

From: [Kathy Croce](#)
To: [Architectural Review Board](#); [Planning Commission](#); [Council City](#)
Subject: Castilleja Project
Date: Thursday, December 2, 2021 11:00:57 AM

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Hello Board Members,

My name is Kathryn Croce and I live across the street from Castilleja, on Emerson Street.

Myself and my neighbors all along Emerson across the street from the school are in agreement that the expansion plans are too extensive for this small area, with an underground garage exiting right at my corner. Currently, we have excessive traffic and kids being dropped off in front of our house, jamming traffic on an already dangerous corner (Emerson and Melville).

I have watched the activity at the school for several years and believe an enrollment increase from 415 to 448 works for both school and neighborhood, if they worked harder at making parents abide by their TDM. Combined with the current 86 surface parking spaces on campus (which are never full) and some additional shuttling, no underground garage is needed. The new proposals for an underground garage provide either no more parking spaces than the school already has or just a few more (if the school was allowed to increase to 540, which is a huge and unprecedented increase which should definitely be reduced. We don't appreciate the environmentally harmful idea of digging a hole to fill with cement to allow for another few parking spaces when they already have a sufficient number for a modest increase in enrollment.

Please help make this a well functioning school that fits in the neighborhood with minimal impacts.

Thank you for hearing our concerns.

Regards,
Kathryn

From: [Michael Eager](#)
To: [Architectural Review Board](#); [Planning Commission](#); [Council, City](#)
Subject: Castilleja expansion plans
Date: Friday, December 3, 2021 9:42:47 AM

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Commissioners, City Council:

I urge you to NOT approve expansion of Castilleja school.

Castilleja is in a R-1 residential neighborhood. Expansion of the school, if necessary, should be by relocating to a more suitable appropriately zoned location either within Palo Alto or in neighboring communities, or by opening a satellite campus.

Castilleja has exceeded their enrollment limit for decades. Allowing expansion would reward this unethical behavior. Castilleja apologized for exceeding the limit, but only after applying for a 30% increase in enrollment. This gives no assurance that they will comply with future enrollment limits.

Castilleja places a burden on the City of Palo Alto and their neighbors which is not balanced by benefit to either. More than 75% of students are not from Palo Alto. The school pays no taxes. Burdens include increased traffic, especially in an area which is likely to be adversely impacted by railway crossing closures.

Castilleja requests special treatment which is not supported by the Comprehensive Plan or by existing zoning. Variances should be granted only when there is a compelling argument in its favor and the impacts of the variance are minimal. The argument provided by Castilleja, that they want to grow enrollment, is weak and self-serving. Clearly the impact of the variance, adding an underground garage and increasing the gross floor area, is not minimal.

There are many ways to support Castilleja's mission to support education. The expansion plan is the least desirable of the viable alternatives.

Please deny Castilleja's expansion plans.

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Michael Eager

From: [J Stinson](#)
To: [Architectural Review Board](#); [Council, City](#); [Planning Commission](#)
Subject: Castilleja's latest Master Plan
Date: Tuesday, December 7, 2021 9:14:55 AM

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Dear ARB -

Since you will be once again discussing Castilleja's new master plan, I'd like to express my strong support for the building design, and in particular comment on the lengths the school has gone to protect more trees. I live near the school on Churchill and appreciate the beautiful landscaping on the Castilleja campus, including the canopy which includes protected redwoods and oak trees.

Based on the many plan revisions the school has submitted, it's clear that protecting trees has been a high priority. Castilleja has been very responsive to the Council's and neighbors' concerns. In particular, significant changes have been made to the pool and the parking garage in order to mitigate impacts on protected trees. It is clear that Castilleja has gone to great lengths to re-evaluate and re-study *all of the trees* to further protect a treasured part of our environment. My understanding is that their latest proposal further protects both tree 89 and tree 155 (the latter- in particular -if the pool is moved). They're doing everything possible to preserve existing trees while still adding 100 new trees to the canopy.

Please recognize these improvements and approve their latest submission. This project has been under review for far too long.

Sincerely,
Jason Stinson
Churchill Ave.

From: [Cindy Chen](#)
To: [Council, City](#); [Architectural Review Board](#); [Planning Commission](#)
Subject: Supporting a 69-car garage for Castilleja
Date: Thursday, December 9, 2021 12:21:30 PM

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Thank you Commissioners for this opportunity to speak. I live on Emerson Street very close to the Castilleja campus, and I want to express my appreciation for the garage options presented to you this evening. I recall last year when the City Council directed the school to reduce the garage capacity to 52 cars. At the time, it struck me as an arbitrary number -- it was significantly smaller in order to address concerns of a few neighbors, but why 52? Did they actually know the number of spots that could fulfill the school's required spaces per city code? Did they know the number of spots that would still allow more trees to be preserved? Did they somehow conjecture that the 52 car capacity would mitigate traffic in a way that no other number could?

The answer to these questions is an emphatic NO. The 52 car limit was an arbitrary, finger in the wind number. Unfortunately, its effect is to significantly impair the school's ability to educate more young women. And yet, to oblige, the school has submitted plans to you that meet Council's limit. Instead of recommending that plan, however, please approve their garage with a 69-car capacity. The slightly larger capacity will get more cars off the streets, it will prevent parking on Spieker Field, it preserves trees, and it STILL adds no additional traffic on any surrounding street, including Emerson - my street.

I thank you for your continued attention. I know some of you are terming out soon on the PTC, and I appreciate your service.

Cindy Chen

From: [Roy Maydan](#)
To: [Council, City](#); [Architectural Review Board](#); [Planning Commission](#)
Subject: Castilleja Proposal
Date: Thursday, December 9, 2021 12:32:11 PM

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I spoke at the PTC meeting last night regarding the Castilleja proposal. Below is the original text of my comments.

Good evening members of the commission. I am Roy Maydan and I have lived in Downtown North for over 25 years. I am grateful for the attention you have given this project. As a citizen who wishes to see City leaders make decisions that will positively impact our property values, our quality of life, and our community, I especially appreciate that you have already supported the merits of this proposal.

Therefore, I am really disappointed to be speaking to you again at yet another hearing on this project, as this does seem to deny the hard work you have already put into this process. The good news is that you have acted in clarity and conviction in the past, and I am sure these improvements will only increase your desire to see this project become a reality.

Your previous review of this project solidified what the data in the EIR proved -- that the garage will not bring more cars to the neighborhood. Now you just need to determine how many parking spots should go below ground and how many should remain on the surface. While I support a proposal keeping as many cars off the street as possible while preserving the trees, I trust your leadership as you make that decision. However, please keep in mind that the staff report estimated that Option E will result in a shortage of parking spaces.

Most of all, it is important for leaders to be able to decide -- then act on those decisions. You have decided once, and this review further defines the plans you have already supported. Now I hope you will make a choice and urge the city council to act.

Roy Maydan


From: [Barbara Gross](#)
To: [Council, City; Architectural Review Board; Planning Commission](#)
Subject: Castilleja Modernization Project
Date: Thursday, December 9, 2021 1:10:06 PM
Attachments: [Castilleja.pdf](#)

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My comments expressed last night at the PTC meeting are below.

I support this project on its merits.

The time and cost - both lost and spent - on this process seem to go unnoticed and/or unappreciated.

As people in charge of local government, you have experienced this with the construction of the fire station on Newell and Embarcadero, the California Ave Garage, the Public Safety Building.

Please approve this project and move on.

Thank you// Barbara Gross

From: [Jim Fitzgerald](#)
To: [Council, City; Architectural Review Board; Planning Commission](#)
Date: Thursday, December 9, 2021 2:11:27 PM

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Hello Committee Members and Council Members,

I'm Jim Fitzgerald, a long-time resident of Palo Alto. I am here tonight to provide my unqualified support for Castilleja's new redevelopment plan. I want to thank all of you for your support and endorsement of the previous redevelopment plan and it is just unfortunate we need to tie up your time to address this project once again due to a small group of objectors. Everything about this updated project provides improvements for all parties. Including exceptional education for more young women, reduced traffic flow, enhanced beautification of the campus and neighbor facing building and grounds. I might add This was accomplished with the first plan you all approved. This new plan just goes further in that direction.

This new Castilleja plan goes even further in preserving trees, reducing traffic and car trips, limiting hours of operation and educational events, and further enhancing the aesthetics of the campus for neighbors with lower rooflines, increased setbacks, and more underground square footage. These steps have created additional burdens on Castilleja in delivering on its noble mission, but in continuing to be a quality neighbor they are committed to these changed plans and working through the operational inefficiencies they may create. In doing so they can finally build the modern facility needed to nurture and educate our next generation of Women leaders.

As always Castilleja has bent over backwards to meet the concerns and objections of those who oppose this project. However, No one is deluded that any plan will satisfy this obstinate group, so I would advise you to not hold your breath waiting for concurrence from them. What matters most is this committee has already endorsed an excellent redevelopment plan. This new plan addresses the concerns of the City Council and is an even better plan than the last. This plan should receive your enthusiastic RE-recommendation and in particular support for the larger parking option of this plan and I request you provide that as soon as possible.

Thank you.

Jim Fitzgerald

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Jim Fitzgerald

M: 650 888-1293

Email: jimfitz8@gmail.com

<http://www.linkedin.com/in/jimfitz8>

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From: [Lian Bi](#)
To: [Council, City; Architectural Review Board; Planning Commission](#)
Subject: My comments for yesterday's hearing
Date: Thursday, December 9, 2021 2:39:47 PM

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Hi,

Below is my comments for yesterday's hearing.

As a near neighbor of Castilleja, I want to speak about two issues: TDM and the garage.

I am happy that after your hearings about Castilleja last fall, it was finally fully understood that the garage would not bring more cars to the neighborhood. Opposing voices have tried to confuse the issue, but I appreciate that you read the EIR carefully, studied the proposal, and were able to see through those attempts. Castilleja is a TDM leader. I wish other organizations in Palo Alto would follow its lead.

Throughout the pandemic, Castilleja has only improved upon its TDM, with additional buses for students who are not ready to return to Caltrain yet. Castilleja's commitment to keeping car trips low will not waver because that is the only way the school will be permitted to enroll more students in the high school. No cause for doubt here. Castilleja is already pivoting to do whatever it takes to keep car trips low.

As for the garage, I am a strong supporter. It is a gift to the neighborhood, a wise investment in the long-term aesthetics and infrastructure of Old Palo Alto. The options before you all improve quality of life and preserve trees. Please remember that the new tree plan also adds over 130 new trees to campus, another HUGE gift to our neighborhood.

I am looking forward to seeing this project finally begin. Please act quickly to lend your support again. Offer the city council clear guidance toward a better future for my neighborhood with underground parking on Castilleja's modernized, sustainable campus.

Thanks
Lian Bi

From: [Bill Burch](#)
To: [Architectural Review Board](#)
Subject: Speaking in support of Castilleja School during last nights PTC meeting
Date: Thursday, December 9, 2021 8:46:30 PM


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Dear ARB members,

I wanted to share with you my presentation from last night's PTC meeting.

Thank you,

Bill Burch


Members of the Planning and Transportation Commission, thank you for this opportunity to speak on behalf of Castilleja School.

My name is Bill Burch. My family has lived in Palo Alto for over 40 years and in that time we've come to love and appreciate our community. We are blessed with wonderful natural resources stretching from the Baylands to Foothill Park. We also enjoy our cultural treasures including The Children's Theater, fantastic libraries, Stanford University, and yes, I would include Castilleja School as well.

We can thank the foresight of those who came before us for these gifts. We should also appreciate the stewardship of our *current* civic leaders for such great new resources as the new Baylands Bike Bridge and the Junior Museum. The "Palo Alto Process" can be painstakingly arduous at times, but wonderful things *can* be achieved.

It's in that spirit of "process" that I'd like to take you back nearly *10 years ago* when Castilleja first reached out to City staff and neighbors about their plans to upgrade the campus and desire to increase enrollment.

Since those initial meetings, Castilleja has shown good faith and a willingness to listen and compromise. For example, on-campus events were drastically cut to reduce impacts, deliveries & pickups have been reduced *and* limited (at a cost to the school) to improve conditions in the neighborhood. And, the school has limited it's hours of operation.

Castilleja's TDM or Traffic Demand Management program has grown to become a "way of life" with daily trips reduced *by up to 31%*.by adding new bus routes, providing dedicated morning and afternoon shuttles to Caltrain and East Palo Alto, as well as requiring employees to commute by alternate means three days a week and park off-site on those days they *do* drive.

Castilleja advocates for internal carpools and ride-sharing while encouraging cycling and walking for all community members who can do so.

That willingness to *listen and compromise* is reflected in the evolving campus design. The architects have reduced the massing of the buildings along Kellogg and Bryant, while the underground parking and the pool area have been reconfigured to further protect trees. As you know, the school is now offering several different options for the garage and *two* choices for the location of deliveries in response to guidance from the City Council.

A 10 year process..and all the while, time keeps passing.

And all the while, Castilleja cannot offer admission to students who are seeking this education. Every year spent in process, negotiation, and compromise has resulted in *scores* of young women being shut out from joining the Castilleja community.

Time is passing.

The school is making compromises..many of them. And it begins to feel like it will never be enough, like there will *always* be a new issue to delay this process. This project has been receiving *unprecedented scrutiny for over 10 long years*.

Meanwhile, while we are spend so much time talking about setbacks and trees and traffic patterns, we are forgetting the human impact.

Castilleja is a school that is different from other schools. It's not the right place for everyone, and luckily Palo Alto has other outstanding choices for students who are seeking a larger coed environment. But for girls in Palo Alto who *are* looking for something else, Castilleja is right in our midst, walking and biking distance away, waiting for them.

And waiting.

Meanwhile, I know there are residents who take issue with the fact that some students come from outside Palo Alto; they want Castilleja to cater only to our direct community, not to the surrounding towns. I feel compelled to point out that this line of thinking sounds a lot like people want to build a wall around Palo Alto to keep the “outsiders” out and hoard our resources only for ourselves.

In truth, some of the students who come from surrounding towns live in areas where the schools are not as strong, where they don't have local options like Paly and Gunn and this chance to attend Castilleja is an opening to opportunities they can't access any other way.

Whether we like to admit it or not, independent schools—like Castilleja with 22% of its students receiving tuition assistance—are one of *the most powerful* ways to gain equal access to educational opportunity. Especially in the Bay Area where real estate values make living in well-resourced school districts impossible for many families.

Time is passing.

I realize that many Palo Altans are concerned about growth. But let me remind you this project is *not* an expansion. The proposed building has a smaller footprint, and car trips are capped. The school has responded to neighbors, community members, city staff, and city leaders with

modifications that improve everything from drop-off patterns..from facade materials... to rooflines.

Tonight you will weigh in about enrollment, the garage, and events. Let's run through what has already been done over the past ten years on these topics:

- Events have *already* been brought to within the limits you set. Quite frankly, a further reduction in the number of events would weaken the communal fabric of the school.
- The garage has been reduced to preserve trees and improve conditions in the neighborhood. The school has offered several different compromises there.

So let's return to enrollment—the actual students who want to learn at Castilleja. The school will *make sure* they do so without adding trips. I know that critics have cast doubt on this promise, but their doubts are unfounded. Castilleja is already keeping this promise, with better transportation demand management than anyone in the Bay Area.

Castilleja will do what it takes to keep car trips level because Castilleja *wants* to educate more girls. This isn't a big high tech company, factory or a corporate office park. It's a small school that seeks to build a 21st century learning space and gradually add more students..without adding traffic.

If we step back for a moment, one could argue that years spent on debate have begun to make the proposal seem much bigger than it really is.

Remember...small school, smaller footprint, and a gradual and modest increase in enrollment..with no new traffic.

Let's seize the opportunity to switch the onerous "Palo Alto Process" to one of Palo Alto "Progress".

The conditions of approval can be met. Let's continue to respect the ideals of Palo Alto..great schools, commitment to the greater good, opportunity, and community.

It would seem to me that this proposal "checks all the boxes."

Thank you.

From: [Vania Fang](#)
To: [Council, City](#); [Architectural Review Board](#); [Planning Commission](#)
Subject: Castilleja modernization project
Date: Friday, December 10, 2021 12:20:55 AM

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Hi,

I spoke at the PTC hearing last night regarding the Castilleja agenda item and I would like to share my comments with you:

I live across the street from Castilleja on Kellogg Street, and I cannot wait for this project to be approved. I want to look out my windows onto an updated campus with more trees and green space.

The various garage plans, which we have seen today, will move parking from our neighborhood streets to below ground. Whichever plan you choose will also reroute some pick up and drop off below ground. All of this will improve conditions in the neighborhood and enhance the value of the homes in the nearby area.

As you all know, Castilleja is a highly sought after school. People move to Palo Alto because of our outstanding schools, and Castilleja is among them.

I truly appreciate the years of work that Castilleja has put into listening to neighbors' questions and concerns. Now, I hope you will listen to my concerns. I am counting on you to approve this project once and for all. You have sent it forward to the city council with your endorsement before. With these improvements, it should be easy to do so again. Please urge the city council members to do as they have been entrusted to do—to follow your informed and careful guidance to approve this project.

During this long process, the school has willingly met every change requested by City Council and City staff as the goal posts kept moving. This has now resulted in additional alternatives for you to review on their merits. I trust you to find the best among these plans and to help bring this long chapter to a close. Please continue to urge the city council to support this proposal. Thank you very much.

Vania

From: [Julia Ishiyama](#)
To: [Council, City; Architectural Review Board; Planning Commission](#)
Subject: ARB and PTC statements
Date: Friday, December 10, 2021 8:25:41 AM
Attachments: [Ishiyama ARB statement 12.2.21.docx](#)
[Ishiyama PTC statement 12.8.21.docx](#)

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Dear Council members, Commissioners, and Board members,

I have recently spoken at ARB and PTC meetings in support of Castilleja's modernization plan, and I am attaching both of my statements here for your reference. Thank you again for your consideration.

Best,
Julia Ishiyama

Julia Ishiyama's December 2 statement to Palo Alto Architectural Review Board

Good morning board members and staff. Thank you for your hard work and your time today.

I'm speaking to you today as a child raised in Palo Alto and as an adult invested in its future. I was born here and attended Castilleja for seven years, walking from my family's house on Lowell Ave. I've recently moved back from Colorado to this place that I've always known was home. Since returning, I can see how much has changed—and what has stayed the same.

Palo Alto has grown and evolved.

Neighborhood mainstays like Paly High and the Junior Museum and Zoo have undergone major renovations to better serve the community. Castilleja deserves the same chance to modernize. I have followed the project since its inception, and I've seen how the school's plans have evolved in response to City and neighborhood input. From design to tree preservation to square footage, their project is ready for approval.

While much has changed in Palo Alto, much remains the same.

The Bay Area is booming, but in my personal experience, the residential blocks of Old Palo Alto are as quiet as ever—thanks in part to Castilleja's rigorous Transportation Demand Management efforts to reduce car trips in the neighborhood. I urge you to approve the proposed garage that maximizes the number of underground parking spots, which will go even farther to preserve neighborhood tranquility. I recognize that the City Council has suggested 52 spaces be allowed underground, and I hope you will support *at least* that many, but I'd ask this board to additionally consider the design that allows 69 spaces below grade. My understanding is that this would not increase the size of the garage or the number of total spaces. It would simply keep more cars off the street level, a win-win in line with the city's Comprehensive Plan,

which prefers underground parking to surface lots.

Another constant: the tree-lined streets that I loved as a girl and now value as a local homeowner still have a beautiful canopy. I'm grateful that Castilleja has worked diligently to preserve and add trees to the neighborhood. In particular, I hope the Board will appreciate the school's updated pool proposal, which includes plans to relocate a stairway and transformer to responsibly protect another tree. The new plans for deliveries also provide options that further reduce street-level impacts, whether deliveries stay above grade but off the sidewalk or move below ground.

I understand that you have already endorsed the school's prior plans. Please do so again and allow Castilleja to move forward so it can continue to educate more girls in a modern, sustainable, and beautiful campus that I would be proud to have as part of my neighborhood.

Julia Ishiyama's December 8 statement to Palo Alto Planning and Transportation Commission

Good evening commissioners and staff.

I appreciate your review of Castilleja's Conditional Use Permit and Transportation Demand Management plan. I live close to the school in Old Palo Alto, and I welcome a detailed analysis that will ensure residents the peaceful enjoyment of our neighborhood.

I am also confident that the current plan to allow a gradual enrollment increase up to 540 students stands up to scrutiny. I understand the concerns about traffic, but by making any enrollment increase conditional on "no net new trips" and imposing substantial fines, you have *already* created an incentive structure that guarantees compliance. And under its current leadership, Castilleja has been a good citizen and has kept its word on TDM.

A small, vocal group of residents still objects. But it is clear based on the public record that they won't be satisfied by any amount of additional mitigation or monitoring and are instead intractably opposed to anything other than de minimis enrollment increases. I understand that the City Council has asked you to identify procedures that would allow for a larger increase, and I ask that you approach this stage of the approval process by taking into account the five long years of hard work that you know even better than I do has included careful consideration of the right path forward. Please, hone your recommendation based on legitimate criticism, but don't let a refusal to compromise take us backwards.

Since I've been bold enough to suggest the motives of my neighbors, I'll reveal mine: I am a Castilleja alum who wants to see both my school and my city succeed—goals that I know from experience go hand in hand. Castilleja's unique educational environment is not available anywhere else in the area, and the option of a local, single-sex school has enabled thousands of Palo Alto's young women to grow and thrive. The students educated at Castilleja are your friends, neighbors, babysitters, and dog walkers. Castilleja alums, teachers, and staff members

shop alongside you at the California Avenue farmer's market and jog next to you at the Moonlight Walk and Run. We are part of this community, and as a Palo Alto who has always valued giving back, from serving on Congresswoman Eshoo's student advisory board as a high schooler to supporting local nonprofits as a working professional, I consider any good that I'm able to do here to be a return on Castilleja's investment in me.

I'm also proud that in the inclusive city where I was raised, Castilleja can offer a quality education to others throughout the region—particularly to young women from under-resourced school districts. In the past, I've heard commenters and city officials discuss residency as a potential enrollment factor, and I urge this commission not to limit the opportunities available to families who cannot afford to live in Palo Alto and access our excellent schools. Doing so would cut against the values of diversity and equity that we as a community espouse.

I want to be clear: I do not come by my support uncritically. I will always push my alma mater to do better as a member of this community. But I support the parking, design, and enrollment changes as currently proposed because this is a *good* plan on its merits—one that holds the school to good behavior *and* supports its ability to be a real force for good in Palo Alto. I urge you to support this plan as well.

Thank you.

From: [Jeff Chang](#)
To: [Architectural Review Board](#)
Subject: In support of Castilleja project
Date: Sunday, December 12, 2021 11:25:47 PM

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Dear Architectural Review Board,


As a twenty year resident of Palo Alto and parent of a Casti student, I am writing in support of the Castilleja project before the Board.

Our daughter greatly benefits from her education at Casti, and its mission supporting Women Leadership.

I also feel that Castilleja has been working over many years in good faith with the city and the neighborhood to design a project which best suits all stakeholders.

I hope that you can support the project.

Thank you,
Jeff Chang



From: [Alan Cooper](#)
To: [Planning Commission](#); [Architectural Review Board](#); [Council, City](#)
Cc: [Tom Shannon](#); [Alan Cooper](#)
Subject: Castilleja: Kellogg building acceptance
Date: Wednesday, December 15, 2021 9:39:35 AM
Attachments: [Kellogg facade submitted by Castilleja.pdf](#)

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Dear ARB, Planning and Transportation Commission and City Council Members:

We are Castilleja neighbors and our homes sit directly across the street from the proposed Castilleja Classroom building running along Kellogg Ave.

As neighbors of Castilleja, we would support the proposed Kellogg building and elevation submitted to the ARB **last year** (see attached elevation) and subsequently approved by the ARB prior to being forwarded to the City Council for final review and approval.

The City Council submittal incorporates all of the changes that the ARB made during their series of hearings last year. As neighbors, we are satisfied with the design of the Kellogg facade including the elevation, the materials and the articulation of the different sections of the building. Specifically, we would ask that the massing of the Kellogg building not be changed, the building height in particular should **NOT** be increased, nor should Kellogg become a major entrance to the school. We request that for noise reduction in the neighborhood, Castilleja install a transparent sound wall at the back of the 2nd-floor gap between the first and second "articulation" of building segments on the east end of Kellogg.

Given this building spans almost the entire block of Kellogg, we as neighbors approve of the proposed articulation in Castilleja's submittal if substantial landscaping including the planting of several 48" box trees and other plantings are added to soften this mass appearance and create an acceptable addition to our neighborhood.

We are two of the six neighbors that reside across the street from Castilleja's Kellogg Classroom building. We know from talking with other neighbors in our 200 block of Kellogg, they share similar feelings about this elevation, articulation and materials.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this statement of support,

Tom Shannon
[REDACTED]

Alan Cooper
[REDACTED]

From: [Lesley King](#)
To: [Council, City; Architectural Review Board; Planning Commission](#)
Subject: Letter of support for Castilleja Project
Date: Friday, December 17, 2021 12:02:30 PM

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December 12, 2021

Dear PTC and ARB Members –

Below are the comments I made during the public comments section of the PTC meeting on December 8, 2021. Thank you again for your service to Palo Alto.

Lesley King

My name is Lesley King and I own a house about a block from Castilleja. First, I want to thank the commissioners for all the hard work they do on behalf of our town.

I am speaking tonight on behalf of a few other residents as strong supporters of the Castilleja Renovation and we have a few comments to make.

The nuances of this project review are very confusing as a lay person so some of our comments are meant to clarify some of the items that I believe should no longer be controversial.

As I read the Staff report issued in advance of this meeting, I understand that you, the Planning and Transportation Commissioners, have the **authority to make recommendations** on the C.U.P, the TDM plan, the variance, the parking adjustment, the Environmental Impact Report, and the text amendment proposed by city staff.

It's a long list, one that Commissioner Lauing mentioned tonight, and I know you take this responsibility seriously.

My first comment is about your recommendations on the C.U.P

I think this relates to the enrollment increase and the TDM measures to ensure no new trips. As of now, the mandate you have received from City Council calls for starting with an enrollment increase to 450 and identifying a procedure to allow Castilleja to increase to 540.... in phases.... contingent upon compliance to “no new trips.”

This procedure, as far as I can tell, is already outlined in the application. **For some reason, I feel that this “no new trips” fact has been hard for the community to grasp.** The application has specific language that outlines the very gradual and measured path the school would need to follow in order to be allowed to admit more students. If growth begins by taking the school to 450 from the current 426 number that Amy French just mentioned, the school will need to successfully meet the “no new trips” threshold before it is allowed to add more students. If that goal is met, the school can then add another 25 to 27 students in the next year. As you can see, the procedure seems to

already be in place. I was pleased to see that Castilleja put forth an even more detailed set of procedures in response to the City Council's latest comments, even though the procedures were already comprehensive.

In my study of the plans, I see that successful TDM measures were well-developed and in place, showing me the compromise and cooperation Castilleja has demonstrated throughout this prolonged process. From what I read in the Weekly, the school has again proposed additional policies, including new shuttles and bus routes, bike sharing, guaranteed rides home in emergencies for employees who don't drive, an internal Lyft program, and a "kiss and ride" program with parents dropping children at an off-site location to meet a shuttle. All of this comes in addition to the measures Castilleja has already taken over the past 10 years to reduce traffic by over 30 percent.

The school has already run a successful TDM program and seems determined to continue to succeed. So I want to reiterate the good news that the burden is on the school to show continued success with TDM. Since Castilleja **wants** to enroll more girls, the "no new trips" will need to be a priority. It's not the neighbors' or the City's or even the PTC's burden. It's on the school to earn the right to enroll more students.

The Second Point on this relates to the complaints I have heard from a few vocal opponents who point to the fact that the school over enrolled over a decade ago as evidence that it cannot be trusted....those days are clearly over.

The school has been under a microscope at every moment. The length of this renovation approval process, the depth of study invested in the EIR, the standards that have been applied to this project are not ones I have seen applied to other projects.

In my opinion, Castilleja has accurately recognized that accountability is essential to rebuilding trust and moving forward. Thus, accountability is built into the application.

The next item in the city staff's report that I want to address is the parking garage.

I really appreciate Commissioner Alchek's comment that the debate about the size of the garage is counter to the original request from the community asking for underground parking.

The City Council recently directed Castilleja to limit the size to 52 spaces—It's my understanding that this is 50 percent of what was required for total parking for the project.

At the ARB hearing last week, the board members supported Plan E because it complied with the City Council's guidance, However, all five of the five board members admitted that they ALSO supported Plan D with 69 spaces because it protected as many trees and maximized underground spaces, which they admitted seemed wise. **So the ARB board members were unanimous in their support of 69 spaces below ground.**

I agree with them. I was at the City Council meeting when the number 52 was introduced. This number seemed to have been pulled out of the air, or maybe just drawn from the idea that 50% is somehow fair. But since the desire to reduce the garage was driven by the effort to preserve trees and reduce construction scope, if the same benefits to trees can be accomplished with 69 instead of just 52 spaces, why wouldn't we put more cars below ground?

This plan was deemed superior by the EIR, is supported by the City's Comprehensive Plan, and even the city's ARB members were left tossing this question around at the end of their long hearing. They didn't seem to have a good answer as to why we are going forward with 69 spaces.

My final observation about the staff report is a very small and specific one that reveals a much larger and more general concern that I want to present to you as you consider this important proposal at this pivotal moment. On page 10, in a short aside, the report admits that even though the large chart and the previous several paragraphs suggest a shortfall of 30 spaces if the school enrolls 540 students, the chart and the parking demand study DID NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT ANY TDM MEASURES. This analysis is actually inaccurate and incomplete, but it is still presented as a problem that cannot be solved. I think that Amy French just referenced this quickly tonight but I want to underline this inconsistency.

We are relying on arbitrary numbers to determine whether this project can succeed and is in the best interest of Palo Alto?

52 - The number of spaces City Council directed to be below

ground - Why are we wedded to 52 when 69 spaces can be accommodated while still preserving trees in the exact same way? Even the ARB was left questioning this.

30 - The shortfall of spaces if the school reaches 540. This number doesn't take into account any TDM, so it is irrelevant. Why would we begin a conversation this important with such flawed data and unfounded assumptions?

50 % - The amount of parking capacity that can be allowed below ground in the suggested text amendment. This amendment, which requires that only 50% of parking can be below ground or the entire measurement of the project will be redefined. Where did this guideline come from? How was this threshold derived?

I understand the need to compromise and believe, like you, that it's well past time to find a middle path that serves all parties. At this point, though, I'm troubled that even though the ARB and, you, the PTC have acknowledged that this is a project that should be approved, the staff report and the guidance from council do not heed that advice and instead have raised some seemingly arbitrary numbers and incomplete data to stall progress.

As a concerned neighbor, I ask you please to remember what you have already said about this proposal—that it should be possible to approve this. I would like to see this project approved and underway so that we can all move forward.

Sincerely,

Lesley King

--

Lesley King
Back40Mercantile.com



"My work with the poor and the incarcerated has persuaded me that the opposite of poverty is not wealth; the opposite of poverty is justice. " - Bryan Stevenson, Just Mercy

From: [J Stinson](#)
To: [Council, City; Architectural Review Board; Planning Commission](#)
Subject: In support of Castilleja CUP
Date: Friday, December 24, 2021 9:40:47 AM

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Planning Commissioners, Architectural Review Board, and Council Members,
I meant to send out my oral comments from the PTC meeting on 12/8/2021 but realize they've been sitting in my outbox. Please find them below.
Happy Holidays!

Good evening, Commissioners,
Here we are again, still discussing the Castilleja project. For years, the school has been modifying and reducing the scale of their proposed modernized campus, and I hope this evening you will recommend approval of the significantly smaller 69 car underground garage, as well as the modified pool design that includes moving a stairway.

I want to focus on trees this evening, because many of the school's recent changes have been designed to further protect their canopy. In particular, changes have been made to the pool and parking garage in order to mitigate impacts on protected trees.

1. First, the 69-car garage protects trees just as well as the 52-car garage. Yes, it also serves the neighborhood by moving more cars below grade, but importantly, it protects trees.
2. Second, making adjustments to the placement of the pool stairway and electrical transformer will further protect tree 89. In addition, choosing this pool option still allows deliveries to be moved below grade, which I have to believe is ideal for immediate neighbors from a noise standpoint.
3. Overall, the school is adding 100 new trees to campus. While it will be many years until the trees are mature, they are investing in the beautiful canopy for generations to come.

Like many in Palo Alto, I love the trees that line our streets and beautify our city. We also love our city's schools, and investing in education has always been a hallmark of Palo Alto values. Castilleja is investing in trees, sustainability, and education, and it's now time to move forward with this project.

Sincerely,
Jason Stinson

From: [Trisha Suvari](#)
To: [Planning Commission](#)
Cc: [Architectural Review Board](#); [Council, City](#)
Subject: Castilleja Project
Date: Thursday, January 6, 2022 7:10:28 PM

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Dear Planning and Transportation Commission,

The Castilleja project, which you have already voted to support, is before your commission again. I hope that once again, you will support this latest design and demonstrate responsible decision-making that supports our community's schools. Unlike its neighboring schools, Castilleja is the only educational institution that has not had the opportunity to renovate its teaching and learning spaces. The school is in desperate need of modernization, and I think they've done an excellent job revising, and revising again, to incorporate the constructive feedback they've received. The only area of concern you raised last time was over the garage. Now they have offered five different options that all reduce the size, preserve trees, reroute cars from the neighborhood, and move parked cars below ground. All I see are benefits; what is holding up the process from allowing the school to move forward and provide updated buildings to its students and our community?

During your hearings last year, there was a lengthy conversation about whether the limits and restrictions that were being placed on Castilleja were at all consistent with the treatment other schools and nonprofits receive in Palo Alto and other nearby towns. I think that after these changes that the school has offered in compromise, that question will loom even larger unless city leaders like you find a reasonable path forward. I am a voter in Palo Alto and I hope you will represent me and the many others like me rather than a small number of neighbors who cannot and will not compromise. This project will improve traffic and parking, bring no new cars, and blend beautifully into the mix of homes on Bryant, Kellogg, and Emerson. More importantly, it provides the space to educate more young women so that those families seeking all-girls education can attain it for their daughters. All education, including single-sex, is a public benefit. In a city that lauds education, innovation, and knowledge, why are we facing so many obstacles in supporting an institution whose mission aligns with Palo Alto's forward-thinking values?

Thank you for your time.

Best,
Trisha Suvari



From: [Meg Gilbuena](#)
To: [Planning Commission](#)
Cc: [Architectural Review Board](#); [Council, City](#)
Subject: In Support of Castilleja
Date: Thursday, January 6, 2022 11:21:45 PM

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As a neighbor living on Churchill Ave, I want to affirm my support of Castilleja. Thank you for approving the very thorough and painstaking analysis in the Environmental Impact Report, which took years to research and produce, and found no significant impacts. Now I hope you will recommend this project for approval to the City Council for the second time. The lag in decision making over the years feels like a stalling tactic regarding a project that is ultimately about providing our children with knowledge and opportunities. Please listen to the copious voices who wish to see this project succeed.

Schools should always be part of residential neighborhoods. They sustain the children who live in the homes there and are a promise for the future. **Schools should not be driven out of residential zones.** They should be encouraged to thrive. Every other school in Palo Alto has grown and modernized their campus in recent years. Why shouldn't this very small all-girls school have the same opportunity? Castilleja has improved this project again and again, and now you have excellent options before you that allow a school to thrive quietly and sustainably in an area that was zoned as residential many years after the institution was established.

Castilleja's mission to educate girls for leadership is critical to support the broader societal movement to place more women in positions of leadership. With a budget of \$3.5 million in Tuition Assistance to grant access to any deserving student, despite her family's financial circumstances, Castilleja is actively working to rectify age-old disparities in access to education. Particularly important to me, Castilleja has a year-round program to support first generation college students as they prepare to take steps no one in their families has ever taken before. Supporting this should be a core value for our city. Palo Alto is a bellwether city, a community known for cutting a brave path into a better future. Castilleja is part of that effort, working to amplify young women's voices. Please think of the positive impact beyond our own city, and do not let a small number of neighbors hinder broader societal advancements.

Sincerely,
Megan Gilbuena

From: [marcela millan](#)
To: [Council, City; Architectural Review Board; Planning Commission](#)
Subject: Castilleja
Date: Friday, January 7, 2022 2:37:57 PM

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Dear PTC,

It's clear that Castilleja's Traffic Demand Management program (TDM) will be vital to their mitigating traffic once their enrollment grows. I just wanted to write to express a few points about their successful, and ever expanding TDM program.

1. As has been well documented, the school has been very successful executing TDM results to date, reducing traffic by ~ 30% in the neighborhood.
2. It can not be said enough times: the school will not be able to increase their enrollment if traffic increases. **It seems that this requirement is not discussed enough.** Opponents who worry about growth or "expansion" must remember that the school *will not be able to grow unless they manage the car trips*. Let me repeat that in other words: Castilleja will only be able to gradually add more students each year IF the car trips remain under their current number. It is in their best interest to invest in traffic reduction—something that the neighbors also heavily desire.
3. To illustrate the school's agility and investment in TDM, they added new bus routes to school during the pandemic since families were uncomfortable putting students on trains. The goal of all of these shared rides is the same: keep cars and traffic from the neighborhood.

Companies and other organizations in Palo Alto should all be instituting TDM measures, and Castilleja is proving to be a strong test case for successful mitigation. Going forward, it sounds like Castilleja will further expand their rideshare options, and I hope other businesses do the same.

I appreciate your service, thank you.

Marcela Millan


From: [Tina Kuan](#)
To: [Planning Commission](#)
Cc: [Council, City; Architectural Review Board](#)
Subject: Castilleja project
Date: Friday, January 7, 2022 3:37:55 PM

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Dear Planning and Transportation Commissioners,


Thank you for your service regarding the Castilleja project. It is a surprisingly contentious issue considering that both sides of this debate want the same thing: fewer cars in the neighborhood. Castilleja has done that in two ways:

1. By reducing daily trips to campus by 25–31%
2. By submitting plans to move street parking below ground.
3. By increasing shuttle options and adding bus routes.

As far as reducing trips, the school will continue to do this after the CUP is approved because in order to enroll more students, daily trips cannot rise above current levels. This simple fact seems to get lost, and I think it is important to highlight. The good work the school has done on TDM will only become more comprehensive if it is granted the opportunity to do so.

And as far as moving street parking below ground, you have five options before you. All of them move parking off neighborhood streets. All of them shift part of the drop off and pick up below ground. All of them reduce the overall size from the original proposal. All of them preserve trees. You can't go wrong. Just select a plan and make a recommendation to City Council. Why continue to hold up the process when you've already approved the project before? It is well beyond time for this excellent project to be approved and move into the execution phase.

Respectfully,
Tina Kuan



From: [Kathy Burch](#)
To: [Planning Commission](#)
Cc: [Council, City; Architectural Review Board](#)
Subject: Support for Castilleja School
Date: Friday, January 7, 2022 4:05:38 PM

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Dear Planning and Transportation Commissioners,


I am grateful for the hard work you have already put into reviewing Castilleja School's project. And I thank you for recommending it for approval last year. This year, you have minor improvements to review, and excellent options to choose from in order to reach a compromise. It's time for Castilleja to update its outdated campus and provide opportunities to more girls who seek an education at this nationally-recognized institution.

One element of recent news to add to the conversation is Castilleja's capacity to adapt its outstanding TDM program in response to the pandemic. Before the pandemic, many students who live north of campus rode Caltrain to school and were met by Castilleja's electric shuttles to get to campus from the station. As school reopened when it became safe again, some students who had ridden the shuttles before chose not to continue to do so. Castilleja responded immediately, with two new bus routes picking students up near their homes, thereby preventing them from relying on smaller carpools or single-occupancy vehicles. Even as some students have become more comfortable riding Caltrain again, the bus routes are still running to make sure that daily trips remain low.

Please put these questions of increased car trips to rest. The cap on car trips directly impacts whether Castilleja can *gradually* increase enrollment. This is built into the project's approval process. Approve the project, and car trips will be capped. Simple.

The school has outstanding TDM and will immediately make any changes necessary to keep car trips below the cap. What other institution or organization in Palo Alto has achieved reducing their daily car trips by 25–31% percent? Approve this project and highlight Castilleja for being a leader in reducing traffic.

Thank you,
Kathy Burch


Palo Alto

From: nancytuck@aol.com
To: [Council, City; Architectural Review Board; Planning Commission](#)
Subject: Castilleja Proposal
Date: Friday, January 7, 2022 4:38:42 PM

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Dear Planning and Transportation Commissioners,

Thank you once again for committing time to reviewing the Castilleja architectural plans. I am a neighbor on Melville Avenue and have actively advocated for the project's approval for years. I certainly appreciate the time you have put into this. Now, I believe you need to make a final decision to support this project again for the second and last time. The project checks all the boxes and is better than it's ever been.

The current campus is old and dated, and the school is long overdue for an upgrade that other local and comparable schools have been granted. I understand the school is also presenting options for the new underground garage and swimming pool that will further protect trees. I appreciate their time, effort, and care in offering these alternatives.

I would like to leave you with two key points of feedback regarding planning and transportation:

1. As a neighbor, I am grateful to Castilleja for all that it has done to reduce traffic. Have you come to school at drop off or pick up to see how smoothly it goes? The school does not deserve and should not be subject to car counting measures that are more stringent than those at Stanford. It is a disservice to compare the size of the two institutions; Castilleja is a small community, with minimal impacts, despite the outsized complaints from a few of my neighbors. I'm here on Melville without an agenda--other than supporting a school that is being a good neighbor. Please be reasonable.
2. I also would like to add my adamant support for the 69 car underground garage. To me, the Council's direction to limit the capacity to 52 cars seems arbitrary. If the capacity is 69 cars, the school can fulfill the number of spots required by city code AND get more cars off our streets. This addition of 17 cars creates no additional traffic, nor does it affect any trees. This maximized capacity is wiser for all parties involved and should be recommended. Further, the stipulation of no new car trips is built in to the project's approval process. Knowing this, what is holding up the approval process?

Thank you, as always, for listening to constituent and neighbor feedback. I appreciate the time you've dedicated to this effort and our city at large.

With gratitude,
Nancy Tuck - [REDACTED], Palo Alto

From: [Lian Bi](#)
To: [Council, City; Architectural Review Board; Planning Commission](#)
Subject: Castilleja Project
Date: Friday, January 7, 2022 8:53:30 PM

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Dear PTC,

I understand that you have continued assessing the Castilleja project, more than a year after you last reviewed it and recommended approval. I live close to the school and am anxious for the modernization to begin, so thank you for your renewed attention to the project. I think it's the best version for our community.

In particular, I appreciate that the school is putting forth several parking options for you to consider, so that an optimal solution can be recommended that best preserves trees, removes cars from our neighborhood streets, minimizes noise, and modernizes the very dated campus while offering an excellent all-girls education to more students AND reducing car trips.

Specifically, I understand that the school is presenting an option for the pool that can better protect one of the trees, as well as different options for the below grade parking structure. Over the past several years, the school has made countless modifications to their plans in response to neighbor feedback as well as feedback from Council, the ARB, and PTC. I greatly appreciate their investment and effort in designing a campus that best meets our community's needs. For the sake of our city and our children, I hope this latest round of revisions is the last. The goalposts for this project can not keep moving; please recognize the work that the school has done, including the latest options for your review. You have great choices before you; the decision should be easy. I hope that you will once again recommend approval of this project so that the divisive signs can come down, neighbors can again be friends, and construction can begin.

With great appreciation,
Lian Bi, [REDACTED]

From: [Laura Stark](#)
To: [Planning Commission](#)
Cc: [Architectural Review Board](#); [Council, City](#)
Subject: Please support Castilleja's project
Date: Saturday, January 8, 2022 9:59:13 PM

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Dear Commissioners,

I am writing to ask you to approve the Castilleja project, which is once again before you. As you know, the City Council asked the school to again revise their plans, so the project has improved since you last approved it a year ago. Now, the massing of the academic building is smaller (and ensures no new square footage is included), the garage is smaller, and more trees are preserved. These changes are in addition to the many changes/compromises made by the school in previous rounds with regard to hours of operation, events, drop off and pick up patterns, etc. I hope you all recognize and acknowledge the copious changes the school has made so that they can at long last move toward approval.

People talk about "the Palo Alto process," a reference to the lengthy and consensus seeking approval process that applicants must adhere to in our city. No applicant has endured a lengthier process than Castilleja. The school has faithfully revised its plans for several years, each time integrating input from neighborhood stakeholders. This is a school, not a massive tech company or conglomerate. Their goal is to educate girls who want a single-sex, non-sectarian education. But they need to renovate their buildings to best fulfill this goal in the 21st century. Palo Alto is a leader in innovation, education, and in investing in the future. Knowing this, it seems enabling the successful completion of this project should be high-priority.

I hope you will vote to support their project, including the 69 car garage, and enable this process to move expeditiously to City Council. The school has delivered, and it is time to approve the project.

Thank you.
Laura Stark
645 Hale Street

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Laura Stark [REDACTED] . Palo Alto, CA 94301

From: [Heidi Hopper](#)
To: [Council, City; Architectural Review Board; Planning Commission](#)
Subject: Please approve the Castilleja project
Date: Sunday, January 9, 2022 9:50:13 AM

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Dear PTC -

I'd like to express my strong support for Castilleja's updated design with different options to review. In particular, I want to comment on the lengths the school has gone to protect more trees and be flexible and open to feedback. They have offered you five options for the garage that all improve the neighborhood and protect trees. Which will you recommend to City Council? Will you recommend the option that parks as many cars as possible below ground, knowing that doing so, according to the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR), will have no negative impacts?

Castilleja has been very responsive and thoughtful about the city staff's, the Council's, and neighbors' concerns for over almost ten years now, correct? We have all watched the project evolve. Changes have been made to the massing of the buildings, the patterns for pick up and drop off, the materials on the facades, the pool location, the parking garage exit and size to protect homes and trees. The school has taken feedback from all sides and made dozens of changes. They have listened. And every time, they respond. Have any other Palo Alto schools, or businesses, been held to the same standards?

The latest proposal further protects both tree 89 and tree 155, preserving existing trees while still adding 100 new trees to the canopy. It also shows an array of choices for the garage that all preserve trees. The school is doing everything possible to integrate feedback and move toward a positive future for the neighborhood, the city, and girls who want a single sex education.

Please review these improvements and select the one you believe is best. This process has gone on too long, and your leadership is critical to helping our community move forward.

Sincerely,
Heidi Hopper

From: [Priyanki Gupta](#)
To: [Planning Commission](#)
Cc: [Council, City; Architectural Review Board](#)
Subject: Castilleja School project
Date: Sunday, January 9, 2022 12:54:31 PM

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Dear Planning and Transportation Commission.


After your thoughtful review and approval of Castilleja's project last year, it should be easy to approve it again, especially as the garage size is reduced to preserve more trees and the pool and the delivery access is also improved to further protect other trees. The project has only gotten better since the last time you approved it.

Since that time, the TDM at school has also proven to be agile and responsive, doing whatever it takes to keep car trips level in any circumstances—including a once-in-a-century pandemic. As fewer people rode the Caltrain during the pandemic, the school opened new bus routes and expanded its already-successful carpool matching program to ensure that when students returned to campus, they did not do so in single-occupancy cars. The community is committed to sustainability and improving quality of life in the neighborhood and the city by reducing traffic. TDM is not a passing phase, it is a way of life at Castilleja.

I think we are all finally on the same page in understanding that the garage will not bring more cars to campus. There is cap on daily car trips. If the school exceeds the cap, it will not be allowed to enroll more students. There is built-in accountability to the project. After all the years that the school has invested in this new CUP process, it's abundantly clear that the school wants to enroll more students. Thus, they will stay under the cap. However, for critics who need more reassurance, there are external audits and consequences and the increase in students is GRADUAL and CONDITIONAL. It is ALREADY SELF-LIMITING: 25 to 27 students can be added each year IF CAR TRIPS REMAIN LEVEL.

I was delighted when you approved the project the last time, and I look forward to your endorsement of these improvements.

Respectfully,

Priyanki Gupta


From: [Lorraine Brown](#)
To: [Planning Commission](#)
Cc: [Council, City; Architectural Review Board](#)
Subject: Please recommend approval of Castilleja's project. It's time!
Date: Monday, January 10, 2022 6:45:36 AM

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Dear Planning & Transportation Commission,

I live, work, and vote in Palo Alto, and I continue to strongly support Castilleja's proposal to modernize campus, increase enrollment, and build an underground garage to remove cars from the neighborhood streets - and I hope you all do as well. The EIR, for which you voted to recommend certification, made clear that all of these improvements can be made with no negative impacts on the neighborhood. The assertion, by one opponent, that the data in the EIR is now out of date is outrageous and a blatant attempt to further stall progress. Our city process is embarrassing when I reflect on how this project has been derailed and stalled by a few vocal opponents for 6 years!

Now, Castilleja has presented several options for the garage, all improved versus last year's submission, and I urge you to vote to approve this meaningful compromise. This plan preserves trees, significantly reduces the square footage of the parking facility, and importantly, will bring no additional cars to the neighborhood. We can not forget that car trips for the school are capped; they can only increase enrollment if traffic does not increase in the neighborhood.

It's long overdue for this project to be approved, so that you and our city leaders can focus on far more pertinent issues, such as housing. Thank you for closely reading the studies submitted by the school, and again recommending approval of their project.

Thank you,
Lorraine Brown

, Palo Alto

From: [Roy Maydan](#)
To: [Planning Commission](#)
Cc: [Architectural Review Board](#); [Council, City](#)
Subject: Castilleja Proposal
Date: Monday, January 10, 2022 11:37:18 AM

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Dear Members of the PTC,

Once again, the Castilleja project is before you, and I hope you will once again vote to support their plans. Their latest submission looks like it gives you several options to consider, in particular for the underground parking garage and the pool. The school has made revision after revision in response to valuable feedback, ultimately landing on a master plan that is aesthetically pleasing, sustainable, and mindful of reducing traffic. In reviewing the options before you, I hope you will support the following:


Garage: I strongly support the garage with the capacity of 69 cars (vs. 52 cars). The 52 car limit seemed to be randomly suggested at a Council meeting, but 69 cars can be parked with no additional impact, AND it will allow the school to meet their required number of spaces without having to remove green space to do so. It would make no sense at all to require surface parking when the additional 17 cars can be parked below grade. Why not choose an option that moves as many cars as possible underground? This is the best solution for the neighborhood.

Pool: Two options are before you, one that moves the pool to better protect tree 89 (but will require deliveries to be above ground). A second option moves a pool stairwell and transformer, still protects tree 89, and allows for below ground deliveries. I would think the second option is preferable. Bringing deliveries below grade reduces noise in the neighborhood, and that option still better protects tree 89 compared to the previous plan.

What's most obvious to me are the lengths the school has gone to respond to feedback, protect trees, and still meet the objectives of their project. This has been an interminable approval process, and I certainly hope this will be their final round of revisions. Years of professional review by multiple third parties support the approval of this project. Let's listen to the facts and move forward.

Thank you for considering my input, and thank you for your service to our community.

Sincerely,
Roy Maydan



From: [J Stinson](#)
To: [Council, City; Architectural Review Board; Planning Commission](#)
Subject: Castilleja Master Plan review
Date: Monday, January 10, 2022 1:14:47 PM

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Planning & Transportation Commissioners,

Since you will be once again discussing Castilleja's new master plan, I'd like to again express my strong support for the building design, and in particular comment on the lengths the school has gone to protect more trees. I live near the school on Churchill and appreciate the beautiful landscaping on the Castilleja campus, including the canopy which includes protected redwoods and oak trees.

Based on the many plan revisions the school has submitted, it's clear that protecting trees has been a high priority. Castilleja has been very responsive to the Council's and neighbors' concerns. In particular, significant changes have been made to the pool and the parking garage in order to mitigate impacts on protected trees. It is clear that Castilleja has gone to great lengths to re-evaluate and re-study *every single tree* to further protect a treasured part of our environment and our community. My understanding is that their latest proposal further protects both tree 89 and tree 155 (the latter, in particular, if the pool is moved). They're doing everything possible to preserve existing trees while still adding 100 new trees to the canopy.

Please recognize these improvements and approve their latest submission. This project has stalled under the review process for far too long. Everyone has had multiple opportunities to voice their opinion on the matter. Now, we turn to your leadership to make a decision that will enable Castilleja to meet its goals while also respecting our neighborhood.

Thank you so much for your attention,
Jason Stinson
Churchill Ave

From: [Joel Brown](#)
To: [Planning Commission](#)
Cc: [Architectural Review Board](#); [Council, City](#)
Subject: It's time: please recommend Castilleja project approval
Date: Monday, January 10, 2022 1:27:20 PM

You don't often get email from joelbrown@yahoo.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Dear PTC -

It's time to approve Castilleja's project. You can clearly see that the small handful of opponents are losing steam, and the supporters throughout the city and in the neighborhood are stronger than ever, eager to see the tired old building be replaced by new, more sustainable and more beautiful structures.

And as you delay, risk of lost opportunity increases.

I understand that traffic is a concern for Palo Alto residents in general (including me), but Castilleja's enrollment increase will bring no new cars to the neighborhood. The school has set an example of excellent TDM for all businesses in the area. By requiring employees to rideshare, park offsite, and take public transportation (AND by adding new bus routes for students during the pandemic), Castilleja has continued to reduce traffic to campus. They have shown both the commitment and flexibility needed to keep car counts low, and their plan makes clear that their TDM measures will broaden once enrollment increases. These measures are not just for show -- the school is teaching their students and employees the sustainable measures necessary to make life better in our shared community. It's an imperative, not a choice.

With no new cars, with more trees preserved, with lower square footage, why this continued delay? Please recommend this project for approval. It is time.

Thank you,
Joel Brown - Walter Hays Drive

From: [Ashmeet Sidana](#)
To: [Planning Commission](#)
Cc: [Council, City; Architectural Review Board; Yuko Watanabe \(yknabe@hotmail.com\)](#)
Subject: Castilleja Project approval
Date: Tuesday, January 11, 2022 9:50:14 AM

[Some people who received this message don't often get email from sidana@engineeringcapital.com. Learn why this is important at <http://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>.]

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Dear PTC,


I want to make sure that you hear from enthusiastic supporters again as you consider the Castilleja project. I'm surprised that this project has not yet been approved, and I want to do what I can to urge your 'yes' vote.

I would like to bring you back to the discussions you had in late 2020. At the time, there was a great deal of discussion about the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and the Conditions of Approval. Here are some key findings:

1. The Final EIR, which you all endorsed, stated clearly that the Castilleja project had no negative impacts which couldn't be mitigated.
2. The school can have no new car trips; if they do, they will not be allowed to increase enrollment.
3. The garage will bring no new car trips; it simply makes the neighborhood more beautiful by moving cars below ground and preserving greenspace.
4. The garage improves traffic patterns in the neighborhood. Drop off and pick up will be distributed around campus, and the garage creates a distribution such that traffic will improve for everyone.

The project is even better than before. You approved this project before, and I urge you to approve it again. This project has so much neighborhood support, and those voices sometimes get drowned out by a small number of vocal opponents. Let's get to 'yes' -- and let's finally get this project moving so more girls-including those in Palo Alto-can benefit from this extraordinary educational opportunity.

Gratefully,
Yuko Watanabe and Ashmeet Sidana



From: [Andie Reed](#)
To: [French, Amy](#); [Lait, Jonathan](#); [Planning Commission](#); [Architectural Review Board](#); [Council, City](#); [Shikada, Ed](#)
Subject: Castilleja GFA
Date: Thursday, January 13, 2022 11:39:36 AM
Attachments: [ARBpktpg19GFA,12-2-2021.pdf](#)
[Dudek-Nov 2021 GFA page A-1.pdf](#)

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Be cautious of opening attachments and clicking on links.

Jan 13, 2022

Dear Amy,
(cc: Lait, Shikada, ARB, PTC, CC)

1. Please make the **Dudek "Castilleja School Building Survey and Gross Floor Area Assessment"** report dated Nov 17, 2021 easily available to interested parties. City council requested this official third-party count on March 15, 2021, and it significantly changes the applicant's request for variance.

Locating this report is very difficult, and its importance is thus diminished. However, it is exceedingly pertinent to any discussion of Castilleja's project's request for a variance. The PTC vote on the variance, on 11/4/2020, Packet Pg 28:

Finding 1: doesn't mention that the school's **increasing their own property site by 1.36 acres in 1992** expressly excludes them from using size as a basis for a variance, and Finding 2: doesn't mention **allowed FAR (.30)** at all, and gave only (we now know) inaccurate current FAR (.43) and proposed FAR (.42). In order for the PTC to make a reasonable analysis, they need to know all three: **allowed FAR (.30), current FAR (.51) and proposed FAR (.48).**

Current existing GFA is 138,345SF, proposed new buildings is 128,687SF. Allowable GFA is 81,385SF. Buildings added in the last couple of decades that didn't go through the PTC or usual channels in the development process and didn't get recorded properly are now coming to light; **the site is significantly over-built. The actual square footage being requested in excess of allowed FAR is 47,300SF.**

Currently, planning commissioners learn vaguely about the report in the 12/15/21 PTC staff report, Packet Pg 26, although it is not called by the same title in the two places where it is referenced, and can only be accessed by a link which leads to the ARB 12/2/2021 staff report. From there, one has to scroll down to ARB Packet Pg 18 and footnote 9, for a link to a report called "City's consultant report on existing gross floor area..".

A. The first link below is the ARB page, and it is important because it shows the flow of the GFA from the Dudek report to the project's plans, by segregating out, in different columns, the existing, proposed demolished, and proposed retained/new buildings (Packet Pg. 19). This ARB page states that volumetrics came into code in 1993. Both buildings that are counted with volumetrics were built (re-built) after that date (arts building 1998, gym 2006), so that's not a basis for reducing the professional measurement. Developers have to comply with current code, not some prior code from previous years, even if it pertained, which it doesn't.

<https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/files/assets/public/agendas-minutes-reports/agendas-minutes/architectural-review-board/2021/arb-12.02-castilleja.pdf>. I attach Packet Pg 19 below, to save you time.

B. This second link is the source data for that ARB analysis, the **Dudek "Castilleja School Building Survey and Gross Floor Area Assessment"**. The page following Page

8 (A-1) shows that the total existing gross floor area is 138,345SF, which flows through to the ARB Packet Pg. 19, so now you have the whole picture. I attach Page A-1 below, to save you time.

<https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/files/assets/public/planning-amp-development-services/new-development-projects/1310-bryant-street/castilleja-school-building-survey-and-gfa-111721.pdf> Pertinent numbers are on page A-1 (after pg 8).

2. Secondly, please identify who made the measurements and calculations and when they were made. The report, as you've explained to me, was provided by Dudek, and then city staff reviewed and studied and vetted it. However, I only see Katherine Waugh's name on it, and I'm sure you hired a professional surveyor (or Dudek did). I did notice that the summary page A-1 (after page 8) transposes the Rhoades building's numbers and the Arillaga building's numbers.

Thank you,
Andie

--

Andie Reed CPA
Palo Alto, CA 94301



portion of the garage from the GFA calculation. This direction was further refined on March 29th when Council directed staff and the PTC to review an underground parking garage alternative that allows a maximum of 50% of the required on-site parking to be below grade without counting against the project GFA. More information on this amendment will be included in the PTC staff report scheduled for December 8, 2021.

- 2. Re-Analyze Existing and Proposed Gross Floor Area.** Leading up to the City Council's March 8, 2021 public hearing, staff learned of a discrepancy in the size of one of the existing campus buildings; more GFA was attributed to an existing building than should have counted. Specifically, 7,000 square feet (SF) of exempt below grade floor area was incorrectly included in the total existing gross floor area count. However, the applicant had also undercounted existing gross floor area in another portion of the building reducing this discrepancy to 4,370 SF of gross floor area.⁸

Due to the confusion regarding floor area, the City Council directed staff to prepare an independent (third party) analysis of the project site's existing and proposed building areas, including basement space. Staff engaged a subconsultant to the City's environmental consultant to prepare this analysis. The consultant report⁹ and findings are available online (link below). This analysis was prepared using a laser measurement tool and provides a greater level of precision than previously existed. Some assumptions were made regarding wall thickness, but in general, the results are the best possible calculation of existing floor area. This data was then evaluated to the existing code, which defines floor area that is included and excluded from GFA calculations, including volumetric spaces exceeding 17 feet and 26 feet in height. A 1993 code change for GFA required double and triple counting of this volumetric floor area, also known as second and third floor level equivalences, toward GFA. This was intended to recognize the impact of these spaces on overall building mass. It is clear these volumetric requirements were not considered in previous campus renovations and are not reflected in the applicant's architectural plans.

Existing Campus Gross Floor Area

The applicant's most recent project plans show an existing campus gross floor area (GFA) calculation of 109,297 square feet (SF), which is down from 116,297 SF previously presented to Council. This reduction accounts for corrected discrepancies and applicant-initiated floor plan adjustments. These numbers were provided by the applicant.

⁸ More information on this floor area discrepancy was provided in a March 8, 2021 memorandum to Council: <https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/files/assets/public/agendas-minutes-reports/at-places-memo/03-08-21-agenda-item-7-at-places-memo.pdf>

⁹ City's consultant report on existing gross floor area <https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/files/assets/public/planning-amp-development-services/new-development-projects/1310-bryant-street/castilleja-school-building-survey-and-gfa-111721.pdf>

The City's independent consultant analysis concludes the actual existing campus has 114,819 GFA, not including volumetric gross floor area, which adds another 23,526 SF from the gym (17,346 SF) and fine arts building (6,180 SF). Accordingly, Castilleja's total existing campus GFA, based on current code definitions and using enhanced measurement techniques, is 138,345 SF.

Staff's evaluation of the consultant's analysis and the applicant's project plans concludes that the discrepancy between the two data sets is mostly due to the omission of the volumetric floor area. The balance of the discrepancy is assigned to the applicant's use of decades old permit records to report the existing GFA. This was a less precise way to measure GFA than the readings provided by the laser measurement tool to determine existing built conditions.

Demolition and Replacement of Previously Entitled Gross Floor Area:

Based on the foregoing analysis and after reviewing the most recent architectural plans to current code, the applicant proposes the following:

Campus Building	Existing GFA	Demolished GFA	Proposed GFA ¹⁰
Arrillaga Campus Center	37,179	37,179	0
Administration, Chapel, Theater	17,754	0	17,754
Gymnasium	33,513	0	33,513
Leonard Ely Arts Building	12,360	12,360	0
Maintenance Building	2,863	2,863	0
Pool Equipment Building	884	884	0
Rhoades Hall	33,793	33,793	0
New Academic Building	0	0	77,420
TOTAL	138,345	87,079	128,687
<i>TOTAL (Not Including Volumetric Area)</i>	<i>114,819</i>	<i>80,899</i>	<i>111,341</i>

If the volumetric second and third floor equivalency GFA were excluded from all calculations, staff concludes the total existing GFA would be 114,819 sf and the proposed plus existing to remain GFA would be 111,341.

Project Design Revisions

Related to, but independent of the GFA analysis described above, the applicant made some revisions to the proposed building and site planning. These changes resulted in reduced building floor area or relocation of structures to reduce impacts to protected trees or accommodate more surface parking.

1. **Academic Building Changes.** In the May 2021 submittal, the applicant modified two roofed portions of the academic building at the second-floor level: one was previously a conditioned interior building space, and the other was a solidly roofed second floor

¹⁰ Includes existing to remain (not demolished).

**Attachment A
Raw Square Feet and
Gross Floor Area Tables**

Castilleja School Existing Campus Building Space

Summary			
Building	Level ¹	Raw Square Feet ²	Gross Floor Area ³ (square feet)
Rhoades Hall			
	B1	7,252.90	0.00
	L1	18,924.62	18,924.62
	L2	17,836.79	17,836.79
	L1-L2	417.46	417.46
Subtotal		44,431.77	37,178.87
Administration-Chapel-Theater			
	B1	8,594.56	0.00
	L1	10,072.27	10,072.27
	L2	7,682.03	7,682.03
Subtotal		26,348.86	17,754.30
Gymnasium			
	B2	13,032.03	0.00
	B1	6,794.69	0.00
	L1	16,166.57	33,512.54
Subtotal		35,993.29	33,512.54
Leonard Ely Fine Arts Building			
	L1	6,179.85	12,359.70
Subtotal		6,179.85	12,359.70
Maintenance			
	L1	1,941.01	1,941.01
	L2	921.98	921.98
Subtotal		2,862.99	2,862.99
Pool Equipment			
	B1	832.53	0.00
	L1	883.84	883.84
Subtotal		1,716.37	883.84
Arrillaga Campus Center			
	B1	4,636.40	0.00
	B1-L1	263.24	0.00
	L1	10,980.51	10,980.51
	L2	11,093.47	11,093.47
	L3	11,093.47	11,093.47
	L1-L3	625.13	625.13
Subtotal		38,692.22	33,792.58
Total		156,225.35	138,344.82

Notes:

1. Level indicates the building floor level as follows:

- B1 is the first level below grade.
- B2 is the second level below grade.
- L1 is the ground floor level.
- L2 is the second level above grade.
- L3 is the third level above grade.
- L1-L3 indicates exterior stairways between the ground floor and third floor above grade.
- B1-L1 indicates exterior stairways between the first level below grade and the ground floor.

2. **Raw Square Feet** identifies the measured square footage of each building area.

3. **Gross Floor Area** identifies the Gross Floor Area (GFA) for each building area as defined in the Palo Alto Municipal Code (PAMC). Areas shown as having a GFA of 0.00 are excluded from the GFA. Areas shown as having a GFA that is greater than the Raw Square Feet are counted twice or three times. Refer to the individual building sheets for additional detail.

From: [Barbara Gross](#)
To: [Council, City](#); [Architectural Review Board](#); [Planning Commission](#)
Subject: Castilleja Modernization Project
Date: Thursday, January 13, 2022 12:18:23 PM

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Dear Commissioners,

Please accept my brief note thanks for the work you did last year in advancing the Castilleja School modernization project. The dated, academic building that has been in the neighborhood since the 1960s is long overdue for updating with a sustainable new building that truly suits the needs of a 21st century education. Your feedback to the school last year was helpful, and I want to thank the school for the beautiful design they've put forward in accordance with your direction, City Council guidance, and feedback from neighbors. While it's been an excessively long process, it's been productive, and all of us can benefit from a school that blends nicely into the neighborhood using sustainable building materials and drought resistant landscaping.

The school has done an excellent job providing you with design options that will preserve more trees and improve quality of life in the neighborhood AND that take neighbors' needs and concerns into account. It has been an eight-year-long process of the school compromising and revising their project. Why have they stayed in the game so long? They want to educate more girls. Simple. So they have come up with many options to make that happen.

At the same time, I hear opposing voices who seem to be open to nothing at all. It becomes harder and harder to honor those perspectives when the school has spent years listening, adjusting, and making changes that just never seem to be enough. In any process, it is critical to listen to all viewpoints. There is a difference between being heard and consequently invoking all suggestions.

I appreciate that considering opposing perspectives on this project may put you in a challenging position. However, sometimes leaders must make difficult choices. As leaders of Palo Alto, I trust you to make recommendations that will allow this project to move ahead. Supporting education—even single-sex education—should be a city-wide priority.

Thank you very much,
Barbara Gross



From: [Teresa Zepeda Kelleher](#)
To: [Planning Commission](#)
Cc: [Council, City; Architectural Review Board](#)
Subject: Castilleja Project
Date: Friday, January 14, 2022 1:47:27 PM

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Dear PTC Members,

I'm writing to ask you to approve the Castilleja project for the second and last time and express my fervent support for allowing the school to revitalize its campus. I appreciate your support for the project last year, and your continued attention to the school's proposal. Let's move forward with a plan that fulfills requests from both parties.

TREES


Yes, we care deeply about them. We take great pride in our city's beautiful trees and appropriately protect them. Castilleja has found a way to both protect trees AND carefully move ahead with necessary updates. Throughout Castilleja's many project revisions, I particularly appreciate the efforts they've made to protect their campus' trees and add abundantly to our canopy. **The new Master Plan adds over 100 new trees to the campus.**

PARKING OPTIONS

Now, you have their revised proposal in front of you which *further* protects trees. First, they have recommended an underground parking garage which serves the important purpose of removing cars from the neighborhood streets while NOT harming trees. Please support any of these FIVE excellent solutions. **Weigh the pros and cons, think of the constituents involved, and select one underground parking plan that will serve the city and the citizens and the school.**

By recommending approval of their project, you can help the school educate more students, while at the same time adding no additional traffic, improving the neighborhood aesthetic with a modernized campus and underground garage, and protecting trees and adding to our canopy. This project cannot continue receiving unclear and mixed feedback. Consider the facts that have been presented, and that the number of neighbors who enthusiastically support Castilleja far outweighs a few opposing individuals. As leaders in our community, we look to you for sound decision making that will support our current and future children.

Sincerely,

Teresa Kelleher


From: [Cindy Chen](#)
To: [Council, City; Architectural Review Board; Planning Commission](#)
Subject: Support for Castilleja
Date: Friday, January 14, 2022 3:06:17 PM

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Dear Members of the PTC,

I live near Castilleja School on Emerson Street and am writing to urge you to support Castilleja's recommendations so that their dated buildings can be updated and surface parking can be reduced. As a near neighbor, I implore you to take the lead, follow the code, and move this project toward approval.

The school has been making changes and compromises for years. I have been watching closely, very grateful and very impressed by the care and responsiveness. Now we are at a point where trees are preserved; there is a balance of cars below ground and on the surface—an attempt to appease neighbors on both sides of that question; the rooflines are lower and setbacks increase; 100 new trees will be added to a net-zero campus; and no new cars will come to our neighborhood because Castilleja is better at TDM than anyone on the Bay Area. All of this is ready to happen, just waiting on city approval.

And while that process marches on, every year there are girls who could have access to the education they are hoping for but don't. The time matters. It may feel like it doesn't but it really matters to real kids.

Thank you for your continued attention to our city and schools. Please do not allow further delays to this project, which is good for our city, children, and neighborhood.

Thank you,
Cindy Chen, 

From: juliekaye@gmail.com
To: [Architectural Review Board](#)
Subject: consideration
Date: Sunday, January 16, 2022 5:12:35 PM

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Dear Planning and Transportation Commissioners,

Thank you for the time you commit to the greater good of Palo Alto. We are writing to you about that very topic—the greater good in relation to Castilleja’s application for a new Conditional Use Permit (CUP). By definition, schools contribute to the greater good by educating children. In particular, Castilleja provides a particular benefit as the only nonsectarian 6-12 school for girls in the Bay Area. This isn’t the right setting for all girls, but for some it makes the difference in their lives at an important stage.

Castilleja also contributes to the greater good as a leader in TDM. Businesses and organizations across Palo Alto should look to Castilleja for ways to reduce THEIR car trips by up to 31%. Rather than incorrectly attributing the traffic on Embarcadero to Castilleja, we should credit Castilleja with finding creative and effective solutions. No one else has done more to reduce their traffic impacts in Palo Alto.

Excellent schools benefit everyone by providing a place for children to learn and grow, by fortifying property values, by outreach in the community. Castilleja does all of this and would even do more if the terms of the CUP allowed it. Most of all, if more students can attend in the high school (without adding more traffic) all of those benefits increase.

With accountability built into the plan, the school will only be permitted to grow if traffic remains the same. This proposal is all about public benefits.

Thank you,
Julie and Todd Kaye
[REDACTED], Palo Alto

From: [Jim Fitzgerald](#)
To: [Council, City; Architectural Review Board; Planning Commission](#)
Cc: [Emily McElhinney; Elke Teichmann](#)
Subject: Support for Castilleja
Date: Monday, January 24, 2022 5:52:05 PM

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Hello,

Please approve one of the 5 versions of the Castilleja campus modernization plans. Having already approved this project once before, this should be a simple and quick process for all of you. Once again, Castilleja has gone above and beyond with five different versions for you to choose from. The repeated delays and tactics perpetrated by a vocal minority has had a detrimental effect on Castilleja fulfilling its mission to educate young women. Your support and rapid, affirmative resolution of this proposal will help to heal this damage and send a message to all that Palo Alto enthusiastically believes in the incredible value of Castilleja's mission to educate women.

The changes to the garage, the adjustments to the pool, and the new option for the loading entrance all preserve more trees. I recommend and prefer the garage plan with 69 spaces, to move as many cars as possible below ground, but the plan with 52 cars that the City Council asked for is also there. Also keeping the loading dock above ground is a preferred approach for preserving trees which is a priority for the community, but the good news is that if you go with the other option that moves deliveries below grade that will work as well.

The greatest step forward for Castilleja, the neighborhood and the city will come when you approve this for the last time and allow the school to break ground on this exciting and beautiful update. You are all doing the community a grave disservice by delaying, and now standing in the way, of this wonderful initiative and I implore you to just do the right thing.

Regards,
Jim Fitzgerald

--

Jim Fitzgerald

M:

Email: jimfitz8@gmail.com

<http://www.linkedin.com/in/jimfitz8>

αίεν ἀπιστεύειν

From: [Stewart Raphael](#)
To: [Council, City](#); [Architectural Review Board](#); [Planning Commission](#)
Subject: ARB Palo Alto - URGENT
Date: Tuesday, March 8, 2022 5:34:08 PM

You don't often get email from stewraph@aol.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Dear Members of the ARB,

I am writing to you in support of the Castilleja School project. Over the course of the three hearings this past year, you have supported Castilleja's proposal and provided the school with productive recommendations for further improvement. The school listened and integrated your recommendations, making changes to the facade of Kellogg so that it blends in even better with the neighborhood. Now, the project once again is before you, and I urge you to support Castilleja's updates so that their dated buildings can at long last be updated and surface parking can be reduced. It is at long last that this project moves forward!

The City Council has asked you to once again review the massing of the proposed buildings. Following your recommendations in 2020, the school reduced the massing not just once, but twice. Following your recommendations in 2021, the school again revised the building, bringing the rooflines even lower than before and increasing its setback from the street. Your commission did an excellent job hearing neighbor feedback, studying the surrounding neighborhood, and ultimately voting to support the design, revised per your guidance. Now, I ask you to once again support the project with all these revisions that make the buildings fit in even better within our neighborhood. It is a beautiful building for our neighborhood that has been broken up such that it does not appear too linear or massive. Further, it's designed to protect the surrounding neighborhood from sound internal to the school. This latest design is ready for approval.

Thank you for your service to our community. Please do not allow further delays to this project, which is good for our city, children, and neighborhood.

Thank you,
Stewart Raphael, Military Way, Palo Alto

From: [Roy Maydan](#)
To: [Architectural Review Board](#)
Cc: [Council, City; Planning Commission](#)
Subject: Castilleja Project
Date: Tuesday, March 8, 2022 6:14:04 PM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Be cautious of opening attachments and clicking on links.

Dear Members of the ARB,

Once again, the Castilleja project is before you, and I hope you will once again vote to support their plans. Their latest submission looks like it gives you several options to consider, in particular for the underground parking garage and the pool. I know that your responsibility is to approve aesthetically pleasing design, and the school has made revision after revision in response to valuable feedback, ultimately landing on a master plan that is aesthetically pleasing and sustainable. In reviewing the options before you, I hope you will support the following:

Garage: I strongly support the garage with the capacity of 69 cars (vs. 52 cars). The 52 car limit seemed to be randomly suggested at a Council meeting, but 69 cars can be parked with no additional impact, AND it will allow the school to meet their required number of spaces without having to remove green space to do so. It would make no sense at all to require surface parking when the additional 17 cars can be parked below grade.

Pool: Two options are before you, one that moves the pool to better protect tree 89 (but will require deliveries to be above ground). A second option moves a pool stairwell and transformer, still protects tree 89, and allows for below ground deliveries. I would think the second option is preferable. Bringing deliveries below grade reduces noise in the neighborhood, and that option still better protects tree 89 compared to the previous plan.

What's most obvious to me are the lengths the school has gone to respond to feedback, protect trees, and still meet the objectives of their project. This has been an interminable approval process, and I certainly hope this will be their final round of revisions.

Thank you for considering my input, and thank you for your service to our community.

Sincerely,
Roy Maydan



From: [priya.chandrasekar](#)
To: [Architectural Review Board](#)
Subject: Please vote for Castilleja school to move forward with the plan
Date: Tuesday, March 8, 2022 7:21:25 PM

You don't often get email from priya_chandrasekar@yahoo.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Be cautious of opening attachments and clicking on links.

Dear Commissioners,

Thank you very much for your dedicated public service to the City of Palo Alto. You have done a great job overseeing the harmonious development of our City, and I am grateful.

I am writing in support of Castilleja School. Nearly a year ago, City Council asked Castilleja to return to the ARB to revisit the square footage of the building. During the December 2021 hearing, you reviewed the school's improvements:

- The proposed square footage has been reduced by 1,830 sq. feet, which is the correct amount to make sure that it does not exceed current above ground square footage
- The underground garage's size is being reduced to preserve trees
- The pool stairway is adjusted (and in one option the pool is shifted) so that more trees can be better protected and preserved

To me, all of these changes further demonstrate the school's commitment to comply with city code, to respond to feedback, and to improve daily life and aesthetics in the neighborhood.

In fact, in response to your comments from December, the school has now changed the facade of Kellogg; the design blends in so nicely with the neighborhood. One section even looks like it could be the facade of a home with its lowered and sloped rooflines and revised windows.

We are long overdue for this project to be voted on and approved. The school has spent years adjusting their plans according to feedback, and that must be recognized - and it's time for our city and the school to move on. Please vote to approve their plans.

Thank you again,
Priya Chandrasekar



From: [Lian Bi](#)
To: [Council, City; Architectural Review Board; Planning Commission](#)
Subject: Castilleja School Project
Date: Tuesday, March 8, 2022 9:09:42 PM

You don't often get email from lian_bi2002@yahoo.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Dear ARB,

I am writing in support of Castilleja School's project. I live close to the school and am anxious for the modernization to begin, so thank you for your renewed attention to the project.

In particular, I appreciate that the school is putting forth several parking options for you to consider, so that an optimal solution can be recommended that best preserves trees, removes cars from our neighborhood streets, minimizes noise, and modernizes the very dated campus while offering an excellent all-girls education to more students. Specifically, I understand that the school is presenting an option for the pool that can better protect one of the trees, as well as different options for the below grade parking structure. Over the past several years, the school has made countless modifications to their plans in response to neighbor feedback as well as feedback from Council, the ARB, and PTC. I greatly appreciate their investment and effort in designing a campus that best meets our community's needs. For the sake of our city and our children, I hope this latest round of revisions can be the last. The goalposts for this project can not keep moving; please recognize the work that the school has done, including the latest options for your review. I hope that you will once again recommend approval of this project so that the divisive signs can come down, neighbors can again be friends, and construction can begin.

With great appreciation,

Lian Bi, [REDACTED]

From: [Trisha Suvari](#)
To: [Council, City; Architectural Review Board; Planning Commission](#)
Subject: Castilleja Project
Date: Wednesday, March 9, 2022 9:10:57 AM


CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Be cautious of opening attachments and clicking on links.

Dear Architectural Review Board,

I am writing in support of Castilleja. I don't expect you to remember, but I made comments at the ARB hearing in 2020 regarding the Castilleja project. Now that the project is before your commission again, I once again would like to thank you for your guidance and urge your support for their latest design. The school is in desperate need of modernization, and I think they've done an excellent job revising, and revising again, to incorporate the constructive feedback they've received.

I recall that the massing of the building along Kellogg was of concern to a couple of you in particular, and I hope that you see that the latest design offers even more improvements. The current design is broken up so that it does not look massive at all. And, the massing in the proposed redesign is actually less than the building's existing massing. The new building will have a smaller footprint than what you see walking along Kellogg today. The materials and facade work well with the historic buildings that will remain standing, and while the design is modern, I think it blends beautifully into the mix of homes on Bryant, Kellogg, and Emerson. And, importantly, it provides the space to educate more young women so that those families seeking all-girls education can attain it for their daughters.

Thank you for your public service.

Best,
Trisha Suvari, 

From: [John Giannandrea](#)
To: [Architectural Review Board](#)
Subject: Castilleja planning project
Date: Wednesday, March 9, 2022 1:31:46 PM

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Dear Architectural Review Board Members,

I am a resident of the city of Palo Alto and I am writing in support of the Castilleja application for a revised Conditional Use Permit and in support of their Master Plan to upgrade the school classroom buildings.

This project has received a level of due diligence and community feedback that might be unprecedented for the City. The final result is a proposal which has been highly responsive to community and staff input over a period of five years.

This project is extremely important to Palo Alto because it continues to provide the community with a world class school which is at the forefront of women's education. The plan if approved increases access to a highly sought after education with private investment in modern and green buildings on an existing school site. I urge you to approve the project for the betterment of Palo Alto.

Thank-you.

John Giannandrea

[REDACTED]

Palo Alto, CA

From: [Heidi Hopper](#)
To: [Council, City; Architectural Review Board; Planning Commission](#)
Subject: Castilleja Modernization Project
Date: Friday, March 11, 2022 1:02:00 PM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Be cautious of opening attachments and clicking on links.

Dear ARB,

I am writing to express my fervent support for Castilleja's modernization project. It's been years of collaboration. Years of revision. Years of debate. Years of time. Years of denying more girls the opportunity to attend the school of their dreams. I sincerely hope you concur that it is time to give Castilleja's project final approval. Let's allow the school and Palo Alto to move forward.

My understanding is that you have already approved this project. What you have before you is a version of the plan that is in direct response to several sets of requests from other City bodies that reflect an even better version of the prior plan. Please guide the school on which of the following options is best for them *and* for the neighborhood. If I may suggest:

Underground parking garage: 69 or 52? City code allows for 69 parking spaces. Each one of those cars is one more car that is not visible on the street, thereby increasing the amount of green space. Why park 52 underground when they could park 69? Fewer cars on the street is more aesthetically pleasing, is quieter, and safer for our bicyclist and pedestrian community. Comprise. Everyone benefits.

The facade on Kellogg now better reflects the neighborhood aesthetic. Sloped and lowered rooflines resemble homes in the neighborhood. The setback is even greater. Windows have been modified to again resemble the surrounding houses. The architectural design suits the school's needs and is beautiful for neighbors to enjoy on their walks around the school. Everyone benefits.

I support the school's carefully thought-out plans and appreciate the amount of compromises they've made over the last several years. Please play a part in approving this plan for the last time. It's time to support more girls who wish to receive an all-girls education with the opportunity to do so. This isn't about expanding a footprint, and may I interject that this is a non-profit institution, not a company that is seeking profit. It's an educational institution whose goal is to educate girls to become compassionate and confident leaders. Let's do our part as compassionate community members so that in the end, we all benefit from greater educational opportunities for all.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,
Heidi Hopper
Matadero Ave., Palo Alto

From: [Barbara Gross](#)
To: [Council, City; Architectural Review Board; Planning Commission](#)
Subject: Castilleja Modernization Project
Date: Thursday, March 10, 2022 1:54:17 PM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Be cautious of opening attachments and clicking on links.

Do Not Scroll Ahead Without Reading

Dear Commissioners,

I am sending you a brief note thanking you for the work you have already done to advance the Castilleja School Modernization Project. The dated, academic buildings that have been in the neighborhood since the 1960s are long overdue for updating with sustainable new plans. You gave good feedback to the school last year, and I want to thank the school for the beautiful design they've put forward in accordance with your direction, City Council guidance, and feedback from neighbors.

While it's been an excessively long process, it's been productive, and all of us can benefit from a school that blends nicely into the neighborhood using sustainable building materials and drought resistant landscaping. The school has done an excellent job providing you with design options that will preserve more trees in keeping with the beauty in the neighborhood. Now, I trust you to make recommendations that will allow this project to move ahead.

Bravo to the ARB and the school, and I surely hope that your March 17 meeting will close with a recommendation for City Council to approve the latest design.

Thank you very much,
Barbara Gross



From: [Patty Boas](#)
To: [Architectural Review Board](#)
Cc: [Council, City](#)
Date: Friday, March 11, 2022 8:25:57 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from pattyboas@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Dear ARB,

After years of collaboration, revision, debate, and time, I hope you realize it is time to give Castilleja's project final approval and allow the school and Palo Alto to move forward.

You have already approved this project, and what you have before you is a version of the plan that is in response to another set of requests from other City bodies that reflect an even better version of the prior plan. What the school needs from you is guidance on which of the many options is best both for them, and for the neighborhood.


The 69 car garage option follows City code *and* reduces the number of cars at grade. Why park 52 underground when they could park 69? This option is more aesthetically pleasing, is quieter, and safer for our bicyclist and pedestrian community.

Plans for the swimming pool further protect trees, which I understand is also a priority for the community and neighbors. We all want to preserve the beautiful canopy in Palo Alto. Castilleja's plans meet this desire. Win-win.

I support the school's plans and appreciate how much they have compromised over the last several years. It's time to approve this plan!

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,
Patty Boas



From: [Kyu Lee](#)
To: [Architectural Review Board](#); [Planning Commission](#)
Subject: concerns on Castilleja Expansion as a Kellogg resident
Date: Monday, March 14, 2022 6:28:19 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from psykyu@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Hello,

I would like to say thank you for your hard work and effort to make Palo Alto a better place to live. As a resident of 100 blocks of Kellogg avenue, I would like to raise some concerns related to Castilleja Expansion.

The first and most important point of Castilleja expansion is that there is **no good to neighbors and Palo Alto residents**. Over 2/3 of students are from outside of Palo Alto. Palo Alto already has very good public education system. The expansion is only beneficial for the school (making more profit) and wealthy family living in highly expensive but no good public school areas (e.g., Atherton, Woodside). We are suffering from high traffics every morning and afternoon, and it will get worse with expansion. School started school bus system to mitigate the traffic, and I counted how many students are using the bus. It was **less than ten**. School parks two big school buses on already busy Kellogg avenue every morning and afternoon, and it makes even harder to drive on my neighborhood. Since school buses block the view at the corner, they even hired people to look around the corner to have cars drive safely. Ironically, it shows how dangerous it is to drive the Kellogg avenue.

It has been over 5 years this project has spent going through the system, and through all those processes, **Castilleja has not reduced its proposed footprint by one inch, nor have they reduced their enrollment increase demand by one student.**

Please consider Palo Alto residents and their quality of life on the first of your decision making.

Best regards,
Kyu

From: [Richard Mamelok](#)
To: [Architectural Review Board](#)
Subject: Castilleja expansion
Date: Wednesday, March 16, 2022 9:47:42 AM

You don't often get email from mamelok@pacbell.net. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Castilleja is a wonderful school that seems to have outgrown its present site. The expansion that is planned runs counter to what should occur in an R1 neighborhood. In addition the school the large majority of matriculating students do not come from Palo Alto; nor do are its programs of speakers open to the community. It is not a major community benefit or resource. It pays no taxes. Their plan to expand should be denied.

Richard Mamelok and Midori Aogaichi



Palo Alto, CA

From: [Jo Ann Mandinach](#)
To: [Architectural Review Board](#); [Planning Commission](#); [City Mgr](#)
Subject: Casti Process & Nonsense
Date: Wednesday, March 16, 2022 1:49:33 PM

You don't often get email from joann@needtoknow.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Hello.

In all the years the "hearings" have been going on, Casti hasn't reduced its footprint or its proposed enrollment at ALL. This should have stopped as soon as they were found to be in violation of their enrollment cap. How long did it take the city to fine them for these violations? How much time and money has the city wasted when it should have said no immediately.

When we weren't totally outraged, we laughed at their nonsense about when a basement is not a garage, when a protected tree isn't protected unless we say so -- and all their other transparent absurd lies like only Cast can end sexism, pay inequity and foster pay equality!

If they really cared about equity for women, they should have instructed their parents to support equity in THEIR workplaces. Instead, they insult our intelligence claiming that only Casti can end discrimination. Where are their ads calling for pay equity? Has a single parent denounced his/her workplace continuing to pay women less?

Of course not. Instead Casti grads and/or Casti parents are denouncing Casti for violating the values they claim to espouse. They're furious at the hypocrisy which is why they oppose this illegal expansion and costly process.

The deception is unbelievable and insulting You all should be well aware that Embarcadero is one of the 3 PA access roads to 101. Anyone with a clue knows how backed up it is for much of the day yet you believe Casti's "promises" that there will be no traffic impact WHILE using outdated traffic numbers. GET REAL.

Why should PA taxpayers and residents have to pay out of their/our own pocket to hire consulting arborists, engineers, lawyers and other specialists to refute Casti's lies when you and the City Planning Board should have just said NO years ago?? We/they can't afford to hire big expensive PR firms but we do pay attention and we did put up lawn signs which Casti found so expensive.

How much has this prolonged nonsense cost Palo Alto taxpayers most of whom

get NOTHING from Casti -- no special events, no visiting privileges?

They refuse to consider having their students take a shuttle bus from off-site parking WHILE the city spends a fortune to tell US -- residents and taxpayers -- to get out of OUR cars while the city promotes its "vision" of a 15-minute city where WE can't go anywhere it would take US more than 15 minutes to walk, bike or take public transit!

Why are the 75%+ of NON-resident, non-taxpaying students exempt from making the sacrifices you expect US to make??

How much time and money has the city spent on this FARCE?? Each time Casti's caught in lies by the residents and their consultants, nothing changes.

Please get real. We're watching. Any of you supporting Casti's expansion should think twice about running for higher office should forget it.

Please do the right thing and stop this process. Deny Casti's proposal and force them to return to their legal entrolcap. AND better yet, charge them what it's cost Palo Alto at a time when the city still hasn't restored full library hours while the city pleads poverty.

Most sincerely,
Jo Ann Mandinach
Palo Alto, CA 94301

From: [Lait, Jonathan](#)
To: [Andie Reed](#)
Cc: [Architectural Review Board](#); [Planning Commission](#); [Shikada, Ed](#); [City Mgr](#); [French, Amy](#)
Subject: RE: Castilleja - Unanswered Issues re GFA
Date: Wednesday, March 16, 2022 3:06:00 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image011.png](#)
[image012.png](#)
[image013.png](#)
[image015.png](#)

Hi Andie,

Thanks for your email and I apologize for the confusion surrounding this topic.

The Castilleja campus is currently, legally non-conforming for floor area. This means the school has obtained the necessary approvals for the existing campus buildings but by today's zoning code, it exceeds the amount of gross floor permitted on the site. The campus today has 138,345 square feet of gross floor area based on the zoning code definition, including volumetric calculations, and as documented by a third party surveyor. This represents a floor area ratio (FAR) of .51:1.

If the site were vacant and proposed for non-residential redevelopment, the maximum gross floor area that would be permitted without a variance or other legislative or discretionary approval, would be 81,379 square feet of gross floor area. This allowance is determined using the formula in the zoning code that allows R1 zoned properties to count the first 5,000 square feet of lot area at a .45 FAR. The balance of the site (263,765 SF) is calculated at .30 FAR.

Castilleja seeks to remove a portion of its existing, previously permitted gross floor area and replace with a new building. The project being considered by the ARB, PTC and City Council has approximately 128,687 square feet of gross floor area resulting in a FAR factor of .48:1. This represents a reduction in overall gross floor area, but still exceeds the allowable gross floor area under today's code.

The City's zoning code provides that non-conforming floor area, once removed, cannot be replaced. Accordingly, the applicant is seeking a variance application, as permitted in the zoning code, to remove and replace existing non-conforming gross floor area. Our staff report to the PTC will be released next week and will include updated draft variance findings.

With regard to your other specific questions to Ed Shikada below, the pool equipment structure is 50% or more open to the air and therefore is not included in gross floor area. Municipal code section 18.04.065(C) defines gross floor area to mean total covered area and the City has applied a 50% threshold, consistent with other guidance in the municipal code for floor area inclusions and exclusions.

You also questioned the difference between the square footages shown on plans for the basement and the first floor of the academic building. This discrepancy exists because the square footage provided for the basement is the total square footage, while the square footage provided for the first floor is gross floor area, as defined in our code. The first floor includes several spaces, like

uncovered porches and decks, that are excluded from gross floor area, but are still part of the building envelope.

Lastly, you wanted to confirm the amount of floor area was being added to the basement level of the campus, understanding this does not count as gross floor area. The existing basement area is 41,406 square feet. The project proposes a finished basement floor area of 79,357 square feet. This represents an increase of 37,951 square feet to below grade floor area, exempt from the gross floor area calculation.

I hope the above address your questions regarding gross floor area. I appreciate your attention to each of the details as this is a complex project and we want to make sure we are getting this right for the decision-makers to take a final action on this project.

As you know the ARB will consider some design modifications tomorrow. The PTC will have a hearing on March 30th and will have the authority to adjust or modify wholly or in part any of the variance findings.

Thanks, Andie.

JONATHAN LAIT

Director

Planning and Development Services

(650) 329-2679 | jonathan.lait@cityofpaloalto.org

www.cityofpaloalto.org



From: Andie Reed <andiezreed@gmail.com>

Sent: Friday, March 4, 2022 8:38 AM

To: Shikada, Ed <Ed.Shikada@CityofPaloAlto.org>; City Mgr <CityMgr@cityofpaloalto.org>; Architectural Review Board <arb@cityofpaloalto.org>; Planning Commission <Planning.Commission@cityofpaloalto.org>; Council, City <city.council@cityofpaloalto.org>

Subject: Castilleja - Unanswered Issues re GFA

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Be cautious of opening attachments and clicking on links.

Dear City Manager Shikada,
CC: ARB, PTC, City Council

I represent neighbors who have very grave concerns that the boards, commissions and City Council are not being provided accurate, essential

information to allow for an informed analysis regarding the Castilleja project. We appeal to you to rectify this.

The project states that the school proposes to retain or reduce current gross floor area, which requires a variance. Many buildings over the years have been added to the site without their floor areas being properly counted, and Castilleja's current Floor Area Ratio is significantly in excess of allowed FAR. Because of the many inconsistencies in the plans, we have requested clarification over the past 5 years about this issue from the planning department, and in 5 years, have never received a straightforward answer that would lead to our understanding of why this project is being advanced. In two years of PTC and city council meetings, questions regarding what GFA is being requested versus what is allowed on this site have been asked but not answered accurately if at all.

In March 2021 the city council requested, and the planning department solicited, an official third-party measurement of Castilleja's existing above-grade (GFA) and below-grade square footages. In Nov 2021, the planning department published the **Dudek GFA study**. The school is proposing to demolish 5 buildings and build one large building. Neighbors have noted for 5 years that the proposed large building is unusually massive for the site. This new study shows our instincts were correct.

Please answer the questions below. We respectfully request a response within the next week, as opposed to offering promises that this will be addressed at some future time that never comes.

Questions:

1. Analysis of the Dudek GFA study appears to show that the proposed square footage being requested by Castilleja has increased to a FAR of .479, since volumetrics would be included in any analysis of current GFA. Is that the case? It appears that the allowed FAR for the site is .303. Is that the case? Please translate that to how many square feet of gross floor area is being requested over that allowed by code.

2. In our review of the most recent plans from May 17, 2021, pages G.004 and G.005, it appears that **additional** Gross Floor Area totaling 7,100SF is being proposed but not counted towards GFA (see att'd GFA5-15-21plans).

a. The pool equipment building at 4,300SF is underground but not under a building nor a part of a building

b. The lower level main building (LL1) is 2,800SF larger than the first floor building (L1), therefore not fully under the building.

Would these two underground spaces be considered exempt from GFA? I discussed these pages of the plans with the planning director last summer and have brought it up by email and written and oral communications to the PTC, but have not received an explanation.

3. Although it doesn't add to GFA or FAR, it appears, by review of the plans, that the underground square footage, not including the garage, is proposed to increase from 41,000SF to 80,000SF. Please confirm that the school is proposing to increase its underground class space by 39,000SF.

We appreciate that you will ensure straightforward, direct and correct answers are provided, as our experience in this regard has been discouraging.

Thank you,
Andie Reed
PNQL

--

Andie Reed CPA
Palo Alto, CA 94301
[REDACTED]

From: [Andie Reed](#)
To: [Lait, Jonathan](#)
Cc: [Architectural Review Board](#); [Planning Commission](#); [Shikada, Ed](#); [City Mgr](#); [French, Amy](#)
Subject: Re: Castilleja - Unanswered Issues re GFA
Date: Wednesday, March 16, 2022 6:05:43 PM
Attachments: [image003.png](#)
[image011.png](#)
[image012.png](#)
[image013.png](#)
[image015.png](#)

Thanks, Jonathan.

I appreciate that you provided these numbers in this email per my request. Can you please ensure that current existing GFA and FAR, proposed GFA and FAR, and allowable GFA and FAR are stated in the staff reports for the PTC, on the same page, so a comparison can be made by the reader? Thanks for confirming the additional underground square footage that is proposed, which increases classroom square footage by 38,000SF over current underground SF. Please get this important point in the staff report as well.

There's a reason new developments are required to comply with current code; it's an opportunity for old, overbuilt projects to get compliant. A variance is granted to allow a project to overcome special constraints that would keep them from using their site in ways similar to other sites, or otherwise subject them to substantial hardships if they followed current code, which is not the case here. If the "finding" isn't clear, decision-makers might think a variance is requested and granted when a developer simply wants to have more square footage than allowable.

Per my follow-up email of Mar 14, which I CC'd you on, I noted the "findings for the variance" from the Nov 4, 2021 PTC staff report compares current GFA with proposed GFA in the discussion about not being compliant with FAR standards. That is not helpful data for this purpose. Can you ensure that all three sets of numbers appear in the "findings" when it comes back for consideration in a couple of weeks? Decision-makers need to be able to "find" that the proposed GFA is requesting 47,300SF in excess of code.

It is important that boards and commissions are aware that the allowable GFA is not "what's there now", as they have been told is the case.

Regarding your last two paragraphs, please provide further clarification. 18.04.030(65)(C) refers to balconies and porches with partial coverage. Would the underground pool equipment area be open at the top? Please explain.

Regarding the differences between the basement and the first floor square footages, do you mean that people can build basements under their decks? I think the basement rules require being a part of a building, under the footprint, not an envelope. Please clarify.

Thanks again for getting back to me. I look forward to getting these follow-up answers.

Andie

On Wed, Mar 16, 2022 at 3:06 PM Lait, Jonathan <Jonathan.Lait@cityofpaloalto.org> wrote:

Hi Andie,

Thanks for your email and I apologize for the confusion surrounding this topic.

The Castilleja campus is currently, legally non-conforming for floor area. This means the school has obtained the necessary approvals for the existing campus buildings but by today's zoning code, it exceeds the amount of gross floor permitted on the site. The campus today has 138,345 square feet of gross floor area based on the zoning code definition, including volumetric calculations, and as documented by a third party surveyor. This represents a floor area ratio (FAR) of .51:1.

If the site were vacant and proposed for non-residential redevelopment, the maximum gross floor area that would be permitted without a variance or other legislative or discretionary approval, would be 81,379 square feet of gross floor area. This allowance is determined using the formula in the zoning code that allows R1 zoned properties to count the first 5,000 square feet of lot area at a .45 FAR. The balance of the site (263,765 SF) is calculated at .30 FAR.

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The City's zoning code provides that non-conforming floor area, once removed, cannot be replaced. Accordingly, the applicant is seeking a variance application, as permitted in the zoning code, to remove and replace existing non-conforming gross floor area. Our staff report to the PTC will be released next week and will include updated draft variance findings.

With regard to your other specific questions to Ed Shikada below, the pool equipment structure is 50% or more open to the air and therefore is not included in gross floor area. Municipal code section 18.04.065(C) defines gross floor area to mean total covered area and the City has applied a 50% threshold, consistent with other guidance in the municipal code for floor area inclusions and exclusions.

You also questioned the difference between the square footages shown on plans for the basement and the first floor of the academic building. This discrepancy exists because the square footage provided for the basement is the total square footage, while the square footage provided for the first floor is gross floor area, as defined in our code. The first floor

includes several spaces, like uncovered porches and decks, that are excluded from gross floor area, but are still part of the building envelope.

Lastly, you wanted to confirm the amount of floor area was being added to the basement level of the campus, understanding this does not count as gross floor area. The existing basement area is 41,406 square feet. The project proposes a finished basement floor area of 79,357 square feet. This represents an increase of 37,951 square feet to below grade floor area, exempt from the gross floor area calculation.

I hope the above address your questions regarding gross floor area. I appreciate your attention to each of the details as this is a complex project and we want to make sure we are getting this right for the decision-makers to take a final action on this project.

As you know the ARB will consider some design modifications tomorrow. The PTC will have a hearing on March 30th and will have the authority to adjust or modify wholly or in part any of the variance findings.

Thanks, Andie.



JONATHAN LAIT

Director

CITY OF
**PALO
ALTO**

Planning and Development Services

(650) 329-2679 | jonathan.lait@cityofpaloalto.org

www.cityofpaloalto.org



From: Andie Reed <andiezreed@gmail.com>

Sent: Friday, March 4, 2022 8:38 AM

To: Shikada, Ed <Ed.Shikada@CityofPaloAlto.org>; City Mgr <CityMgr@cityofpaloalto.org>; Architectural Review Board <arb@cityofpaloalto.org>; Planning Commission <Planning.Commission@cityofpaloalto.org>; Council, City <city.council@cityofpaloalto.org>

Subject: Castilleja - Unanswered Issues re GFA

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Dear City Manager Shikada,

CC: ARB, PTC, City Council

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Please answer the questions below. We respectfully request a response within the next week, as opposed to offering promises that this will be addressed at some future time that never comes.

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1. Analysis of the Dudek GFA study appears to show that the proposed square footage being requested by Castilleja has increased to a FAR of .479, since volumetrics would be included in any analysis of current GFA. Is that the case? It appears that the allowed FAR for the site is .303. Is that the case? Please translate that to how many square feet of gross floor area is being requested over that allowed by code.

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b. The lower level main building (LL1) is 2,800SF larger than the first floor building (L1), therefore not fully under the building.

Would these two underground spaces be considered exempt from GFA? I discussed these pages of the plans with the planning director last summer and have brought it up by email and written and oral communications to the PTC, but have not received an explanation.

3. Although it doesn't add to GFA or FAR, it appears, by review of the plans, that the underground square footage, not including the garage, is proposed to increase from 41,000SF to 80,000SF. Please confirm that the school is proposing to increase its underground class space by 39,000SF.

We appreciate that you will ensure straightforward, direct and correct answers are provided, as our experience in this regard has been discouraging.

Thank you,

Andie Reed

PNQL

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Andie Reed CPA
Palo Alto, CA 94301

530-401-3809

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Andie Reed CPA
Palo Alto, CA 94301



From: [Tina Peak](#)
To: [Architectural Review Board](#)
Subject: Castilleja
Date: Wednesday, March 16, 2022 7:39:24 PM

You don't often get email from tmpeak@yahoo.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Be cautious of opening attachments and clicking on links.

Dear ARB,

I am very opposed to any expansion at Castilleja. This organization cheated and lied to the people of Palo Alto for 20 years by systematically over-enrolling students at their campus. Now they have the audacity to suggest that we should let them increase the size of their campus and add an additional 30% to student enrollment. They are not to be trusted or rewarded for their past lawlessness.

The Castilleja campus adds little benefit to the city of Palo Alto. 75% of Castilleja's students come from outside Palo Alto. The campus sits on just over 6-acres in an R-1 residential neighborhood upon which they pay no taxes.

Their plans call for destruction of the natural environment. They will remove trees and disrupt the soil. Any building material and concrete used produces large amounts of additional CO2 that is added to our environment. Underground garages use large amounts of polluting concrete and adding an underground parking lot is not even allowed in R-1 areas. Trips to the school are also huge greenhouse gas emitters.

Castilleja should get no more special treatment. They have a conditional use permit that they ignored for decades, have been poor neighbors, and add to the noise and pollution of the area. They deserve no special variance for adding more floor area or enrollment. This is an R-1 neighborhood.

If Castilleja wants to grow they should find an appropriate piece of real estate and move to an area that will accommodate their desired growth. Please do not allow them any ability to grow or increase enrollment

Regards, Tina Peak

From: [Andie Reed](#)
To: [Architectural Review Board](#); [Planning Commission](#); [Council, City](#)
Subject: Castilleja
Date: Thursday, March 17, 2022 7:37:11 AM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Be cautious of opening attachments and clicking on links.

To the Architectural Review Board

Good morning Board Members:

Mar 17, 2021

I'm Andie Reed and I live on Melville by Castilleja.

Today you are tasked with approving "findings" that are by their nature subjective and some are at odds with what many neighbors have been saying and writing about for years.

For example, Finding #2, d reads: "provides harmonious transitions in scale, mass and character to adjacent land uses..." We residents in the surrounding narrow streets and mostly smaller, older homes, always thought that the one building proposed to replace 5 buildings, taking up the entire block of Kellogg, is too large for the site. Since a **Nov 2021 Gross Floor Area study** was published by **Dudek**, our instincts have been proven correct. Existing above grade square footage is significantly in excess of allowable by code. Over the years, buildings were built and SF not appropriately counted, even those built after code was in place that required counting things like volumetrics. For example, the gym is very tall and gets counted 3x - that was the case when it was built in 2006, and that's the case today.

The Code specifically states: " when GFA that exceeds permitted allowances is demolished, that floor area may not be restored".

Now, as you read that paragraph and consider what that means, your first question might be "well, what kind of numbers are we talking here? What is the variance being requested in square feet?"

All reports are silent on that very important point. Please request planning staff to provide you with the number of square feet in excess of allowable being proposed. Variances are not granted because developers want more square footage than allowable, even to replace old GFA. A variance is granted to overcome special constraints others in the zone don't suffer, or without a special exception they would be subject to hardship. That is not the case here. "Because we had the square footage before" is not a valid criteria for being granted a variance.

Instead of accommodating their own redevelopment by building into the "circle" in the middle of the campus, Castilleja chooses to move their swimming pool to accommodate this 77,400SF, thus taking away existing on-site surface parking. In other words, the school is choosing to create a need for parking that doesn't currently exist.

Please keep in mind that the 2 parking schemes you will be considering today **do not** increase the number of parking spaces at the school, a hugely important point.

The school has been there a long time, and was a boarding school until 27 years ago. Now it is a commuter school, with 75% of its students coming in from out of Palo Alto. If the school reduced their scope, built within code and maintained the character of the neighborhood, they would be re-built by now.

Thank you.

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Andie Reed CPA
Palo Alto, CA 94301

