



# Architectural Review Board

## Staff Report (ID # 11971)

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**Report Type:** Approval of Minutes **Meeting Date:** 2/4/2021

**Summary Title:** Minutes of December 3, 2020

**Title:** Draft Architectural Review Board Meeting Minutes for December 3, 2020

**From:** Jonathan Lait

### Recommendation

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

### Background

Draft minutes from the December 3, 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](https://bit.ly/paloaltoARB)

### Attachments:

- Attachment A: December 3, 2020 Draft Minutes (DOCX)



**ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD**  
**DRAFT MINUTES: December 3, 2020**  
 City Hall/City Council Chambers  
 250 Hamilton Avenue  
 Virtual Meeting  
 8:30 AM

**Call to Order/Roll Call**

Present: Chair Peter Baltay, Board Members Alexander Lew, Grace Lee and David Hirsch.

Absent: Vice Chair Osma Thompson

[Roll Call]

**Oral Communications**

Chair Baltay: Thank you very much. Next item, on our agenda is oral communications. Do we have any member of the public who wishes to speak to any item not on our agenda? Do we have any members of the public who wish to speak?

Veronica Dao, Administrative Assistant: Currently, there are no raised hands.

**Agenda Changes, Additions and Deletions**

Chair Baltay: Very well. Next item is agenda changes, additions, and deletions. Jodie, could you take us through that, please?

Jodie Gerhardt, Manager of Current Planning: Yes, we do have a few changes this time around. The study session on ex-parte communications is going to be continued to the next hearing. Then on Monday, we had added the ARB annual report, and that draft letter was sent out to the Board for review and discussion today. That concludes changes.

Chair Baltay: Just so the public knows, we also have comments from Board Member Thompson on each project, which we will read into the record at the start of the discussion for each project.

Ms. Gerhardt: Yes.

**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. Anything, Jodie, again, from staff on that?

Ms. Gerhardt: Yes, Veronica had that up and she will bring that up again. Perfect. I think what was shown on here was the Hamilton project, which is I believe is delayed, but Pope-Chaucer Bridge should

still be coming to you on December 17th. We would also have the ex-parte communications, and then we would also have the elections for Chair and Vice Chair because the idea is that Council will vote on new Board Members on the 14th, I believe. Then, we can do Chair and Vice Chair afterward.

### Action Items

2. PUBLIC HEARING / QUASI-JUDICIAL. 3585 El Camino Real [17PLN-00305]:  
Consideration of a Major Architectural Review to Allow The Demolition of a 800 Square Foot Commercial Building and the Construction of a New Three-Story Mixed-Use Project Including 2,400 Square Feet of Office Space, and Three Residential Units. This is a Housing Incentive Program Project with a Variance Request to Deviate From the Parking Lot Shading Requirement. Environmental Assessment: Mitigated Negative Declaration. Zoning District: CN (Neighborhood Commercial). For More Information Contact the Project Planner Sheldon S. Ah Sing at [sahsing@m-group.us](mailto:sahsing@m-group.us).

Chair Baltay: Perfect. Okay, thank you. With that, we are ready to move on to our action items. The first item is item number two, Public Hearing / Quasi-Judicial for 3585 El Camino Real: Consideration of a major architectural review to allow the demolition of an 800 square foot commercial building and the construction of a new three-story mixed-use project including 2,400 square feet of office space, and three residential units. This is a Housing Incentive Program Project with a variance request to deviate from the parking lot shading requirement. Can we have a staff report, please?

Sheldon Ah Sing: Yes, good morning.

[Setting up presentation.]

Chair Baltay: Before we do that, I would like to ask if we have any disclosures from any members of the Board before you start, Sheldon. Alex, any disclosures?

Board Member Lew: No.

Chair Baltay: David, disclosures?

Board Member Hirsch: No, none.

Chair Baltay: Grace, disclosures?

Board Member Lee: None, except that I looked at the materials Board at City Hall.

Chair Baltay: I will disclose that I did spend some time visiting the site and also looking at the material board. Okay, Sheldon, please go ahead.

Mr. Ah Sing: Thank you for the introduction.

Board Member Hirsch: Yes, I disclose that I also -- David here -- visited the site again and also the board at City Hall.

Chair Baltay: Thank You, David. Okay.

Mr. Ah Sing: Thank you. This is the third time for this project before you. What we are going to be talking about today is the formal review of a mixed-use project. I'll give a little background of how we got here and then some of the changes that the applicant did at the recommendation of the ARB, and then our recommendation. The project is located on 0.14 acres. It is a corner lot there at El Camino Real and Matadero Avenue. It is a new three-story mixed-use building, zoned CN neighborhood commercial. The project uses the Housing Incentive Program. This will probably be the first project to be approved; you may be aware of another project on San Antonio, but that one needs the ordinance to

be in effect. This will likely be the first one to get approval using this incentive program. The requests are for architecture review. The variance has been withdrawn because it is no longer necessary, and we will talk a little bit more about that. The recommendation is for the ARB to recommend approval to the director. A little bit of background: the project has been before the ARB twice before in October of 2019, and recently in May 2020. Most recently, the ARB did provide the following recommendations and suggestions. Those were to revise the shading exhibit considering all of the trees that affect the shading for the parking lot area, including the street trees; review size of a second-floor one-bedroom unit. The ARB thought that was a large unit, maybe too big. Then to demonstrate more about the base, middle, and top to be consistent with the South El Camino Real guidelines, in particular, the top portion of the building; to consider adding a landscape professional to the team; also to evaluate basement parking possibility, and to update materials to match the plans. A little bit of site context. The site is a corner lot. It also has an alley to the rear and some overhead utilities. The site is constrained in that manner with these streets. There is also a residential right behind on the alley. It is an RM30 site. Then, in general, you have a curb-cut there in front. Those would be eliminated as part of this development project. A little more about the site context here. The area is an area that has a lot more older developments, single to two-story types of development. You can see there is another Quonset hut there across the street from the project. There is one also on the site that is partially dismantled. The site was an automobile repair area and was the location of remediation in the past for hazardous materials that has been given closure for the site by the County with site agencies. Those areas, you can see, is just an area that's going to be in transition over a period of time. A little bit about the Housing Incentive Program is for residential mixed-use projects along El Camino Real (CN or CS) that the director may waive requirements if they are consistent with architectural review findings. The FAR maximum is not to exceed 1.5:1. The base CN in comparison is 1.0 and the maximum lot coverage can be waived where the base CN allows up to 50 percent. The Housing Incentive Program is intended to produce more housing as an incentive. For the proposed project, we are looking at a three-story mixed-use building. The applicant has revised the project and proposes the following. There was some adjustment to the office square footage, they also adjusted the square footage of residential units down slightly, making the one large bedroom unit on the second floor a two-bedroom unit. Also, the applicant added a parapet to address the top issue, and also revised the landscape plan. The project does include .41 FAR commercial space, and three residential units that have .71 FAR. The total FAR is 1.12. Just slightly over what would otherwise be allowed but still under the maximum for the HIP. The maximum lot coverage is 60 percent, which is a little over what otherwise the base would be. Some notable development standards for the district are that there is a 12-foot effective sidewalk for El Camino Real. Off the property line, there is actually a five-foot setback, but in total for the face of the curb there is a five-foot sidewalk. There is also a five-foot setback for the street on Matadero. That does push the property development envelope in a little bit towards the property. Then, you have the open space coverage is 35 percent, as well as the parking lot shade canopy is 50 percent. There are also the South El Camino Real guidelines that are applicable to the project. Some of those are 75 percent build-to for El Camino Real frontage, 50 percent frontage to the side street, and that encourages projects to take access from the side street. The orientation of the building is also towards El Camino Real and it includes an articulated base, body, and roof. This shows the evolution of the project since we first saw it on October 2019 through today. Very slight and very small changes. The Board had some specific recommendations but nothing about really changing the building or site plan that drastically. That's why you don't see a lot of changes from the first iteration. This is from El Camino Real and you can see slightly the Matadero elevation as well. The main changes here would be planters are the ground level giving a little more base to the project, and then the parapet at the top there where they are using a brushed aluminum cladding. Then more along Matadero and the alley side, here you probably see a little more changing. It is, again, the parapet and the landscaping along the alleyway has changed as they have changed Japanese Maples to the Western Redbud. It might be easier to see more of the changes here on the site plan, especially with the parking area in the back. There was an addition of a landscape area, the parking was reduced, and the machine. Overall, the project still meets the requirements. You can see as the project has evolved, the back part of the property towards the alley has more screening and more landscaping giving some buffer for the residences across the alley. Here you see the project is one-story taller than the adjacent properties. That is something that is seen to be acceptable in these areas. The first floor, or base of the building, is consistent with the neighboring buildings to maintain that rhythm and pattern. You can see, also, from Matadero it still the same there with the properties across the way has a pretty big setback from the

alley, and it is also just one floor above that. This is going to the elevations and the planters at the base of the building here. This is along El Camino Real. Then you can see where this concrete frame and glass railings and three-form cladding material -- the applicant will go a little bit more into their design palette and design intent. Then, at the top you have the brushed aluminum metal cladding for the parapet wall and the perforated aluminum for the mechanical screening. There is a lot of variety in the materials. The applicant has certain slides on those in his presentation. Again, along continues that same type of palette there. All of this is within 35-foot height limit. The elevation here you see that pebble wall that is introduced on the rear of the building and the screening of the rear parking lot area. Also, you may be able to see here a little bit of the trellis that is covering the parking spaces in the back and it has some binds on it trying to achieve that buffering between the property and the alley and the residents way. This is the alley elevation, as I mentioned, with the landscaping as much as they can do as it is not shown here but there are -- in the picture I showed earlier -- overhead utilities. These trees can't get that tall or they're just going to get chopped by utility services. The whole goal here in landscaping is to try to soften this elevation from what those residents would see across from the alley. One of the things that had to be addressed on previous iterations having requested a variance was a parking lot shading. The tree canopy and sizes within a service parking area shall include tree planting designed to result in 50 percent of the parking lot surface areas within 15 years. There are certain criteria requirements for certain types of trees that you can plant to achieve that. What the applicant did -- with the recommendation of the Board -- was bring on a landscape professional to have the plans refined, changed some of the trees in the back from Japanese Maples to Western Redbud trees. Also, count those London Plane trees, they have very wide, large canopies especially at maturity. When all of this was put together, they did meet the requirements. It is 50.3 percent. It just barely made it but we did double-check that so no variance is required for this part of the project. The other component here was the base, middle, and top and this comes into play with being consistent with the South El Camino Real guidelines. The base of the building includes the office space, and this is featuring landscape planters, exposed concrete column frames with concrete slab, and glass walls. The floor-to-ceiling height is 13 feet. The middle of the building includes a little more variety here. You've got exposed concrete frame overhangs for balconies with hanging landscaping; there's some solar screening, as well as the floor-to-ceiling height here in nine feet. The top is residential use and it features an eight-foot setback with a four-foot overhang of the terrace. It includes three-form cladding and operable windows and doors. The very top includes a one-foot parapet wall with brushed aluminum cladding and coping. The very top, at the roof, includes mechanical equipment screen with perforated aluminum screen. One of the other topics was to look at whether or not you could put the parking underground. There is an attachment that includes some diagrams. These are some different diagrams. These are more detailed ones. The applicant along the way through this project has provided a lot of different iterations for this basement addressing some of the Staff, as well as the ARB's, comments. As you look here, this site is 104 feet by 60 feet and you have setbacks in the front along El Camino Real that need to be maintained and those transcend not only at the ground level, but it goes down below grade when you consider a basement element. It also has a five foot setback along Matadero. Then, what can we do with it? Once you lay that out and try to fit we can really distill a one-way ramp down that's not to code. In doing so when you are making that turn at the bottom of that ramp it is not possible without going into the setbacks, that's another deviation there. You need another deviation to go into the street side yard setback. Then, once we figured out how to get into this area, where do we put the parking? They put a little example here of some stackers. These stackers here are, I think, nine stackers. It is very difficult to see how this would really fit. Maybe you could orient these in a direction? Then, trying to get to the top level, you need to have an elevator and a stairway; they put that in the rear of the property. Then when you get to the surface you can see how this looks. You actually still need to have a driveway and surface parking. Really, you have just, kind of, complicated the site more with the alley being the access to the ramp; you still have the trash there. Now there is this other element of a stairwell and elevator. The transformer is still there. It is very busy in the back. You lose a lot of landscaping and you still have a driveway and parking at the top. We haven't really achieved much by trying to put this below grade. This is why we have determined that this is not a feasible thing to do. This is just the cross-section of what that looks like. Maybe you could put some parking underneath the ramp but it is very limited. You have to a pit to go down more. There are just a lot of different things that make this not a feasible solution. We're going into the materials here, and the applicant will go a little bit more into this. Just provided here are some of the different materials that create a lot of variety. A lot of variety being used

throughout the elevations, as well as the details. Here are the glass railings, the glass overhangs, and how that is attached to the building. The long-term bicycle parking has some stainless steel panels. There is wood that is being used as well for the project. There is a bench, there is a trellis; the rooftop has metal as well as the trash enclosure. There is a pebbled wall that is being used along the perimeter towards the rear and the alley of the building. Then there is a masonry block wall that is being used for the closure for the trash. The mechanical equipment is also screened. You can see how the wholes are situated. It should provide screens and won't be able to see the equipment. The planters are the metal type of planters there. This is the new aluminum cladding material for the parapet wall. Then all of the material composed there. I think here is an updated one at City Hall. Some other miscellaneous issues are the below market rate housing; the project will make an in-lieu payment. The mechanical lift parking, there is a condition regarding operations and maintenance. For CEQA, the project required a mitigated negative declaration that circulated earlier in the year. Some of the impacted topics included air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, hazards and hazardous materials, and noise. There were mitigations that were proposed to reduce these impacts to less than significant. In conclusion, they want the board to conduct a public hearing. The project does respond to the ARB comments. The project is consistent with the architectural review findings. I do want to note that that in finding number one, we just want to make a change there. It is on page 19 of the packet. The sentence right before finding number two -- so it's the last sentence -- needs to be revised to strike out the last part of the sentence since the project does not require a variance. The project is consistent with the code as proposed. Staff makes the recommendation to the ARB to review and consider the initial study and mitigated negative declaration, and recommend approval of the project to the Director Of Planning and Development Services based on the findings and subject to conditions of approval. That concludes my presentation and I will be happy to answer any questions. The applicant does have their presentation. Thank you.

Chair Baltay: Thank you for your thorough presentation, Sheldon. Do we have any questions for staff from any member of the Board? Then, Sheldon, I'd like for you to clarify for me, please, on the shading of the parking area the applicant also has some sort of a trellis structure or trellis and vine combination. Am I right in understanding that the code requires the shading to be from trees?

Mr. Ah Sing: That is correct. We did not count that but we did clarify in our staff report that that does help with some additional shading. We didn't count the roof overhangs that went into the driveway, nor did we count the parking portions.

Chair Baltay: Okay. Then, you have confirmed these calculations to prove the area meets the 50 percent requirement? It is a very tight calculation it seems.

Mr. Ah Sing: We did. We did confirm them.

Chair Baltay: Okay, thank you very much. No other questions from me. Again, any other questions for staff from Board Member? Okay, then, with that let's have the applicant make a presentation if they would like to. Do we have an applicant present today?

Pratima Shah, Architect: Yes.

Chair Baltay: Very well. Welcome and good morning. Thank you for your presentation. You'll have ten minutes to speak to us if you'd like. Go ahead whenever you are ready, please.

[Setting up presentation.]

Ms. Shah: My name is Pratima Shah. I am the lead architect on this project. Good morning Architectural Review Board Members, Planning Staff Jodie and Sheldon. Thank you for reviewing our building design proposal. We appreciate the thorough staff report and detailed presentation by Sheldon. This is our third formal presentation before ARB. We appreciate the review and comments. The revisions made to the design in response to these comments have assisted with building design enhancement. The project site has been weakened in (inaudible) condition for the last 30 years. We,

Bellomo Architects, together with KSS Management are proposing a three-story mixed-use building with office spaces on first and second floors and three residences on the second and third floor. There are two double bedroom units and one single-bedroom residential unit. As you are familiar with the design proposal, I will focus my presentation on the revisions and responses to ARB comments from previous hearings. First important topic is parking area shading. The revised design proposal has four Western Redbud trees along the alley and three London Plane trees. These trees provide shading of the parking area and fulfill the requirement of 50 percent shading with trees. The project does not need a variance. The surface parking is located on the northeast side of the building, and it is covered with combination of standing seam metal roof and wood trellis with vines. The building overhangs five feet over the driveway. The shadow study performed on June 21st at 3:00 p.m. indicates that most of the portion of the driveway will be shaded due to the building. The shading with the trees and these additional measures cumulatively mitigate the heat island effect associated with the surface parking. Articulated façade. A 12-inch parapet wall has been added along the perimeter of the building on the roof. This parapet wall is clad with a brushed aluminum sheet. The parapet with cladding defines and articulates the top of the building. Brushed aluminum panels have been part of the building material palette of this project. The application of aluminum sheet cladding is similar to three-form cladding. The revision is aligned with Palo Alto municipal code and El Camino Real guidelines. The proposed building has a well-articulated façade with storefronts, glass overhangs, balconies, terraces, and operable doors and windows. The third-floor walls have been setback eight feet to reduce the massing of the building and to complement the neighboring two-story buildings. The building form also expresses the use of the space. On the ground floor, the concrete columns and glass storefronts maintain the rhythm and scale of the neighboring storefronts. The second-floor office space has balcony with vertical screen garden, which provides a beautiful view and shading. The third-floor walls are recessed eight-foot creating terraces for residential use and provide privacy for residential spaces. Materials. A detailed material sheet, which includes specifications, materials pictures, and construction details, has been submitted in the package. There is no change in the previous material purchased with additional of aluminum sheet cladding for the parapet wall. There are two different types of screens used in this project. The screen used for screening mechanical equipment on the roof is made of perforated aluminum sheet, which has one-inch diameter hole placed full and center to center. This will screen the equipment properly. The other screen used is for bicycle parking and is made of stainless steel with smaller holes and 40 percent openness. Three-form color samples and pictures includes are consistent with the colors in the rendering. With this revision, we have submitted photo realistic rendered elevations that show the material color, texture, and its location in the building precisely. The next couple of slides show rendered elevations. The building has honest expansion of concrete structural frame, and the palette is really minimum with concrete, steel, and glass as the main structural materials and three-form aluminum [distortion]. Landscape design. The landscape design has been revised after consultation with architect Annie Wong [phonetic]. There is no existing tree on the sidewalk or on the property. We are providing a total of five London Plane trees on the sidewalks and one at the end of the driveway. The Japanese Maple trees have been replaced with four Western Redbud trees, which are native, drought-tolerant, and ornamental. It grows around 15 feet tall, so it satisfies the constraint of overhead electrical cables along the alley. A landscape planting strip with four Western Redbud trees, shrubs, and bamboo planters along the alley act as buffers and screen between the proposed building and the residential apartments. A vehicle parking on grade is partially covered with wood trellis and flowering creepers, which will provide shade to the parked cars as well as create beautiful views for the residents and the neighbors. Metal planters with African Iris plants has been proposed along El Camino Real and Matadero Avenue side. The planters with beautiful Iris plants will enhance the pedestrian experience, as well as provide a screen and a view to occupants. African Iris is a drought-tolerant and robust perennial with great aesthetic value and easy care. On the second floor balcony on El Camino side, a vertical screen garden has been proposed. A cable trellis system will be provided, which will guide creepers planted in the planters in the balcony. The creepers and cables will create a beautiful garden screen with interesting views and make urban space more livable. It will also help reduce solar gain mitigating noise and dust. Most of the proposed landscape elements can be seen in the rare view of the corner of Matadero Avenue and the alley. There is a little change in the program on the second floor. A one-bedroom unit on the second floor has been converted to 1,240 square foot two-bedroom unit. Two car parking spaces have been provided for requirement for this unit and the mechanic elevator lift system. The project fulfills parking requirements. Guest parking is not required but a shared parking program can assist with guest parking

for residential uses. At the surface, parking spaces allocated for office use can be shared with the residences after business hours for guest parking. Regarding (inaudible) parking, a detailed study, comparison of parking solution, and multiple design options have been submitted to the Planning Department, including one-way ramp with stackers, two-way ramp with stackers, and a one-way driveway with a jog. Even with one-way ramp, the maximum permitted slope and 180-degree turning radius for cars could not be accommodated. Despite of proposing a full 6,000 square foot basement, we were able to accommodate only three car parking spaces in the basement thus requiring use of three-chair mechanical lift system in the basement to maximize the parking to eight to nine cars. The study has been provided to show how basement layout, position of stairs, and elevators would impact above-grade in meeting the code requirements and design guidelines. Basement parking is not feasible due to the size and shape of the property. We are not able to fulfill California Green Building code requirement, Palo Alto municipal code requirement of two car parking spaces on grade, and we are able to provide only eleven cars and this project needs 15 car parking spaces. The basement parking will require entry and exit from the alley which will increase traffic in the alley, as well as impact the neighboring residences. No trees or landscape can be proposed along the alleyway with the basement layout. With this, I will conclude my presentation and hand over to Joe.

Joe Bellomo: Thank you, Pratima. Good morning ARB members. First of all, I appreciate the time you spend. It is really well appreciated. I did two terms on the ARB and I think it is very helpful. Let's see. I have designed a few hundred thousand square feet of commercial buildings on El Camino, as well as major downtown Palo Alto buildings. I have designed shopping centers. I have a wide range of projects we have worked on. It gives me immense pleasure to present a mixed-use building on this 60-foot microsite. Most of you understand that that is the size of a single-family residential site in Palo Alto. The project has... as I mentioned it is a small site and we did have remediated soil that is cleaned up now. The site is clean.

Vinh Nguyen, Administrative Associate: One-minute warning.

Mr. Bellomo: Yes, our design team is ready and we are ready to receive your approval so we can move this project along. Once again, I just want to say how much I appreciate the time you give on the ARB. We are excited about the project. Thank you.

Ms. Shah: Thank you.

Mr. Bellomo: Any questions at any time.

Chair Baltay: Thank you very much, Architect Bellomo. Do we have any questions for the applicant from any member of the staff of the ARB?

Board Member Hirsch: Yes, I have a question.

Chair Baltay: Go ahead, David.

Board Member Hirsch: Earlier renditions had solar collectors on the roof. Can you tell us are they still there? Are they still part of the project?

Mr. Bellomo: There will be solar and PV panels on the roof.

Board Member Hirsch: Thank you.

Mr. Bellomo: Yeah. We do that, for example, 102 here, this building here we have solar panels. But, yes, we will have them, David.

Chair Baltay: Okay. Any other questions. Very well, then. I would like to open up the meeting to comments from any members of the public. Do we have any members of the public wishing to address us?

Ms. Dao: Currently, there are no raised hands.

Chair Baltay: Very well. Then we will close our meeting to public comment and begin Board deliberations. Before we start, I would like to have Jodie or one member of the staff read the comments sent to us by Osma Thompson who is not with us today. Osma is not voting on the project but I would like for her to comments to be read into the record so everybody hears what she had to say. Jodie, could you do that, please? Jodie, or any member of staff.

Ms. Gerhardt: Sorry, I had to leave for a second. What's the question?

Chair Baltay: I would like to read Osma's brief comments into the record at this point.

Ms. Gerhardt: Yes, one second here. I will bring those up.

Chair Baltay: These are notes sent to Jodie Gerhardt this morning.

Ms. Gerhardt: Yes. On this particular project, she said in general the design is lacking a granular detail and warmth. The effort to articulate the top of the building by utilizing a change in material on the top parapet is ineffective at defining the top and appears slightly out of place. A change in plane would certainly bring more definition to it but could potentially be out of place as well with the language of the rest of the building. The problem remains that the top story appears to be one big wall element without much relief, and could benefit from a material or textural change for the whole top story since just altering the tiny silver band of the parapet doesn't do much for scale of the building as a whole. In a similar vein, the design would benefit with a change in material for one of the stories instead of having the same three end material on every floor to break up the monotony of the appearance of the mass. For this reason, she finds that she could not make finding number two and would not recommend approval.

Chair Baltay: Okay. Thank you for reading that, Jodie. David, would you like to go next on this project?

Board Member Hirsch: I would like to go last if you don't mind.

Chair Baltay: Fair enough. Grace, how about you? Are you willing to put your opinion on the line right now?

Board Member Lee: I am willing.

Chair Baltay: Thank you, Grace.

Board Member Lee: I just want to start with a big thank you to planning staff and to Sheldon for a very complete staff report as well as your presentation. I appreciate, in particular, walking us through some of those previous studies and how to problem-solve. It really shows how the applicant has really gone above and beyond over a period of time to find the right solution and to work with the City Staff, as well as our Board. Overall, I have to say that I am very much in agreement with planning staff to recommend this project for approval. I believe it is consistent with the findings. I will say further that this is going to be the first project to be approved under the Housing Incentive Program; a very welcome addition to the El Camino corridor. It's not an easy site, however, how much better can we do, right, than the 30-year-old vacant and then the Quonset hut that was there before. It is consistent with the South El Camino guidelines, as well as the vision for the Ventura area. I just want to reiterate -- we all know -- this is a mixed-use building that is happening with housing and retail. To walk through some of the responsiveness from the applicant, I do appreciate the shading exhibits and just understating my colleague's comments regarding trees, perhaps a change in the one of the trees, and also making sure about that 50 percent requirement. I see that it meets that. I also think that in terms of how the site diagram is working, given the site and the access issues that this makes a lot of sense in many ways. I do think that it is buffered along the alley and that the Matadero Creek, Matadero street façade, as well as the El Camino street façade access and parking works very efficiently and in a way that really thinks

about the context and also on how to protect the usage in terms of safety. We talked a little bit, it wasn't on my side, but I believe my colleagues had mentioned the whole base, middle, and top issue or challenge. I never really saw that as a challenge but I just want to talk a little bit about articulation of base, middle, and top. I fully respect it but have a different perspective than Vice Member Thompson. I think if we look at this building from all sides and to me what is terrific is that there is this wonderful concrete frame. That is the main skeleton and something that we see overall. Now that skeleton really breaks down with transparency, with solids and voids, and a rich variety of materials. I just wanted to walk through my reading of base, middle, and top. Thank you staff and applicant for in your staff report walking through it. Pratima and Joe, thank you so much for your responses. I feel very strongly that the top is now articulated with this parapet; it goes all the way around. I just want to go back to that concrete frame because that is what unifies the whole building both at the ground, and middle, and top, and we see that that articulation is different at each level of how that frame is pierced, where things are sitting in plane. I think we all agree on the base we have these wonderful planters and the higher ceiling height. Everything is working to really read as a strong base. At the middle, the concrete frame is there, however, we have the steel railing and the vertical cables with the landscape element. It is a clear part of the concrete frame but it is differentiated from the base. At the top, the concrete frame disappears. I don't see too much of one material because it is also recessed for that balcony with an awning. You really only see the three-form... I do not feel like it is used in an excessive way because we now have the parapet, the cap on top, as well as this translucent material as the balcony, and it is recessed, and then the shadow of the awnings. For me, there is a very strong base, middle, and top. I just wanted to walk through that. The other piece that I wanted to mention is that I applaud the colors and textures and the variety that is shown in the palette. For me, the actual rock wall provides a texture, the landscape that is in planets on both street sides, El Camino and along Matadero provides texture and landscape that works well with the building materials and the overall elevations. I think in summary, I don't think we should delay. I think it's time to approve. The applicant has been very responsive to our comments. I also just want to send a thank you... particularly the handout that was part of the package on materials is very thorough and I appreciate that, and thank you for the paper sets this time. I feel like this set in terms of the elevations, sections, and plans, and all of the that could be a model example for other applicants who are proposing to the ARB. With that, I will go ahead and pass it on. Thanks.

[Adjusting Audio.]

Chair Baltay: Thank you, Grace, for your comments and I'll ask Alex to speak next.

Board Member Lew: Okay. I can do that. Thank you, Joe and Pratima. I think that the project looks really good and I think I can recommend approval today. I do think that there are some things that are missing. I think you have been showing things in your presentation but they are not in the drawing set. Here is what I have got on my list that I think need to come back to the Board in some way, perhaps a subcommittee. One is the rear trellis in carport in the back. I don't see any details of that. Also, I don't see the roofing material. I think you showed some in your presentation today. I think the drawings are calling out a corrugated metal. I think what is shown in the presentation today is fine. I would have some reservations about corrugated metals just because it is fairly reflective when it is new. The second item is the metal planters. I don't see any spec sheets and sizes for those. I think you have quite a number of them at the street, and alley, and the second floor. I think we do need to see that. Also, on the second floor you're showing the cable system connecting from the ceiling soffit down through to the bottom of the planters. I think that is a critical detail that the Board should review to make that it is actually workable. Also, I think there is some sort of grates or louvers above the parking lift doors and I don't really see those called out anywhere. I think that that needs to come back for review. I don't have any conceptual issues with what is being shown. I think the idea, though, is to try and screen anything... I think we do want to try to screen the cars that will be in the parking lifts, especially from the neighbors. I think we should have some consideration for that. With regard to the base, middle, and top, I think I understand Osma's point of view. I guess in my mind, the awnings that you have above the third-floor doors and windows, to me, I would consider that part of the cornice element. It is a projecting element. I think that, for me, it satisfies creating some sort of cap on the building. I think with regard to the base, middle, and top, I think it is really critical that we do that for large buildings but this is not really one of them. I think the Board needs to still pursue the base, middle, and top on a really large project. It is

really a critical concept to breaking down the scale of buildings but I am finding that for this one it is not really quite a large issue. Anyway, that is where I am. I can generally recommend approval with items coming back somehow to the Board.

Chair Baltay: Thank you very much, Alex. Out of respect to David's request to be the last comment, I will offer my suggestions now. In general, I can recommend approval of this building. I think it's a handsome building and will do its job well. I would like to offer one minor concern that is something that's not really directly our purview but I noticed that all of the residential units have no closets. I am hard-pressed to believe that it will end up being built that way. I am not sure if what will end up happening is larger units getting created, perhaps going back to one-bedroom units with proper closets and things. I guess I would like to leave it to Staff's discretion but we specifically pointed out that we didn't want to have the parking reduced by having the bedroom count being made larger. I think that the layouts still need a little more work. I am in favor of letting the project go forward, in spite of the fact that I think there will be some revisions on the bedroom layouts. I am just pointing that out. I don't know if other Board Members are concerned about that but I think...

Ms. Gerhardt: Chair Baltay?

Chair Baltay: Yes.

Ms. Gerhardt: Is it possible to ask the applicant where they think those closets may go because I think if they are interior that would be fine for staff to handle but we wouldn't want them changing the exterior windows.

Chair Baltay: Exactly. Let's come back to that, though. Let's see if the rest of the Board has any concern about it because I don't want to drag this out if it's just my thing. The closets themselves are not our concern. I think I am bringing it up just because Alex had mentioned, appropriately, that the proper unit size would require an extra parking place, which they seem to have accommodated. My other thought is to really address the issue of base, middle, and top. That's something we have all be discussing and thinking about. At a high level, I think this building exemplifies why it is important in our objective design standards that we have some way to evaluate buildings without such a rigid criteria like a base, a middle, and a top. This is, I believe, a building that fits in well with its environment and the streetscape on El Camino. It is clearly well-articulated and beautifully designed but I don't believe it has a base, middle, and a top of the formal, traditional sense. I don't think the one-foot parapet screen on the top can really be called a parapet or a top. It -- as Osma pointed out -- would need a lot more planer definition to really make it do that. However, the real purpose behind the base, middle, and top is to ensure the buildings have sufficient articulation and really to help them relate to other buildings on the street and in the plane. I think this building by setting the concrete form, the frame, sort of relating to the rest of the buildings along the street and it just fits right in with my gut feeling of Palo Alto. You can see Joe Bellomo's been around a long time and he gets what El Camino looks like, and the building fits. It just goes right in there with the way the frame is done. I think that does the purpose of the parapet. Really, it is just the second-floor overhang with the glass wall that is the top in that formal sense, and the upper piece is recessed back. Clearly the building is well articulated with the openings in the frame and the ins and outs, and the way the doors are put into corner. I can support this building as meeting the intent of the south El Camino Real design guidelines. I can support recommending approval. I do support Alex's requests for a subcommittee to review a few of those items. With that, David, why don't you speak?

Board Member Hirsch: Okay, thank you. Sheldon, that is a nice initial presentation. Congratulations to the clients for method of transcribing it at this time; very distinct and to the point on every item that has been raised, including your latest presentation, which is also complete. I really have to take a different tact because Grace stole every thunder from this descriptive part of the project.

Chair Baltay: You had your chance, David.

Board Member Hirsch: I don't want to repeat everything that she said. My take on the building, from the beginning, has been very, very positive to the extremely strong idea of this frame that sets the tone of the building. All other things are, kind of, subservient to it except for the tan volume that projects itself from the base all the way through to the top. All of the detail on the surface has improved somewhat but was there, at least in concept, from the very beginning. I think I could say that I appreciate Osma's push on the parapet. I think they must have studied it a bit because it had to be not really a projecting element or an extremely visible piece, otherwise it would likely conflict with the stronger aspect of the building framework. In the end, it was a techy kind of piece of metal on the top that simply changed the proportion that has improved the top of the building. I appreciate it. My take is that there are some other ways in which we should look at buildings, not just static views from the street scene across the street because, after all, if you're in the middle of this street you're never even going to see the top of this building. Or if you're in a car traveling along El Camino from one or the other side, you're not going to see it at all from the perspectives that we look at to determine whether a building is aesthetically appropriate or not. I think we could look at this building from the perspective of the car or what you would see when you drove on this particular street, which is filled with fast moving traffic and then sort of quiet zones. It's a strange kind of felling when you're on El Camino. This is a very powerful frame of concrete and it is expressive on the street. You'll see it from several blocks away because there isn't much coming from the south. There is not very much there to interrupt you; the view is open with a gas station. This is quite a corner piece, and I think it is going to make an impression even to a car because it is so simple and so direct. It has that beauty of attracting your eye to it with the brightness of the frame and the openness in the corner. I want to speak to the corner because the corner makes an urban statement that I think is just terrific here. It is the way in which I would like to see corners made much more, especially an El Camino corner where the sidewalks are so bloody narrow that you really need relief. We don't talk about a building that way but that's a terrific corner now; recessed that way so that you're eye can flow around it and you can actually walk that turn around the corner. It gives us the 12-foot sidewalk that we really separately need on El Camino, and hopefully we can extend it on many other areas of El Camino. Just reflecting a bit, Grace seemed to catch most of the detail of it and Alex all of that great detail that you added to it, which I think all of which are important aspects. Putting those two together I think that's such a complete picture. My emphasis, really, on these kind of urban issues as to what is a building in the urban structure here do? Well, what it does is that in a neighborhood that's desperate for improvement it is the improvement. I think that you will see other people investing in this part of El Camino, and we can see a future that if it has buildings like this at the corner and then the buildings adjacent to it are kind of obsequious to it or respectful of it -- that's probably a better word -- this almost could be a prototype for the city. Not that I hope that it will be that way in all cases but I really think this will be an excellent developer for the rest of this area of the City, which is really in need of a lot of work. I think that I agree with Grace that the detail that has been added to this building is improving it but it as there. That the wood on the balcony and the planters and the... I did want to mention one other aspect that as it faces a very busy street and a very noisy street at moments, the ground floor, which is somewhat protected but yet visible, is an enclosed area but the second floor is setback. In terms of the sound issues of the street I think it's a very appropriate thing to do. That area needs to be quieter. You may still go out on the balcony; you don't look at the traffic when you're in there as an office. Then the same thing is true at the top floor. Those two balconies set the function of the building back and that's a very important aspect to the planning of this building. It all kind of works together; the frame of the building and the setback of the function of the building are two things that work together. The top floor, of course, needs to be that because it's a residence. Now, as to the corner, you turn the corner and you see the entry three-stories high in that frame. It doesn't lose emphasizes on the entry to the building as well, which I think is an excellent way in which to turn a corner and to indicate a change in function the way it does. I think that one other aspect to this is that you see a building both at day and night and now that the days are shorter you have to imagine this building -- I think if I were to give the architects some advice they should have shown in with the light son and the sky dark because that is a totally different view of a building. The upper floor will sort of loose the setback which we have been talking about as base, middle, and top. The top of the building will all of a sudden disappear and the frame of the building will be that two-story turning to three-story around the corner. I keep looking at the photograph of it because it's right here in front of us and you know you can see the strength of it, and you imagine the glassy area down below with lights on in it through the frame. It's a very dramatic corner and we shouldn't forget that we need to look at buildings

both from daylight and nighttime. We have done that on other projects and it is important to do it. It should have been done here and we should've asked to see it at night because it's a selling point for that building to see what it will be like with a frame lipped that way so the transparency of the glassy areas and the setback and the entries area above will all emphasize the way the frame is used here. I just want to make one slight comment to Peter about the closets because I noticed that the first time I looked at the plan. I said "where the hell are the closets?" I talked to the architects about it when I visited there and they suggested Ikea; there are armoires. I thought there should be closets inside, and it is true that a lot of people go out and buy their own and make their own closets. If you had more space you'd call in California Closets, but in this case Ikea is a good bet for buying ready-made closets that will fit into the corner that's adjacent to the bathroom there in the apartment. I don't think it's a critical issue. Just to end, sort of, with my own opinion because it agrees with Grace and Alex about how this building should be seen as a base, middle, and top because I am kind of hoping that we will get to redefine what that really means somehow, if it needs to be redefined. In this case, I don't think you need to really discuss it as a base, middle, and top because the strength of the frame of the building is enough to carry the intent here. It is more of a question of the contrast between the frame and the body of the building. If we could readjust our vocabulary to take about base, middle, and top to be more reflective of this kind of dimension sculptural treatment of a building I think we would be doing ourselves a great service and not to be too hung up on that image. I will tell you that I speak about this as a person who worked in New York on buildings where I was trying to make my building look like it fits into a block and the block was a 20th century, 1900 -- no excuse me. Nineteenth-century buildings with base, middles, and tops in very exposed cornices and very expressed cornices. That is, indeed, where you really do need to do something that doesn't look outlandish in relation to the street facades. When there is consistent blocks of base, middle, and top then I agree that you must have a base, middle, and top for it and recognize it at the very least. In that case, I would do it. In fact, to build a cornice like they did in the past except out of fiberglass working out all of the details so you could extend it out over the front of a building and have it secure with window surrounds and everything else that's a part of that era of construction. But let's just think about Palo Alto as, kind of, moving on and this building is a good representation of just that. That's my opinion.

Chair Baltay: Thank you, David. Okay, I hear four voices of support for this project. I would like to check, though, that Alex has suggested a few items come back to a subcommittee, which I support. Grace, do you support that as well or do you think it should not have those items for a subcommittee?

Board Member Lee: I am open to the subcommittee approach. I am also open to coming back to planning staff to review but it sounds like in this group it's moving towards the subcommittee approach.

Chair Baltay: David, what's your opinion about eh items Alex suggested?

Board Member Hirsch: I have been pretty happy with the degree of detail on the project as it is. If there is one or two that Alex feels strongly about, certainly I have no problem with it coming back to committee.

Chair Baltay: Okay, great. Then let's be clear about the point I brought up about the closets and the layout. My concern is not whether or not they even have closets or where they come from, but rather if they come back with a change on the floor plan what should staff do? At what point do they come back to us or to a subcommittee or something? I think it is incumbent upon us just to give them clear guidance, especially since my guess is they are going to make a change on that sooner or later. We could bring up the pans and ask the applicant for some opinion, but if we were to say look any change that affects the positioning of windows then we want to see it and we do not want to see the parking count reduced even if they cut back a bedroom. Is that a fair statement to leave that as a position of the Board instead? Grace, what do you think?

Board Member Lee: I think it's not really within our purview; however, planning staff would definitely come back to us in any case, right, if elevations are changed.

Chair Baltay: We are just trying to make it easier for them so that the guidelines are set. That's why I am bringing it up.

Board Member Lee: Sure.

Chair Baltay: Who else?

Board Member Hirsch: I could go along with the statement that if there is any change in elevation it should be brought to our attention somehow if that's a motion you would like to make.

Chair Baltay: And the parking count because the parking count increased with the addition of the bedroom. I'd be loafed to see the parking count be reduced. Alex, what's your take on this?

Board Member Lew: Yeah, thank you for the comment on the closets. I did notice that I decided not to mention it. I think that that we should just flag it.

Chair Baltay: Okay.

Board Member Lew: I think the closet is an actual issue because once you go to the county if it doesn't have a closet then it's considered a study. It's not considered a bedroom. Yeah, I think we should just put in a condition of approval that any change to the exterior is required to come back to the Board somehow.

Chair Baltay: Okay. Then, I don't think we should discuss it any further. Alex, can you, perhaps, make a motion? We will see if we can carry with your items that you're concerned about.

## **MOTION**

Board Member Lew: Okay. I will make a motion that we that we recommend approval of the project to the Planning Director with the following four items to return to subcommittee: 1) provide details and material specs of the carport and trellis. I think the trellis called out (inaudible) in the current drawings, and that's fine. 2) provide a spec sheet for the planters on the ground, second floor, and along the alley and provide the wire detail on the second floor and the wires for the vines; 3) provide the material and installation detail of the screening material above the parking lifts at the mezzanine level. Three items: the first one at the carport was trellis details and also the metal roof. That makes it four items.

Chair Baltay: Okay. I can support that and will second that motion. We can have a vote on it now, or, Grace, would you like to try to make a friendly or contrary amendments to reduce it and take it out of subcommittee?

Board Member Lee: I am happy to support it.

Chair Baltay: Okay. With that why don't we just have a vote? Can we do a roll call vote, please, Vinh or Veronica?

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

No: (0)

Absent: Thompson (1)

## **MOTION TO APPROVE PASSES 4-0-1.**

Chair Baltay: Very good. Thank you very much. Congratulations to our applicant. Before we move on I would like to appoint the subcommittee to be Alex Lew and David Hirsch so the staff knows how we will

treat that in the future. Very good, then. Let's move on to our next item or does anybody need a break for five minutes?

Board Member Hirsch: Yes.

Chair Baltay: Yes.

Board Member Hirsch: Nobody else?

Chair Baltay: Okay.

Board Member Hirsch: I could last if you had to but...

Board Member Lee: I could take a break.

Chair Baltay: Okay, we will take a five-minute break, please. It's 9:47. Let's resume at 9:52. Thank you.

[Board took a five-minute break.]

3. PUBLIC HEARING / QUASI-JUDICIAL. 3241 Park Boulevard [20PLN-00032]: Recommendation on a Major Architectural Review to allow for the demolition of a portion of the existing 4,500 square foot building and addition, resulting in a proposed floor area of 7,861 square feet. Environmental Assessment: Pending. Zoning District: GM. For More Information Contact the Project Planner Garrett Sauls at [Garrett.Sauls@CityofPaloAlto.org](mailto:Garrett.Sauls@CityofPaloAlto.org).

Chair Baltay: Okay, are we all back here? Grace, you're with us?

Board Member Lee: I'm with you.

Chair Baltay: Alex, are you with me?

Board Member Lew: (Inaudible).

Chair Baltay: David? Okay, we are back in session. Next item is action item number three, a public hearing /quasi-judicial for 3241 Park Boulevard. Recommendation on a major architectural review to allow for the demolition of a portion of the existing 4,500 square foot building and addition, resulting in a proposed floor area of 7,861 square feet. Can we have disclosures, please? Does anyone have any disclosures to make?

Board Member Lee: Just simply that I visited the site and the materials board, too, right? There was a materials board. I think I saw that as well.

Chair Baltay: Okay. Alex?

Board Member Lew: I visited the site and the materials board.

Chair Baltay: Thank you. David, any disclosures? Dave Hirsch, any disclosures for this project?

Board Member Hirsch: No... yes, I was at the site and the materials board.

Chair Baltay: Okay. I will disclose the same. I was out at the site. I looked at it from several angles and visited the materials board at City Hall. Okay, can we have a staff report, please?

[Setting up presentation.]

Garrett Sauls: Good morning Board Members. My name is Garrett. I am the project planner for this application. The site is 3241 Park Boulevard, which is an existing building that is being partially torn down and remodeled which is adjacent to the Fry's Electronics site that was in the North Ventura Coordinated Area Plan AREA. In general, what the project is proposing to do is it is going to be a two-story R&D and office building which will total about 7,861 square feet. They are proposing to have 31 spaces, which will be at least nine on the at grade and then they will have a parking lift within the back end of the site which will include 21 spaces. They will have two parking lifts that will have a total of 21 spaces, basically bringing the site into compliance without code requirements. In addition to that, they will be providing five bicycle spaces on these site with four long term spaces and one short term space. The proposed landscaping that they have will provide for at least 55 percent canopy over the parking areas, which is exceeding our 50 percent requirement over the next 15 years. The site, given that it was previously used as an auto service, had some chemicals that had intruded into the ground as a result. There is a soil investigation that was included in your packet that demonstrated that soil vapor mitigation system would be required, which the applicant and staff has been in communication with the Department of Toxic Substances Control and the Regional Water Quality Control Board to have them start that process and get the necessary documents prepared for those departments once this project is approved to go through their system. The existing building has a concrete block and wood frame structural system, which again they are tearing down a portion of that building which is roughly 2,000 square feet and retaining that other existing portion and then adding square footage on to the remaining areas. As a result of the work that they are doing, this project would be able to fall under a Class 3 and 32 exemption for new small structures and in-fill development as it is below the thresholds that the CEQA has identified as being less than significant of an impact. In general, what you are seeing here is a site plan of the facility. Along this bottom side where you see my mouse moving to is Park Boulevard, which is the frontage of the site. Along this left-hand side and up above on the left and top of the screen is where the Matadero Creek is which is where Santa Clara Water District holds the ability to review projects within those areas. We have routed this project to Santa Clara Valley Water District and you will not in the conditions of approval letter that they did provide conditions of approval for additional review of this parking lift structure, which is back along here. Staff and the applicant have had meetings with the Santa Clara Water District to review this preliminarily and determine whether or not it would be feasible. That where you see the conditions of approval identifying that preliminary they have looked at it and they said it seems like it will be okay but they will need to do a more formal review with their geotechnical instructional engineer once they have that permit. Additionally, you will be able to see they have a trash enclosure located on this backend corner, which is pushed further way from the street so it reduces the presence of that facility. Additionally, in this bottom left-hand corner where you see my mouse moving, they do have a transformer placed within this area but as you will see on the elevations drawings they do have it appropriately screened with a fencing which has been reviewed by utilities and they have indicated this is an appropriate solution. On the site plan again you will be able to see the nine parking spaces they have along the ground level and then additionally the remaining spaces, which you see in these two parking lifts along the side. Along this front area that you see my mouse moving around here is a gathering space for the tenants of the building, which is shrouded effectively by the planter wall that you have her in this background image. You see this smaller planter below but further beyond it is this planter wall, which you can see will be able to screen this from view but provide, also, a space for airflow to move through and not become a **stalgey** area. On this right hand of the elevations that you see here is where that transformer -- that I mentioned before -- is going to be located, which you can see is screened by this fencing. On the left-hand side is where they are going to put in their fire spout and everything, which they are proposing to have a hedge to shield that from view which are additional things that we typically want to see so that we don't have a brand new beautiful building and then a lot of utility equipment that detracts from that aesthetic appeal. The elevations that you see here is a south facing elevations, which is basically a cut through to face south on the property. You can see on the right-hand side over here is where that communal space is for the tenants. This along the back side is that parking lift that is at an angle so while it may seem at this point that it's further away, if you come three-dimensionally towards it or have that structure moving towards you closer it actually would get closer to this retaining wall that you see along this left-hand side. You also see here that they have a proposed second-floor amenity area. This doesn't qualify for any sort of amenity space as per our definitions which would limit or reduce floor area or our parking regulations that we would have. But it is mostly just for the tenant's ability to enjoy this space as well. Some key considerations for the project is

that there are currently three existing street trees on the site which they are proposing to remove and then replace with 20 trees in total on the site. They would be exceeding the urban forestry requirements to do tree replacement for those trees while also placing in a majority of native species on the site, which you will be able to see on the landscape plans and the documents that were submitted to you in the staff report. In general, the project is well composed in design. There was a portion along the southern wall that kind of faces towards the substation that staff wanted to ARB weigh in and say whether or not they felt that that area needed any sort of additional treatment or if they felt that the design that was proposed is sufficient. The reason for them having a two-story wall is fairly under stable; they have an adjacent substation which is not necessarily the most appealing thing to look at. The applicant has indicated that their intention for that is so that they can screen that facility from the tenants view. As you all have mentioned, this is an example of the material boards. They are proposing to use a smooth troweled-integral cement plaster along the majority of the building, also utilizing a painted metal to help break up the massing up the building. And also using clear glass along the site to give it an openness to it. Lastly, Staff is recommending to the ARB to recommend approval of the project and provide any direction that they feel is necessary. That concludes my presentation.

Chair Baltay: Thank you very much, Garrett. Any questions from any members of the Architectural Board for the Staff? Nothing? Garrett, could you clarify for me, please, you measured the shading area in the parking area. Does that include strictly areas shaded by tree planting or does it include a vine on a trellis structure as well?

Mr. Sauls: Our understanding is that it's strictly for the tree planting and not the vine. That that vine canopy is supplemental but we can have the applicant clarify that.

Chair Baltay: Thank you, Garrett. Any other questions? Okay, then do we have the applicant with us? I see Ken Hayes here. Is it Ken or his son that's going to make this presentation today?

Ken Hayes: Jeff Galbraith with my office, my partner, will be making the presentation. Thanks, Peter. Good to see you, everybody.

Chair Baltay: Yes, so I was just remembering back Mason was a student of my wife's, you know?

Mr. Hayes: Yeah, right.

Chair Baltay: I'm not sure if I have to disclose that or not but...

Mr. Hayes: Mason had a lot to do with the design of this building.

Chair Baltay: She says Mason is a good boy, whatever that means. I certainly feel like I should be careful. In any case, Jeff and Ken, you have ten minutes to present your project to us. Please, go ahead at your convenience.

[Setting up presentation.]

Jeff Galbraith: Good morning members of the Board. I am Jeff Galbraith, I am the surrogate son of Ken Hayes and I am excited to present this project to you this morning. Our site is located at 3241 Park Boulevard. It is in the south end of the North Ventura neighborhood and it is directly across the street from the old Fry's parking lot. It is a unique parcel, as was mentioned, to the south, which would be to the right of your screen. There is an existing electric utility substation, and wrapping around the north and east sides of the lot is the Matadero Creek. In this area, it consists of two concrete vertical retaining walls and a concrete base at the bottom. Across the creek to the east is the CalTrain and Alma Street corridor. Across to the north is a single-story structure that's currently occupied by Vance Brown Builders. In terms of zoning, the site is zoned GM, as are the adjacent parcels to the north along Park Boulevards. The Fry's site across the street is RM-30, and kitty-corner to the site on the corner of Park and Lambert there is a CS-zoned parcel as well as the parcels on the north side of Lambert. Transitioning from Lambert south begins the R1 South Ventura Residential area. We are a bit of a

transition point. The existing structure is 4,500 square feet thereabout. The rear two-thirds of the footprint is high-bay space, single story, and the front third is two-story where there is office space that supports the use. The historical use is automotive sales and repair. In 2018, we brought before the Board the design that you see before you and we got a lot of good, constructive criticism. I have highlighted five of the most salient point from that review on the screen here. The first was that it felt disconnected from the urban context. The second was that the scale and style felt too institutional for the neighborhood. Third was that there was no front yard landscape setback, and four was that the fence along the Matadero Creek was too tall; and five that the curb cut locations were not ideal. We took the dieback to heart and completely reimaged the building. At the heart of our proposed concept is the idea of a courtyard. A lot of the comments that we just ran through had to do with how the building related to its context in the neighborhood, and we feel like putting a courtyard at the center of the concept really solves that. It roots the building and the site, connects the exterior to the interior spaces, it engages the street, and it establishes, in general, a very open and inviting character to the project. Here you see an elevations perspective from Park Boulevard looking back towards the building. It is a very different feel; very engaging and open here to the street with a lot of landscape woven into it. Jumping to the site plan to talk about how things a relayed out on site, the square you see in the center of the site is the remains of the existing structure. We are basically filling in the overhead rollup door openings with new glazing, reskinning the building in new finish, and then we are demolishing the front third and replacing that with the outdoor courtyard that becomes the center point that things to radiate around. We are proising to construct a new two-story bar off to the south up against the substation lot line, and the gap between the two becomes a glassy entrance point into the building. We are also proposing a free-standing structure in the back to house parking lifts. Again, here the demolition portion of the existing structure replaced with a courtyard that really connects the use back to the urban environment. A little bit more granular look at that ground floor. The purple area off to the right is where the services are located, electrical stairs, a bathrooms, and so forth. The blue is occupied space. In addition to the main courtyard, we also have a counterpoint of secondary outdoor space which is more of a contemplate of and worthy focused garden called the refuge. Back to the comments the first one was the feeling of being disconnected, which had a lot to do with the tuck-under parking scheme. In the previous version we were maximized FAR, lifting it up above the parking and avoiding parking going underground for various reasons. That really resulted in that feeling of disconnection. You can see in the new concept a very different feel to the building. Here is a section through showing, again, the connection of the building through that forecourt and the roof deck on top. One of the devices we are using to create a little bit of a sense of separation, but still engagement, is hanging vines, or hanging cables, rather, with vines strung up on them. That would be located between the courtyard and the sidewalk. Here you see the magenta lines that show paths of travel. You can see how the forecourt really becomes a center point that you're invented to walk along if you want to take the sidewalk and get filtered views through the hanging vines or you're also invited to walk through it as the forecourt becomes a key piece of your entry procession into the project. Here is a few views of what that might look like. Here you have parked your car and you're looking back towards the building. Here you have entered the Forecourt, and here you have turned the corner and are facing towards the main entrance. The second comment we received was about scale and style feeling a little too institutional. We feel like the current proposal does a much better job of transitioning between the urban and suburban context. It does that through extensive landscaping, the use of trellis and canopy structures, stepped massing, and just an overall smaller scale of the project. We have reduced the project floor area by about 25 percent from the previous version. The third comment that was there was no front yard landscape setback. We were encouraged to study other projects along Park Boulevard. You see four of those here and you notice that all four of them have a strip of landscaping between the sidewalk and the building. Whereas the previous proposal did not, with the exception of a sunken garden in one location, as we have discussed and as you can see on the right, the current proposal has a lot more landscaping built into that frontage. In the site plan, you can see, as well, whereas the previous project was riding up against the sidewalk we are now setback 10 to 30 feet depending on where you are on site. The fourth comment was that we had this tall wall shielding view of the Matadero Creek. That has been eliminated. We are now just proposing to keep the existing fence and instead buffering that edge with trees that does a nicer job of improving views from both sides. The last comment was regarding the curb cuts. Previously we had left the two existing curb cuts in place and in the current proposal we are consolidating those into one, which has less impact on the pedestrian experience. A quick look at the second floor, a very simple

format. Again, the purple service bar on the right, blue occupied space with floor-to-ceiling glass around the west, north, and east sides, which gives you access onto the second floor outdoor space. You'll notice here a dashed line off to the right, that's indicative of motorized sunshades that can be deployed or retracted around those glassy facades. Here's a view of what that terrace might look like. Some precedent images that inspired us as we developed this concept. I will leave you with a few perspectives of the project again here looking from Park Boulevard with the shades at the second floor deployed, and here retracted, a view for the south, and a final view from the west looking back towards the building. Thank you.

Chair Baltay: Thank you very much, Jeff. Do we have any questions for the applicant from any members of the Board?

Board Member Lee: Peter, if I may -- I mean it's up to you if you think appropriate -- but I thought it would be nice to hear from the applicant regarding what the staff had directed our attention to, the story-story flat wall. Would it be okay to just hear their thoughts?

Chair Baltay: Please, go ahead, but maybe formulate your question carefully for... this is a question for staff or the applicant?

Board Member Lee: For the applicant.

Chair Baltay: Okay, why don't you go ahead and ask them.

Board Member Lee: Thanks for your presentation. Could you please just speak about your thinking in design of the two-story flat wall, I believe that's the south-facing the city substation?

Mr. Galbraith: Certainly. Currently along that edge -- if we go back and this image shows a little bit -- there's an existing fence along that side that's probably about 10 or 12 feet tall or so, and within the substation there is also a lot of vertical elements that carry wires. There's not a lot of visibility on that wall and we have talked about different options for how to breakdown the scale of it a little bit, whether it's a combination of joint in the plaster and we kicked around the idea of is it an appropriate place for public art. I think we are open to options to some extent but also recognizing that it's not going to be a very visible element.

Board Member Lee: Thank you.

Chair Baltay: Thank you, Jeff. Thank you for that question, Grace. Any other questions? Then I would like to ask the applicant to address for me, please, the question of the existing building that you're proposing to retain, how much of that building will actually be retained? Do you have any engineering sense of what's actually usable?

Mr. Galbraith: We have talked to a structural engineer and had some sort of initial plans formulated. Basically, the existing structure is built of concrete masonry units and in that rear two-thirds of the floor plate you've got columns between the overhead doors and then you have a band of CMU up over the top of the doors that terminates at the parapet. We intend to keep all of that CMU in place. The roof structure itself will need to be either reinforced or replaced in order to support the roof garden up above. In order to cut off the front of it, there will be some additional steel to strengthen that front façade laterally. Our intent is to keep the CMU in that area.

Chair Baltay: Okay, thank you. I ask that question because on two previous Hayes Group projects we have ended up seeing -- at least one of them, the one on the corner of Litton and Waverly -- the building came down completely to a slab and then was completely rebuilt, and yet we were told it would be remaining. Then on the Mills Flores project, as we all know, that's been quite an issue. But, again, at that point we were hearing exactly the same thing about intention to preserve and if it wouldn't be better to get some real engineering input as to whether that can really handle the new seismic loads and the new loads of that roof deck above or if it will just end up being torn down to a slab again and starting

over, and if that affects things. That's the second half of my question, I guess to staff, is that is there any zoning or entitlement benefit to the applicant for keeping that existing building? I just don't want to see us get in the position where the whole city is with the Mills project where it's incredible controversial not that the building can't be saved, and yet what do we do? Jodie or Garrett, can you address that, please?

Mr. Sauls: Yeah, there is no benefit that's being provided to or afforded to the applicant for retaining the existing building. Typically, like you are usually seeing, it is a teardown of everything and scraping the site and rebuilding it but hats not a requirement for people to follow, at least as of yet. Overall, their proposal is going to be consistent and meet the minimum requirements that we have for parking, for floor area, for canopy, for landscaping, anything the code that we would be applying for a new building. They are going to be consistent and compliant with those requirements. There is nothing like additional floor area or relaxation of any regulation that we have that is afforded to them by retaining the building.

Chair Baltay: Does that apply, Garrett, as well to Environmental Impact Reports or studies?

Mr. Sauls: Yeah, it would similarly apply. We looked at basically the whole site with our exemption document as if there is going to be, effectively, some kind of new building, whether it is part of it existing and the other to be torn down, there is still going to be a lot of work done on it. It doesn't cut off the threshold of what we are looking at because someone is keeping some of the building.

Chair Baltay: Wonderful. Thank you for answering the question. With that, then, let's see do we have any members of the public who would like to address us on any item here or on this item? Do we have any speakers, Veronica?

Ms. Dao: No, currently no raised hands.

Chair Baltay: No raised hands. Okay, so then we will move on from that and begin our own deliberations on this. As earlier, Jodie or someone, please read the comments Osma Thompson emailed in. Again, Osma is not voting today but I would like her comments to be read into the record for everyone to hear.

Ms. Gerhardt: Yes. Board Member Thompson's comments on this particular project were that aesthetically the project is very handsome providing small-scale details in the soffit and trellis locations, except for the wall facing the substation. There could be more done here to break up this long, blank façade. The applicant should also show this in context when we see this again. The protruding shading element is unusual and its relationship with the overhang is also unusual, but aesthetically and proportionally it seems to work. While the rest of the building looks great, that blank wall is significant enough that I would not recommend leaving it to subcommittee and at this moment it is the only thing that would keep Board Member Thompson from recommending approval.

Chair Baltay: Thank you for reading that, Jodie. Alex, would you like to start us off today, please?

Board Member Lew: Sure. I do have one additional disclosure. It's that I have researched the site historically as part of the North Ventura Area Study that I have been working on. Historically, there has been some very unusual things on this property, including some sort of bridge that connected both sides of the creek to each other. It was very difficult to learn more about that site. Also, the creek alignment had shifted over time and there has been flooding here in this area before the most recent site improvements were made. I think the design is very handsome. I have a hard time imagining this beautiful building next to the substation. I am having a hard time reconciling that. I have been having a hard time reconciling the project with the context of the other buildings on Park Boulevard. We don't have specific context space findings [distortion]. I don't really have any objections to what is being proposed today. The items on my list -- one which I have mentioned -- is that I'm not crazy about the placement of the street trees just because it is different than the rest of the block. I will accept them and I think that is mostly because we have had lots of comments from neighbors who want wider sidewalks on Park. I think that this does that. I can support that. I think, also, if I look at the comp plan goals for

the creek I think this project does much better with keeping the area open and placid. It seems to be much better than the previous scheme. I can support that part of the project. On findings, I am not completely comfortable with some of the wording that the facets put in there. On packet page 70 for our finding number five with regard to landscape, the draft language says as decided in the developed portion of the City, it is not considered prime habitat, but I think from my understanding in listening to lots of people in the North Ventura CAP process they actually consider the creek prime habitat. It is really a naturalized creek just on the other side of El Camino. This side is a concrete channel but the City has planned some preliminary studies for naturalizing this portion of the creek up to Park Boulevard. I don't want to say that somehow it's not prime habitat. The neighbors have testified, or at least there used to be, frogs in the area trying to get down to the creek. There are some really beautiful old Oak trees on the Fry's property site. I prefer to strike that. I would add there that those planting plans do have the West Redbuds and the Western Sycamores proposed along the creek, which are both native plants and they are both wildlife-friendly. I think that that should be added into the finding. I think my last comment is -- if I could go back to the street trees -- I would like that to, maybe, go back to Urban Forestry for comment. The Western Sycamore is a riparian tree. It's typically moderate to high water use. I am wondering if that's actually the best choice for the street tree and whether or not we should use something that's more typical. A typical street on Park is the London Plane, which is a related species, but it is time tested and it has done pretty well in Palo Alto. Then on the blank façade, I think I would accept the blank façade mostly because on other projects in Palo Alto -- say for example we looked at one recently in the Research Park -- we have learned that no planting is allowed. We would not be able to plant screening trees along that edge for security reasons, and, so, it seems to me that the blank wall makes sense. I suppose you could somehow put in some sort of decorative 2-D motif on that. The Board has tried to that on the University Avenue project on Kipling and I think it was 636 University Avenue. The Board went around and around and we didn't get anywhere or come to an agreement on that, so I am sort of hesitant to go down that route again. That is where I am. I think I can generally recommend approval on this particular project with a few things to follow up with staff about. Thanks, Peter.

Chair Baltay: Great, thank you very much, Alex. Dave Hirsch, how about you step in this time ahead of Grace?

Board Member Hirsch: Okay, thank you. Yes, I would just like to start with the blank wall issue and the bar of backbone to this project of that solid element and just get it out of the way because that electric yard is filled with unusual equipment that we don't always see. It sits up like a sculptural element in that lot. It certainly would be better if there were more done with its perimeter but you're kind of seeing that wall with that equipment in front of it. That becomes a sculpture in which the wall is seen. It isn't really sculpture but it is interesting looking. I think it relieves the wall. In fact, I think the wall being there is a really interesting contrast with the elements that are in that space. But that's not my main concern. I am only mentioning it because it will undoubtedly come up again in our discussion. Thank you very much for the presentation. As an advanced schematic, it has all of the elements we need, in my opinion, to review the project. I say this because it deals a little bit with the details that are necessary, the landscaping, etcetera. It really is a quite complete schematic idea. I think we can see the clear intent to provide a simple, understated, elegant building with massing that is essentially compatible with the site's boundaries, the public electric service, and the Matadero Creek, and sensitive to the use of the exterior space. I am impressed with the site planning effectively using the car lifter garage to lessen the parking impact and actually managing to slide one of those parking areas under the building the way it does. I feel the use of the solid linear volume of all of the buildings service program (stairs, bathrooms, elevator mechanicals) create a significant solid volume at the boundary of the electric service yard and acts as a visual anchor to the two distinct office elements. Except for the floor slab, I find the idea that this is a kind of renovation to be sort of a joke and as Peter noted, you're likely to take down the whole top of it at some point, but if that's not the case okay. I will accept it because of what it does; it allows you to build this building. From my experience with nineteenth-century century structures, some of which have had historic attributes, renovations require a different and much more detailed category of construction and rehabilitation work in order to be called rehabilitations. But if it benefits this project then all to the better. In any case, I find the painted stucco appropriate to the building function, and the extended roofs and trellis as a shading device as well as a dramatic expression of the building planes defines and

dramatizes the building's geometry, provides an appropriate extension of the interior to the exterior. All of those things seem to work very well. Since moving to Palo Alto eight years ago, I have been impressed by the brightness and clarity of the sunshine and the freshness of the air as the fog recedes over the mountain, so I wonder why it is so necessary to seal in office buildings. It seems to me to be so contrary to environmental principles and antithetical to energy savings. The first-floor large square office space has a significant operable glass wall facing an expansive landscape terrace with a natural screen providing separation from the street, so it does not have this problem. But the adjacent narrower, deeper office area has one small door to this special garden area, or refuge, also separated from the lightly trafficked Park Boulevard by vertical metal panels as in the contemplative window (inaudible) courtyard at Stanford. The second level, a much larger floor plan, has a limited area of what appears to be operable doors to the usable deck area but it mostly enclosed by a repetitive fixed-vertical windows. To me, this space is unnecessarily airtight and environmentally claustrophobic seeming to satisfy unnecessary rigid aesthetic of vertical floor-to-ceiling windows -- fixed windows that is. Given the design's generous and creative use of outdoor landscape space, this standard of inoperable windows seems contradictory. Why isn't it possible somehow to insert in those windows some more operable panels without disturbing the grid work? I am hoping that other would agree that this is something that should be looked at. Their screening of free-standing fencing that faced the parking lot interrupts the visual clarity of the building in the front. That is towards the parking lot and what is basically the front of the existing building. If the privacy of it is an issue there then there's certainly ways to use a different kind of obscure glass but I cannot understand the purpose of that -- actually, I should have asked that question of the applicant. Maybe somebody else could (inaudible) later on here. The roofline for nearly the entire upper floor office area has a major overhang on all sides except the area facing Park Boulevard. You can see that in this illustration here. Drawing A3.0A shows a residence with a roof projecting and an end condition, a similar expression of the end of the building. This would be a much more consistent, and I believe more appropriate, ending to this street-facing facade if it returned in line with the way the roof line is shown there. It would clarify the formal relationship between the glassy areas where there are extended roof and the solid element that is against the electrical... between the solid and transparent elements of the building itself. For one, I would like to see more study of this end of the building here. I don't quite see it with all of the different views that you see this projecting steel structure. I am very intrigued and happy with the method and material usage here -- thank you for showing that -- with that exposed steel element, but... can you go back to that? I don't understand this interconnection in here; this is really open to the sky in some way it is a strange connection at that end. I really feel if you had the roofline extending out over that you could work with that corner and make it a better expression. That's my feeling. If you're really noting this and you rotate around the building and you see that cantilever of the roof line from the opposite side it doesn't work for me. I think I would rather see the expression of the cantilever and upper section of that roof. Even as an advanced schematic, I would recommend that any further issues could be discussed in committee and I am certainly prepared to approve this project. Even as a small office structure, this is a significant addition to the lexicon of high quality buildings in Palo Alto. It is true to its function, sensitive to its detail throughout even as a renovation. Thank you.

Chair Baltay: Thank you, David. We may well come back to having the applicant address this cantilever element for us but let's hear what Grace thinks about the project first. Grace?

Board Member Lee: Yes, thanks. I just want to thank our planning staff, Garrett, for your staff report and walking us through. I also want to thank the applicant. It's wonderful to see Hayes Group packages come forward again and thank you, Jeff, for your presentation, and nice to hear your voice, Ken; it's been a few years. I was not on the Board, I did not sit on the board September 2018, but I see that this see that this project has dramatically improved. Thank you for sharing where you came from and what you're proposing now. My comments will be rather brief. I concur with staff; I believe this is a terrific project and has met the findings and I am thrilled to have it proceed. I would be happy to approve. I accept my fellow Board Member Alex's small additions. I believe that those make sense. I also concur regarding the street tree in terms of Park Boulevard and knowing what is there and how we can maintain some continuity and the London Planes trees would be terrific, or just to take a careful look at what's happening along Park. I did have a few comments, and maybe these are small issues and it could come back to staff or a subcommittee. The overall site diagram and massing is just terrific. I actually can very

much see this proposal in the context where it sits. I don't have a hard time imagining it all. I concur with my fellow Board Member David on your last statement. It is going to be a positive addition in this context. Now, on the two-story flat wall I also don't have any issues. I don't think it's a challenge. Given the transparencies and the massing and everything else that is happening along the edges I think that flat will work well overall. I, however -- if you want to pull up that view north from Park Boulevard -- have some thoughts regarding the refuge. I do want to preface that the forecourt and the setback from the sidewalk is very inviting and wonderful in many ways, both at the vehicular and pedestrian scale. I guess I often come to this site coming down Lambert between the Gryphon and Akins and across there and I walk along that sidewalk and I wonder about the inward focus on the refuge. I understand and as a quiet outdoor room that all seems terrific for the program and the users. My worry is just the solidity when I see the city property which will likely remain a blank solid wall, as well as the landscape treatment of that metal screen. I feel like that is something that could be... I know you need the transformer and you want to screen it and you're going to remove that screen there. I wonder about how solid that is on the sidewalk in terms of its... maybe there is a way to create a refuge with an inward focus; however, that solidity is not a blank wall that continues. It's a very short distance and you have that lovely lone tree, but perhaps your capable landscape consultant can think about or maybe that is one more layer of design there in terms of having that solid screen for the transformer; however, something in that same language and I feel confident given your precedent study images that you might be able to address that solidity there. I guess the other piece that I wanted to mention is that I saw on your precedent study that you show on sheet A30A the roller shade system, the motorized exterior, and how wonderful and transparent your building proposal is on the south and west facades. You will definitely need those motor shades. When I look at the materials board I saw something very dark. I see in your renderings and your elevations, and in the printed set and online, that it actually shows as not a heavy black. I don't think you want to emulate the current black shading on the existing building but it is actually a significant part of the façade. My suggestion -- this could come back to staff or subcommittee -- is simply just looking at your precedent study and thinking about the painted metal, which I forget the name of the color there but it is lighter. It is not black. It is enough of a surface area... maybe from across the street you would see through that woven fabric and it wouldn't appear black but I think it is worth taking a look at that color choice. Let's see. I guess the last piece I have, that is very minor, is the trees in the parking lot. I understand the shading and you meet the city requirements. My small comment is just why don't we see more Evergreen trees in the parking lots? Is that something... and maybe that's just a small one to consider. Just knowing in terms of the two deciduous choices, maybe an Evergreen choice would be appropriate. With that, I will pass it on to Peter.

Chair Baltay: Thank you, Grace. That leaves me. I am not quite ready to recommend approval of this building today, although I think it is a handsome design and I certainly appreciate its landscaping and the way it treats the street better than the previous version. Let me start with my concern with the existing structure. I am all for saving the building and reusing it; I think it's a better thing to do. I think it would be useful if the applicant could investigate more carefully what parts of the building really are going to be saved and let us know if it really is coming down or not, if for nothing else, for the public record to make it clear. What seems to be said right now is that everything is remaining and I just don't think that is going to be the case. I would like to see some additional engineering study of how that is going to be accomplished, if possible. I am concerned about the parking configuration for two reasons. I wonder if the applicant or someone could pull up for me the images in the packet on page 4.1 and 4.2 of what that parking area in the back of the building, between the additional structure and the building, looks like. It is drawing number four and packet page A4.1. I thought I saw something in the presentation about that. Are we able to pull that up? Who's screen is this we are sharing here?

Mr. Galbraith: This is my screen. I was just jotting that note down. What is the context of the image?

Chair Baltay: It's the back behind the new building, between the new building and the parking structure.

Mr. Galbraith: Is it a 3-D view or is it a...

Chair Baltay: It's a 3-D view, yes. I saw a 3-D view of that earlier.

Mr. Sauls: I can share that screen. I have it on my plan and I am already at that page. Let me just go ahead and do that.

Chair Baltay: It is in the upper left-hand corner of A4.1. There it is on the upper left corner there. I am concerned about two things here. One is that by reading of the plans, you're including that landscaping trellis cable structure as part of your screening and I don't think the code supports that. I think you will need to just check that. Secondly, I think that's a pretty mean space, to be honest. It's a 25-foot wide space with no real human activity looking in on it. It's just doors of the parking garage on two sides and a blank wall. Maybe above you're looking at it through the screening but I think you can do more if you can modulate the building a little bit and get some activity there. I worry that it is almost dangerous at night. This is a space somebody might be coming out to activities one of these lifts and there is no visibility anywhere from anybody. I think this could be improved. I'd like to see some work done on the design of this space to just make it fit better somehow. Okay, thank you for showing that image. I share the concerns of the staff, I guess, and some of my colleagues regarding the blank wall facing the power substation. I completely agree with the applicant's basic design decision to use that as a partition, a big screening element from inside the building. You clearly don't want to be looking at it orienting towards that electrical station. I get that, but from the public's point of view coming down Park Avenue that wall is quite visible. It is really just a blank wall right now. What I would really love to see is something down along the street in front of the power station as a compromise. For example, if the applicant were to plant a row of trees down the front of that substation or if they were to do something with that wall that would dramatically mitigate the effect of the blank wall of the building. I think either of those is a possibility to explore or to do something else to the wall of the building, maybe a transit line of the top if it or some sort of decorative element. I think as it is now it's just a large blank wall and that doesn't speak well for anybody. That will be quite visible. I just can't support it until something else is done to mitigate the effect of that large wall.

Mr. Sauls: If I can speak just briefly to the comment about the trees along the substation. I have been working with utilities on a number of their projects within the substations around that in the whole City and their primary mode or function of what they're doing right now is trying to eliminate any sort of means for which individuals will be to access that space. A lot of the things that they are doing right now are removing trees or building the wall taller that they have around the substation. I would envision utilities may -- while planning and other groups may support it -- not be willing to allow them to plant trees in front of that area. They would certainly interpret that as creating another opportunity for people to access it. It is a conflict, I think, right now that the departments are trying to deal with as it relates to how we look at the urban environment. Planting trees and softening these -- I would say unsightly -- less appealing features within the City. I know that would probably be a challenge to do that specifically but what you are saying about the articulation, or some other modification, on that wall may be something that they'd be able to look at.

Chair Baltay: Thank you, Garrett. I understand that it may be very challenging to get another division of the City to cooperate where they don't want to. To the applicants, I am just offering that as a possibility if it is easier or something in the cards to something to that fence at the utility screen or the landscaping, or the back wall of the building. I am open to anything like that that can just mitigate a little bit the effect of that as you're going north along Park Avenue. The power station is going to be there as far as we can imagine into the future, so the wall and the view of the building will also be there. It's not going to get larger. It's not that it's necessarily unattractive, while the equipment has a charm of its own, but as it is going to be now I think it's just not a positive thing. I applaud the landscaping at the front. The courtyard I think is a wonderful space. It is going to be really neat the way the architect described it, even having the ability to walk through it at several passes. I think it sets off a wonderful entrance into the building. The refuge space, however, I am much less sanguine about. I think that from the inside it is almost too closed to it. The propositions of it aren't quite right. From the outside, those tall steel plates are a bit off-putting to the public. There must be a way to achieve that sense of a more quiet space and also have a softer landscaping barrier to it. Then, I am really unsure what to make of the shading structure. I guess it has a cloth that drops down but I don't quite understand how that's working over the front. I think it might be better, as David suggested, just to have the roof cantilever out somehow and form the upper part of that. In any case, I have got to believe that this is a talented group

of architects and if they were to take one more look at that whole assemblage up above they might be able to come up with another way to treat that whole space. I think I am also in sync with Grace was feeling at the gut level about that refuge area. It can just be improved a little bit. Then, I think David's comment about having operable windows is perfectly valid. It's a small building still and to the extent that we cannot rely on mechanical HVAC systems, that's all the better. I haven't gone through it in detail myself, but I would like to see that clearly spelled out where the windows are operable. I know Board Thompson would also appreciate that. I am in favor of having that looked at a little more carefully. Lastly, Alex, I want to take exception a little bit, I guess, to your pointing out in the findings that... I am trying to look at this now. It says as the site is in the developed portion of the City, it is not considered prime habitat. I am not quite sure what you're driving at there but I don't think that anybody would say that concrete creek channel is prime habitat right now. I understand that we want to not make statements that are not true or setting a precedent but I don't want us to say that that creek is also a wonderful waterfront that the architects have to focus on and develop on and focus towards. I am not sure what you're point was with that. I think it is fair to say that it's not prime habitat right now. That's the sum of my comments on this project. I am in favor of continuing it subject to the comments we have made. Any further discussion from anyone else?

Board Member Lee: I will add just a few comments. I appreciate all of the Board Members' comments. The one thing I was thinking about was those motorized shades, and our fellow colleague Osma also referred to that structure. One thing that I did want to just comment on not knowing... I have confidence the applicant might come back with some other ideas. The idea that there is a need for shade for the comfort of the users, and given the program, I am just wondering how that motorized shade structure is recognized as a major part of the elevation? I then wanted to just offer the perspective given where we live and its orientation and the amount of glass and my experience working in buildings like this, there is also internal motorized shade systems. Stanford does it on a lot of their buildings, as you know, in Redwood City. I just to throw it out there just for your further thoughts, applicant, in terms of how you proceed, and I do see those shades as a big part of the elevation overall.

Chair Baltay: To the applicant, would you like to address or ask questions or make sure you're clear on some of the comments we have made? It seems like...

(Crosstalk)

Chair Baltay: ...continue your project and I don't have a clear list of things for you, but I want to know what have you heard from us?

Board Member Hirsch: Peter, can I just insert a few more comments in between before they respond. Can you hear me, Peter?

Chair Baltay: That's fine, David. Go ahead.

Board Member Hirsch: Okay. Number one, I would like to agree with your comment about the creek. It is clearly a concrete creek the way it happens on this side of the road. It is in fact on this side of the road; therefore, it is a little different than what it might be closer to where the residents would likely be. I don't see that it is necessary to naturalize it from this point on. It has to remain deep to go under the railroad. I think there is enough to do just relating the building to the creek at that very corner, which was described by the architects that that is going to be an issue to deal with because the foundation of the building there will have some effect on the wall of the creek at that corner. Let's leave it at that; it's not an important tissue. Another one, as you mentioned, that area in the back and in looking at it while you were speaking about it, it seemed to me that there could be some protection to the actual walkway that is along the edge of the building so that it might have a railing, a protective, that keeps people from wandering into the line of traffic. It's not going to be overly used. It is going to be quite nice the way the concept of the greenery on the top when the Boston ivy grows all the way across, and the lighting hung from the center of that rather than protruding out or being from the wall structure, et cetera. It is a really clever idea and it should light in, once again, a night vision of that with the pattern of light on the ground might be quite interesting. That could be handled with a further lighting study so that

elements of the canopy... it might not be a single line of light. It might be a little bit more lighting thrown on the building itself, as well as on the ground. I would include that, as you point out, as an area of further study for us to see. I rather like the idea of the solid element in the front. I disagree with the problem with that being the refuse... no, not the right term. The recluse? No, that's not right. Whatever the term for that enclosed area but there are other options for that. I think that they should be studied. Perhaps it's not metal but it's a glass element. It still creates privacy, it's a diffused glass that allows light to come through but not see the inside and its elements of glass instead of... I mean that's just a suggestion. I think there is further study in that area. I am happy to hear you all talk about the roofline, actually, Grace did not and Alex did not, but I think that's an important element of the front. In terms of the shading device, what Grace just said kind of makes me think that it's very easy to imagine that a regular grid of vertical windows could include shading devices that are all automated on the inside that would come down when the sun came down if the sun was strong in that area. The shades could go down at that time and be a part of the whole system of how you enclose that. It makes it an interesting layering of elements with the framework of the windows and the shading devices at different angles. I just want to say that I am as thrilled as Peter and everybody about the garden in the front adjacent to eh one-story building. I think that is going to be quite a nice space. In fact, the fact that it is a soft edge and inviting you to come into that area reinforces the idea of there being a somewhat harder edge, even if it is glass or whatever, in the garden area, in front of the portion of the building. The one thing about this is it is expanding the sidewalk already in an area where there aren't going to be very many people walking. When you get to the other end and you're at the creek edge, the sidewalk narrows again. It is going to be just a small area where it gets wider and more appropriate in feeling, and then it is going to go back and be choked at the point of further progressing in the direction of downtown. These are my comments in addition to the ones that have already been mentioned. I think that this really retracting the fact that we could approve it at this point and say that it should to come back for further discussion at another meeting. Thank you.

Chair Baltay: Thanks, David. I am afraid, Hayes Group people, that maybe one more round of design would be appropriate. I would love to see this get approved next time around. I certainly appreciate the hard work you're doing. Do you understand or do you have any questions about the comments we've made?

(Crosstalk)

Mr. Hayes: Do you have questions, Jeff, or I could say a few words.

Mr. Galbraith: Go ahead, Ken.

Mr. Hayes: I was thinking that we had three members that were ready to provide, provided we address some things like... I think the operable windows, Board Member Hirsch's recommendation, was just an oversight. I mean, operable windows would certainly make sense at this location and I don't have a problem with that being introduced to the project. The two-story wall is something that you want us to address, although I kind of think that what Grace had said made a lot of sense. All that utility, all of the wires, all of the insulators and stuff when the sun comes up and you have a blank wall as a backdrop I think it creates interesting shadow on that wall. I would much rather put the money into the building, right, out in front as opposed to spending it on that wall that is really not that visible. The mechanized shades: we really gave that a lot of thought; should we put them inside, should we put them outside? Outside, obviously we do that all the time but you're not really cutting out all of the heat. The solar energy is still entering the building. The more effective way to try to create shading on the outside. Then it is obviously a much more expensive way but what we thought about it was that it makes a much greater statement about environmental awareness than having the shades on the inside. Having them on the outside you will start to see that building responding to its environment and everyone else gets to see it do it as well. We thought it was more of a, I don't know, not a public gesture, but it really puts it out there for everyone to see that this building is responding the environment. At the front, again, rounding around on that, the cantilever at the floor line is there to be able to stretch the shades from roof cantilever to second-floor cantilever frame. The reason we extended that out as a cantilever, where all the other shades are just outside the glass, was so that the refuge below when the tree grows it is

held inside of that volume that's created by the shade being on the outside. The refuge is there for the ground floor but also, potentially, for the ground floor. If that shade came back it is just a different experience. We thought it would be really neat to be in that space. You look up and the shade comes down and now you've got this two-story outdoor refuge kind of space. If you want us to look at that we can look at that but that was our reasoning. Operable windows are easy. The rear parking area, I like the idea of festoon lights that could be introduced on the cables that come across that space, and it could make that space a little bit more lively. Perhaps introduce some bollards or something, instead of a railing, along the walkway to protect people that are walking there. I actually like the severity of that space. We have got edges all around. Then, the existing building, Peter

Chair Baltay: Yes, Ken.

Mr. Hayes: We beat the appeal at Council on Monday night, right, which was the...

Chair Baltay: You were very good on that one, yes.

Mr. Hayes: It was the right decision at 480 Litton, just my two cents, we did keep 20 percent of the existing wall. All of the concrete wall was kept. On this building, we are going to do our best to keep the solid CMU block. Once we decided to keep that it informed everything about the site plan, and it lead that whole concept with the bar and then the circulation space in between. The front part that we are tearing down is all wood frame and it is terrible. It is two-story, terrible ceiling heights. That's going to be removed very easily, and Hohback and Lewin have already done an analysis on the CMU, obviously, the roof's coming off, but we are having to put brace... I mean the CMU could come down. It's all going to be brace frame on the inside. If we can keep it, we're going to try to keep it.

Chair Baltay: I would appreciate, Ken, if you guys could just put together a demolition plan for us. We had this discussion when you were talking about the Mills building and I asked you specifically how much of those bricks are going to stay and what are you going to do and you had a really good answer about it, but it didn't seem to pan out with the engineering.

Mr. Hayes: The answer now is...

Chair Baltay: This is the second time I am asking you to show us a little more carefully what the engineering is going to be. You've got some good engineers.

Mr. Hayes: Sometimes, yeah, the project gets in front of the engineering. We are keeping the bricks, Peter, on the Mills building.

Chair Baltay: No, I understand, and I am all for you doing this. I think it's a great thing to do. I don't want to get in the way of preserving these buildings or reusing the way you're doing. It's all good stuff.

Mr. Hayes: Okay, great.

Chair Baltay: My question to you, Ken, had been do you understand what we are saying? It sounds like you do.

Mr. Hayes: I think I do. We may come back with some... we will come back with some options but we will certainly have a preference still, I think.

Chair Baltay: What I am hearing from the four Board Members here now is that -- at least David and I have cleared this -- I think it is one more round of design. I heard Grace say she is ready to approve it now, and Alex, I am not sure where you stand on this. I guess I want to give Grace a chance to persuade us. If you think it can be approved today, grace, how do you think so?

Board Member Lee: I just wanted to say a few words because I don't think I said enough about the blank wall, and that is something that fellow Board Members are concerned about. I agree with the

applicant. I do not think that it is going to be seen as much as we do when we see an elevation in a set or on screen. There are oblique views that occur as you are coming down Park, naturally, towards Cal Ave; however, it is what it is. This is -- and you said it Peter -- not going away anytime soon. There are, perhaps, some views coming down Lambert but I don't think so. When I wrote my notes after visiting I did not write the blank wall. I only actually wrote it because it was directed from staff. For me, that's not a challenge that blank wall. I think there is enough variety in the materials and the massing where I don't think that it will be a strong challenge for other people to be focusing on those other elements. The other piece that I want to mention, and thank you Ken for explaining it, is my original comment about the shade structure was truly the color, and perhaps you see through that weave in terms of transparency.

Mr. Hayes: Yes.

Board Member Lee: I do think that that is simply was my comment in terms of the actual color that wraps around the building that is black. I just wanted to note that. Perhaps Board Member Lew would want to just weigh in and then we can go back and forth on in this discussion you feel like it's worthwhile.

Chair Baltay: Yeah, I am just trying to give a fair, clear hearing to everybody. If the majority of the Board wants to approve it today, then it should be certainly pushed for. Before Alex starts, I would like to mention that I just don't think that the 50 percent screening on the parking is there yet. I think that is a significant change and they are going to have to do something. Those landscape vines have been included in their calculation and the code doesn't allow for that, as I understand it at least. I think that needs to be changed and that is more than a subcommittee can address, I believe. Alex, were do you feel on this? Where do you land on this, Alex? Do we continue it?

Board Member Lew: I actually don't have anything else to say on this particular project. I am leaving it up to the three of you. It seems like Osma was opposed to the blank wall. I can go either way. Since there are only four of us, it seems to me that this is going to need to come back.

## **MOTION**

Chair Baltay: Yeah, I am just trying to get your opinion. You're saying you're on the fence then. I'll move that we continue this project to a date uncertain subject to the comments we've already made. Do I have a second for that?

Board Member Hirsch: I second that.

Chair Baltay: Okay. Jodie, do you understand clearly enough? Do you feel that we have given you enough guidelines to talk to the applicant about it?

Ms. Gerhardt: Yes, I think the between the Board Members and Ken highlighting some of the main comments, the shade calculation was the other one that I picked up. The only thing I didn't hear about was the refuge fence around that transformer area. I didn't quite know where we landed on that.

Chair Baltay: I don't think we quite did. It is an odd circumstance but I think the consensus of the board is that it's not necessarily a bad thing. We were just a little bit confused by it, perhaps.

Ms. Gerhardt: Okay. Maybe I think Board Member Hirsch was talking about a different material. Maybe it is something along those lines.

Chair Baltay: It might just be that it's a unique enough idea that it will take us a while to get our heads around. I am sorry, Ken. I don't know what else to say to you on that one. It is something we haven't seen before here, and maybe you're right that it is best to put the shading outside and express the environmental concerns that way. Right now we have a motion moved and seconded. Let's have a vote on that, please, Veronica.

Aye: Baltay, Hirsch, Lew (3)

No: Lee (1)

Absent: Thompson (1)

### **MOTION TO CONTINUE PASSES 3-1-1.**

Chair Baltay: Okay, thank you very much. Thanks, Hayes Group for your presentation. It was very nicely done.

Mr. Galbraith: Thank you.

Mr. Hayes: Thank you all. Have a great day.

### **Study Session/Preliminary Review**

4. Study Session on Ex-parte Communications between Architectural Review Board Members and Applicants, Developers and Other Persons (Continued from November 19th)

Chair Baltay: Thanks. Thank you very much, guys. Okay. Our next item is a study session -- no, it's just the letter. Do we need another five-minute break, everybody? No, okay. Let's keep moving along then. On our agenda the study session for ex-parte communications has been postponed. I just think Osma needs to take part in that discussion and she is not with us today. We do have the draft of the letter to Council, which I feel strongly we want to get put together.

Ms. Gerhardt: Chair Baltay?

Chair Baltay: Yes, Jodie.

Ms. Gerhardt: I believe we have the minutes first for November 5th.

### **Approval of Minutes**

5. Draft Architectural Review Board Meeting Minutes for November 5, 2020

Chair Baltay: Oh, you want to do the... fair enough. Okay, let's first do the minutes from November 5th. Do we have any comments or a motion on that, please?

### **MOTION**

Board Member Lew: I will make a motion that we approve the minutes for November 5th, 2020.

Chair Baltay: All right. A second for that?

Board Member Lee: I can second.

Chair Baltay: Seconded. Moved and seconded. Let's have a vote, please.

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

No: (0)

Absent: Thompson (1)

**MOTION TO APPROVE PASSES 4-0-1.****Board Member Questions, Comments or Announcements**

## 6. North of Ventura Coordinated Area Plan Working Group Updates

Chair Baltay: Thank you. Okay, next item is Board Member questions, comments, or announcements. Alex, do we have any information about your North Ventura Project?

Board Member Lew: Yeah. There is going to be a presentation at the Planning and Transportation Commission next week on Wednesday, December 9th. The day beforehand, the planning staff is going to have an open house question and answer session. That is Tuesday, December 8th at 5:30 p.m. Nothing happened with regard to the committee since last month.

Chair Baltay: Okay. Nothing else to report on that, Alex?

Board Member Lew: No, I think people may have seen in the news that there is a townhouse proposal being proposed for part of the Fry's site (inaudible). That would go to the Council first.

Ms. Gerhardt: Yes, and if the public is interested there are several websites. It is probably the easiest if you go to the Planning Department projects on our pending projects page you will see 200 Portage Avenue and there are some additional details about that project, and also the SB330 process. This is one of those projects where we are starting to get some of those housing projects that are using the state streamlining and this is why those objective standards start to be so important. Thank you.

## 7. Architectural Review Board Annual Report to Council: Review of Letter

Chair Baltay: Thanks, Jodie. Thank you, Alex, for that report. Then before we adjourn, I would like to get feedback from members of the Board regarding our annual letter to Council. I would like to reinforce to everybody that we are requested by the municipal code that we provide this letter once a year. We did it last year; I would like to establish a precedent or practice of doing it at the end of each year as the outgoing Chair takes the lead to push this across the finish line. To that effect, I have written up this draft based on feedback from our last meeting. I would like to get comments and feedback at this meeting, and my hope is that we can have a final draft circulated before our next meeting and then we can vote to approve it. I think it really speaks well for us as a Board to be consistent and provide this feedback, whatever it is, to the City Council and the Planning Commission on a regular basis at the end of the year. I strongly want us to produce something. I would much rather just eliminate things we can't agree on but put out what we do agree on. To that effect, I structured... I think it was five pieces, A, B, C, D, and E. Does everybody see is this the right grouping of things or are there things in here we just shouldn't be talking about? Then, if so, what do we think about these individual items? Any feedback on the topics themselves?

Board Member Lee: I want to thank you, Peter. I think this letter is very well written. I do have some comments and questions. I am going off of -- I don't know if everybody is looking at it -- what Jodie sent this morning. It is the marked-up copy with Osma's and Jodie's comments.

Chair Baltay: Yes, I have tried to circulate... Jodie put some comments on a word document and so has Osma now. Maybe we can get a letter from the attorney if it is possible, to be circulating this kind of document without violating the Brown Act.

Board Member Lee: Yeah, that would be helpful.

Chair Baltay: It seems ridiculous to have to do it this way. At this point we are halfway done with it, but, Jodie, it really would be useful if we can that out. I just can't see how this violates; it's not a quasi-judicial issue. It's just the operation of the Board. In any case, I have left Jodie's comments in there. They're very helpful and I want to have that included, but continue Grace, please.

Board Member Lee: If I may, the first question, Peter, is this a letter? In the past, it has been emailed to Council members and then it looks like we are going to email it to the PTC as well. How do they discuss and give us feedback on this letter and how do we receive it?

Chair Baltay: There is no process or stipulation for that. It is up to the Council to decide what they want to discuss, honestly.

Board Member Lee: Okay.

Chair Baltay: Last year I made a big push that we present it in person, and I really -- Jodie will tell you -- just refuse to accept having it just emailed to Council members. That is where we got that big presentation in front of the Council. They indulged us and we got this big thing. This year, given the situation the City is in with the virus impact and a couple of really pressing planning issues, I think we should just email it to them.

Board Member Lee: Okay.

(Crosstalk)

Board Member Lee: My question was also the date in terms of new Council or old Council. We will receive it from...

Chair Baltay: That's up to the Council again to decide. We send it to them at the end of the year.

Board Member Lee: Right.

Chair Baltay: I would think the Council Members are eager to hear this, but maybe not. It is, nonetheless, incumbent upon us just to put this out there.

Board Member Lee: How about if we just ask if it could go to the old Council and the new Council? Is that something that's possible or is it always that we give it by the date that the Council that is no longer? I am just wondering if there is a way since this is an end of the year but it might be nice for both, old and new, to receive this.

Chair Baltay: I don't see any harm in asking just to have it circulated to all new and old Council members.

Board Member Lee: Yeah.

Chair Baltay: We just have to be careful that we are asked to provide a report. We are not asked to tell them what to do or to give them direction. It's just what have we seen over the course of the year. I don't want to be seen as insisting on things. It is really the Council's job to drive policy and decide what they want to hear and think about. It's just incumbent upon us to tell them what we are seeing. That's, at least, how I see all of this.

Board Member Lee: Okay. What I really appreciate about this letter and draft form is that it is a summary of things that the group has noted, but it also does provide some suggestions. I see our role as an advisory group...

Chair Baltay: Exactly.

Board Member Lee: ...to the Council. I just marked up this letter with some thoughts. I don't know if you want to go and circle with each...

Chair Baltay: I have got my pen ready to write them down because that is how we seem to work in the age of the virus here.

Board Member Lee: Yeah.

Chair Baltay: Let's just talk away.

Board Member Lee: Okay. I can just quickly go through. I just have a few thoughts. On the first one, the hybrid model, I appreciate it. I do think the meetings are better in person; however, I do think it is important to do this in a non-pandemic world for safety. A hybrid model for seeing material boards and all of that, I am actually fine looking at the material boards through a piece of glass, but if other Board Members feel like they want it open to touch the materials that Osma had noted I am open to discussing that.

Ms. Gerhardt: Board Member Lee, if I may, when I was discussing the hybrid model I was thinking that after COVID when we are able to go back to chambers would we still want to have some sort of Zoom component so the public could participate?

Board Member Lee: Yeah. I mean, Osma brings up a good point to that she, herself, is able to do more in Zoom. I do see a benefit in that, I do. However, the alternate approach is the letters, right? I just wanted to put it out there that there is an opportunity to write; however, you're missing the discussion in live time. I think a lot of impediment is the timing of the meetings during work hours on Thursday mornings is my feeling. I do read the letters and I don't know if we want discuss how we could emphasize that letters are important. I think that is really on the applicant side to make sure about letters and community member's interests. One thing I did want to mention is I do like this idea of having the ARB just make suggestions, for example these corridor design standards for El Camino is 2005, right? [distortion] I think it's time for San Antonio design guidance and we should weigh in. I feel like joint meetings with full Boards are rarely productive. I do want to stress that. I have been to several and there is just too many members for it to be productive. I think the leads should meet and the leads of each Board should reach out to their individual board members to make sure that they are represented. Then, I do have some thoughts on the objective design standards but I also can wait on that if others want to weigh in. That was my only other thing.

Chair Baltay: Let's come back to that particular topic, Grace. I think that is going to be a bit more of an issue there.

Board Member Lee: Sounds good.

Chair Baltay: Does anybody else have any thoughts on the first idea? The notion that we are just giving them feedback on remote design review. How has it worked for us over this past year and should we be entraining a hybrid system in the future? Any other thoughts on that? Is what I have written in this letter about accurate that we can all support? Okay, then I think we will leave it like this. I'll add Jodie's comment that a hybrid model might work in the future. We don't really have a strong opinion. On the San Antonio corridor design standards, does that belong in this report? As much as I think we all agree it is necessary, Jodie points out that there is already something going on. Is that right, Jodie?

Ms. Gerhardt: The Council has already directed planning staff to come back to them but certainly the ARB can help support that effort.

Chair Baltay: You think it is beneficial for us to say that we think this is something that you really need?

Ms. Gerhardt: Yes.

Chair Baltay: Other members of the Board support that again? David and Alex?

Board Member Hirsch: Yes, I do. I think it is very important to bring it up to the Council.

Chair Baltay: Okay.

Board Member Hirsch: I guess there are design standards now for El Camino south but...

Chair Baltay: It is mentioned that there are standards there but they are now, what, pushing 15 years out of date? We are struggling with that, you know? This base, middle, and top thing I think we would probably write a different stand if we were writing it today.

Board Member Hirsch: Exactly. I think...

(Crosstalk)

Chair Baltay: I think if you just tell the City Council, look all of the standards need to be revised that's basically saying nothing.

Board Member Hirsch: Yeah.

Chair Baltay: We have struggled at San Antonio Road with several projects. It just has no design standard whatsoever. I think that leaves applicants and us struggling a little bit. Does the Board support that this is important enough that we are mentioning it here? It is one of five topics?

Board Member Hirsch: I would support expanding it to El Camino.

Chair Baltay: Alex and Grace, do you think we should also include a statement about the El Camino standards? I think that's too much, David. I think we are better keeping a focus tight.

Board Member Hirsch: You have to eventually do it, you know? Eventually, it has got to come up. Alex, maybe you could take to it.

Board Member Lee: I guess I'll go first.

Chair Baltay: Should I add a statement about that, then? Grace, do you want me to do that?

Board Member Lee: I feel like we should say that the standards that we review they are really old. I know that's not productive in terms of time and staff and how we can do these, but I think it is very important to point out. We are looking at standards that are outdated without examples of the past decade or two decades in those standards.

Chair Baltay: Yeah.

Board Member Lee: I think it's a problem.

Chair Baltay: Okay, that's appropriate...

(Crosstalk)

Board Member Lew: I feel like its important.

Chair Baltay: Okay. I'll add something to that effect and we will circulate it. It is very important to me that we have enough consensus to all be able to vote on this. I want it to be unanimous. It's got to be something that we all agree on. Please, now is the time to discuss it differently. I don't want to get close to a vote and then find we have a problem, okay, gang? The third item was regarding communication between City Council Planning Commission, et cetera. This is coming from your comments, Grace, the other day about wanting to see some way of getting together with all of this. Does this come close to what you were thinking? Do you want to make any suggestions on it?

Board Member Lee: Yes, yes, and I appreciate the liaison. I feel like, and Alex you can remind me, but it was before you came on but we did have a liaison. It was back in 2005. Jodie, maybe Amy knows

because I feel like there was a City Council liaison for ARB, and HRB, and PTC. In any case, I think it would be helpful to have some formalized channel or just a way that that communication

Ms. Gerhardt: Yeah, I started her in 2012. I didn't see an ARB liaison but there certainly was an HRB liaison in the more recent past. I was just offering in this letter that if you wanted to talk to the HRB Chair and see how that played out and how that could be best used or not.

Chair Baltay: I could give Dave Bower a call and ask his opinion. What I have heard from Council was that somehow they felt that the ARB was a little more political and that wasn't so easy for them to decide on who would be a liaison between the ARB and the Planning Commission. I think what we are trying to say to them here is independent of their politics, we think it would just be better communication and that is really what we are looking for. That's really what we're looking for.

Board Member Hirsch: My opinion about all of this is liaisons aren't all that helpful sometimes. It depends upon the detail of the report. What concerns me about some of the way in which we approach and the City approached presenting information that we get ourselves in our report is that the whole of the minutes that we have are so detailed and absolutely everything that everybody has spoken. The reality is what we really need is a summary sheet. What I depend upon, somehow, is Palo Alto online review of the meetings. That is not sufficient either. It is one-sided frequently. My personal preference is some kind of a summary sheet of what these meetings have major issues that they have address and then share them between us rather than just a liaison.

(Crosstalk)

Ms. Gerhardt: You're asking about a summary of Council meetings?

Board Member Hirsch: Summary of Planning and Transpiration, summaries of our own meetings so that they are available in general. Then that information would be useful and not so difficult with 150 pages of reading. A summary of the decisions that have been made and I just think it is a better way of communicating information.

Chair Baltay: You don't think a liaison necessarily is what we should be saying is a good idea, David?

Board Member Hirsch: I don't.

Chair Baltay: Okay. Instead, you think we should be asking, I guess it would be, staff to prepare a one summary of our meetings to circulate to the entire City Council?

Board Member Hirsch: One or two pages, or maybe even three pages; whatever it is to get the full intent of the decision. I think if these meetings can be summarized rather easily. We're wordy people, and the wording is great but we don't need it all when we are talking about what actually was decided and what was important.

Chair Baltay: Okay. That's a new idea. How do we feel about that? Grace, what do you think? You've been around.

Board Member Lee: I have a worry that what we are asking is too much for staff given just how many meetings and how long-winded we are. I actually feel like the Chair of each Board, generally, over the years have been so responsible as a voice. Certainly, Peter, I feel comfortable you representing what happened in a meeting. I do think the communication that can occur, if not violating the Brown Act, between the Chair... I feel that that is, separate from the meetings, the role of the Chair or Vice Chair to represent the Board to another Chair, or Vice Chair, or liaison. I also feel like the liaison of the Council may not agree with everything that has happened in each meeting; however, that simple communication -- and maybe there are touchpoints related to major projects or maybe quarterly or even at the halfway mark of the year, or halfway mark of our term -- would be productive.

Chair Baltay: Okay. You're just saying having more feedback formalized, Grace. That makes sense, too.

Board Member Lee: Just touchpoints that are not onerous on anybody, but right now there is nothing. Over the years I feel like communication is important at certain moments that are scheduled on a calendar. I just feel like it's just doing work.

Chair Baltay: Scheduled meetings, yeah. If we emphasize in our letter that we just feel the communication is lacking and we could put forth a few ideas they may consider like a liaison, or a summary letter of each meeting. Is that getting close to what everybody can support?

Board Member Hirsch: Yes.

Chair Baltay: Yeah. Alex, you're very silent. Is that because you're just agreeing with everything?

Board Member Lew: I am just listening. I hear a lot of very different conflicting things between the Board Members and what I have heard from Council. I am just having a hard time reconciling all of this together. I don't really disagree with having more communication. I don't really agree with liaisons. I think in the past a previous planning director did a monthly report highlighting what each Board did.

Chair Baltay: Yeah.

Board Member Lew: It was a really quick way for everybody to see oh, you know, HRB had an issue with the project but the ARB liked it and then it went on to Planning Commission or Council. We don't really have that anymore. I think all of us have to go and search out the information through the media or meeting minutes. It is pretty time-consuming. I think Mountain View has been doing monthly reports pretty consistently, but they don't really have all of the same boards that we do. It's easier for them to do it.

Chair Baltay: That's a good idea, Alex.

Ms. Gerhardt: If I can, I do think the previous planning director had some public outreach help and that helped with that report.

Chair Baltay: Yeah. I don't think we want to put something out there, Jodie, that just makes more work for your staff arbitrarily or even intentionally. You guys have a lot to do, we understand that.

Ms. Gerhardt: There was additional staff to deal with that is part of what I am saying.

Chair Baltay: I think what we are saying consistently is that we just don't feel there is that much communication between us and Council or us and other boards. I will structure this letter with a series of loose ideas, I guess. That's really up to Council anyway how they would want to take this up if they do. The last two subjects I am going to skip. The very end one was just trying to put forth the work we do is important to the City. I have heard Council Members refer to that. I would like to just a few images of projects and stuff. I can't imagine anybody has a problem with that but is that all okay? Yeah? Okay.

Board Member Hirsch: Yes, but could we just make sure the list is complete?

Chair Baltay: That's the second half. Is the list complete or should we take things off?

Board Member Hirsch: Yeah, for example, the really exciting housing project that's on its way up on Hamilton wasn't on the list.

Chair Baltay: I was trying to think of ones that they can actually see that are built.

Board Member Hirsch: Right, I know. Does that mean that the ones that are in construction will be taken off the list?

Chair Baltay: I thought these were finished now. I guess they're not all finished. No, of course not.

Ms. Gerhardt: We could do before and after with the plan sets.

Chair Baltay: My idea was to try to get a before and after image of what first came to us and what was built. I was really struck looking at the Marriott Hotel on San Antonio. The end result is really attractive relative to where we started. I just wanted to get quick images on both if that's feasible.

Board Member Hirsch: I think that's good but you could add to that the images of projects that are coming up that are worth keeping an eye on.

Chair Baltay: Absolutely. What are things should we add to this again, David? You said the housing one on the corner of Hamilton, is it?

Board Member Hirsch: Yeah, next to the church there.

Ms. Gerhardt: Yeah, 565 Hamilton.

Chair Baltay: We approved that design and we could show then the initial design and the final approved design?

Board Member Hirsch: Yes, that's good.

Chair Baltay: Honestly, David, I am not sure that the Council Members are going to notice the difference all that much without really looking hard at it.

Board Member Hirsch: Maybe not, because that's a good design when it came in.

Chair Baltay: It was good to begin with and we pushed hard about the compatibility and stuff like that but I don't think they see that in the City.

(Crosstalk)

Board Member Hirsch: ...unique housing project open on the bottom the way it is, the mix of the commercial in there, and the...

Chair Baltay: There is some merit to just showing what's coming up that's good. I am not sure that's reinforcing the Architectural Review Board as much.

Board Member Hirsch: It has an awful lot in it.

Chair Baltay: Okay. We will put that project in here. Anything else?

Board Member Lee: I am wondering if it is possible to add, in addition to the address, just what it is. For example, Wilton Court is 59 units of affordable housing. I guess I had a different view on these. I thought that we were going to show a photo of the site as it is now, and you said former Footlocker, former Olive Garden. I just feel that they are not going to see the difference between a rendering and a final. I think it is pretty compelling to see what was at that site, or what was there before, and then what has been approved or what it is in terms of [distortion]. I felt like that was important.

Chair Baltay: I think that's a good point, Grace. Sure, just showing from nothing got the new building is powerful if we can dig up those images. Okay. I will take that and see if we can make that happen. Any other thoughts about this thing about architectural review buildings? Okay, that's going to be a necessity also but limited by just how much research time we have and facts and stuff we have. I want to take care of it as the Chair but I can't do that for every one of these. Then, objective design standards. It occurred to me that I think that's something that all of us have commented at some point or another that

objective design standards will result in a lower quality of design consistency in the town. At least, to me, I feel strongly that we are going to have to do this but I don't want it to seem like the Architectural Review Board is given its blessing. I don't think it's a good idea; it's just one we have been forced into. I am trying to find a way to say that so it's loud and clear to the Council and the public that's where we stand. Is that something we support?

Board Member Lee: I would say but one thing I did want to make sure... I appreciate this draft and I agree with pretty much everything here but I wonder if others had thoughts on that last paragraph under D. Then, also, I had questions regarding our process and timing and how we are. Thank you, Jodie, I saw your question what have you heard from other architects that built in Palo Alto. I just wanted to circle back and see if we are going to be able to share stakeholder feedback, if we are going to be able to share this letter or at least a section with stakeholders so that they might understand if we shared a link of the current draft and they provided feedback where we are as a group in our previous discussion and want we feel about objective design standards. I guess the last piece I want to make sure about, I am hopeful that we can add one sentence that talks about affordable housing rather than just residential. That there is something about how we all are thinking about objective design standards regarding affordable housing versus (inaudible) or mixed-use.

Chair Baltay: I am looking at that last paragraph, Grace. It's a rather long paragraph and you're suggesting that we --

Board Member Lee: I was just going to Jodie's comment on need planning support, right, in terms of the streamlined review and other departments. Then when Jodie asked what have you heard from other architects that built in Palo Alto it just reminded me that maybe we could share this idea and how do we get feedback from other architects in Palo Alto. There's that piece, but I also just had the question in terms of objective design standards draft, when is that coming back? Do we have an idea of when that is coming back to us? I had shared with Jodie for some example graphics I just want to make sure that is being shared or what this timeline is going to be.

Ms. Gerhardt: Right this minute I haven't been able to spend a lot of time on objective standards. We had a possible date for the next hearing. I want to say it was in January but I think that might have to be pushed out so that we can do some of these other things. Yeah, we had January 7th as a tentative date so far. That means we have to do a lot this month if we're going to get information from other architects and things.

Board Member Lee: Thank you, Jodie. I just want to make sure that on the current website that is the draft standards is it just simply the draft that we had before we had our last meeting to share with the public?

Ms. Gerhardt: Yes, I don't think that webpage has been updated quite yet. We haven't had a chance to talk to the subcommittee either.

Board Member Lee: It sounds like that won't change this month.

Ms. Gerhardt: I think this month I will try to talk to David and Osma about getting the subcommittee so at least we can get that next round up on the webpage so people would have some more time to digest it.

Board Member Lee: Okay, thanks.

Board Member Hirsch: That's from my standpoint too. I feel like it is a bit in the dark here as to what's going on. I don't know about Osma's feeling but if it is progressing I think I would like very much to see how it is progressing. I think one of the concerns that we had talked about at the last meeting was that the drawings were, in a way, more desperately needed than the textual part, but everything has to fit together. I am anxious to see how it progresses and what the actual schedule is, if there is one, or van it be stretched out. What is the end schedule for the whole of this requirement for the State?

Ms. Gerhardt: There is no State required schedule other than if we don't have these in place and we get an SB35 project then they really are very minimal objective standards that they would have to abide by. We don't want to be in that position. Getting them done as soon as possible is the best idea. We were trying to get them done at the end of this year. That's not going to happen given the pandemic and everything else. At this point, we are just trying to get them done somewhat quickly but we want them to be good quality as well. We are balancing those two things. I am hoping in the early part of next year we will be done. You haven't missed anything, David. There has just been a lot going on and I will get back with the subcommittee.

Board Member Hirsch: Okay. Thank you.

Chair Baltay: My intent with the letter was to just make the basic statement that objective design standards are, in our opinion, not as good as the subjective Architectural Board review just so the Council hears that from us. I think if we go into more detail about the standards and the process we are doing them it quickly gets too complicated. I don't know if so far the draft reflects that or if we have a different opinion collectively.

Board Member Hirsch: Now we are having a meeting. I just want to share with everybody something about objective and subjective. That conversation with my cohorts in my previous New York office and the comment was that it is entirely objective in the New York City building code. Of course, there is no art, historic, whatever review of projects in the City except for projects that have City funding so that 98 percent of the projects in New York are simply based on a code that is totally objective; quite a difference. There is no control except the economics of construction, really. However, it is just a different place, of course, you know, but the rules actually require a certain amount of architecture, clearly. The setbacks and all of the limitations that are normally applied through the zoning are not so bad, really. They establish a lot of rules and regs so you get a very commonplace building that fits in with the other common place buildings. You have to really work at making something quite unique that is subjective.

Chair Baltay: Are you suggesting, David, that we should not mention this then? Should we just leave subjective/objective off of our letter?

Board Member Hirsch: No, I think it's very worthwhile mentioning it. I would even imagine as much as the Council itself might be objecting to the rule of the State in our affairs, it might be concerned about how we present this and it is important for them to hear it. I am very pleased, Peter, with your letter with the items that are on it.

Chair Baltay: Okay, thanks. What I am hearing is that we more or less leave this intact. Are there any other topics that we didn't put in here that somebody thinks we should have?

Ms. Gerhardt: Chair Baltay, Amy French was just reminding us that the 2020 ARB Awards did not happen because of COVID, so maybe we just mention that we would pick that up next year.

Chair Baltay: That's a good point of course. We will put that in. Thanks for the catch. The awards are going to be postponed.

Ms. Gerhardt: We will do the same time frame. It is just the ceremony and the choosing would be later.

Chair Baltay: We will pretend 2020 never happened, right?

Ms. Gerhardt: We're all trying to do that.

Chair Baltay: Yes, we are indeed. Boy!

(Crosstalk)

Board Member Lee: Sorry, Peter, can I just add one more thing...

Chair Baltay: Please, Grace, go ahead.

Board Member Lee: ...about the objective design standards? I feel like there should be an opening sentence in terms of our Board understanding the intent of the State law to streamline discretionary review for housing given the need. I just feel like right now I appreciate this paragraph but I feel like -- correct me if I am wrong -- our Board understands why this is need, particularly for the neediest in housing. I feel like that should come across and that we are abiding in this way.

Chair Baltay: I can support that, sure. I think that the State law fundamentally is doing a good thing. Do other Board Members support that? I will take silence as yes. I will put that in there Grace. I appreciate your feedback. It's good to have that.

Board Member Hirsch: If we are using this opportunity to speak to the supportive housing or affordable housing, let's say -- that's the right term for it here -- my own personal idea here for solving this kind of a problem why don't we actually consider... I'm not making a recommendation but expressing an idea that might be possible, at least I am going to do it with all of you. Why not use the PF zones? I have mentioned it before. Maybe Alex would speak to why it doesn't work but why not suggest that the City actually get involved in studying the PF zones to provide affordable housing at a greater density? Change only the PF zones themselves. I am talking about all of the parking lots around downtown. There is a tremendous benefit in working in this area because the zoning could be easily changed to provide greater density, it is not adjacent to residential communities which means it could negotiate with developers for a good deal for a more skewed development towards affordable housing. The parking could be retained as part of the whole development; the City could continue to own the parking lot. It seems to me that it is a win-win situation.

Chair Baltay: David, you and I have had these discussions and I think we support this is a great idea. I just think it's not the purview of the ARB. We don't review projects about how the zones are done and we run the risk of overstepping our bounds.

Board Member Hirsch: Here's an idea. I am just expressing an idea. I am not saying we do anything yet. I am asking for discussion. We don't actually make recommendations for planning like this. It is really the Planning Department that ought to do the planning and transportation because it is both Planning and Transportation but they're not doing it either. We are all reacting. We are a reacting agency. A project comes in and we review it. When you look at the whole thing as a planner you see this possibility. Alex, I would like your opinion on it, actually, because this is something I think you looked at for a long time, the issue of zoning of downtowns. Is it possible to imagine that? I know that you have mentioned the fact that Mountain View has really begun to do some major developments that have made a significant change in that community. Palo Alto hasn't actually done this on a large scale the way Mountain View has. What do you think about the possibility of doing this in our downtown around California Street and University?

Board Member Lew: David, I think that that is in our comp plan. If you look at the comp plan it is there. Council has added a zoning mechanism to make that happen. You can add a housing overpay on a PF zone. I think that that is all there and the Council has talked about that in years past. I think they have made their intent clear. I don't think that we need to say anything about it at this point. I think we could just say that it is an opportunity that is still out there but I would leave it at that because this is really more of a report. I think if you wanted to add this I would add it in the section just about housing. Council Member Kniss is always asking how many units have been improved, where are we? If we were responding to something like that we could say we have approved this many units of housing. Then, I would say you could add there are all of these other opportunities that are out there and leave it in that section.

Board Member Hirsch: That's a great comment.

Chair Baltay: Which section are you talking about, Alex?

Board Member Lew: It's not a section. I am saying if there was a section on housing because that has been one of the Council's objectives. We could report on how many housing units ARB has approved recently and then we could also highlight where we think there are missed opportunities.

Board Member Hirsch: That's a good point, Alex. A really good point. It could, sort of, be because after all objective/subjective is really about building housing and somehow...

Board Member Lew: Yeah.

Board Member Hirsch: ...we could expand that to answer it the way you suggested it I think could be a good way to put it.

Chair Baltay: We are suggesting one more topic where we talk about housing that the ARB has recommended approval for and then lost opportunities, like David suggested, as part of our annual report?

Board Member Lew: Possibly. I think there should be one other thing under housing which is how Council Member Tanaka is always talking about microunits...

Chair Baltay: Right.

Board Member Lew: ...as well as (inaudible). We might just want to highlight the sizes of the units.

Chair Baltay: That would be (inaudible) units you're talking about?

Board Member Lew: Like the small studio apartments.

Chair Baltay: Small apartments, okay. As the Architectural Board, what are we reporting about it? That they work? That we can find them approvable? That they are too tight? That it takes too long to approve them? What's our statement about it?

Board Member Lew: I think our issue is that we actually have approved them, right?

Chair Baltay: True, we have.

Board Member Lew: In the past, the density limits typically would preclude micro studios because then you're talking about something under units per acre and our zoning is for 40 units per acre maximum.

Chair Baltay: Okay. Certainly, the Council would like to have a number like that. It's useful.

Board Member Lew: Yeah. Anyway, my thought about including that was just because it is something that one of the Council Members frequently mentions it.

Chair Baltay: That's a good point.

(Crosstalk)

Chair Baltay: Will you be able to help figure out these numbers? It's a bit of research to do it.

Board Member Lew: Yeah.

Ms. Gerhardt: If you're asking about units approved this year...

Chair Baltay: Yeah.

Ms. Gerhardt: ...I am working on it as we speak.

Chair Baltay: Grace, do you support putting this topic in there?

Board Member Lee: Yeah. I was just going to say to make it work with what we have would it be appropriate to highlight the addresses that are housing and have an asterisk that says housing or residential and then in the description...

Chair Baltay: Great idea.

Board Member Lee: ...highlight housing incentives site or the units in that one-sentence description with the address. That might be a way to do it without calling out a whole new section. Clearly, you have highlighted what the Council is interested in and it is a descriptor in the section where you actually see a photo of the site instead...

Chair Baltay: I think that's brilliant, Grace. Very good. We are going to take section E and we are going to make sure it clearly shows what housing is being approved and at the bottom we'll put a line about lost opportunity with the PF zones. Is that something we can all support?

Board Member Hirsch: Yes, but I have to say that my concept, or a concept, here would be that somehow or another if the City were to be more proactive in developing their own housing it certainly would be a possibility. It would mean sorting like creating housing department that is somewhat separate from Planning in order to organize the whole effort for an entire area like the PF zones and perhaps a broader view as well, depending upon comments like Alex makes about what is there in the code for these various and for the densities. That is of course a different... I don't think we are going to get into that in this particular meeting but I think it is something that is done in very many cities; certainly, it was done in New York City many times now where there have been certain ZARS created to take an area of the city, like in the Bronx, and have constructed incredible numbers of housing units at a time when it was possible to get properties easier than it is now.

Chair Baltay: David, I appreciate you wanting to bring that up and it is a very good idea but it is noon. I want to get this meeting down.

Board Member Hirsch: Okay.

Chair Baltay: The purpose is to get the letter or the report that we can all agree on.

Board Member Hirsch: I am mentioning this because yes we should all move on.

Chair Baltay: Okay. Listen, Jodie, I would like to find a way for me to finish a revision of this by the end of the week, and is there any way we can circulate it to Board Members and get feedback before I produce the final document? You think we can make that work?

Ms. Gerhardt: I talked to the attorney and he did say that because this is Board business, this is part of the mission of the Board that it does need to be done in a public setting for the most part. If there is one-way communication to me, or something like that, that's fine.

Chair Baltay: Okay. Look, to my colleagues, I will put forth a final draft of this. I promise to have it done by the end of the weekend, if not sooner. I will give it to Jodie. Jodie, I would like you to circulate that to everybody. That is still a one-way communication. It is up to individual Board Members to decide if they want to give Jodie direct feedback in advance of the meeting. As long as you're going back to Jodie that's okay. Jodie, if you want to report that to me at our premeeting or not, that's up to you if you think you can do that. I don't want to run afoul of the Brown Act but feedback is great here.

Board Member Hirsch: Why don't you establish a date for the feedback?

Chair Baltay: I am saying I will have something to you guys by the end of the day tomorrow. To the extent that Jodie can circulate the email, you will have something by Monday.

Board Member Hirsch: A week to respond or several days?

Chair Baltay: What's our timing, Jodie?

Ms. Gerhardt: Our next hearing would be on December 17th. If you're able to get this to me on Friday, tomorrow then people really have two weeks to review it.

Chair Baltay: Okay. I can get it out. I might not have all of the images but the rest of it I will have.

Ms. Gerhardt: We do have our premeeting on December 14th. Maybe that's a better deadline.

Chair Baltay: I would love to get any feedback then. Last year we had some last-minute questions that were dicey and it required us to start redrafting things and it just doesn't make for a better letter. I really want everybody's support of all things. I want this to be unanimous. I need everybody to feel good about it. Please speak up if you don't. Okay, anything else on this? Then thank you, everybody, for another long meeting. We are adjourned. Have a great day everybody.

Board Member Lee: Thank you all.

Ms. Gerhardt: Thank you all.

### **Adjournment**