



Architectural Review Board

Staff Report (ID # 9675)

Report Type: Subcommittee Items **Meeting Date:** 10/18/2018

Summary Title: 2609 Alma Avenue: Subcommittee Review of Rear Facade and Rear Yard Landscaping

Title: 2609 Alma Street [18PLN-00074]: Subcommittee Review of a Previously Approved Project That was Conditioned to Return With Project Changes Related to 1) Rear Facade Design and Materials, and 2) Rear Yard Landscaping Plan. Environmental Assessment: Addendum to the Mitigated Negative Declaration Prepared for 14PLN-00253. Zoning Districts: RM-30. For More Information Contact the Project Planner Emily Foley at efoley@m-group.us.

From: Jonathan Lait

Recommendation

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

1. Discuss and provide direction or approve project revisions.

Background

On August 21, 2018 the Director of Planning and Community Environment approved the subject project. At the Board's recommendation, a condition was imposed that required certain project elements return to the ARB subcommittee. Below are the items that were requested to return to the subcommittee and the applicant's response to the ARB's comments:

Architecture Review Condition 3a:

Revised the rear elevation to incorporate better use of materials and improve visual appearance.

Applicant's Response:

- These drawings describe revisions to the rear façade that were discussed during ARB approval for the project. Board members requested the project return to the subcommittee to review proposals to clarify the design of the rear façade. The original

proposal was a design with four different stucco colors on four different quadrants of the façade. The revised proposal incorporates a wood element on the top right (largest most visible quadrant). The wood element wraps the corner of an upper balcony. The base stucco color was simplified to be the darker color (stucco color #4 – see sample). The remaining top left quadrant is a lighter stucco color. The new façade proposal is better balanced and more in keeping with the look of the front façade.

Staff Analysis/Feedback:

- The color scheme overall has been unified, and the ground floor only contains one stucco color, excluding a vertical accent on the West elevation. The wood accent material was also added to the second floor to be more cohesive with the other sides of the building. The rear façade now contains three colors of stucco.

Architecture Review Condition 3b:

Consider an alternative planting plan for the rear of the property that facilitates both visual screening and patio use.

Applicant's Response:

- The placement of screening bushes has been revised on the site plan to locate the 15 Prunus Carolina along the rear fence. This is in response to a comment from the Board that Staff's recommended placement of the bushes in the middle of the yard was not satisfactory.

Staff Analysis/Feedback:

- While the landscaping addresses the ARB's concerns that the original landscaping plan makes the backyard unusable, the proposal of plants along the rear fence will obstruct an existing five-foot utility easement along the rear property line, including an existing utility pole.

A video recording of the Board's last meeting on this project is available online:

<http://midpenmedia.org/architectural-review-board-74-2-3-2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2/>

The Board is encouraged to provide direction to staff and the applicant as to whether the proposed changes are sufficient or requires further refinement.

Report Author & Contact Information

Emily Foley, Project Planner
(408) 340-5642 x111
efoley@m-group.us

ARB¹ Liaison & Contact Information

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

Attachments:

¹ Emails may be sent directly to the ARB using the following address: arb@cityofpaloalto.org

- Attachment A: August 16, 2018 Excerpt Minutes (DOCX)
- Attachment B: Applicant's Response Letter (PDF)
- Attachment C: Project Plans (DOCX)



ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD EXCERPT DRAFT MINUTES: August 16, 2018

City Hall/City Council Chambers
250 Hamilton Avenue
8:30 AM

- 3. PUBLIC HEARING/QUASI-JUDICIAL. 2609 Alma Street [18PLN-00074]: Recommendation on Applicant's Request for Approval of a Major Architectural Review to Allow the Demolition of two Existing Residential Buildings and two Carports, and Construction of two Three-Story Buildings Comprised of Four (4) Condominiums, Including one (1) Below Market Rate Unit. Environmental Assessment: Addendum to the Mitigated Negative Declaration Prepared for 14PLN00253. Zoning District: RM-30 (Medium Density Multiple-Family Residence District). For More Information Contact the Project Planner Phillip Brennan, Phillip.Brennan@cityofpaloalto.org.**

Vice Chair Baltay: Next item is a public hearing regarding 2609 Alma Street, a recommendation on an applicant's request for approval of a major architectural review to allow the demolition of two existing residential buildings and two carports, and construction of two three-story buildings comprised of four condominiums, including one below market rate unit. The environmental assessment is that this is an addendum to the mitigated negative declaration prepared for the earlier project on this site. Staff, do we have a report?

Ms. Gerhardt: Yes. Good morning, Board. We have a slight staff change here. Philip Brennan is moving on to another jurisdiction, so Emily Foley will be taking over this project. Thank you.

Vice Chair Baltay: Thank you. Emily, welcome.

Emily Foley, Project Planner: Good morning. As previously stated, this presentation is for 2609 through 2617 Alma. The proposal is to demolish four rental apartments - it's two duplex buildings - and construct four ownership units, including one below market rate unit. Each unit has a two-car garage. They vary in size from two to four bedrooms, and about 860 to 1,300 square feet. This project was previously approved in September of 2015. However, the building permit was not pulled within the allotted amount of time, so the planning entitlement did expire, so we are reviewing it again. The associated parcel map to subdivide the four condominium units was recorded at the County and is still valid. There were no major changes to the architecture. However, in 2017, the Affordable Housing Code changed, resulting in the need to provide one below market rate unit, which, as previously stated, the proposal is doing. The project is located on Alma Street in the Midtown neighborhood. The lots along Alma Street are in the RM-30 zoning district, and the parcels in the rear are R-1 single-family. There was one neighbor comment received after publication of the staff report, which was provided to the Board when it was received. It had a question about the relationship between the height of the building and the RM-30 district compared to the R-1 single-family houses behind it. However, this was addressed at the time of the original approval. The design of the building steps up from the street and steps down in the rear. It complies with the daylight plane that is required for RM-30 when it abuts to R-1 zone in the rear, so it's two story in the front and the back and the three story is in the middle of the property. Here are the elevations showing that. Along Alma, you see the two-story form. The side elevations show how it steps up towards the middle. This is Building A; that's in the front. Building B is in the back. This one shows the daylight plane on the west and east elevations, showing how closer to the single-family homes it is lower. Additionally, the building materials include wood siding and various colors of stucco to break up the

massing, as well. The staff recommends the Architectural Review Board recommends approval of the proposed unit based on the findings and as subject to the conditions of approval. You may ask me any questions. Additionally, the applicant is here and has prepared a presentation.

Vice Chair Baltay: Okay. Why don't we hear from the applicant? If you could please state your name and spell for the record.

Chris Kummerer, CKA Architects: Thank you. My name is Chris Kummerer. [spells name] My company is CKA Architects in Menlo Park. Happy to be in front of you again. And, thank you, Emily, for the thorough presentation. We've worked the planners hard on this project as we...I think she's our fifth. Thanks for jumping on the project. The presentation was great, so I'm going to keep mine brief. You've seen this view of the project. I'd like to quickly go through our history, just so you understand the amount of scrutiny we've had, and hopefully we've been thoughtful about responding to the comments we've gotten along the way here. We started, in 2013, at the DRC, and then, brought our project preliminarily here in 2014. It was a much larger volume and we got some good feedback from you folks and revised the design to be smaller, and tried to be more sensitive to the neighbors. That redesign came back in 2015. We were continued again to October of 2015. And then, that was approved. As a part of this, the environmental study was also approved, so we did, because we're in the, I want to call it a toxic plume; I forget the name of it. We had a full environmental study done, and limits of grading were established, and what-not. That was also approved. Then, the building permit was set to issue in September of 2016, but the property was sold. Our new clients took over and had a miscommunication with the building department. They thought they were extending the permits for a year, and it was only six months. We ended up back in this loop, so, here we are again, to try to get this reapproved. Thank you for spending the time. I'll try to go through this quickly. Here's our site. I think you've seen it. It's a pretty blighted property. Two low-rise 60's buildings. There they are. The one to the right is not part of this. Here's our neighbor to the left on Alma, and here's our neighbor to the right. This will remain and is not a part of our project. This is worth noting. This is what we started with, and here's kind of our design process. This is a three-story building all the way, front to back. This complied with the zoning but wasn't very sensitive to the neighborhood. With the feedback we got, we took this - here is the rendering of that version - and we were given direction to use the width of the lot instead of the length, separate our vehicle and pedestrian entries, and just reduce the bulk in general. This was the ensuing design, which I think was a lot more sensitive. As a part of this, we worked with the neighbors, too, and if I remember correctly, it was with Lisa. They were very generous, had us to their house, and we sat down, talked about this redesign, and said we're going to try to keep it real simple; two stories on your side, mask the third stories with these roofs. They were supportive of that approach, so it was very nice of them to engage with us at the time. Here's another rendering of that. And then, we were continued for some small items, the detailing of the pedestrian gate and the garage doors. These are images of those. This was the ensuing renderings, which was sort of the final one that shows the full project. Here's our materials board. It's been thoroughly reviewed with a lot of analysis, acoustic analysis because of being on Alma, as well. Now, in this latest iteration, as staff mentioned, we did have to add the BMR unit, which is a significant concession by our clients. But, that was something that was not negotiable. Then we went through another round here. We had to justify fire ladder access and floor area, realignment of street trees. There was one street tree that moved in the building permit process; we had to move it back in this process. These things were on the margins. And then, we actually got a different determination of daylight plane, which was more favorable. But, we didn't enlarge the building for that. And our plantings were revised to be more current and more drought-tolerant. It's hard to see the daylight plane here but there's a spot that we're not using because of the more favorable determination. Here's some of those native plants. In conclusion, it's been a pretty thorough process for us. We've been doing this for five years. I felt really good about the initial approval when we got it here. We worked with the neighbors, we worked with staff, we worked with the comments we got here. We took a pretty large design and made it hopefully into something sensitive. And everybody felt great because here's a portion of Alma that really hasn't seen any work for 50 years. We were hoping it was going to be this first building, that would sort of spur some redevelopment on this stretch. That is still the hope, that it can continue and get built and be the, sort of first thing here that makes this block a little better. In fact, this whole stretch. Thank you for the time. I'm happy to answer any questions you might have.

Vice Chair Baltay: Thank you. I don't have any speaker cards. Is there any member of the public who would like to address this project? Then we'll close the public portion of this meeting. Does anybody have any questions for staff or the applicant? Osma?

Board Member Thompson: There are three stucco colors. In the render, I was just wondering if you could clarify a little bit on the elevations and how, in terms of...I guess this is my first time looking at the stucco, but in the render, it sort of looks like a really simple subtlety, and then, in the elevations, it says there are three different colors. Here, I can see one and two are similar, but three is really different. What is your design intent with using three different colors and where they go on your building?

Mr. Kummerer: Yeah, thank you. As you know, it's hard to render these things consistently. The intent is really to follow the materials board and for them to be subtle variations and not loud. The genesis of this was to reduce bulk by having different colors. That's the intent. We're really using, on this color board, the two middle upper colors to create variation, and then, that yellowish color on the left is just a little bit of an accent. If the question is which one did we choose, it's this here color board.

Board Member Thompson: Okay. Thanks.

Vice Chair Baltay: Anything else? If not, I'd like either Robert or Alex to start us off and maybe...You two were on the Board when this was approved, so bring us up to speed. Were there any issues, concerns? How did it go about? Alex, maybe you should take the lead for us.

Board Member Lew: Yes. I think, as Chris had shown in his presentation, that the Board was not happy with the full three-story scheme, all four units, three stories, front to back. Also, I think the Board didn't like that the driveway was all open, is my recollection, to the street. The units didn't really have very much privacy. I think we've all been to the site. Alma is very noisy. I think the Board was just not seeing that that was the best option. They did the major redesign to the proposed scheme. And then, we did also continue the redesign to address some of the things, some of the windows, and stairs, and details, and landscape. My recollection is that there were, that the neighbors did complain about the three-story scheme, and then, we didn't hear from anybody on the revised scheme. I'm in support of the project. I think, looking at the project again, there are two things that I think could be addressed better. I think these are easily resolved. One is the rear elevation, I think could look better. And I think the elevation isn't drawn that well. It doesn't really show the setbacks, the setback of the third floor very well. I'm just thinking in terms of proportions and colors. I think it could be more attractive. The reason why I'm mentioning it is because it's only 10 feet from the rear property line, so the neighbors on Emerson are going to see it. And then, I think there's been a revision on the hedge on that back property line. I don't remember it being in the middle of the rear setback. I see that there is a utility easement. I'm thinking that that's not going to be viable. I think we have to figure out a way of having that unit have some sort of patio space and have privacy for the neighbors in the back. I don't know what the right solution is. I was thinking maybe pleached trees or something, where you have the green mass 10 to 20 feet up high, and then, it's open on the bottom for patio use. Maybe you need a second layer of landscape. Maybe there has to be something like vines on the fence, or something...Something. I think it doesn't really work as it is proposed now. Anyway, so, Chris, if you have any comments on that.

Mr. Kummerer: It was a condition of approval, so it wasn't on the initial approved set, but it was a condition of approval that we add screening back there. Philip helped us work through that item, and that's where these 10 trees came in, or 15. Fifteen. Because of the easement, we weren't going to plant them in an easement, so we kind of backed into it, if you will. I agree it's not the ideal solution because the original proposal has a patio out there. I'd be supportive of either figuring out a way to plant in the easement with something that's not a tree, that's more of a hedge, so that we accomplish the same things without killing the back yard.

Board Member Lew: Okay. And I would like, I guess, if we worked it out. There's the easement, but then, you have an underground electrical connection back there. There might be actually two different standards for how to plant around there. I think it may be kind of tricky. I think we have to resolve that

because I think...There's only 10 feet, and if you have, like a, I think like a hedge now would take out five feet of that. And it's in the middle of the 10 feet. We have to figure out something else for that. Otherwise, I'm in support of the project. I think that the...For the reasons that we approved it before, in that it steps. It has a fairly strong roof, horizontal roof profile that blends in with the neighboring mid-century buildings. That's where I am on this one. I think I mentioned before - last time - that I wasn't crazy about some of these nine to 10-foot rooms, but that's not really the purview of the Board. But, it seems to me that there's some undesirable things inside the units. Robert?

Board Member Gooyer: Okay. Well, from my recollection, it did take quite a few changes based on the initial proposal that came before us. But the thing is, even in this final version, when you're the first building on a block to go either two stories or three stories with nothing else around you, is that the thing really stands out. And, just because technically you're allowed to do it by code doesn't mean that it fits the character of the neighborhood. Basically, my objection to it is the same thing it was at that point, is that the unit in the back is just way too close to the back property line for a third story. The front one is probably okay, mainly because it is facing Alma and cars going 40 miles an hour. It's not that big a deal. I'm up in the air at this point whether...I believe I voted against it the first go-around also, but I'll leave it open at the moment.

Vice Chair Baltay: That's it? Osma?

Board Member Thompson: Yeah, I think, in general, it looks quite handsome from the street, I just discovered there's a stucco color number four here on the rear elevation, and we don't have that in front of us. There's also an obscure glass material back here, as well, that is...I don't know what that is. I think in terms of materiality and what you're doing on the elevations, I think I just need more information, for one. I'm okay with a bunch of different colors of stucco. I'm not entirely sold on how they're being played out right now, just given that there's a lot of it. And I do understand that you have worked in a series of reveals, but I'm not sure how successful it is with the colors that you're trying to use. If you guys do come back, I would really like to see how these colors actually do look, and more of an attempt to, sort of render these a little bit more authentically, to sort of understand how they do affect the street. I agree with my fellow Board members about the rear yard, that it is quite small. Yeah, I mean, I think it's, it's a handsome building, in general. There's a little bit of...What's the word? I'm still a little unclear exactly what I'm getting. I see a render, and I see some design intent, and then, when I'm really going through your elevations, it doesn't really add up, so that makes me a little nervous. That's where I am.

Vice Chair Baltay: Thank you, Osma. I'm feeling that this project has been reviewed, looked at, very recently, and I really am uncomfortable with the idea of grinding it out again. I think they've been through the process. We approved the building. I think the City needs to have this kind of building built, especially in this location, and we owe it to the applicant, to the town, to expedite, or at least help them get this thing out of here. To have to come back again...I don't want to discount, Osma, your comments about the colors are correct. I think that it could use a little more work. Alex, that back elevation is not the strongest part of the building, and that back yard, you have 10 feet full of hedges. Not a smart move. People are going to want some space there. I acknowledge the neighbors' comments about it being tall at the back property line, facing the single-family neighborhood, but we all know that Alma Street is going to redevelop with buildings like this. It's an RM-30 zone. I think the first time the Board went through this, they did an admirable job of balancing that out. It was a lot of work, it sounds like, to bring down a three-story building across the whole site. Clearly, the design has a lot of effort put into modulating it, attempting to placate the neighbors, to fit in better. I think it's been very well done that way. I can support the project as it is. I can also support if we want to put a few conditions of approval. Maybe they come back to a consent, if necessary. But, I'd like to see us move this along. This is new housing on Alma Street where it's desperately needed, and I think we should be aware of that and not go through a review process again. I don't know...We need three votes. Robert said he voted against it the first time, and Robert doesn't usually change his mind easily.

Board Member Gooyer: No, I mean, I agree completely. It's one of these things that, that is an area, I don't want to say in transition, but it's going to happen. It's just, land is too valuable to not have it

happen. But, again, it is definitely, if anything is going to have to change on that, I think the back unit, you know, should be maybe slightly smaller. It doesn't need to be a 1,400 square foot unit back there. And, I think just three stories of stucco needs to be, you know, something changed on that. I mean, you know, it's the old adage, it's a four-sided building, and basically, three sides have been addressed and the back hasn't. And the person who lives in those two buildings on the adjacent street have to look at that three-story stucco mass for the next 30 years.

Vice Chair Baltay: I hear you. My understanding is that they've already finished construction documents on this and already had a permit issued once, so changing the size of that back unit is a major setback from the applicant's point of view, I would think. Does anybody else have other thoughts of how we might change it a little bit, or condition it and still let it get out of here? Alex?

Board Member Lew: Yeah, I would say, for me, if we just changed...If we changed the colors on the back façade, and figure out how to add, have patio space and landscape screening in the back, however we do that, subcommittee or consent, is fine with me. And then, to answer the question about the glazing, normally what we've done on other projects where we have a multifamily unit which is 10 feet away from a single-family house, usually we have, like, a double-hung window, and the upper part is clear glass and the bottom part is obscure glass, so that, just from site lines inside the unit, they can't look down into the neighbors' back yard. And so, that's...We've found on a number of projects in town, and we haven't done it this way, as shown in the drawings, where a bedroom has all obscure glass. We don't have to do it. I don't think that's in the code, right? I mean, this is something that we've just done on other projects, and I've seen them, and they seem to work, and it seems to placate the neighbors.

Ms. Gerhardt: Yes, thank you. That was going to be my question. We certainly can just obscure the bottom of the window. That is a standard treatment that we do that does protect the privacy, but still allows the light in. I did want to ask a question about the landscaping in the rear. Is the Board seeing that landscaping as a privacy screen, or are you seeing it more as a screen that helps reduce the massing?

Vice Chair Baltay: Alex, do you want to address that?

Board Member Gooyer: Well, the problem I see is that you've got, you know, you've got a straight stucco two-story wall and the only thing that changes is that the bottom half is painted one color and the top half is another color. I just don't like that. We always seem to be hung up on the whole, the clear versus the frosted glass, everything else. It's like, I don't think there are that many peeping toms around that everybody seems to worry about, that everybody's going to sit up there and look down at the neighbors' yard. I'm more concerned that it's an ugly design from that side. I'm more concerned, if I was the owner of that building, I would hate to sit in my back yard and look at that thing. Not if somebody was sitting up there, looking down at me. I don't really care. And I think that's the difference I had. It's just a very unattractive rear of the building. I think some money needs to be spent either putting some wood back there like is on the other three sides, and maybe even a variation of some sort. You know, the windows seem to be nicer on the front than they are on the back. It's just, it's not close to the level of quality that, if I was the owner of the building in back of it, I won't...It's bad enough having a three-story building, and then, it might as well at least be an attractive-looking building I'm looking at. That's my main concern.

Ms. Gerhardt: If I may suggest, if we're just talking about material changes on the rear, that's certainly something that could be handling at a subcommittee meeting. As far as privacy, I think most of these windows look to be high sill windows, so the privacy issue has already been handled in the placement of the windows.

Board Member Gooyer: Right, I agree. Like I said, I'm not too worried about the privacy aspect of it.

Board Member Lew: For staff, I think the...We have a stucco building 10 feet off of the rear property line. My take is to reduce the visual impact on the neighbors, so, one is typically, like, a wood façade, or a

taupe-colored stucco. Something that just fades into the background and recedes. And then, I'd also like to have an evergreen hedge, ideally 15 feet high, 12 to 15 feet high. Just makes everything much more attractive. I guess the way I would say it is, like, I think I'm treating, I would treat this particular back yard as I would normally do on a single-family house's side yard. That's basically the kind of dimensions we're looking at, with only a 10-foot rear yard. Just trying to make it very low key and fade into the background.

Ms. Gerhardt: I'm just thinking, if we're using the shrubbery and landscaping to more breakup the massing, then it doesn't need to be a straight line of shrubs or trees. It can be more clumped together. And then, give some more sense of rear yard space.

Board Member Gooyer: Well, even the...I'm sorry, go ahead.

Board Member Lew: Well, okay, I think, yeah...Generally, I think the continuous line is good, and in this particular case, I'm willing to break it up. It seems like there's...Possibly in two. And then, I think what's very strange, I think, on this particular one, is that everything that we're looking at on the first two floors is plainer, but we have four different colors, plus wood railings. And I think that was just too much on this particular façade.

Vice Chair Baltay: Osma, did you have more to add?

Board Member Thompson: Yeah. I think I kind of agree with Robert more, in that sense in terms of the back façade. I actually think adding some of that wood material to come around...It's true. I guess from a ground level perspective, if you have hedges that maybe block out a certain amount, it's really the top that you would see. I guess I'm not sure that something super subtle would make sense. I think something that is more in tune with whatever else is happening on the façade would be more appropriate. And I think I also agree with you, Peter, that it's true, this has been through a lot. I could see this going to subcommittee. I think the issues that we have brought up are reviewable in a subcommittee, so I could support that.

Vice Chair Baltay: I'd like to have the architect come back to the microphone and respond to what we've been saying. Is this something that you think you can successfully modulate without being a big deal? Because you need to convince us. I think you're on the edge of getting sent back for another design review.

Mr. Kummerer: Right. Well, thank you. Thank you for the chance to comment. I'd like to step back for one second. In the initial discussions about privacy, it was noted that the neighbor at the rear, who was a very nice, older gentleman, has a forest in his back yard, so it's evergreen back there. So, these concerns at the time were not as much of a concern. And it's still that way. As far as plantings go - and I know plantings can be a fig leaf because trees come down, and what not, but that was part of the initial discussion. I wanted to bring that to bear. I'm not opposed to...

Vice Chair Baltay: Could I interrupt you for a second? I want to be clear. Is it true there's a heavily-landscaped property on the other side of this elevation, in the neighbor's...?

Mr. Kummerer: Correct. It's evergreen and quite dense.

Vice Chair Baltay: Do we have any photos or evidence of that?

[Looking for photos.]

Vice Chair Baltay: Robert or Alex, do you remember that from the previous review? Was that the case?

Mr. Kummerer: You can maybe see here. If you look behind that dotted line...

Board Member Lew: Yeah, but they're also removing several trees on the property.

Board Member Gooyer: Yeah, exactly. Trees can also be removed next year, sort of thing. I don't want to...

[crosstalk]

Board Member Lew: After being...Yeah.

Vice Chair Baltay: Why don't you go on, Chris, and address our questions about the elevation, the [crosstalk] elevation.

Mr. Kummerer: This photo will show you the evidence of the tree behind, if that's suitable. I think the suggestions on the elevation are good ones, and from my point of view, just adding the wood veneer to that top right section of the elevation, to me, seems like a nice improvement. And then, maybe scrapping the yellow color on the lower would just simplify that. The glazing, the obscure glazing, was just something we worked out with the neighbor. Again, it was an elderly man who was behind there, and the neighbors were looking out for me. We proposed sort of half obscure, and they just said, "We don't want to have anything back there." Our clients felt it was odd to have a room that didn't have a window you could look out, but that was a concession we were willing to make. I agree, it's not great, but that's how we got there.

Board Member Gooyer: I don't have a problem, like I said, with the glazing. That could also easily be changed sometime in the future, if something changes. But, for instance, on A3.2B, the elevation that faces the driveway, if we're going to call it, the wood slats there on the second story stop right at the corner, and I don't like a change like that occurring on an outside corner anyway. I prefer, if you're going to change materials, I prefer to change...

Mr. Kummerer: It doesn't conclude. If you look on the top elevation on that sheet, it wraps the corner.

Board Member Gooyer: Oh, it's way back here?

Mr. Kummerer: It's a screen that wraps the corner for privacy. It's on two sides and stops where that window is, where the stucco is. Another item that was brought up was...

Board Member Gooyer: Well, still, my thought was that if that wood material goes all the way across, similar to what it is on the front of the building...Or, I should say, the Alma Street side. And as you said, get rid of the yellow, which I think is an arbitrary color that doesn't really need to be there. I think it would help enhance that back side quite a bit. It also splits up the elevation from the back. It is obviously, in a pure elevation like this, the third story looks a whole lot closer, obviously, than it is in reality. But still, I think that would help a great deal.

Mr. Kummerer: I think those are good suggestions. I also wanted to address the point about three-story stucco walls because...I just want to make sure there's not confusion about that.

Board Member Gooyer: No, I know it's two story...

Mr. Kummerer: They don't exist in the project unless you're in the middle of the project and looking up, and you're in the center between those two buildings and you look within the project.

Vice Chair Baltay: Okay, thank you. We're not trying to re-debate...

[crosstalk]

Mr. Kummerer: Yeah, yeah, [crosstalk] ...

Vice Chair Baltay: ...so I think we're done with questions for you. Thank you.

Mr. Kummerer: Cool. All right. Thanks.

Vice Chair Baltay: The question to the Board is, do we put this to a subcommittee? Or do we want to see it back again?

Board Member Gooyer: I'm fine with a subcommittee. This is not that drastic that it needs to come back for total review on our part.

Vice Chair Baltay: Alex, maybe you can make a motion for us, then?

MOTION

Board Member Lew: Okay. Let me get the findings out here. I'll make a motion that we recommend approval of the project, subject to the findings and existing conditions of approval in Attachment C, with the addition that it returns to the subcommittee for review of the rear...? What do we want to say?

Vice Chair Baltay: Rear elevations.

Board Member Lew: Revision of the rear elevation. And, two, is consider an alternative planting plan for the rear property line that allows for the dual screening and patio use.

Vice Chair Baltay: Do we have a second?

Board Member Gooyer: I'll second that.

Vice Chair Baltay: Okay. Let's take a vote on it, then. All those in favor? Opposed? Okay, the motion carries 4-0.

MOTION PASSED WITH A VOTE OF 4-0.

Vice Chair Baltay: I'd like to call a five-minute adjournment, and then, Alex will be taking over for Chair after that. Thank you.

[The Board took a short break. Vice Chair Baltay did not return to the meeting because he recused himself from discussion of Item No. 4.]

Board Member Lew: We are ready to reconvene.

cka | ARCHITECTS

2609 – 2617 Alma
ARB subcommittee memo
September 28, 2018

These drawings describe revisions to the rear façade that were discussed during ARB approval for the project. Board members requested the project return to study session to review proposals to clarify the design of the rear façade. The original proposal was a design (4) different stucco colors on four different quadrants of the façade. The revised proposal incorporates a wood element on the top right (largest most visible quadrant). The wood element wraps the corner of an upper balcony. The base stucco color was simplified to be the darker color (stucco color #4- see below for sample). The remaining top left quadrant is a lighter stucco color. The new façade proposal is better balanced and more in keeping with the look of the front façade.

The placement of screening bushes has been revised on the site plan to locate the 15 Prunus Carolina along the rear fence. This is in response to a comment of a board member that Staff's recommended placement of the bushes in the middle of the yard was not satisfactory.

Sincerely,
Chris Kummerer

Principal, CKA Architects
Menlo Park, CA



Stucco color #4

Attachment C

Project Plans

Hardcopies of project plans are provided to Board members. These plans are available to the public online and/or by visiting the Planning and Community Environmental Department on the 5th floor of City Hall at 250 Hamilton Avenue.

Directions to review Project plans online:

1. Go to: <https://palalto.buildingeye.com/planning>
2. Search for "2609 Alma St" and open record by clicking on the green dot
3. Review record details on the right side and click the "more details" option
4. Use the "Records Info" drop down menu and select "Attachments"
5. On the attachments webpage, you will find a link to the ARB Subcommittee Plans entitled "Binder_ALMA ARB Study Session" uploaded on October 1, 2018.