



ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD

MINUTES: May 4, 2023

Council Chamber & Zoom

8:30 AM

Call to Order / Roll Call

The Architectural Review Board (ARB) of the City of Palo Alto met on this date in Council Chambers and virtual teleconference at 8:30 a.m.

Present: Chair Peter Baltay, Vice Chair Kendra Rosenberg, Boardmember David Hirsch, Boardmember Yingxi Chen

Absent: Boardmember Osma Thompson

Oral Communications

None

Agenda Changes, Additions and Deletions

Senior Planner and ARB Liaison Claire Raybould indicated there were no Agenda changes, additions, or deletions.

City Official Reports

1. Transmittal of 1) the ARB Meeting Schedule and Attendance Record, 2) Tentative Future Agenda items and 3) Recently Submitted Projects

Ms. Raybould reported there were no major new projects submitted. They had hoped Waverly would be heard but the architect was out of town. The May 18 agenda includes 123 Sherman Avenue for a second formal hearing for a recommendation and the SB 9 Objective Standards which were continued to a date certain.

Chair Baltay inquired from Ad-hoc committee regarding the large housing project on El Camino.

Ms. Raybould replied there was one at 3150 El Camino.

Chair Baltay stated that was the project with Vice Chair Rosenberg and Boardmember Hirsch as the Ad-hoc committee.

Boardmember Hirsch reported that they looked at the project and had some communication with the developer and recommended that the Board take a closer look at interior issues of circulation when the project is officially brought forth, relative to the entry to the building as well as the parking of the building, and the delivery areas.

Chair Baltay asked if there was anything to report from any other Ad-hoc committees.

Ms. Raybould stated the same Ad-hoc subcommittee also looked at 420 Acacia and the 800 San Antonio project.

Vice Chair Rosenberg replied there was nothing major to report on those two items.

Chair Baltay requested a subcommittee be considered for two upcoming potential projects. One at 4075 El Camino Way and 300 Lambert. He assigned himself and Boardmember Chen to 4075 El Camino Way and Boardmembers Thompson and Chen to the subcommittee for 300 Lambert.

Manager of Current Planning Jodie Gerhardt commented that 300 Lambert is only an SB 330 project at this point, the plan set will be fairly thin.

Action Items

2. PUBLIC HEARING / QUASI-JUDICIAL. 3001 El Camino Real [22PLN-00229]: Recommendation on Applicant's Request for Approval of a Major Architectural Review Application Allowing Demolition of Two Existing Retail Buildings to Construct a 129 Unit, 100% Affordable, Five-story, Multi-family Residential Rental Development Utilizing Allowances and Concessions Provided in Accordance with State Density Bonus Regulations. The Units Would be Deed Restricted to Serve Tenants Meeting 30%-50% of Area Median Income. The Project Would be Located on a 49,864 Square-Foot lot Located at 3001-3017 El Camino Real. Environmental Assessment: An Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration Was Circulated for a 30-day Public Review Beginning on February 13, 2023 and Ending on March 15, 2023 in Accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). A Final MND is available for review. Zoning District: CS (Service Commercial). For More Information Contact the Project Planner Claire Raybould at Claire.Raybould@cityofpaloalto.org.

Chair Baltay asked for Boardmember disclosures.

Boardmember Hirsch stated he had no disclosures.

Vice Chair Rosenberg stated she visited the site.

Chair Baltay stated he visited the site.

Boardmember Chen stated she had no disclosures.

Chair Baltay requested a pause.

Ms. Raybould provided the staff report for 3001 El Camino Real which is located in the North Ventura neighborhood at Page Mill Road and El Camino Real. This is the third hearing before the ARB and Ms. Raybould gave a quick overview of the project, which includes the demolition of 9,100 square feet (sf) of vacant retail space to construct a five-story, exclusively residential rental building with 129 units affordable to very low income (30-50% of area median income) tenants. It is an SB 330 project that sits on 1.14-acre parcel (49,658 sf) lot. A pre-application for SB 330 was filed in May of 2022 which froze their development standards in accordance with SB 330. The project is proposing to use State Density Bonus allowances meant for low and very low income near transit. They are eligible for unlimited density, a 33-foot increase in height from base zoning (59 feet proposed; 68-83 feet allowed), and no parking (103

spaces are proposed). The four concessions include a rear setback on Acacia to provide a 5-foot balcony on the rear, the building would be setback over 10 feet, lot coverage, gross floor area, and open space requirements. Some of the key comments that came up at the prior hearing were vehicular access to the site; internal circulation to fitness room, parking garage and bicycle room; reducing the length of connection to the laundry and trash collection, and concern regarding building code compliance. The applicant has provided an onsite pathway to the fitness center, however, still does not have an internal connection. The bike parking empties into the courtyard. This is a redesign from the original proposal from El Camino. Staff believe that is an improvement, however it still does not have an internal connection. The trash collection has been revised so there are now two rooms, a room with bins by the maintenance room which would have to be moved for collection service to the room on the ground floor. They have not provided two separate collection areas or a central trash collection area. There are some concerns with a central trash collection room, it would need to be serviced from the street and it has to be 25 feet from the street. Providing a central location would be a concern from that prospective. The project would have to be designed to allow a 22' overhead entrance for a trash collection truck or it would be servicing on El Camino, which staff had expressed previously would be a safety concern for delivery drivers and trash tracks. In order for there to be a trash location on each side of the building would require usage of real estate on Acacia and Olive frontage, in addition to each room above for the trash shoots. The applicants expressed a concern in doing that because it would take away from the community room on the exterior. The applicants ensured the building is now code compliant. The design was amended to ensure there is enough distance between the elevator and stairwell. The applicant added an entry door on Acacia as well as a drop-off/loading zone on the Acacia side, which addressed the safety concerns from the Office of Transportation related to delivery truck drivers double parking on El Camino. There were ARB comments regarding the El Camino facing façade requesting more definition between the top, middle and bottom floors, with more visibility onto the street from El Camino Real, request to reconsider the vertical windows on the ground floor, break up the left side of the façade, and reconsider the white material to be less white/bright. The applicants did not make changes to provide more definition between the top middle and bottom floors, they feel they have provided enough definition between the floors. Staff believes there could be more improvements, however they have met all of the objective standard requirements. They provided additional windows, particularly in the art-flex room between the fitness center and bike room, which allows more outdoor visibility on the El Camino Real side of the building. They have not made changes to reconsider the vertical windows on the ground floor or break up the left side of the façade. The white color has also not changed. The community room has been relocated to face Acacia. The ARB was interested in having more visibility onto the street frontage rather than the laundry room. The applicant has not made changes to provide more articulation for privacy on the rear ground floor units, they did provide ground floor unit plans, but not sections. Ms. Raybould read the Housing Accountability Act (HAA) as a reminder of State regulations regarding the City's authority for applications to build very low, low- and moderate-income housing. Senate Bill (SB) 330 freezes development standards and they were frozen for this project as of May of 2022, before the 18.24 objective standards applied. Therefore, this project is not subject to the newer objective standards. A Mitigated Negative Declaration circulated for review on February 13, 2023 and closed on March 15, 2023. Formal responses to comments were included in Attachment H of the staff report. The City received comments from Santa Clara County Department of Environmental Health (SCCDEH), Valley Transit Authority (VTA), one member of the public,

and the board on the Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND). Staff recommends the ARB consider the MND and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan (MMRP); and recommend approval with conditions based on the findings and conditions of approval.

Applicant Kathy Robinson, Director of Development for Charities Housing, thanked staff for assisting them with the project and the ARB for their consideration and introduced Will Bloomer from David Baker Architects.

Mr. Bloomer provided the staff presentation summarizing the changes made that Ms. Raybould outlined in the staff's presentation which included the location of the community room, the connection through to Acacia, the second lobby for the mail room, the relocation of the stairwell for better upper floors circulation, and the setback massing on the roofline due to the addition of the second lobby.

Joe Head provided information on traffic circulation data gathered for analysis regarding peak travel times and parking facilities provided and noted they would be willing to enter into a Traffic District Plan that would restrict the residents of the project from parking in front of neighbor homes except during overnight hours and on weekends, should the parking garage not be sufficient for the residents.

Chair Baltay opened the meeting for public comments.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Yugen Lockhart provided public comment as a resident on Olive Avenue, and expressed frustration over the potential parking and traffic impacts the project will have and stated that Charities Housing has been interacting with the neighbors which has been appreciated. Staff also provided public outreach regarding traffic abatement ideas. He appreciates the ARB's efforts in making sure the project has the least impact possible on neighbors. The existing neighbors are not objecting to higher density, they just don't want to feel overwhelmed by the higher density.

Rebecca Sanders, a Ventura resident, provided public comment and agreed with some of Mr. Lockhart's comments. It's great that the public outreach has been done by both Charities Housing and the staff, it would be nice if someone could advocate from City Hall for the existing neighbors. She believes that the applicant has not yet made any concessions based on feedback from the public outreach that has been done and expressed serious concern for potential parking issues. Her hope is that the ARB will stress the changes that need to be made to preserve Acacia and Olive from becoming like a street in Los Angeles. She expressed concern regarding privacy issues from sightlines from the project and collective impacts from all of the higher density projects proposed for Palo Alto which currently stands at over 1,500-units.

Chair Baltay closed the meeting to Public Comments.

Vice Chair Rosenberg inquired about the design decision that is adhering the applicant to that specific white color on the façade.

Mr. Bloomer responded they are trying to use fiber-cement in a way that provide a lot of variation, it's not an objective standard change that the applicant feels is necessary to change at this time, however they are willing to continue having that discussion.

Vice Chair Rosenberg explained that the ARB was pretty specific in their prior comments regarding the white color chosen and felt like that could have been an easy accommodation to achieve.

Ms. Robinson replied that Charities Housing believes the aesthetics of the building are really attractive, it uses a variety of colors and textures and materials that work well together. Often when a project starts with a blank white canvas, it enhances the variety and interest. They are willing to continue having internal conversations about possibly tweaking the color slightly, however they appreciate the current aesthetics of the building as it is.

Vice Chair Rosenberg requested the specific name of the white and the LRV that is associated with it.

Mr. Bloomer stated he would have to check on the specific LRV number.

Manager of Current Planning Jodie Gerhardt provided the materials board.

Vice Chair Rosenberg commented that getting the specific name of the white coloring and the LRV number would be incredibly helpful.

Boardmember Chen inquired about the new arts and craft space and if it will be open to the public.

Ms. Robinson replied that is currently designated as flex space with the hope that it can become an arts and craft space that will be open to the residents and the community.

Boardmember Chen asked if the laundry room is now smaller than what was shown in the previous design.

Mr. Bloomer answered they relocated the laundry room, which previously had a small lounge portion. With the relocation of the room, the lounge space is now part of the community room. Both the laundry room and the community room have wonderful views of the rear community yard. The number of machines in the laundry facility remained the same as previously presented.

Boardmember Chen inquired if the loading zone on Acacia is a true loading zone and not blocking one lane of the street when needed.

Mr. Bloomer responded that it is now a true loading zone. It is currently now in the civil drawings.

Boardmember Chen requested clarification of any separation between the public sidewalk and the private passage to the fitness center.

Mr. Bloomer explained that there is no separation, and they liked the idea that it would be open, however it is covered above by the building. They plan to work with landscaping architects to make sure the space is well defined.

Boardmember Chen asked about the front façade glazing in the drawings is an actual reflection of what the glazing will be in the final design of the building.

Mr. Bloomer explained that what the current design shows is a type of store front system that may have a spandrel panel with the electrical system overhead. If there were a spandrel panel it would not have glazing. The opportunity provides the type of store front look that they prefer.

Boardmember Chen asked if the same were true in the rear elevation. If a spandrel panel were used it would not have glazing where the panels are located.

Mr. Bloomer believed the rear is fully glazed. There is a band of brick on the elevation and that is more for the aesthetic and to break up the rear mass and would not provide mechanical use.

Boardmember Chen asked what the material of the outdoor staircase that is used for fire access leading to the second-floor open space.

Mr. Bloom stated he thought it was planned as a steel staircase; he would have to get back to the board with that. It may possibly have a concrete base. It becomes a bridge over, and their hope is to create another design element with its construction.

Boardmember Chen noted the space under the stairwell is open and wondered what the support would look like.

Mr. Bloom responded that their intent is for it to be open and frame the space to create a design element for the back community room.

Boardmember Hirsch stated he had no questions for the applicant.

Chair Baltay suggested rather than the Board go through the project again in detail, they should provide, as a Board, the conditions the building would need in order to meet their standards. Some of the previous suggestions had not been made, rather than arguing with the applicant, the ARB considered providing a list of the changes the project would need to achieve ARB approval.

The consensus of the Board agreed and Chair Baltay provided a list of five changes for the Board to discuss as recommended conditions of approval to include:

Internal Circulation –

- a trash collection area on each floor within 200 feet of every apartment
- an internal connection between the fitness and art space down on the street

Vice Chair Rosenberg commented that if trash access is not provided within a reasonable length, people will leave their trash outside their doors. That will lead to a build up of undesirable community space. It is a big ask, however, the potential impact of not having the chutes available could be dire and potentially a health risk.

Boardmember Hirsch commented that projects with this high density generally have a trash shoot near the elevator and given the change in elevator to meet code regulations, it would seem natural that would be a good location to add trash collection chutes. The trash in the building could then be moved to the trash pick up room.

Boardmember Chen recalled at the last hearing the ARB listed three items they wanted within two hundred feet of each unit, trash, stairwell, and laundry. Currently only the staircase meets the 200' distance standard. It is critical for the desirability of the property to include the trash and laundry facility within that standard as well.

Chair Baltay responded that he provided what he felt was code regulation for the trash being within 200' of each unit and he had left out the laundry facilities because the code that was referenced was design specifically for trash as he was attempting to provide the minimum they would require for approval.

Boardmember Hirsch stated he believed there could be a compromise on the laundry room in that they have a central laundry as it relates to the outdoor space which isn't unreasonable. It would be convenient to have one on every floor, central to the building, but having it central with the outdoor space and community room isn't a bad compromise.

Ms. Gerhardt stated that while everyone is aware that under SB 330 the measures have been frozen, and they froze prior to Chapter 18.24 going into place, staff will need to discuss the code sections with the director and with the City attorney to ensure that they agree that the conditions are objective enough to enforce.

Chair Baltay stated the next condition to consider:

Provide greater consideration to the El Camino Real and Acacia Street facing façades by:

- Using a greater variety of window sizes and alignments
- Creating a cornice parapet eave or other element to differentiate the top of the building.

Boardmember Hirsch stated he thought they were all concerned about the massing of the front of the building. If there was more flexibility in the design, it could eliminate some of the white massing.

Vice Chair Rosenberg commented that the building elevation should have variation in depth. The large white facing façade does not have variation or depth. Reorganizing floor plans is one way to do that and using variation in materiality is another way, which is quite successfully done on the other half of the building.

Ms. Gerhardt commented that A and B of item two needs to be more objective if possible.

Boardmember Hirsch suggested that item C could reduce the massing of the El Camino façade by introducing recesses, and the back of the building has a gap which could house a unit. A gap in the front façade could break up the front façade massing.

Chair Baltay suggested stating the ARB would like the left portion of the El Camino façade to have variation of at least two feet in depth. He does not support relocating front units, as his biggest concern is the windows are not big enough.

Vice Chair Rosenberg commented that an introduction of new material could be beneficial in the white area and could provide the appearance of more depth and the resolve could be just as simple as that.

Boardmember Hirsch commented that with that change in item A, there wouldn't be a need for his third proposed item.

Chair Baltay continued with the third item:

- The left front white space face on the El Camino facing building, Creating a cornice parapet eave or other element to differentiate the top of the building.

Vice Chair Rosenberg stated that finding the LRV value of the white should be easy to find. And changing the color to a not-so-white could lower the LRV to less than 82%.

Chair Baltay listed the fourth item:

Provide greater privacy to the rear floor ground units by:

- Ensure units on the ground floor are elevated 12 – 18 inches above ground, or
- Reconfiguring the three-bedroom end units to avoid at grade bedrooms with windows fronting directly onto sidewalks or public outdoor space, or
- Provide a landscaped area of shrubs and trees as a buffer between the buildings and adjacent sidewalk or outdoor space.

Vice Chair Rosenberg commented that the interior two-facing bedrooms have the capacity for a landscape buffer on the mews pathway.

Ms. Raybould asked the applicant if all the units were intended to be Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant.

Mr. Bloomer stated there aren't any stairs and they would be ADA accessible.

Chair Baltay stated he believed a 12" rise in the building could be accomplished.

Chair Baltay and Vice Chair Rosenberg commented that if the first-floor units were 17' high there would be room within that space to raise the ground floor without raising the entire building.

Boardmember Chen providing the units were ADA compliant, raising the ground floor units 12 to 18" would make a big difference in privacy to the neighbors.

Boardmember Hirsch was good with the privacy suggestions.

Chair Baltay continued with the last item:

Regarding the ribbed concrete finish on the rear residential unit façade:

- Bring it back to the 35% surface area and provide greater window variation in size and configuration and material selection.

Chair Baltay commented that this is not an objective standard that the applicant is obligated to follow, however it is a standard that was established for the town and is a fair request.

Vice Chair Rosenberg said this was an item she would be fine with it or without it.

Chair Baltay stated the one thing he left off was their request for a traffic study to see if the building would be better off facing Acacia rather than El Camino and he was satisfied with the applicants explanation of why they did not consider that change.

Boardmember Hirsch agreed.

MOTION: Chair Baltay moved, Vice Chair Rosenberg seconded that the ARB recommend approval of the project subject to the conditions listed.

Chair Baltay asked the applicant if they had any current response to the conditions the ARB listed in their motion.

Ms. Robinson commented that the discussion was very helpful in letting the applicant know what their requests were, specifically the white LRV value. They will take the comments to heart and see how they can accommodate them into their final design.

Chair Baltay requested a roll call vote.

VOTE: 4-0-0-1 (Boardmember Thompson absent)

Boardmember Hirsch commented that he appreciated Chair Baltay direction in which they handled that item.

The ARB took a 12-minute break.

The meeting continued with all ARB Boardmembers present.

3. PUBLIC HEARING / QUASI-JUDICIAL. 1020 East Meadow Circle [22PLN-00165]: Recommendation on Applicant's request for Approval of a Minor Board Level Architectural Review for site improvements to an existing commercial building. Improvements include changes to the building envelope, restriping of the parking stalls, accessibility and HVAC upgrades, flood proofing, a new trash enclosure, a new raised utility yard, and new landscaping. Zoning District: ROLM. Environmental Assessment: Exempt from the provisions of CEQA per Section 15301, 15303, and 153113. Review and Adoption of the Revised Architectural Review Board By-Laws to Address Meeting Attendance in 2023

Chair Baltay introduced the item and requested Board disclosures.

Boardmember Hirsch stated he visited the site.

Vice Chair Rosenberg commented she had nothing to disclose.

Boardmember Chen disclosed she also visited the site.

Chair Baltay stated that he visited the site.

Senior Planner Garret Sauls provided the staff presentation for the modifications of the existing building which include painting the building, installing new raised utility yard in the rear of the site along West Bayshore Road, incorporating a new trash enclosure, flood proofing the mechanical screen, incorporating additional native landscaping to satisfy the 50% shading requirements, and restriping of the parking stalls. There are 32 proposed tree removals on site with thirty being planted to accommodate those removals. In addition, the applicant will be required to pay an in-lieu fee of \$32,000 for off-site tree planting. The

applicant provided a noise study as an attachment to the staff report to identify how the introduction of the rooftop mechanical equipment and utility yard will both comply with the City's noise ordinance. The new lighting scheme will not exceed the 0.5-foot candle at all property lines including near Adobe Creek and Echelon homes. Mr. Sauls provided drawings of the proposed plans along with paint color for the repainting of the building. Part of the material board includes the mechanical screen which includes trees within the design to screen the view of the equipment. The trash enclosure will be CMU material at the base of the walls with a roof to prevent drainage from within the enclosures. The roof will include solar. Landscaping information included the trees that will be used for the native tree replacements on the site.

Alex Avellone with Google provided the applicant presentation with Therese Hazelroth and Dan Markey. This building is one of eleven buildings they own and operate on the Google Campus. Six of them have been renovated and occupied over the last couple of years. Two buildings, along with this building are currently in the permitting process for renovation. Most of the buildings are concrete. The applicant showed maps of the project site. They will do a full seismic upgrade on the building and also in need of being flood proofed. A cool roof will be added to the building; the utility structure will have towers that will be energy efficient with chemical free towers and will be locally sourced. New glass windows will be added, new ADA parking and removal of drive isle obstruction.

Chair Baltay inquired of public comments and there were none.

Boardmember Hirsch inquired about the façade of the building and if it would be painted.

Mr. Avellone stated they will keep the current concrete intact and paint the entire exterior of the building.

Chair Baltay inquired about the metal perforated panels enclosing the cooling towers and if they would be painted.

Ms. Hazelroth replied they will be left the aluminum metal color.

Boardmember Chen commented that the project is very straightforward, and she appreciated the materials they selected, and she will support the project.

Boardmember Hirsch commented that he appreciates the removal of the drive obstruction and in back of the building seems to be the most exciting part of the project and wondered if it wouldn't be a great addition to incorporate the perforated metal along the roofline of the entire building to help screen the top of the building further. He appreciated the landscaping plans and inquired about the drainage for the flood proofing.

Mr. Sauls replied that Public Works will be a part of the engineering of those plans but what they understood was Public Works does not allow for drainage offsite of the property so it will be directed to the catch basins.

Boardmember Hirsch asked if there would be any public use of the courtyard.

Mr. Sauls stated his understanding was it would be used for employees only.

Vice Chair Rosenberg thanked the applicants for the straightforwardness of the project details and appreciated the thoughtfulness of the noise and lighting concerns and the design choice for the screening

of the mechanical yard. She agreed with Boardmember Hirsch comments in that it would be nice if they could incorporate them more into other areas of the project, but she wasn't going to penalize them for not doing so. It's a very attractive feature.

Chair Baltay shared the other Boardmembers' views and had nothing further to add and referenced page A2.03 with two large mechanical screen facing the street and asked if those were the screen Vice Chair Rosenberg and Boardmember Hirsch had referenced.

Vice Chair Rosenberg answered she's fine with the rooftop and what has been proposed, she was just fond of the sheet panel and would love to see it incorporated more into the project if possible.

Boardmember Hirsch stated he liked it so much he'd like the entire building to be those panels!

Boardmember Chen commented she doesn't believe the rooftop needs the screening because it's far from the street and it's hard to see from the sidewalk, and the trees will block it from the residential neighborhood. She doesn't see the point necessarily in making this building special by using more of the sheet paneling as the scheme of this building matches the color schemes of the other buildings on the campus.

Dan Marky indicated there is a small recessed area in the front that has a metal railing, and they could incorporate it there as an added feature element to the front of the building.

MOTION: Boardmember Rosenberg moved, seconded by Boardmember Chen, to approve staff's recommendations for the project with the condition of the offered addition of the perforated sheet paneling in place of the metal railing in the recessed area.

VOTE: 4-0-0-1 (Boardmember Thompson absent)

Approval of Minutes

4. Draft Architectural Review Board Meeting Minutes for April 6, 2023.

Chair Baltay introduced the item and called for any additions, deletions, or changes.

MOTION: Boardmember Rosenberg moved, seconded by Boardmember Hirsch, to approve the meeting minutes for April 6, 2023, as drafted.

VOTE: 3-0-1-1 (Abstained by Boardmember Chen, Boardmember Thompson absent)

Boardmember Questions, Comments or Announcements

Chair Baltay extended appreciation to former Chair Hirsch for his time as Chair.

Boardmember Hirsch commented he spoke with Ms. Raybould about the objective regulations on the townhomes and asked Ms. Raybould to share what she told him.

Ms. Raybould stated that City Council has to approve the work plan before staff can spend time working on that project. They will then have to speak to the Director to find out how much time can be allocated, once it's approved. She does, however, see that effort moving forward.

Chair Baltay recollected that the ad hoc committee was asked to come up with a plan that would be ready for staff if and when it is approved by City Council.

Boardmember Hirsch inquired about the study session for SB 9.

Ms. Raybould stated that is also part of the objective standards in the work plan, however, Chief Planning Official Amy French continued the study session to a date certain of May 18 to finish up the study session. Staff will be bringing forth research into how other cities have worked through some of the changes. Staff will provide a brief summary of the ARB comments to the stakeholders of future focus groups.

Chair Baltay suggested all Board members come to the May 18 meeting well prepared with their input so they can get through it at that time.

Adjournment

Chair Baltay adjourned the meeting.