



# Architectural Review Board

## Staff Report (ID # 11934)

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**Report Type:** Action Items **Meeting Date:** 3/18/2021

**Summary Title:** 4260 El Camino Real: Facade Renovation (2nd Formal)

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

**From:** Jonathan Lait

### Recommendation

Staff recommends the Architectural Review Board (ARB) take the following action(s):

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

### Report Summary

The subject project was previously reviewed by the ARB. An earlier staff report includes extensive background information, project analysis and evaluation to city codes and policies; that report is available online: [\[https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/civicax/filebank/documents/77486\]](https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/civicax/filebank/documents/77486).

The purpose of this report is to restate the comments made by the Board and describe the applicant's response to those comments. The analysis section below builds upon the information contained in the earlier report and was modified to reflect recent project changes.

### Background

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

On July 2, 2020, the ARB reviewed the project. A video recording of the Board's meeting is available online: <https://midpenmedia.org/architectural-review-board-74-722020/>. The Board's comments and the applicant's responses are summarized in the following table:

ARB Comments/Direction	Applicant Response
<p>Clarification and consistency throughout the plan set regarding stair railing material. Delete unused details and images.</p>	<p>Railing will be the NOVA II railing system. See plan page A2.0, A2.3 and Applicant's Project Description pages 19-37. Unused details have been deleted.</p>
<p>Provide a lighting plan, including proposed fixtures and locations. Photometric information may be required.</p>	<p>Lighting fixtures were added to elevation drawings, no detail was provided. Therefore, Ad Hoc Committee may be required.</p>
<p>Concern about glare was noted by multiple ARB members. Materials should be darker and/or more accurately shown in the renderings.</p>	<p>See Applicant's Project Description page 7 and materials samples. Also see next response.</p>
<p>If metal panels continue to be the proposed material, more detail is needed. The panels will need to fix exactly onto the existing building, which may be difficult. Colors should be more appropriate to the surrounding area and less metallic. Panels should also be more human scale. Plans must detail how all panel joints and connections to adjacent materials work. Other materials should be considered.</p>	<p>The panels have been reduced in size, and a corner panel detail has been added as seen on the elevations (A3 and A4). Additional details on the joints and connections are provided on A2.4. The applicant has compared the colors and materials to other buildings in the neighborhood in the Applicant's Project Description on pages 4-10. Additionally, the panels now include three colors: a dark gray on the second floor, a dark red band in the middle, and a lighter gray on the ground floor. Overall, these colors are more muted than the previously proposed.</p>
<p>There was some concern the roof color was not appropriate, as well as potentially not being accepted by CalGreen cool roof standards.</p>	<p>Proposed roof color is improved. The composition shingle includes a blend of red and black tones. See Applicant's Project Description, page 8. Project is not required to comply with CalGreen Mandatory as there is no increase in floor area.</p>
<p>The rear elevation needs more attention including maintaining/replacing the existing trellis.</p>	<p>Trellis details have been added to sheet A4. The existing trellis on the side will be enhanced and a new trellis will be added to the rear. See plans page A4 and Applicant's Project Description page 46 and 47.</p>

Provide a landscape plan indicating the existing landscaping to remain, and proposed landscaping for planter boxes shown on plans. Native species are preferred, as this is ARB Finding #5.

Landscaping information has been added to the site plan A2.0. An overview of existing landscaping is provided in the Applicant's Project Description on pages 14-18, and rear trees are also shown on page 12 and 42.

It was recommended the existing utility box be painted if landscape screening is not an option.

The applicant would like to retain the existing green color as it blends in with adjacent shrubs (see Applicant's Project Description, page 13).

### **Analysis<sup>1</sup>**

Overall, Staff has some concerns about the materials and details. There were minimal changes from the previous iteration; however, this is in keeping with the owner's preferences. The plan set has been improved and the details are more accurate.

The colors are darker and more appropriate to the surrounding neighborhood. The darker gray and red tones help break up the massing, though the lower half of the building remains a lighter gray. Other improvements include additional details regarding the existing landscaping, particularly at the rear of the building and in the stair areas. Trellises with Bougainvillea are proposed for the side and rear, along with existing planters and potted plants. While more permanent landscaping would have been preferred, space on the built site is limited, and the planters have large mature plants.

The ARB expressed concern over the details for the metal panels being retrofitted on an older building. The applicant would still like to use the panels, and has adjusted them to be smaller in size.

### **Environmental Review**

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

### **Public Notification, Outreach & Comments**

The Palo Alto Municipal Code requires notice of this public hearing be published in a local paper and mailed to owners and occupants of property within 600 feet of the subject property at least ten days in advance. Notice of a public hearing for this project was published in the *Daily Post*

<sup>1</sup> The information provided in this section is based on analysis prepared by the report author prior to the public hearing. The Architectural Review Board in its review of the administrative record and based on public testimony may reach a different conclusion from that presented in this report and may choose to take an alternative action from the recommendation in this report.

on March 5, which is 13 days in advance of the meeting. Postcard mailing occurred on March 5, 2021, which is 13 in advance of the meeting.

### Public Comments

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

### **Alternative Actions**

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

1. Recommend approval of the project with additional conditions; or
2. Recommend project denial based on revised findings.

#### **Report Author & Contact Information**

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(650) 617-3125  
[emily.foley@cityofpaloalto.org](mailto:emily.foley@cityofpaloalto.org)

#### **ARB<sup>2</sup> Liaison & Contact Information**

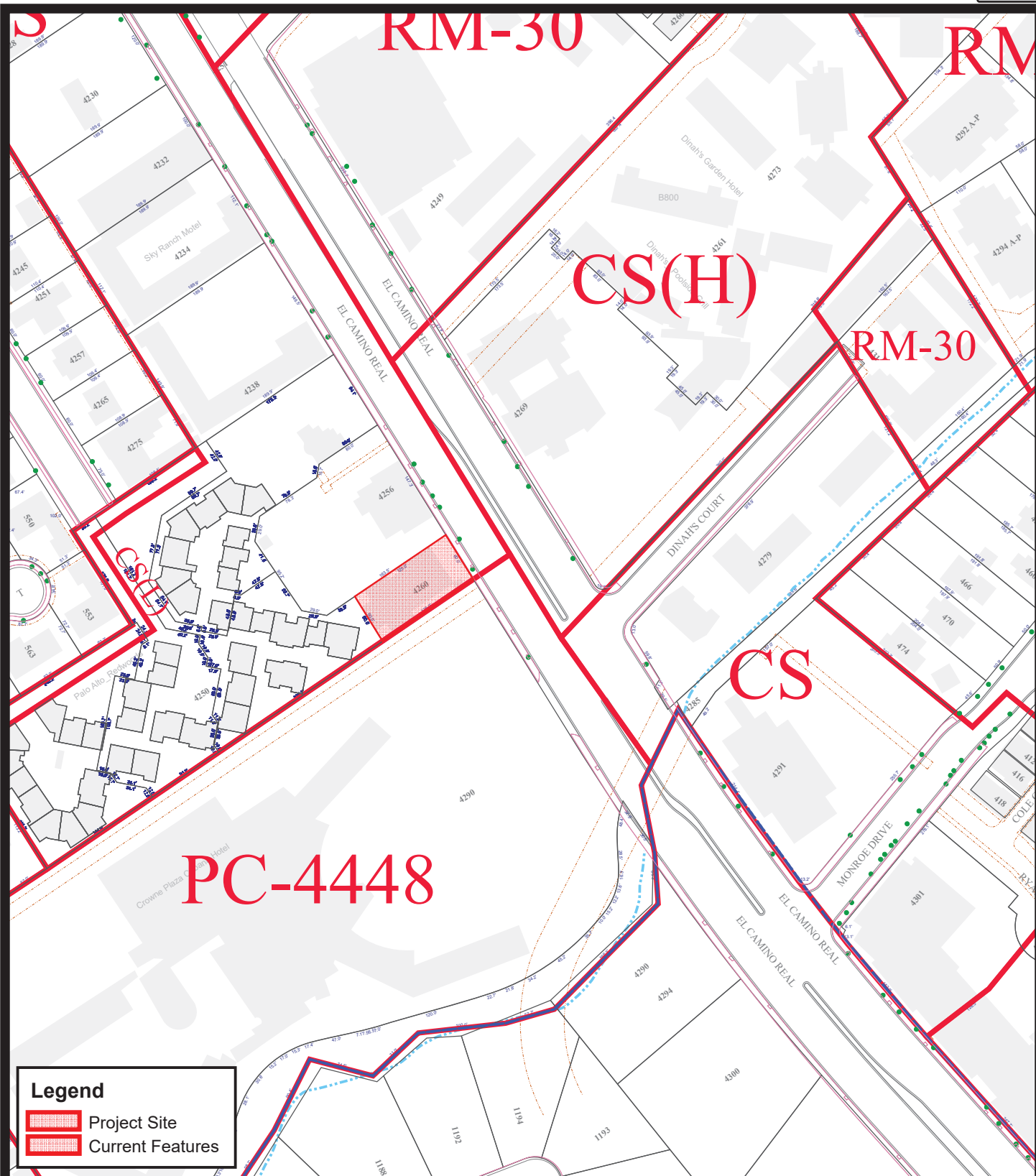
Jodie Gerhardt, Planning Manager  
(650) 329-2575  
[jodie.gerhardt@cityofpaloalto.org](mailto:jodie.gerhardt@cityofpaloalto.org)

#### **Attachments:**



- Attachment A: Location Map (PDF)
- Attachment B: Draft ARB Findings (DOCX)
- Attachment C: Draft Conditions of Approval (DOCX)
- Attachment D: Project Plans and Applicant's Description (DOCX)

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<sup>2</sup> Emails may be sent directly to the ARB using the following address: [arb@cityofpaloalto.org](mailto:arb@cityofpaloalto.org)

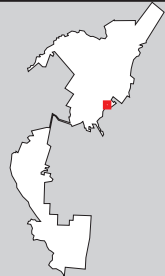


**Legend**

-  Project Site
-  Current Features



The City of Palo Alto



### Attachment A 4260 El Camino Real

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

No changes to the layout of the building or with regards to function are proposed. The ground level parking is convenient and access to the building is through two exterior stair wells or the exterior elevator.

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

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

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

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

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**CONTEXT-BASED DESIGN CRITERIA**

4260 El Camino Real

19PLN-00142

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

**1. Pedestrian and Bicycle Environment**

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

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

**2. Street Building Facades**

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

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

**3. Massing and Setbacks**

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

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

**4. Low Density Residential Transitions**

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

This property does not abut low density residential, though it is adjacent to multiple-family (Palo Alto Redwoods) in the rear.

**5. Project Open Space**

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

This building currently contains usable balconies on the left side and in the rear. No changes



are proposed to the existing balcony spaces.

#### **6. Parking Design**

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

Parking is located in a covered garage on the first floor of the building that is screened from the public right-of-way. There are no proposed changes to this facility.

#### **7. Large Multi-Acre Sites**

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

N/A.

#### **8. Sustainability and Green Building Design**

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

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

**ATTACHMENT C**  
**CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL**

4260 El Camino Real  
19PLN-00401

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**PLANNING DIVISION**

1. **CONFORMANCE WITH PLANS:** Construction and development shall conform to the approved plans entitled, "Commercial Office Building, 4260 El Camino Real, Palo Alto, California," received by the City on January 7, 2021 on file with the Planning Department, 250 Hamilton Avenue, Palo Alto, California except as modified by these conditions of approval.
2. **BUILDING PERMIT:** Apply for a building permit and meet any and all conditions of the Planning, Fire, Public Works, and Building Departments.
3. **BUILDING PERMIT PLAN SET:** A copy of this cover letter and conditions of approval shall be printed on the second page of the plans submitted for building permit.
4. **PROJECT MODIFICATIONS:** All modifications to the approved project shall be submitted for review and approval prior to construction. If during the Building Permit review and construction phase, the project is modified by the applicant, it is the responsibility of the applicant to contact the Planning Division/project planner directly to obtain approval of the project modification. It is the applicant's responsibility to highlight any proposed changes to the project and to bring it to the project planner's attention.
5. **PERMIT EXPIRATION.** The project approval shall be valid for a period of two years from the original date of approval. Application for a one year extension of this entitlement may be made prior to expiration.
6. **LANDSCAPE PLAN.** Plantings shall be installed in accordance with the approved plan set and shall be permanently maintained and replaced as necessary.
7. **NONCOMPLYING FACILITY WALLS:** The applicant has agreed to maintain all non-complying walls in their current condition. Window replacement is allowed as long as they fit within the existing wall openings. Should any wall replacement/maintenance be required it shall conform with PAMC Section 18.70.100(b) as described below:
  - a. When the damage or destruction of a noncomplying facility affects a portion of the facility that constituted or contributed to the noncompliance, any replacement or reconstruction to such damaged portion shall be accomplished in such manner as not to reinstate the noncompliance or degree of noncompliance caused by the destroyed or damaged portion of the facility, and otherwise in full compliance with this title; however, if the cost to replace or reconstruct the noncomplying portion of the facility to its previous configuration does not exceed fifty percent of the total cost to replace or reconstruct the facility in conformance with this subsection, then the damaged noncomplying portion may be replaced or reconstructed to its previous configuration. In no event shall such replacement or construction create, cause, or increase any noncompliance with the requirements of this title.

8. **FINAL INSPECTION:** A Planning Division Final inspection will be required to determine substantial compliance with the approved plans prior to the scheduling of a Building Division final. Any revisions during the building process must be approved by Planning, including but not limited to; materials, landscaping and hard surface locations. Contact your Project Planner, Emily Foley at [emily.foley@cityofpalalto.org](mailto:emily.foley@cityofpalalto.org) to schedule this inspection.

**PUBLIC WORKS ENGINEERING** PRIOR TO ISSUANCE OF EXCAVATION AND GRADING PERMIT:

9. If access to adjacent properties is required for façade improvements, contractor to work with adjacent property owners/tenants.
10. Provide the following note on the plan: “Contractor shall not stage, store, or stockpile any material or equipment within the public road right-of-way.” Contractor shall keep materials and equipment onsite.
11. **SIDEWALK ENCROACHMENT:** Add a note to the building permit plan set that says, “Work must be done in a manner that is safe for pedestrians using the public sidewalk. The work area must be coned or taped off while still leaving at least 4 feet of sidewalk for pedestrian use. If less than 4 feet of sidewalk is available for pedestrians, the contractor must obtain an encroachment permit from Public Works to close the sidewalk.”
12. **STORM WATER POLLUTION PREVENTION:** The City's full-sized "Pollution Prevention - It's Part of the Plan" sheet must be included in the plan set. The sheet is available here: <http://www.cityofpalalto.org/civicax/filebank/documents/2732>

**Urban Forestry**

13. **TREE PROTECTIO COMPLIANCE. In addition to installing proposed tree protection as per plan drawing, take extra precaution during construction to avoid damage to tree canopies when removing/replacing building siding.** The owner and contractor shall implement all protection and inspection schedule measures, design recommendations and construction scheduling as stated in the TPR & Sheet T-1, and is subject to code compliance action pursuant to PAMC 8.10.080. The required protective fencing shall remain in place until final landscaping and inspection of the project. Project arborist approval must be obtained and documented in the monthly activity report sent to the City. The mandatory Contractor and Arborist Monthly Tree Activity Report shall be sent monthly to the City ([pwps@cityofpalalto.org](mailto:pwps@cityofpalalto.org)) beginning with the initial verification approval, using the template in the Tree Technical Manual, Addendum 11.
14. **PLAN CHANGES.** Revisions and/or **changes to plans before or during construction** shall be reviewed and responded to by the (a) project site arborist, or (b) landscape architect with written letter of acceptance before submitting the revision to the Building Department for review by Planning, PW or Urban Forestry.
15. **TREE DAMAGE.** Tree Damage, Injury Mitigation and Inspections apply to Contractor. Reporting, injury mitigation measures and arborist inspection schedule (1-5) apply pursuant to TTM, Section 2.20-2.30. Contractor shall be responsible for the repair or replacement of any publicly owned or protected trees that are damaged during the course of construction, pursuant to Title 8 of the Palo Alto Municipal Code, and city Tree Technical Manual, Section 2.25.

16. GENERAL. The following general tree preservation measures apply to all trees to be retained: No storage of material, topsoil, vehicles or equipment shall be permitted within the tree enclosure area. The ground under and around the tree canopy area shall not be altered. Trees to be retained shall be irrigated, aerated and maintained as necessary to ensure survival.
17. BUILDING PERMIT SUBMITTAL- PROJECT ARBORIST CERTIFICATION LETTER. Prior to submittal for staff review, attach a Project Arborist Certification Letter that he/she has; (a) reviewed the entire building permit plan set submittal and, (b) affirm that ongoing Contractor/Project Arborist site monitoring inspections and reporting have been arranged with the contractor or owner (see Sheet T-1) and, (c) understands that design revisions (site or plan changes) within a TPZ will be routed to Project Arborist/Contractor for review prior to approval from City.
18. TREE PROTECTION VERIFICATION. Prior to any site work verification from the contractor that the required protective fencing is in place shall be submitted to the Urban Forestry Section. The fencing shall contain required warning sign and remain in place until final inspection of the project.
19. EXCAVATION RESTRICTIONS APPLY (TTM, Sec. 2.20 C & D). Any approved grading, digging or trenching beneath a tree canopy shall be performed using 'air-spade' method as a preference, with manual hand shovel as a backup. For utility trenching, including sewer line, roots exposed with diameter of 1.5 inches and greater shall remain intact and not be damaged. If directional boring method is used to tunnel beneath roots, then Table 2-1, Trenching and Tunneling Distance, shall be printed on the final plans to be implemented by Contractor.
20. PLAN SET REQUIREMENTS. The final Plans submitted for building permit shall include the following information and notes on relevant plan sheets:
  - a. SHEET T-1, BUILDING PERMIT. The building permit plan set will include the City's full-sized, Sheet T-1 (Tree Protection-it's Part of the Plan!), available on the Development Center website at <http://www.cityofpaloalto.org/civicax/filebank/documents/31783>. The Applicant shall **complete and sign the Tree Disclosure Statement** and recognize the Project Arborist Tree Activity Inspection Schedule. Monthly reporting to Urban Forestry/Contractor is mandatory. (Insp. #1: applies to all projects; with tree preservation report: Insp. #1-7 applies)
  - b. The Tree Preservation Report (TPR). All sheets of the Applicant's TPR approved by the City for full implementation by Contractor, shall be printed on numbered Sheet T-1 (T-2, T-3, etc) and added to the sheet index.
  - c. Plans to show protective tree fencing. The Plan Set (esp. site, demolition, grading & drainage, foundation, irrigation, tree disposition, utility sheets, etc.) must delineate/show the correct configuration of Type I, Type II or Type III fencing around each Regulated Tree, using a bold dashed line enclosing the Tree Protection Zone (Standard Dwg. #605, Sheet T-1; City Tree Technical Manual, Section 6.35-Site Plans); **or by using the Project Arborist's unique diagram for each Tree Protection Zone enclosure.**

### Building

21. Hire architect to assist with remodel and plans preparation for BP. Show correct occupancy and Building Code Year 2019.

22. Visual review only. Technical reviews will be conducted at BP. Hire an architect to assist with Fire rated wall and protection of opening details required at new wall finishes. CROSS REF ALL DETAILS ON PLAN at time of BP. If not applicable please delete to avoid confusion during construction.
23. Illustrate existing Elevator meets current code.
24. Provide Fire rated wall and protection of opening details required at new wall finishes. Include UL design # and head # at fire-rated construction."
25. Solid Parapet is required matching existing condition. At building permit, architect shall illustrate compliance.

### **Zero Waste**

The following requirements are part of the Palo Alto Municipality Code 5.20 and cut-sheets for both the internal and external containers must be included in the building plans prior to receiving approval from the Zero Waste Department.

26. PAMC 5.20.108 Internal Waste Stations.
  - a. Internal waste stations are required for common areas such as lunchrooms, conference rooms, cafeterias, and coffee stations. The waste station shall be comprised of three-color coded containers. Black for landfill waste, blue for recycling, and green for compostables. The green compostable container, if bags are used, shall be green compostable bags. The waste station containers shall also contain color coded signs. All dining area waste stations must have 3-sort color-coded labeled containers for garbage (black), recycling (blue) and compost (green). Any kitchen area must have the appropriate number of 3-sort color-coded labeled waste stations for garbage, recycling and compost.
  - b. Restrooms that use paper towels for hand drying must have color-coded labeled compost container for paper towels and it is recommended to have a labeled landfill container for the diaper changing stations.
  - c. Signs can be obtained from GreenWaste of Palo Alto [pacustomerservice@greenwwaste.com](mailto:pacustomerservice@greenwwaste.com) or call (650) 493-4894 to request signs.
27. PAMC 5.20.108 External Waste Station.
  - a. If the site chooses to have refuse containers outside they will need to be installed at convenient and appropriately selected locations. The waste station shall be comprised of three-color coded containers. Black for landfill waste, blue for recycling, and green for compostables. The green compostable container, if bags are used, shall use green compostable bags. The waste station containers shall also contain color coded signs. Signs can be obtained from GreenWaste of Palo Alto [pacustomerservice@greenwwaste.com](mailto:pacustomerservice@greenwwaste.com) or call (650) 493-4894 to request signs.

## Attachment D

### **Project Plans**

Hardcopies of project plans and the Applicant's description are provided to Board members. During Shelter-in-Place, documents are only available online for the public.

#### **Directions to review Project plans online:**

1. Go to: [bit.ly/PAPendingprojects](http://bit.ly/PAPendingprojects)
2. Scroll down to find "4260 El Camino Avenue" and click the address link
3. On this project specific webpage you will find a link to the project plans and other important information

#### **Direct Link to Project Webpage:**

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

#### **Materials Boards:**

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