



CITY OF
**PALO
ALTO**

Architectural Review Board Staff Report

From: Jonathan Lait, Planning and Development Services Director
Lead Department: Planning and Development Services

Meeting Date: January 19, 2023

TITLE

PUBLIC HEARING / QUASI-JUDICIAL. 414 California Avenue [22PLN-00207]: Recommendation on Applicant's Request for Approval of a Minor Board-Level Architectural Review to Allow the Removal and Replacement of Existing Stucco with new Tenant Colors, Rooftop Mechanical Equipment and Enclosure, Removal of two Parking lot Trees, Replace Existing Front Breeze-Block Screen Wall with a new Lattice System, new Landscaping, and new Signage. Environmental Assessment: Exempt from the Provisions of CEQA per Section 15301. Zoning District: CC(2)(R)(P) (Community Commercial).

RECOMMENDATION

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

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The application is a request for an architectural review for the renovation of an existing 6,195-square-foot (SF) one-story bank/financial service building. The project includes the refinishing and painting of the existing stucco plaster, modifications to the building colors to reflect the tenant business colors, a new rooftop mechanical equipment enclosure, removal of two parking lot trees, removal of the front breeze-block screen wall to be replaced with a new aluminum lattice system, new groundcover landscaping, and new tenant ID signage. The subject property is a 16,231 SF parcel currently developed with a commercial building occupied by Silicon Valley Bank (SVB). The existing building's square footage will remain the same. The item was heard by the Architectural Review Board on October 20, 2022, and the staff report and video can be accessed at this link: <https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/Departments/Planning-Development-Services/Architectural-Review-Board-ARB/Current-ARB-Agendas-Minutes>.



ANALYSIS

On October 20, 2022, the ARB held a hearing on the project. The Board's comments and the applicant's responses are summarized in the following table:

ARB Comments/Direction	Applicant Response
Introduce a new horizontal element where the breeze block is removed to create a pedestrian scale to the building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The applicant is providing a new extruded aluminum lattice structure reminiscent of the original breeze block to infill the three structural bays. The new design of the rotated lattice members provides a play on light and shadow and will protect the south-facing glazing from solar heat gain. The scale of the new infill lattice elements are in proportion to the neighboring businesses providing a more pedestrian scale to the building.
Study changing pavers under the entry canopy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The applicant notes that the existing concrete is in good structural condition however the exposed finish is splotchy in nature. SVB will power wash the surface to return the concrete finish to a consistent monolithic color. If spottiness remains, a light grind and seal will be provided in the area under the building canopy. The intent is not to make the paving surface a design feature that might detract from the new lattice element and proposed mural.
Introduce art elements or other design elements to wrap around the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The tenant is excited to partner with and propose a large full-height mural on the front opaque portion of the building that wraps the corner to

corner of the building facing the parking lot	the 1st structural bay so that it is visible on the approach and front of the building. The planting area alongside the building wall facing the parking lot is now proposed to have vertical growth California Honeysuckle (<i>Lonicera hispidula</i>) along a cable mounted system. This will break up the long blank façade facing the parking lot and soften the façade appearance.
Study planting a new street tree at the east-side corner of the building adjacent to 408 California Avenue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> After speaking with the Palo Alto Urban Forestry Department confirmed, the proposed street tree is not feasible due to underground utilities running in this location.
Study placing a bench on site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> After speaking with the Palo Alto Public Works department staff, they are not interested in putting a bench in the public right of way for maintenance and access purposes. The proposed location would require the relocation of a public newspaper stand elsewhere on public property. There are a lot of utilities present in this immediate area that require access and could be impeded by placing a bench in the planter strip. Additionally, the proposed location of the bench is between two drive aisles (Mimosa Lane and the parking lot entrance for 414 California Ave) creating an isolated and undesirable seating area. There is also limited visibility from tenant and given the unhoused population in the area poses potential security/ liability risks. The bench could be placed in front of the mural or on the other side of the front door
Consider making the break room window operable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The applicant notes that having an operable window at the ground plane poses a large security risk to the financial institution. SVB's Head of Global Security provides a letter describing the risk to the bank and the regulatory agencies they report to (ATTACHMENT C).

Staff finds the proposed project plans adequately address ARB comments stated during the previous hearing.

Furthermore, the proposed aluminum lattice shading structure and new colorful mural will provide references to the original mid-century brise-soleil proposed to be removed and the prior mosaic mural that may have lost integrity. Staff notes these are appropriate and welcome features replacing the building's original energy-saving and pedestrian-oriented features.

Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan, Area Plans, and Guidelines¹

ARB Finding #1 requires the design to be consistent and compatible with applicable elements of the Palo Alto Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan land use designation for the project site is Community Commercial, which is reserved for major commercial centers that provide a variety of services. The site has been a bank/financial service since the 1970s, and the proposed project continues that use.

On balance, the project is consistent with the policies in the Comprehensive Plan and therefore fulfills the goals of the Plan as well. A detailed review of the project's consistency with the Comprehensive Plan is provided in Attachment D.

Zoning Compliance²

Staff performed a detailed review of the proposed project's consistency with applicable zoning standards. A summary table is provided in Attachment B. The proposed project complies with all applicable codes in a manner that is consistent with the Zoning Ordinance.

Consistency with Application Findings

Staff has prepared a detailed review of the proposed project's consistency with the Findings for approval. The draft findings, tailored to the project, are provided in Attachment D. The proposed project appears to meet all applicable findings for Architectural Review approval.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The subject project was assessed in accordance with the authority and criteria contained in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the State CEQA Guidelines, and the City's environmental regulations. In September 2022, the City's consultant evaluated the building and found it to have lost integrity and therefore to be ineligible for the California Register of Historic Resources. The project qualifies as a Class 1 (Existing Facilities) since the exterior modifications to the building do not increase the allowed square footage of the building and only affect the materials used on the façade of the building.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS

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

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

¹ The Palo Alto Comprehensive Plan is available online: <http://www.cityofpaloalto.org/gov/topics/projects/landuse/compplan.asp>

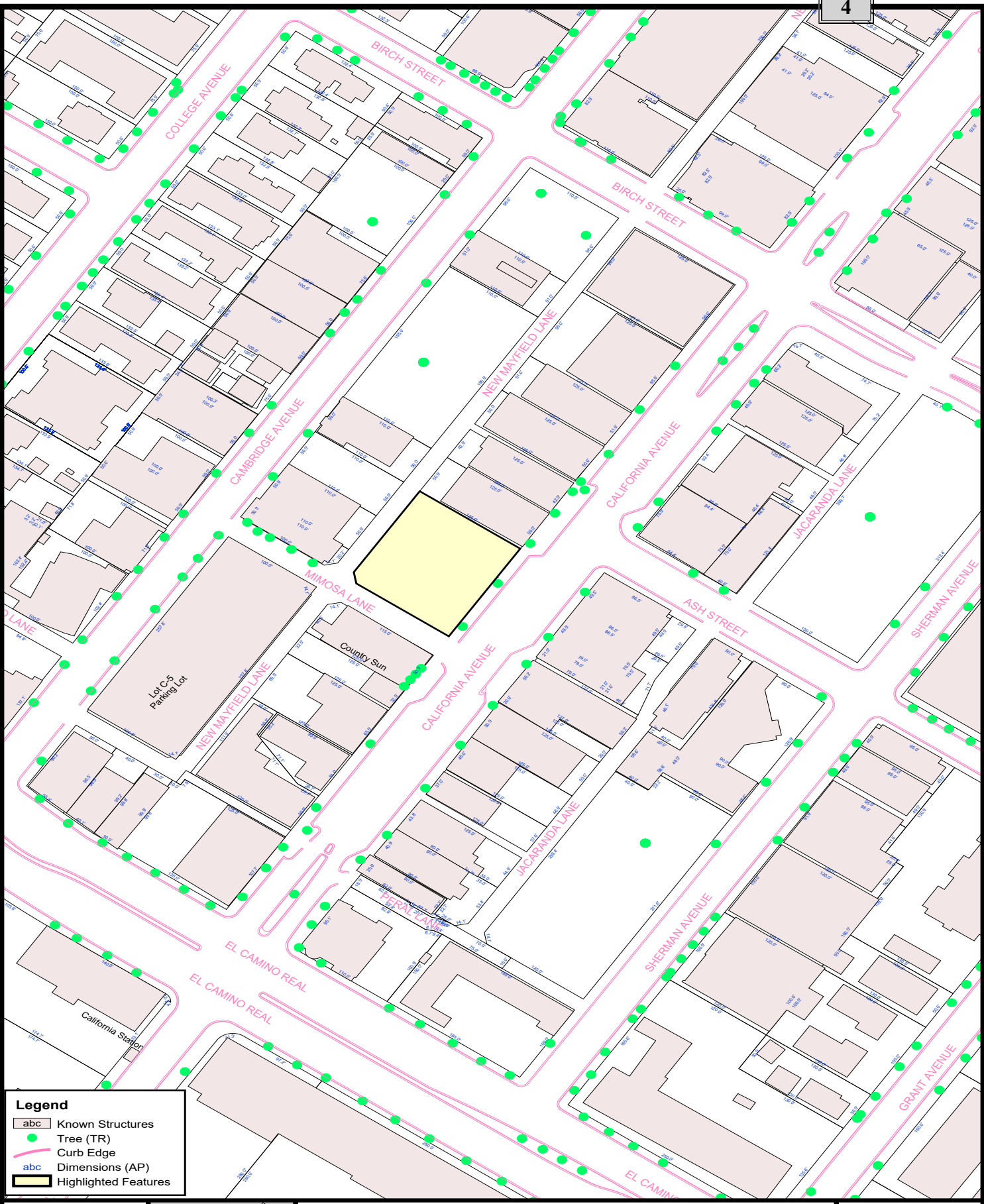
² The Palo Alto Zoning Code is available online: http://www.amlegal.com/codes/client/palo-alto_ca

AUTHOR/TITLE:

Garrett Sauls, Planner

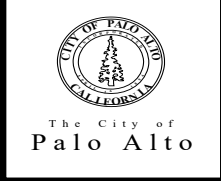
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Legend

- abc Known Structures
- Tree (TR)
- Curb Edge
- abc Dimensions (AP)
- Highlighted Features



414 California Avenue

Packet Pg. 39

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



ATTACHMENT B
ZONING COMPARISON TABLE
 414 California Avenue, 22PLN-00207

Table 1: COMPARISON WITH CHAPTER 18.16 (CC(2) DISTRICT)
Exclusively Non-residential Development Standards

Regulation	Required	Existing	Proposed
Minimum Site Area, width and depth	No Requirement	32,642 sf.	32,642 sf.
Minimum Front Yard	0-10 feet to create an 8-12 foot effective sidewalk width ^{(1), (2), (8)}	12 ft	12 ft
Rear Yard	No Requirement	8 ft	8 ft.
Street Side Yard	No Requirement	N/A	N/A
Interior Side Yard	No Requirement	10 ft & 35 ft	10 ft & 35 ft
Build-to-lines	50% of frontage built to setback on Park Boulevard; 33% of side street built to setback on Grant Avenue ⁽⁷⁾	Canopy is built to front property line; no street side yard	No change proposed
Max. Site Coverage	No Requirement	5,077 sf	5,077 sf
Max. Building Height	37 feet ⁽⁴⁾	24'-7"	24'-7"
Max. Floor Area Ratio (FAR)	2.0:1 (68,768 sf)	6,195 sf	6,195 sf
Daylight Plane for lot lines abutting one or more residential zone districts other than an RM-40 or PC Zone	None ⁽⁶⁾	N/A	N/A

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

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

(4) As measured to the peak of the roof or the top of a parapet; penthouses and equipment enclosures may exceed this height limit by a maximum of five feet, but shall be limited to an area equal to no more than ten percent of the site area and shall not intrude into the daylight plane.

(6) The initial height and slope shall be identical to those of the most restrictive residential zone abutting the site line in question.

(7) 25 foot driveway access permitted regardless of frontage, build-to requirement does not apply to CC district.

(8) A 12 foot sidewalk width is required along El Camino Real frontage

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

Type	Required	Existing	Proposed
Vehicle Parking	1/180 sf of financial service gross floor area for 34 parking spaces	20	20

Bicycle Parking	1/1,800 sf (40% long term and 60% short term) equals 3 spaces for financial service	4 ST	4 ST
Loading Space	0 loading spaces for less than 9,999 sf	0	0

Memorandum

To: Ben Kracke, Managing Principal, STUDIOS architecture

From: Dennis Cochran – Senior Director Physical Security

Date: December 21, 2022

Re: SVB Palo Alto Branch Security

Hi Ben,

I recently learned of a proposed item at Silicon Valley's new branch in the City of Palo Alto that I would like address.

On the East side of the building there is currently a drive-up teller window. I understand there is a recommendation to replace this with a window that would be able to be opened. I am opposed to this proposition as it creates an increased risk to physical security of the office.

We follow the standards provided under The Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council (FFIEC) and the Bank Protection Act. Allowing a window that could open would present a Risk and Gap to physical security and we ask that it not be allowed.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Dennis Cochran
Senior Director, Physical Security
Silicon Valley Bank

**ATTACHMENT D
ARB FINDINGS FOR APPROVAL**

414 California Avenue
22PLN-00207

The design and architecture of the proposed improvements, as conditioned, complies with the Findings for Architectural Review as required in Chapter 18.76 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 project is consistent with Finding #1 because:

The project is in conformance with the following Comprehensive Plan Goals and Policies:

Comprehensive Plan Goal/Policy	Consistency
Policy L-6.6 Design buildings to complement streets and public spaces; to promote personal safety, public health and wellbeing; and to enhance a sense of community safety.	The proposal seeks to repair damaged stucco and refresh the façade of the building. The retention of the stucco establishes the relationship of this building to those in its immediate context while the introduction of the aluminum lattice creates a subtle contrast from the existing structure that enhances the building's aesthetics.
Policy N-2.1 Recognize the importance of the urban forest as a vital part of the city's natural and green infrastructure network that contributes to public health, resiliency, habitat values, appreciation of natural systems and an attractive visual character which must be protected and enhanced.	The applicant has proposed to remove two trees located in the parking lot to the site and pay an in-lieu fee. The site already exceeds the 50% parking lot shading requirements. These in-lieu fees will support tree plantings off site in the City where they may provide a greater impact at reducing heat island effects and achieving the City's canopy coverage goals.
Policy B-6.4 Foster the establishment of businesses and commercial services in the California Avenue business district that serve the adjacent neighborhoods, as well as Stanford Research Park.	The proposed modifications would support the establishment of Silicon Valley Bank at this location. Additionally, the modifications will help to repair damaged stucco to the building to refresh the visual appearance of the building from the pedestrian perspective.

The project has been evaluated for consistency with the Zoning Code, and the project meets all

applicable development standards. The project is consistent with the Context-Based Design Criteria and Performance Criteria of 18.16 and 18.40, respectively.

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 consistent with Finding #2 because:

The design of the project is well ordered and provides a coherent plan that is readily understood in the California Avenue context. The replacement of the existing stucco and breeze-block system will not only bring new life to an aging building but will retain elements of the building that is consistent with buildings in its immediate and historical context. The introduction of the aluminum lattice structure adds a contemporary/modern element of the building that does is appropriately incorporated into the design. As the Page and Turnbull report noted, the breeze-block system is not an historic element of the building that, by removing it, would damage the historic integrity of the site as it is not eligible for the California Register of Historic Resources.

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 project is consistent with Finding #3 because:

The contemporary design of the building utilizes a variety of complimentary building materials, textures and colors that are appropriate to the setting of California Avenue. As noted in Finding #2 the stucco material connects the character of the existing building with those adjacent to it and the introduction of the aluminum lattice structure is complimentary to the overall design approach. The proposed paint scheme will distinguish the building from those around it but will also be compatible with adjacent buildings.

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.).

The project is consistent with Finding #4 because:

The design is appropriate to the function of the project in that the removal and replacement of the breeze-block system will resolve the structural issues associated with retaining and reinforcing the system if it were kept. The new aluminum lattice structure complements the design of the building and pays homage to the previous brise-soleil system. The proposed design will provide openness at façade of the building while breaking up the two-story massing. These elements help to create a more welcoming experience for pedestrians. Replacing the existing stucco will also enhance the building's appearance from the street and resolve other maintenance issues occurring on site.

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.

The project is consistent with Finding #5 because:

The plant material is suitable and adaptable to the site, capable of being properly maintained, and is of a majority native and drought-resistant to reduce consumption of water in its installation and maintenance. The landscape plan increases the use of groundcover plants along the California Avenue street frontage. The landscaping plan supplements the City's tree canopy with additional plantings off site through in-lieu fees; the site currently exceeds the 50% canopy coverage. As the site is in a developed portion of California Avenue, it is not considered prime habitat.

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

The project is consistent with Finding #6 because:

The project will replace the existing stucco on the building which will help the building to be more resilient over time. The applicant will be required to follow the City's Cal Green Checklist to ensure conformance with applicable requirements regarding green building techniques. The site's existing tree canopy exceeds the City's 50% shading requirements which significantly reduces the "heat island effect" associated with surface parking. New groundcover plantings would consist of a variety of native and drought tolerant species.

ATTACHMENT E
DRAFT CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL
 414 California Avenue
 22PLN-00207

PLANNING DIVISION

1. **CONFORMANCE WITH PLANS.** Construction and development shall conform to the approved plans entitled, "414 California Avenue" dated December 23, 2022 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 approval included in this document.
3. **BUILDING PERMIT PLAN SET.** The ARB approval letter including all Department conditions of approval for the project shall be printed on 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. **TREE REPLACEMENT IN-LIEU FEES.** The tree replacement in-lieu fee of \$3,250, equivalent to five 24" box trees, shall be paid prior to building permit issuance. See Condition #15.
6. **PROJECT ARBORIST.** The property owner shall retain a certified arborist to ensure the project conforms to all Planning and Urban Forestry conditions related to landscaping/trees, as shown in the approved plan set.
7. **TREE PROTECTION FENCING.** Tree protection fencing shall be required to protect trees that are to remain during construction.
8. **LANDSCAPE MAINTENANCE.** All landscape material shall be well maintained and replaced if the plant material dies or if the irrigation equipment fails. Planters shall not drain onto sidewalk, ground, or public right of ways.
9. **PROJECT EXPIRATION.** The project approval shall automatically expire after two years from the original date of approval if, within such two year period, the proposed use of the site or the construction of buildings has not commenced pursuant to and in accordance with the provisions of the permit or approval. Application for a one-year extension of this entitlement may be made prior to the expiration. (PAMC 18.77.090(a))
10. **LIGHTING.** Between the hours of 10:00pm-6:00am (normal cessation of business hours), lighting within the building or on the property shall be reduced to its minimum necessary to facilitate security, in order to minimize light glare at night.

11. INDEMNITY: To the extent permitted by law, the Applicant shall indemnify and hold harmless the City, its City Council, its officers, employees and agents (the "indemnified parties") from and against any claim, action, or proceeding brought by a third party against the indemnified parties and the applicant to attack, set aside or void, any permit or approval authorized hereby for the Project, including (without limitation) reimbursing the City for its actual attorneys' fees and costs incurred in defense of the litigation. The City may, in its sole discretion, elect to defend any such action with attorneys of its own choice.
12. 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, Garrett Sauls at Garrett.Sauls@CityofPaloalto.org to schedule this inspection.

PUBLIC WORKS ENGINEERING

13. Provide the following note on the Site Plan: "The contractor shall not stage, store, or stockpile any material or equipment within the public right-of way. This includes job site trailers, dumpsters, storage containers and portable restrooms. Construction phasing shall be coordinated to keep materials and equipment onsite."
14. Provide the following note on the Site Plan: "If the work will impact pedestrian or vehicular traffic in the public right-of-way, the contractor must obtain an encroachment permit from Public Works."

URBAN FORESTRY

15. Applicant proposes to remove two Carolina Laurel Cherry and pay in-lieu fees to replace the five 24" box trees that will be placed of site. These in-lieu fees are assessed at \$3,250 (five trees at \$650 each for a total of \$3,250). These fees shall be paid prior to building permit issuance.
16. TREE PROTECTION COMPLIANCE. 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@cityofpaloalto.org) beginning with the initial verification approval, using the template in the Tree Technical Manual, Addendum 11.
17. 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.

18. 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 2.202.30. 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.
19. 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.
20. 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.
21. 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.
22. 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.**

Attachment F

Project Plans

During Shelter-in-Place, project plans are only available to the public online. Hardcopies of the plans have been provided to Board members.

Directions to review Project plans online:

1. Go to: bit.ly/PAPendingprojects
2. Scroll down to find “414 California 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-Articles/Planning-and-Development-Services/414-California-Ave>