



Architectural Review Board

Staff Report

Agenda Date: October 3, 2013

To: Architectural Review Board

From: Elena Lee, Senior Planner **Department:** Planning and
Community Environment

Subject: **180 El Camino Real [13PLN-00335]:** Request by Simon Properties, on behalf of the Leland Stanford Junior University for a Preliminary Architectural Review of phased construction at the Stanford Shopping Center of four new retail buildings (replacing 133,580 square feet) and the renovation of five existing storefronts and associated landscape improvements. Zone District: CC (Community Commercial).

RECOMMENDATION

Staff requests the Architectural Review Board (ARB) conduct a preliminary review of the proposed project and provide comments on the four new Phase III buildings and other site improvements to staff and the applicant. No formal action may be taken at a preliminary review; comments made at a preliminary review are not binding on the City or the applicant.

SUMMARY

Background

The proposed project is the third and final phase of a three phase remodel of the Stanford Shopping Center. The shopping center has undergone a substantial remodeling over the past three years. Recent improvements included new buildings and/or significant building modifications for multiple tenants, including Apple, the Container Store and American Girl. The ARB held the first preliminary review of the larger project on March 1, 2012 for a new building for the Flemings restaurant and the site plan for all five buildings. A second preliminary Architectural Review on the new Bloomingdales building was held on September 6, 2012. The ARB has approved Phase I, consisting of conceptual site plan and the new Flemings restaurant building, on June 7, 2012 and Phase II, the new Bloomingdales building on November 15, 2012. The Phase II approval included direction on submittals for the future Phase III and other applications. Those included:

- a) Provide a balanced landscape approach and pedestrian experience at the terminus of Shopping Center Way.
- b) Details of an art experience at the Bloomingdales end of the allee that connects the shopping center to the Caltrain station across University Avenue.
- c) Proposed revisions to the Stanford Shopping Center Master Sign Program
- d) Evidence that the existing landscaping within the surface parking area has resulted in 50 percent shading of the parking lot surface as required by the Municipal Code or proposed alternatives to accomplish this requirement which may include larger landscaped islands.

- e) Inventory and locations of existing bicycle parking within the entire Center. Provide additional bicycle parking to conform to the Municipal Code for all three phases.

The Stanford Shopping Center improvements are subject to master façade and sign programs that were reviewed by the Architectural Review Board and approved by the Planning Director. The façade program requires that portions of the shopping center that face public streets, such as El Camino Real and Sand Hill Road, be subject to the Architectural Review process. The size of the frontage determines whether the review process takes place at a staff level or is reviewed by the ARB. Façade and other site improvements proposed at the interior of the site are not subject to the Architectural Review process. Those projects require only building permits. Architectural Review for signs is required for facades that face the public right of way and for signs that are inconsistent with the Master Sign Program. Although components of the overall shopping center remodeling would not be presented separately to the ARB for review because they are below the threshold for Board level review, the entire program of improvements is being presented to provide the larger vision for the center and for context. Plan sheets (Attachment C) G.3 and G.4 show the scope of work and identify areas that are visible from the public right of way.

Site Information

The shopping center is located on a 62-acre site, bounded by Sand Hill road to the north, El Camino Real to the east, Quarry Road to the south and Vineyard Lane to the west. Arboretum Road bisects the property, separating Nordstrom, Crate and Barrel and the new Container Store from the majority of the center. The site is currently developed with an approximately 1,453,026 square foot open air shopping center, which includes plazas, parking structures, and surface parking lots. The four buildings proposed for Phase II would be located on the northeastern portion of the site, directly adjacent to the new Flemings restaurant and visible from El Camino Real and Quarry Road.

DISCUSSION

Project Description

Staff requests the ARB's feedback on the four new buildings, new treatments for the existing buildings, new signage and overall paving and landscaping improvements. The larger project is the updating of the shopping center. The overall improvement program can be broken down into three components:

- 1) Site wide improvements to the center's paving, landscaping and signage
- 2) Improvements to existing buildings
- 3) Four new small shop buildings

The ARB's feedback will be used to inform the applicant and staff on what is expected for reviews of the formal applications and other miscellaneous permits, in accordance with the requirement of the master sign/façade programs and the Municipal Code.

Site wide improvements

As part of the center's effort to modernize and create a more unified look, the applicant is proposing to implement paving, lighting and signage improvements. Special focus would be placed on the primary street entry from El Camino Real, the entry nearest to the University Avenue Caltrain station and the Arboretum Road west entry. The Arboretum entry area, near

Neiman Marcus, would be designed for a variety of uses and events, such as concerts, passive recreation, and enhanced seating and gathering opportunities. An allee of trees and a garden setting would provide shade. The redesigned area would also feature a new circular water feature with a pedestrian bridge.

Over the years, paving, lighting and signage have been improved in a piece meal fashion. The proposal would create a distinct hierarchy of the center's streets and pedestrian paths. The central walkway that runs roughly parallel with Sand Hill Road and Quarry Road would become the new main street. The remaining streets would become primary and secondary interior streets, which would feature different treatments to differentiate them from one another. This would be done with new large pavers with a "tone on tone" patterns for the walkways and plazas, while crosswalks would be paved with stamped concrete. Remaining paving would consist of poured in place concrete paving. The intent is to create a modern and unified paving program. The applicant is also proposing to replace lighting fixtures, with a special focus on the main street, primary entry areas, gathering areas and plazas. The lighting fixtures would include new catenary light fixtures, light poles, trellis down lights, and landscaping lights. The applicant is also proposing to modify the center signage. Individual tenant signage would be handled by each individual tenant. Ten new entry monument signs are proposed with this project. Although details of the new signs were not provided, potential signs for the El Camino Real frontage are shown in the perspective elevations on plan sheet 1.1 and 1.1 A (Attachment C).

Significant landscaping improvements are proposed but a detailed landscaping plan has not yet been provided. The landscape design intent is to provide a more simplified but cohesive and modern palette, featuring a new, simple in-grade planting scheme. The program intends to create different landscape themes for four distinct areas: outdoor rooms, the main avenue, luxury shopping, and areas dedicated to families and children. The tree disposition plan on plan sheet L-1 (Attachment C) illustrates the proposal is to plant 78 mostly large specimen trees and remove 38 trees site wide. A row of Italian Cypress trees is proposed along the primary entrance from El Camino Real to create a significant entry feature and interest between the new Flemings and Bloomingdales building. The proposed trees include 36 inch box Valley Oak, Southern Live Oak, Callery Pear and Ginkgo trees.

Improvements to Existing Buildings

The applicant is also proposing to implement façade improvements and establish new tenant façade requirements. The façade improvements would affect buildings in the interior and perimeter of the site. Simon Properties will now require new tenants to design their storefronts to be the full height, reflecting more recent tenant improvements. There are some buildings where only a portion of the façades were improved, leaving the original building façade exposed along the top. The buildings would include new materials, such as the new canopy, that tie them design wise to the new buildings. Simon Properties proposes have the existing arcades re-clad with modern materials to lighten their appearance. The new arcades would feature wood soffits. Steel awnings are proposed to be replaced with fabric and glass awnings. One significant improvement would be a new 208-foot long, freestanding or floating canopy on the roof of the existing buildings (Building C) located behind the new Flemings and west of the new Phase II buildings. The new canopy would measure approximately 4 feet 9 inches above the existing roof deck. Approximately 600 feet (in total) of trellises made of steel, plywood and glass are proposed in

eight locations, including buildings visible from Quarry Road and Sand Hill Road (Buildings M, N, D, H, L, N, and C).

New Phase III Buildings

As discussed above, the most significant component for which ARB feedback is requested is the the four new buildings. The applicant has provided schematic elevations for review. These buildings are proposed to replace the current Bloomingdales building. Bloomingdales will occupy the new three story building that will be located on the site of the removed Flemings building. The location of the buildings was approved as part of Phase I. The four buildings include two one-story building and two two-story buildings.

Building AA would be a one-story building with 30,820 square feet of floor area, with a height of 24 feet 6 inches measured to the height of the parapet. This building would occupy the interior corner and would not be visible from any public right of way. Building CC would be a one-story building located behind the existing parking structure along the Quarry Road frontage and in front of Building AA, and would also contain 30,820 square feet of floor area. This building would also have a height of 24 feet 6 inches. The two buildings would feature metal trellises to add interest. The applicant proposes to finish common areas and the shell. Individual tenant spaces would be completed by each tenant.

Buildings BB and DD would both be two-story buildings. Building BB, with 51,100 square feet of floor area, would have retail use at the ground level and office use above. It would feature a dramatic canopy system to create an entry feature from El Camino Real at the top, with a larger canopy proposed at the top and another canopy below. It would measure 39'6" to the top of the parapet, excluding the canopy. The canopy would consist of a structure steel frame, wood textured soffit, with a curved façade at the northwest corner. The proposed canopy is a significant design element, different from existing elements, that sets the tone for the overall project. Staff requests ARB feedback specifically on the canopy. Building DD would be occupied by two level retail shops. This building would measure 42 feet to the top of the parapet and would have 33,600 square feet of floor area. Building DD occupies an important area at the end of the pedestrian path leading from the University Avenue Caltrain station across from El Camino Real. It would also be visible from Quarry Road. The building was designed to anchor that path with a curved glass building façade. These buildings would be placed around a small courtyard with new trees and 150,000 square feet of new paving.

Zoning Compliance

The CC zoning district has no requirement for front, rear, or side yard setbacks. Buildings are also not subject to the build-to-line requirement. The district has a height limit of 50 feet and requires a 12 foot wide effective sidewalk along the El Camino Real frontage. The CC district has no site coverage requirement; however, the Municipal Code Section 18.16.060(e)(3) does set forth a maximum of 1,412,362 square feet for this particular site. The new buildings are proposed to replace existing square footage, would be below the 50 foot height limit, and would be placed in the interior of the site. Accordingly, the proposed buildings would comply with the development standards.

Parking

Per the Palo Alto Municipal Code, 1,453,026 square foot of shopping center space would require a minimum of one space per 275 gross square feet or 5,284 total spaces. The site currently has 5,826 parking spaces and the proposed project would eliminate 260 spaces, leaving the Shopping Center with 5,522 spaces more than the minimum required parking spaces. Landscaping details are not provided at this time, however, the project would be required to conform to the City parking design standards contain in Chapter 18.54 of the Municipal Code, and to preserve mature trees whenever feasible.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW


No environmental review is required for this Preliminary Review application, as it is not considered a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).


ATTACHMENTS

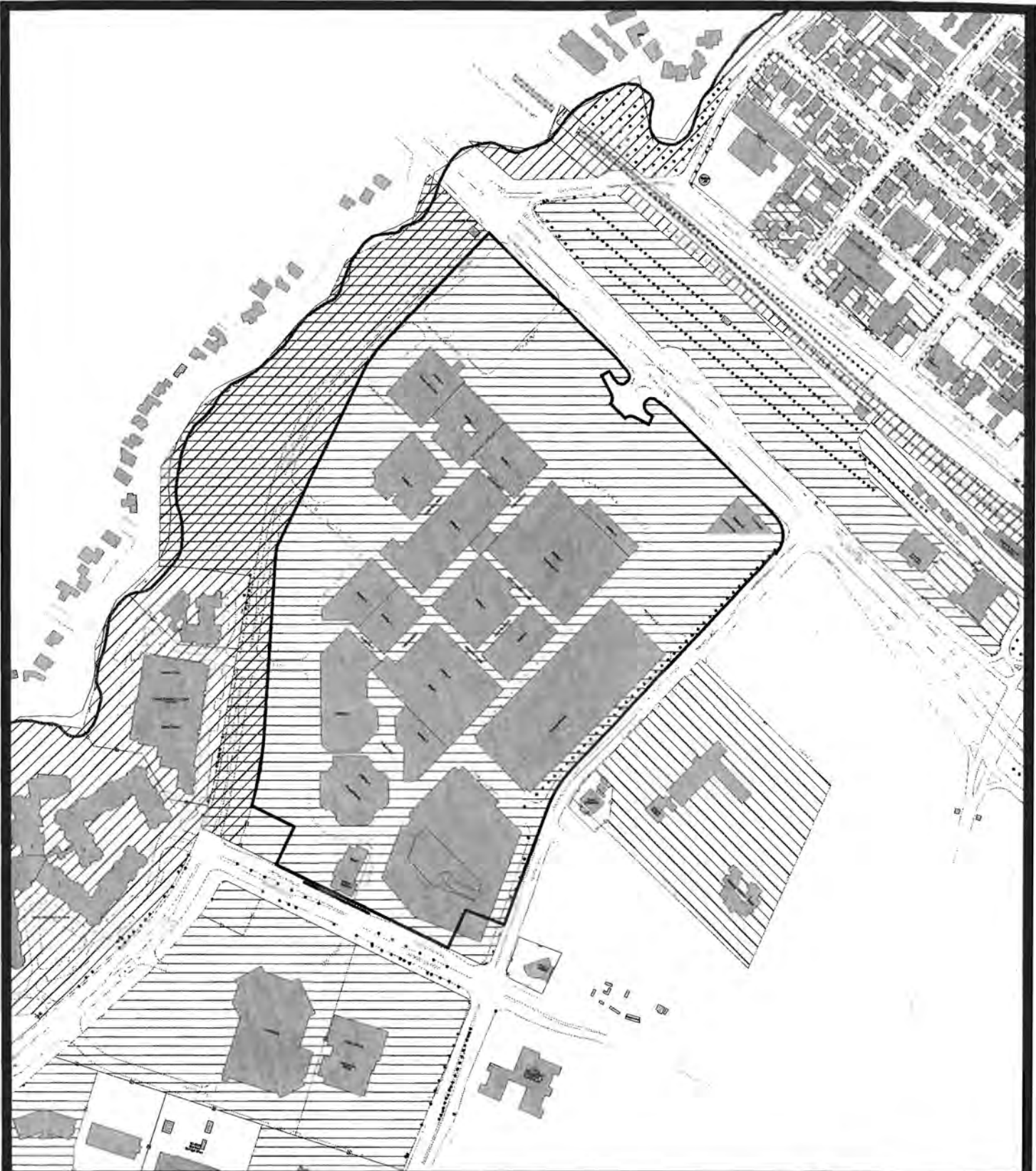
- Attachment A: Project Location Map
- Attachment B: Applicant's Project Description Letter
- Attachment C: Preliminary Development Plans (Board Members Only)

COURTESY COPIES

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- John Lee, email: jlee@bararch.com
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Prepared By: Elena Lee, Senior Planner 

Manager Review: Amy French, Chief Planning Official 



The City of
Palo Alto



Attachment A
Location Map
180 El Camino Real
Stanford Shopping Center

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



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August 12, 2013

Ms. Jodie Gerhardt
City of Palo Alto Planning Divisions
250 Hamilton Avenue
Palo Alto, CA 94301

RE: Stanford Shopping Center, Redevelopment and Renovation Projects (Phase III)
Preliminary ARB Submittal

Dear Ms Gerhardt,

This Preliminary ARB package is for the Stanford Shopping Center Phase III portion of the overall Redevelopment scope which included the new Flemings (Phase I) and the new Bloomingdales (Phase II). Within Phase III we have two projects: The Redevelopment Project and the Renovation Project.

First, the Redevelopment Project will add 4 new retail shop buildings within the demolition foot print of the old Bloomingdales store. These smaller retail shops will be connected by 4 new major and minor outdoor pedestrian streets, following in the tradition of the original shopping center. The new Lady Ellen Place Extension Street, for example, will be a unique tree lined internal shopping street, with views to both Macy's and Bloomingdales, and offering a variety of small shops and restaurants for the customer to enjoy.

Second, the Renovation Project will add new paving, planting, outdoor lighting, graphic signage and limited façade work to improve and enhance the appearance and functionality of the existing shopping center and to physically unify the older structures with the new. Only limited amounts of this work will be visible from the public streets. We are, however, including this information on our designs for your reference and to assist in your review of the new retail buildings.

We look forward to working with you on this application. Please let us know if there is additional information you need to start your review process.

Sincerely,

BARARCHITECTS



John V.Y. Lee, AIA, LEED AP
Principal

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Stanford Shopping Center

Design Statement: Modernizing the Stanford Shopping Center to reflect today's simple yet elegance life style is our goal for the project. To achieve this we are carefully reviewing and re-defining the different elements of the Center into a comfortable, safe, and under-stated urban garden village with multitude of unique and distinctive spaces.

The Stanford Shopping Center - a beloved regional urban shopping center - has grown, changed, modified and grown again over its 60+ year history, reflecting the shifting culture of the times. The Simon Property Group is aware of this and is interested in holistically modernizing the Center but still maintaining and enhancing its essential character and image.

Lush landscaping (full of seasonal floral displays), shaded walkways, free-flowing linkage between indoor shopping and outdoor living, are the defining features of this Center's friendly, casual, eclectic but elegant style. Northern California Modern is an apt description of its essential character and personality. We draw inspiration from the many features of the existing Center, many of which will be maintained in our Renovation and Redevelopment work.

Renovation:

Our design efforts seek to realize the full potential of the Stanford Shopping Center as a unique destination. The following are key design directions we are incorporating into the Renovation Phase.

The current primary gateway from El Camino Real is much understated with limited signage to mark the entry. Recognizing and addressing the need to strengthen the connection to the City of Palo Alto we are improving the overall entry sequence with the following design features:

- Low signage walls at every major entry corner to identify entries from the street. Illuminated graphics will be clearly visible at night.
- The entry drive from El Camino Real to Main Street entryway is lined with tall matured Italian Cypress. These trees are visible from a distance by day and up-lit by night, which provides a unique identifiable signage feature.
- New monumental canopies, added to an existing building and featured on the new two-story retail building will enhance Main Street's East Entry. In addition, new graphics/signage and improved street level lighting will make this entry very inviting.

The pedestrian pavement over time has been patched and replaced many times and is variegated in appearance. Changing the paving is the single most effective way to improve and unify the appearance of the existing Center. We are proposing the following:

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- Completely up-grade the Center's ground plane to large pavers with a subtle "tone on tone" pattern to provide a simple unified and elegant paving treatment. Special paving patterns denote street crossings and plazas as places for gathering and repose.
- Primary streets (i.e. Main Street) and secondary streets are treated differently to provide circulation hierarchy commonly found in towns and villages.

The Center is celebrated for its lush landscaping. A goal for the Renovation phase of this project is to simplify and reorganize the cacophony of potted plants, seasonal flowers, perennials in planters, and matured trees current there. We see that with some simple landscape design strategies, we can groom the planting into a more cohesive modern vision. Using landscape elements to create simple elegant forms, contrasted with soft natural materials through-out can unify and enhance the Center's character:

- Preservation of the good quality existing trees and the addition of new large specimen trees for a seamless integration of old and new to provide overhead canopies and a mature landscape appearance.
- Introducing simple in-grade planting schemes that with careful material selection provide interest through use of texture, form and foliage color, used as a foil for the colorful planter pots.
- Install disciplined yet spectacular landscaping materials will differentiate districts (or outdoor rooms); a directive palette for the main avenue, one for luxury shopping, another oriented toward families and children, and an energetic selection of color and lighting for the newest district of the town.
- Additionally, artful landscape elements are emphasized throughout as focal points, and major up-grades to enhance the way finding signage through-out.

Currently the streetscapes lack consistency; some locations appear crowded, some too bare; some facades overly exposed and others in deep shadow. Removing select overhead shading structures and modifying certain canopies and trellises will refresh the streets and brighten the surroundings. The following strategies will help to unify existing building facades and to improve the shopping experience:

- Require new tenants to design their storefronts to be full height.
- Strip away the plaster arches and grilles at the existing arcades and re-clad with modern material to lighten their appearance. Add wood soffits and new lighting for a modern look.
- Remove the low heavy steel outrigger awnings to open up vistas. Replace with new fabric and glass awnings for sun control and rain protection.
- Enhance select existing (short) storefront façades by extending the finish to parapet height.
- Cap existing and new planters walls with a durable solid material and incorporate seating on many of the planter walls to simplify and reduce clutter at the pedestrian streets.
- Replace existing street lights with new LED light posts and planter lighting to provide new evening shopping experience.
- Maintaining and designing some unique characteristics for each street type to facilitate understandable way finding for the shoppers.

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From Arboretum Road, the West Entry is obscure from view. This entry is an existing plaza paved completely in concrete with minimal landscaping. On hot days this area is under-utilized with few opportunities for comfortable seating and lingering. We propose the following design features to enhance this area:

- The plaza is designed for a variety of uses and event - concerts in the park, students lounging on grassy knoll, interactive water display to excite children, a quiet stroll in a garden, diversity of seating and gathering opportunities.
- Allees of trees and a garden setting to provide natural shade and cooling on sunny days. Soft landscape lighting to create a natural and safe environment for shoppers to enjoy.
- A circular shaped water feature with pedestrian bridge also doubles as a stage for musical events.
- Ample circulation routes through the plaza to offer visitors multiple routes to their destinations.

Redevelopment – 4 Small Shop Buildings:

Four new contemporary retail buildings will be built in the original Bloomingdale's site. This complex of small retail shops will form a new "energetic district", adding new interest and vitality to this "urban garden shopping village". Notable features of the new buildings and streets are as follows:

- The four retail buildings are designed in a modern contemporary style.
 - Buildings AA and CC are both one story buildings, occupied by small shops.
 - Building BB is a two story building with retail at ground level and offices above.
 - Building DD is a two story building, occupied by two level retail shops.
- The new buildings are designed to be shells, allowing the retail tenant to build full height storefronts to complement the scale and diversity of the existing Center's facades.
- A dramatic canopy system invigorates Building BB's façade at the El Camino entry, creating an exciting gateway to the Center and directing-with its shape and size-visitors to Main Street.
- The new east/west pedestrian street will become another major shopping street, similar to Main Street. This gradually widening street is envisioned to be a tree-lined urban environment with a modern and exciting ambiance.
- Energy conserving technologies and building materials will be incorporated in the design and construction of these new buildings.

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Sustainability

Most current concepts in sustainable design are incorporated into the Renovation and Redevelopment phase of this project. Some measures are as follows:

- All demolition refuse will be separated and recycled or disposed as per the City of Palo Alto's standards.
- The use of durable materials will keep on-going maintenance to a minimum, which promotes a well kept appearance and will reduce material replacement.
- Specifying LED or energy efficient light fixtures will reduce energy use and provide maximize bulb life.
- Storm water treatment for new shops area is provided on site in planters.



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**LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
PRELIMINARY ARB SUBMITTAL NARRATIVE**

The landscape design for the shopping center will use a disciplined and elegant plant palette that will compliment the strong and geometric forms of planting beds, serving as a backdrop for the flowering planter pots in the gathering areas. Contrasting foliage color, form and texture will be used to create spatial identity and points of interest along the shopping streets.

High value existing trees will be preserved to maintain a mature appearance for the shopping areas. New trees are added in feature areas to provide shade, define entrances, and to create new gathering spaces. A Tree Disposition Plan is provided showing the existing trees to remain and the new trees proposed.

Planters are used to soften storefront and paving areas, and to treat stormwater with a variety of interesting plantings that are well suited for the fast draining soil of the treatment planters.

New vehicular paving at pedestrian crossings will improve the walking experience. New enhanced paving is proposed for the interior walkways and plaza areas.

New bicycle parking will be provided for guests and employees.

The existing fountain in the main shopping street will be modernized with new material finishes, higher water surfaces to improve the visibility of the water, and eliminate guardrails, and improved visibility to the water features. The Frog Fountain will be relocated to the plaza near the new American Girl store. A new fountain feature has been created in the main park space which includes a bridge, arching seat wall, cascading water and fountain jets. New fountains will also be provided in the new shops walk and plaza areas.

New irrigation systems will improve the landscape water use efficiency to help meet project sustainability goals.

New decorative lighting of the trees and feature areas will further enhance the shopping experience into the evening hours.

END OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURAL NARRATIVE