avenue
 Palo Alto, CA 94301
 (650) 329-2442

Located w/in a Plume:	No
Protected/Heritage Trees:	No
Historic Resource(s):	No
Existing Improvement(s):	4,854 sf; 2 stories; 33 feet; built 1987
Existing Land Use(s):	Office
Adjacent Land Uses & Zoning:	North: Restaurant, approved hotel (18PLN-00096) (CS) West: Restaurant/Hotel (CS) East: Multiple-Family Residential (CS(L)) South: Hotel (CS)

Aerial View of Property:



Source: Google

Land Use Designation & Applicable Plans

Zoning Designation: Service Commercial

Comp. Plan Designation: Service Commercial

Context-Based

Design Criteria: Yes

Downtown Urban

Design Guide: Not Applicable

South of Forest Avenue

Coordinated Area Plan: Not Applicable

Baylands Master Plan: Not Applicable

El Camino Real Design Guidelines (1976 / 2002): Yes, Hotel District

Proximity to Residential Uses or Districts (150'): Yes

Located w/in the Airport Influence Area: No

Prior City Reviews & Action

City Council: None

PTC: None

HRB: None

ARB: None

Project Description

The applicant proposes to renovate the building façade with metal panels and new stair railing. The metal panels are gray and slightly metallic. They are smaller on the front façade and larger on the sides. The railing is proposed to be open, to soften massing and allow visibility for cars entering and exiting the ground-level parking garage. No changes to floor area, height, circulation, or use are proposed.

Requested Entitlements, Findings and Purview:

The applicant requests approval an Architectural Review – Minor (AR) – application. The process for evaluating this type of application is set forth in PAMC 18.77.070. AR applications are reviewed by the ARB and recommendations are forwarded to the Planning & Development Services Director for action within five business days of the ARB’s recommendation. Action by the Director is appealable to the City Council if an appeal is filed within 14 days of the decision. AR projects are evaluated against specific findings. All findings must be made in the affirmative to approve the project. Failure to make any one finding requires project redesign or denial. The findings to approve an AR application are provided in Attachment B.

Analysis¹

Neighborhood Setting and Character

The existing building is located adjacent to 4256 El Camino, the site of a recently approved five-story hotel. The Palo Alto Redwoods condominium complex is located directly behind the building.

The surrounding buildings generally incorporate traditional materials such as siding, shingles, or stucco. The existing building is a rusty brown color with yellow accents. It is two blocks away from the Palo Alto Event Center, which also uses metal panels. The proposed changes do not affect the existing height or setbacks, or existing defining architectural features of the building, such as the roof gable or front façade windows. The existing stairwells will be modified to have open metal railings to improve visibility for cars and pedestrians.

Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan, Area Plans and Guidelines²

The Comprehensive Plan includes Goals, Policies, and Programs that guide the physical form of the City. The Comprehensive Plan provides the basis for the City’s development regulations and is used by City staff to regulate building and development and make recommendations on

¹ The information provided in this section is based on analysis prepared by the report author prior to the public hearing. The Architectural Review Board in its review of the administrative record and based on public testimony may reach a different conclusion from that presented in this report and may choose to make alternative findings. A change to the findings may result in a final action that is different from the staff recommended action in this report.

² The Palo Alto Comprehensive Plan is available online:
<http://www.cityofpaloalto.org/gov/topics/projects/landuse/compplan.asp>

projects. Further, ARB Finding #1 requires designs to be consistent and compatible with applicable elements of the Palo Alto Comprehensive Plan.

The Comprehensive Plan land use designation for the project site is Service Commercial. This designation allows auto services and dealerships, appliance stores, motels, and restaurants. The project is consistent with the policies in the Comprehensive Plan and therefore fulfills the goals of the Plan as well.

Zoning Compliance³

The applicant is not proposing changes to the footprint or height of the building, nor any change that would impact Zoning compliance. The metal panels are 7/8" thick, which may slightly increase the thickness of the wall which is counted towards the FAR. Additionally, the current office use is existing non-conforming for the CS zone.

Color and Materials

The applicant proposes to completely cover the building exterior in metal panels. The panels are smaller and darker on the front façade and tower element, and larger and lighter on the sides and rear. There is also corrugated metal siding to accent the front and rear gables. The metal panels fit at the corners with a flat outside corner trim. Adjacent panels sit flush with little relief between panels.

The proposed railing is a black post and cable system, with wide spacing for increased visibility through the railing. Existing doors and windows, which are black, will remain. The existing gable trusses will be painted black.

The proposed color scheme is shades of gray, with red accents for the roof and gables, and black for the windows and other architectural elements.

Multi-Modal Access & Parking

The project site includes 19 existing parking spaces in the garage, which meets the minimum automobile parking space requirements. The garage also has adequate bicycle storage.

Consistency with Architectural Review (AR) Findings

The project is consistent with most of the AR Findings. Based on the nature of this project, Finding #3 (regarding use of high quality materials and details) is the most relevant finding to consider. The change from horizontal wood siding to metal panels is substantial and affects the cohesiveness of the architectural style. A detailed review of the project's consistency with the Application Findings is provided in Attachment B.

³ The Palo Alto Zoning Code is available online: http://www.amlegal.com/codes/client/palo-alto_ca

Environmental Review

The subject project has been assessed in accordance with the authority and criteria contained in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the State CEQA Guidelines, and the environmental regulations of the City. Specifically, the project is Categorically Exempt per 15301 (Existing Facilities).

Public Notification, Outreach & Comments

The Palo Alto Municipal Code requires publication of a notice of this public hearing in a local paper and mailing of notices to owners and occupants of property within 600 feet of the subject property at least ten days in advance. Notice of a public hearing for this project was published in the *Daily Post* on June 19, 2020, which is 13 days in advance of the meeting. Postcard mailing occurred on June 18, 2020, which is 14 days in advance of the meeting.

Public Comments

As of the writing of this report, no project-related, public comments were received.

Alternative Actions

In addition to the recommended action, the Architectural Review Board may:

1. Approve the project with modified findings or conditions;
2. Continue the project to a date (un)certain; or
3. Recommend project denial based on revised findings.

Report Author & Contact Information

Emily Foley, AICP, Associate Planner
 (650) 617-3125
emily.foley@cityofpaloalto.org

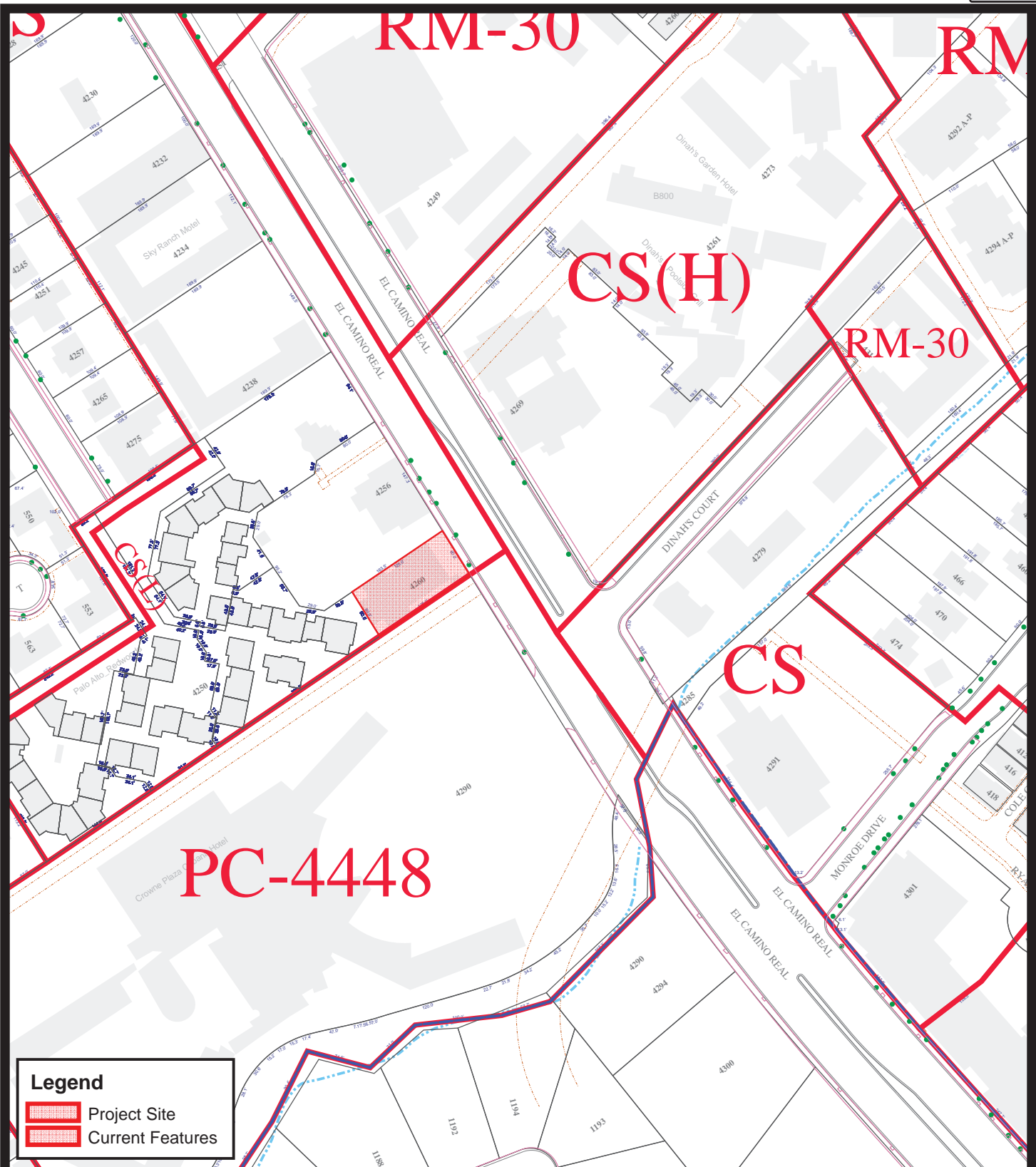
ARB⁴ Liaison & Contact Information

Jodie Gerhardt, AICP, Planning Manager
 (650) 329-2575
jodie.gerhardt@cityofpaloalto.org

Attachments:

- Attachment A: Location Map (PDF)
- Attachment B: Draft ARB Findings (DOCX)
- Attachment C: Zoning Comparison Table (DOCX)
- Attachment D: Project Plans (DOCX)

⁴ Emails may be sent directly to the ARB using the following address: arb@cityofpaloalto.org

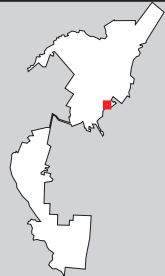


Legend

- Project Site
- Current Features



The City of
Palo Alto



Attachment A
4260 El Camino Real

This map is a product of the
City of Palo Alto GIS



ATTACHMENT B
ARB FINDINGS FOR APPROVAL
4260 El Camino Real
19PLN-00142

In order for the ARB to make a recommendation of approval, the project must comply with the following Findings for Architectural Review as required in Chapter 18.76.020 of the PAMC.

Finding #1: The design is consistent with applicable provisions of the Palo Alto Comprehensive Plan, Zoning Code, coordinated area plans (including compatibility requirements), and any relevant design guides.

The design is consistent with the Zoning Code and Comprehensive Plan to the extent possible. Most aspects of the building, with regard to setbacks, height, and site planning, are not changing from the current conditions.

The project is consistent with many elements of the El Camino Design Guidelines. Many items, such as the ground floor being defined by its parking garage entrance, are not proposed to change. One aspect of the proposed project that is not consistent is the Guidelines discourage brightly colored roofs.

Finding #2: The project has a unified and coherent design, that:

- a. creates an internal sense of order and desirable environment for occupants, visitors, and the general community,
- b. preserves, respects and integrates existing natural features that contribute positively to the site and the historic character including historic resources of the area when relevant,
- c. is consistent with the context-based design criteria of the applicable zone district,
- d. provides harmonious transitions in scale, mass and character to adjacent land uses and land use designations,
- e. enhances living conditions on the site (if it includes residential uses) and in adjacent residential areas.

The project will not impact the ability to meet this finding. Existing landscaping will be preserved. The project is generally consistent with the context-based design criteria of the CS district, as described in greater detail below. The existing building has a contemporary style, with wood siding, a tower element near the street, large street-facing windows, and a large gable with beam detail. Most of these elements are remaining as is, with the change in siding from wood to metal panels. It is generally compatible with the context. The hotel on the left is so far back from the front property line it is not a notable part of the streetscape. To the right is 4256 El Camino, a project recently approved by the ARB (18PLN-00096). This building is contemporary/modern in style with wood-look composite siding and black metal accents. It will

enhance the area to update the existing building.

Finding #3: The design is of high aesthetic quality, using high quality, integrated materials and appropriate construction techniques, and incorporating textures, colors, and other details that are compatible with and enhance the surrounding area.

The metal panels would be generally compatible with the surrounding area. The proposed building to the right contains a significant quantity of metal screens, railings, and window frames with extended face caps. The project's metal panels fit at the corners with a flat outside corner trim. Adjacent panels sit flush with little relief between panels. The panels are smaller on the front façade and tower element, and larger on the sides and rear. There is also accent corrugated metal siding in the front and rear gable. The existing building is a rusty brown color with yellow accents. The proposed color scheme is shades of gray, with red accents for the roof and gable.

The adjacent site, 4256 El Camino, includes the recently approved hotel project. The materials for that building includes wood-look siding, beige stucco, and bronze, dark gold, and black metal accents. One of the most defining features is the thick black metal frames around the windows. The proposed improvements to 4260 El Camino will fit with the new building as the gray color scheme is more neutral than the existing brown and yellow. The design also emphasizes the upper front windows.

Finding #4: The design is functional, allowing for ease and safety of pedestrian and bicycle traffic and providing for elements that support the building's necessary operations (e.g. convenient vehicle access to property and utilities, appropriate arrangement and amount of open space and integrated signage, if applicable, etc.).

No changes to the site plan or layout of the building are proposed. The ground level parking is conveniently accessed from El Camino Real with an entrance at the center of the building. Bicycle storage is also provided within this garage area. Pedestrian access to the building is through two exterior stairways or the exterior elevator that are located at the front of the building.

Finding #5: The landscape design complements and enhances the building design and its surroundings, is appropriate to the site's functions, and utilizes to the extent practical, regional indigenous drought resistant plant material capable of providing desirable habitat that can be appropriately maintained.

There is limited opportunity for landscaping on the site. The adjacent properties contain mature landscaping along the project site's left and rear property lines, which are to remain and be protected during construction. There are also two planters at the front with mature ornamental trees and shrubs, and one planter on the second floor of the front façade to

remain.

Finding #6: The project incorporates design principles that achieve sustainability in areas related to energy efficiency, water conservation, building materials, landscaping, and site planning.

This project does not plan to incorporate any additional design principles, beyond the requirements for Green Building and Title 24.

CONTEXT-BASED DESIGN CRITERIA

4260 El Camino Real

19PLN-00142

Pursuant to PAMC 18.16.090(b), the following context-based design considerations and findings are applicable to this project. These context-based design criteria are intended to provide additional standards to be used in the design and evaluation of development in a commercial district. The purpose is to encourage development in a commercial district to be responsible to its context and compatibility with adjacent development as well as to promote the establishment of pedestrian oriented design.

1. Pedestrian and Bicycle Environment

The design of new projects shall promote pedestrian walkability, a bicycle friendly environment, and connectivity through design elements

The proposed project provides adequate sidewalk in front of the building, as well as adequate bicycle parking.

2. Street Building Facades

Street facades shall be designed to provide a strong relationship with the sidewalk and the street (s), to create an environment that supports and encourages pedestrian activity through design elements.

The existing stair railings are solid. The proposed stair railings are proposed to be open to increase visibility, safety, and ease of access for pedestrians and motorists. No other changes are proposed that would change the building's relationship with the street.

3. Massing and Setbacks

Buildings shall be designed to minimize massing and conform to proper setbacks.

No changes to the building's overall massing or setbacks are proposed.

4. Low Density Residential Transitions

Where new projects are built abutting existing lower scale residential development, care shall be taken to respect the scale and privacy of neighboring properties

This property does not abut low density residential.

5. Project Open Space

Private and public open space shall be provided so that it is usable for the residents and visitors of the site.

This building currently contains usable balconies on the left side and in the rear. No changes are proposed to the existing balcony spaces.

6. Parking Design

Parking shall be accommodated but shall not be allowed to overwhelm the character of the project or detract from the pedestrian environment

Parking is located in a covered garage on the first floor of the building. There is no change from the existing proposed.

7. Large Multi-Acre Sites

Large sites (over one acre) shall be designed so that street, block, and building patterns are consistent with those of the surrounding neighborhood

N/A.

8. Sustainability and Green Building Design

Project design and materials to achieve sustainability and green building design should be incorporated into the project

The building will conform to Title 24 and Green Building requirements, as necessary.

ATTACHMENT C
ZONING COMPARISON TABLE
4260 El Camino Real, 19PLN-00401

Table 1: COMPARISON WITH CHAPTER 18.16 (CS DISTRICT)
Exclusively Non-residential Development Standards

Regulation	Required	Existing	Proposed
Minimum Site Area, width and depth	None	.17 acres 60 feet wide, 125 feet long	.17 acres 60 feet wide, 125 feet long
Minimum Front Yard	0-10 feet to create an 8-12 foot effective sidewalk width ^{(1), (2), (8)}	0' to stairs, 11' at the elevator tower and 21'3" to the building	0' to stairs, 11' at the elevator tower and 21'3" to the building
Rear Yard	None	0	0
Interior Side Yard	None	0	0
Street Side Yard	None	N/A	N/A
Min. yard for lot lines abutting or opposite residential districts or residential PC districts	10 feet ⁽²⁾	Rear abuts Palo Alto Redwoods, which is CS district	No change from existing
Build-to-lines	50% of frontage built to setback on El Camino Real	Stairways are built near to setback on El Camino, however the building is setback 11' at the elevator tower and 21'3" to the building	No change from existing
Special Setback	24 feet – see Chapter 20.08 & zoning maps	N/A	N/A
Max. Site Coverage	None	82.1% (6,152.33 sf)	82.1% (6,152.33 sf)
Max. Building Height	50 ft or 35 ft within 150 ft. of a residential district (other than an RM-40 or PC zone) abutting or located within 50 feet of the site	33'10"	33'10"
Max. Floor Area Ratio (FAR)	0.4:1 (2,998 sf) 18.18.060(e)	64.8% (4,853 sf)	64.8% (4,853 sf)
Daylight Plane for lot lines abutting one or more residential zone districts other than an RM-40 or PC Zone	None ⁽⁶⁾		

(1) No parking or loading space, whether required or optional, shall be located in the first 10 feet adjoining the street property line of any required yard.

(2) Any minimum front, street side, or interior yard shall be planted and maintained as a landscaped screen excluding areas required for access to the site. A solid wall or fence between 5 and 8 feet in height shall be constructed along any common interior lot line..

- (6) The initial height and slope shall be identical to those of the most restrictive residential zone abutting the site line in question.
 (7) 25 foot driveway access permitted regardless of frontage, build-to requirement does not apply to CC district.
 (8) A 12 foot sidewalk width is required along El Camino Real frontage

Table 1: COMPARISON WITH CHAPTER 18.16 (CS DISTRICT) continued
 Exclusively Non-residential Development Standards

Topic	Requirement	Proposed
Hours of Operation (18.16.040 (b))	Businesses with activities any time between the hours of 10:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. shall be required to obtain a conditional use permit. The director may apply conditions of approval as are deemed necessary to assure compatibility with the nearby residentially zoned property	No late hours proposed, typical office use.
Office Use Restrictions (18.16.050)	Total floor area of permitted office uses on a lot shall not exceed 25% of the lot area, provided a lot is permitted between 2,500 and 5,000 sf of office use. The maximum size may be increased with a CUP issued by the Director.	Existing non-conforming office use exceeds 25% of lot area.

18.16.080 Performance Standards. All development in the CS district shall comply with the performance criteria outlined in [Chapter 18.23](#) of the Zoning Ordinance, including all mixed use development

18.16.090 Context-Based Design Criteria. As further described in a separate attachment, development in a commercial district shall be responsible to its context and compatible with adjacent development, and shall promote the establishment of pedestrian oriented design.

Table 2: CONFORMANCE WITH CHAPTER 18.52 (Off-Street Parking and Loading)
 for General Business Office Use*

Type	Required	Existing	Proposed
Vehicle Parking	1/250 sf of gross floor area for a total of 19 parking spaces	20 spaces	20 spaces
Bicycle Parking	1/2,500 sf equals 2 spaces	14'8" x 8'6" area of designated bike storage	14'8" x 8'6" area of designated bike storage
Loading Space	Not Required		

* On-site employee amenity space is exempted from the parking requirements

Attachment C

Project Plans

During Shelter-in-Place, project plans are only available online.

Directions to review Project plans online:

1. Go to: bit.ly/PApendingprojects
2. Scroll down to find “4260 El Camino Avenue” and click the address link
3. On this project specific webpage you will find a link to the project plans and other important information

Direct Link to Project Webpage:

<https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/news/displaynews.asp?NewsID=4867&Targetid=319>

Materials Boards:

During Shelter-in-Place, color and material boards will be available to view in the display case outside of City Hall, on the exterior elevator near the corner of Hamilton Ave. and Bryant St.