



CITY OF
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Architectural Review Board

Staff Report

Agenda Date: August 15, 2013

To: Architectural Review Board

From: Clare Campbell, Planner **Department:** Planning and
Community Environment

Subject: **537 Hamilton Avenue [13PLN-00268]**: Request by Korth Sunseri Hagey Architects for a Design Enhancement Exception (DEE) to allow the proposed roof-top canopy to exceed the 40 foot height limit by 11'-6" in the CD-C(P) zone district. Environmental Assessment: Exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) per CEQA Guidelines Section 15303.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Architectural Review Board (ARB) recommend the Director of Planning and Community Environment approve the proposed project, based upon the required findings Attachments A and subject to the conditions of approval (Attachment C).

BACKGROUND

Previous Review

The ARB reviewed the project on April 18, 2013 and voted to recommend approval of the project. The related staff report has been included as Attachment E for reference and additional background information. The proposed DEE project is consistent with the primary project's approved ARB and Context-Based Design findings as provided in Attachment B.

Project Description

The previously approved project was for a new two-story 14,557 square foot office building with one floor of below grade parking for 19 spaces, utilizing vehicle lifts for 10 spaces. The project also provides a large open space area with a 3,580 sf roof-top terrace. The requested Design Enhancement Exception (DEE) is to allow a permanently installed canopy element to cover the majority of the roof-top terrace that would exceed the allowable 40 foot height limit by 11'-6". Please refer to the applicant's project description and plans for additional clarification (Attachments D and F).

DISCUSSION

Zoning Compliance

Due to the proximity of a residential zone (RM-40), the project is limited to a 40 foot height limit, instead of the standard 50 foot limit in the CD-C zone district. The proposed roof-top tensile shade structure exceeds the 40 foot height limit by 11'-6" and requires a DEE to exceed the height limit.

Design Enhancement Exception

The purpose of a Design Enhancement Exception (DEE) is to permit a minor exception to zoning regulations when doing so will enhance the design of a proposed project without altering the function or use of the site, or its impact on surrounding properties. A DEE may be requested for the following circumstances (PAMC Section 18.76.050(b)):

- (1) Design enhancement exceptions may be granted to the site development and parking and loading requirements otherwise applicable under Title 18, as part of the architectural review process, when such exceptions will enhance the appearance and design of commercial and multiple-family development and other development subject to architectural review.
- (2) Items for which design enhancement exceptions may be granted include, but are not limited to, dormers, eave lines, roof design, bay windows, cornices, parapets, columns, arcades, fountains, art, ornamentation, atriums, balconies, trellises, moldings, balustrades, stairs, entry features, and other minor architectural elements and design features.
- (3) Generally, design enhancement exceptions are limited to minor changes to the setback, daylight plane, height, lot coverage limitations, parking lot design and landscaping configuration, and additional flexibility in the required proportion between private and common open space.
- (4) No design enhancement exception shall be granted under this section that would increase floor area, decrease the number of required parking spaces, decrease the amount of required on-site landscaping, or decrease the required open space.

The requested DEE to exceed the height limit is consistent with the types of allowable exceptions cited above. Staff supports the proposed DEE, and the findings for approval are provided in Attachment A.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Pursuant to California Environmental Quality act (CEQA), this project is Categorical Exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15303.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment A: Draft DEE Findings
- Attachment B: Approved ARB Findings and Context-Based Design Findings
- Attachment C: Draft Conditions of Approval
- Attachment D: Project Description*
- Attachment E: ARB Staff Report, April 18, 2013

Attachment F: Development Plans (Board Members Only)*
* Prepared by Applicant; all other attachments prepared by Staff

COURTESY COPIES

Lund Smith: lund@wsjproperties.com

Prepared By: Clare Campbell, Planner

Manager Review: Amy French, Chief Planning Official

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A French', written over the name 'Amy French' in the 'Manager Review' line.

ATTACHMENT A

Design Enhancement Exception Findings (PAMC 18.76.050) 537 Hamilton Avenue [13PLN-00268]

The requested Design Enhancement Exception (DEE) is to allow a permanently installed canopy element to cover the majority of the roof-top terrace that would exceed the allowable 40 foot height limit by 11'-6".

- (1) *There are exceptional or extraordinary circumstances or conditions applicable to the property or site improvements involved that do not apply generally to property in the same zone district.* This finding can be made in the affirmative in that the site is partially located within 150 feet from a residential zone (RM-40) where the height limit is 40 feet; the remaining portion of the lot can be built to 50 feet. The canopy does not functionally serve its appropriate purpose and is a less than attractive feature if it were covering only half of the roof-top terrace, where the height limit allows its placement.
- (2) *The granting of the application will enhance the appearance of the site or structure, or improve the neighborhood character of the project and preserve an existing or proposed architectural style, in a manner which would not otherwise be accomplished through strict application of the minimum requirements of this title (Zoning) and the architectural review findings set forth in Section 18.76.020(d).* This finding can be made in the affirmative in that the roof-top canopy adds architectural interest to the building and enhances the connection with the street.
- (3) *The exception is related to a minor architectural feature or site improvement that will not be detrimental or injurious to property or improvements in the vicinity and will not be detrimental to the public health, safety, general welfare or convenience.* This finding can be made in the affirmative in that the project will be constructed in accordance with all code requirements of the City of Palo Alto and will be neither detrimental nor injurious to surrounding properties, public health, safety, general welfare, or convenience. The new canopy element will enhance the site and add value to the site and immediate vicinity.

APPROVED ARB FINDINGS FOR APPROVAL

537 Hamilton Avenue / File No. 13PLN-00087

Architectural Review Findings (PAMC 8.76.020)

- (1) *The design is consistent and compatible with applicable elements of the Palo Alto Comprehensive Plan.* This finding can be made in the affirmative in that the project incorporates quality design that recognizes the importance of the area as described in the Comprehensive Plan. The project is also consistent with The Palo Alto Comprehensive Plan policies related to business and economics. The Comprehensive Plan encourages owners to upgrade or replace existing commercial properties so that these commercial areas are more competitive and better serve the community.
- (2) *The design is compatible with the immediate environment of the site.* This finding can be made in the affirmative in that the existing environment is comprised of buildings of various height, including 2-5 stories (parking garage and adjacent commercial buildings) and the proposed building, with its scale, massing, and architectural style, fits within this context.
- (3) *The design is appropriate to the function of the project.* This finding can be made in the affirmative in that the design of the new building is consistent with modern commercial buildings and creates an attractive new building for the site.
- (4) *In areas considered by the board as having a unified design character or historical character, the design is compatible with such character.* This finding can be made in the affirmative in that the project is generally consistent with the Downtown Urban Design Guide.
- (5) *The design promotes harmonious transitions in scale and character in areas between different designated land uses.* This finding can be made in the affirmative in that the project enhances the walkway that leads to the public parking garage at the rear of the site.
- (6) *The design is compatible with approved improvements both on and off the site.* This finding can be made in the affirmative in that the project is compatible with the surrounding office and retail uses of the downtown commercial area.
- (7) *The planning and siting of the various functions and buildings on the site create an internal sense of order and provide a desirable environment for occupants, visitors and the general community.* This finding can be made in the affirmative in that the building amenities (open space, parking, entry, etc.) are accessible and attractive to users.
- (8) *The amount and arrangement of open space are appropriate to the design and the function of the structures.* This finding can be made in the affirmative in that the project provides an open space area with a roof-top terrace for visitors and tenants that is functional and desirable.

ATTACHMENT B

- (9) *Sufficient ancillary functions are provided to support the main functions of the project and the same are compatible with the project's design concept.* This finding can be made in the affirmative in that the open space is compatible with the project's design.
- (10) *Access to the property and circulation thereon are safe and convenient for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles.* This finding can be made in the affirmative in that the building is easily approachable by all modes of transportation and the circulation is safe.
- (11) *Natural features are appropriately preserved and integrated with the project.* This finding can be made in the affirmative in that the proposed tree removals are supported by the city staff and are not considered significant as to require retention. The new landscape plan for the street frontage will create a new natural area that would be desirable and attractive.
- (12) *The materials, textures, colors and details of construction and plant material are appropriate expression to the design and function.* This finding can be made in the affirmative, see Findings 2, 3, 4 and 13.
- (13) *The landscape design concept for the site, as shown by the relationship of plant masses, open space, scale, plant forms and foliage textures and colors create a desirable and functional environment.* This finding can be made in the affirmative in that the project includes a landscaped street frontage and provides planters on the roof-top terrace to enhance the building.
- (14) *Plant material is suitable and adaptable to the site, capable of being properly maintained on the site, and is of a variety which would tend to be drought-resistant to reduce consumption of water in its installation and maintenance.* This finding can be made in the affirmative in that the selected landscaping (planters and frontage area) is relatively low maintenance and drought tolerant.
- (15) *The project exhibits green building and sustainable design that is energy efficient, water conserving, durable and nontoxic, with high-quality spaces and high recycled content materials.* This finding can be made in the affirmative in that the project intends to utilize low-e glazing, sunshades, low-flow toilets, highly efficient mechanical systems, drought tolerant plantings, and other construction materials with recycled content.
- (16) *The design is consistent and compatible with the purpose of architectural review as set forth in subsection 18.76.020(a).* This finding can be made in the affirmative in that the project design promotes visual environments that are of high aesthetic quality and variety.

APPROVED CONTEXT-BASED DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS AND FINDINGS

537 Hamilton Avenue / File No. 13PLN-00087

Pursuant to PAMC 18.18.110(b), in addition to the findings for Architectural Review contained in PAMC 18.76.020(d), the following additional findings have been made in the affirmative:

- (1) **Pedestrian and Bicycle Environment.** *The design of new projects shall promote pedestrian walkability, a bicycle friendly environment, and connectivity through design elements.* This finding can be made in the affirmative in that a covered walkway for pedestrians is provided along the street frontage and bike racks are provided near the building entrance. The project also includes bike lockers in the garage to support the bicycle environment.
- (2) **Street Building Facades.** *Street facades shall be designed to provide a strong relationship with the sidewalk and the street(s), to create an environment that supports and encourages pedestrian activity through design elements.* This finding can be made in the affirmative in that the facade includes glazing and a covered area along the street frontage creating a connection to the sidewalk and street.
- (3) **Massing and Setbacks.** *Buildings shall be designed to minimize massing and conform to proper setbacks.* This finding can be made in the affirmative in that the project has incorporated articulation that facilitates the appearance of reducing the mass of the building.
- (4) **Low-Density Residential Transitions.** *Where new projects are built abutting existing lower scale residential development, care shall be taken to respect the scale and privacy of neighboring properties.* This finding does not apply.
- (5) **Project Open Space.** *Private and public open space shall be provided so that it is usable for residents, visitors, and/or employees of the site.* This finding can be made in the affirmative in that the project provides open space with the roof-top for tenants and visitors that is functional and desirable.
- (6) **Parking Design.** *Parking needs shall be accommodated but shall not be allowed to overwhelm the character of the project or detract from the pedestrian environment.* This finding does not apply. This finding can be made in the affirmative in that the project's parking is located within the below-grade garage and does not detract from the above grade development or conditions.
- (7) **Large (Multi-Acre) Sites.** *Large sites (over one acre) shall be designed so that street, block, and building patterns are consistent with those of the surrounding neighborhood.* This finding does not apply.

ATTACHMENT B

- (8) **Sustainability and Green Building Design.** *Project design and materials to achieve sustainability and green building design should be incorporated into the project. This finding can be made in the affirmative in that the project intends to utilize low-e glazing, sunshades, low-flow toilets, highly efficient mechanical systems, drought tolerant plantings, and other construction materials with recycled content.*

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL
537 Hamilton Avenue [13PLN-00268]
Design Enhancement Exception

PLANNING & COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT

The Architectural Review Board (August 15, 2013) recommended approval of the application referenced above, and the Director of Planning and Community Environment (Director) approved the project on xxx, 2013.

Project Planner: Clare Campbell

PLANNING DIVISION

1. The project shall be in substantial conformance with the approved plans and related documents received June 18, 2013, except as modified to incorporate these conditions of approval.
2. The Conditions of Approval document shall be printed on all plans submitted for building permits related to this DEE project.
3. The Conditions of Approval specified for the related building entitlement 13PLN-00087 shall remain in full effect and not changed unless related to the roof-top canopy.
4. The project approval shall be valid for a period of one year from the original date of approval. In the event a building permit(s), if applicable, is not secured for the project within the time limit specified above, the ARB approval shall expire and be of no further force or effect. Application for extension of this entitlement may be made prior to the one year expiration.
5. Government Code Section 66020 provides that project applicant who desires to protest the fees, dedications, reservations, or other exactions imposed on a development project must initiate the protest at the time the development project is approved or conditionally approved or within ninety (90) days after the date that fees, dedications, reservations or exactions are imposed on the project. Additionally, procedural requirements for protesting these development fees, dedications, reservations and exactions are set forth in Government Code Section 66020. **IF YOU FAIL TO INITIATE A PROTEST WITHIN THE 90-DAY PERIOD OR TO FOLLOW THE PROTEST PROCEDURES DESCRIBED IN GOVERNMENT CODE SECTION 66020, YOU WILL BE BARRED FROM CHALLENGING THE VALIDITY OR REASONABLENESS OF THE FEES, DEDICATIONS, RESERVATIONS, AND EXACTIONS.**
6. This matter is subject to the Code of Civil Procedures (CCP) Section 1094.5, and the time by which judicial review must be sought is governed by CCP Section 1094.6.
7. To the extent permitted by law, the Applicant shall indemnify and hold harmless the City,

ATTACHMENT C

its City Council, its officers, employees and agents (the "indemnified parties") from and against any claim, action, or proceeding brought by a third party against the indemnified parties and the applicant to attack, set aside or void, any permit or approval authorized hereby for the Project, including (without limitation) reimbursing the City its actual attorney's fees and costs incurred in defense of the litigation. The City may, in its sole discretion, elect to defend any such action with attorneys of its own choice.

K O R T H S U N S E R I H A G E Y A R C

Received

537 Hamilton Avenue

JUN 18 2013

June 13, 2013

Department of Planning
& Community Environment

Project Description

650 CALIFORNIA

The proposed project is a 14,567 square foot office building with parking below the building.

FOURTH FLOOR

The site is bounded by two public right of ways which provides a unique opportunity to design a mid-block building with windows on three sides. A 10 foot setback is provided on Hamilton Avenue.

SAN FRANCISCO

Parking is proposed 1/2 level below-grade, providing parking for 18 cars, with two office floors beginning 1/2 level above grade.

CALIFORNIA

The proposed building design presents a layered building elevation facing Hamilton Avenue. The elevation is composed of a textured stone plane with a projecting glass volume expressed at the second floor. This south facing elevation provides a unique opportunity to create a very transparent building skin, shaded by cable supported glass sunshades. The glass system is composed of very high quality components, including clear low e vision glass, opaque spandrel glass, patterned glass with a ceramic frit, and features spider fittings to anchor the glass. The cable supported sunshades are translucent laminated glass. The glass volume extends upward to create a transparent parapet, allowing views to and from a garden terrace. The solid layer of the Hamilton elevation is clad with textured stone panels, offering a distinct contrast to the glass system. The north and east elevations are composed of plaster with a window system consisting of clear low e glass, spandrel glass and painted aluminum panels. The expansive window line will create an inspiring work space with abundant natural light.

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The northeast corner of the building features vertical panels of the same textured stone installed on the Hamilton elevation, marking this mid-block pedestrian intersection.

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The parking entrance is located at grade on the west side of the site, the lobby entrance is also at grade on the east side of the site, with a central bay with office space located 1/2 level above-grade at the center of the site on Hamilton Avenue. A large opening is proposed at the exterior wall on the western property line adjacent to the parking entrance to provide natural light to the first floor office space and to the adjacent property. Vertical circulation elements including an elevator, stair and landings at each floor are expressed as a cubic volume extending through all levels of the building at the southeast corner, rendered in red. Featuring this taller vertical element at this corner of the site emphasizes the building entrance and vertical circulation, while providing a scale reference to the taller building directly to the east of the site.

The landscape design on the ground level will incorporate a modern planting aesthetic sensitive to storm water treatment, water efficiency, and sustainable biodiversity and increase the available bike parking for the project.

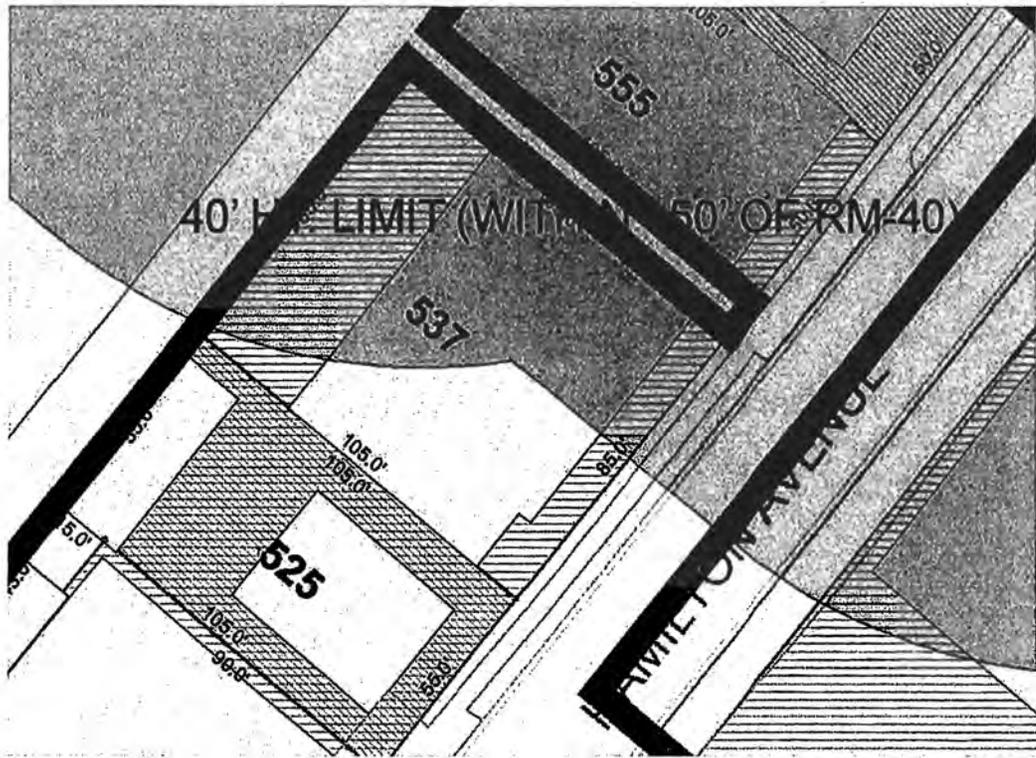
The roof deck will provide quality outdoor open space for tenants in the building. The roof deck will also feature modular outdoor seating for flexible event programming and employee respite, precast planters to screen the unoccupied area of the roof, and rich accent paving to compliment the featured materials of the building facades. A tensile shade structure will offer cover and shade for roof occupants.

Sustainable features include high performance glazing, sunshades, highly efficient mechanical systems, low flow toilet fixtures and drought tolerant planting featured at the center of the site adjacent to Hamilton Avenue.

A Design Enhancement Exception (DEE) is being sought to allow the installation of a tensile shade structure at the roof terrace. The height of the tensile shade structure exceeds the 40' height limit applied to a portion of the site within 150' of a RM-40 residential zone (see graphic on following page). During the Preliminary ARB hearing for this project the ARB encouraged the project sponsor to create a more active & visible roofscape for the project. This tensile shade structure responds directly to this request, enhancing the architectural character of the project while providing valuable shade for those that occupy the space. The Palo Alto ARB has been very supportive of this design concept and asked that we pursue a DEE to allow the inclusion of this feature. We believe that the following findings apply to this request for a DEE:

The granting of the application will enhance the appearance of the site or structure, or improve the neighborhood character of the project and preserve an existing or proposed architectural style, in a manner which would not otherwise be accomplished through strict application of the minimum requirements of this title (Zoning) and the architectural review findings set forth in Section 18.76.020(d); and

The exception is related to a minor architectural feature or site improvement that will not be detrimental or injurious to property or improvements in the vicinity and will not be detrimental to the public health, safety, general welfare or convenience.





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ATTACHMENT E

Architectural Review Board

Staff Report

Agenda Date: April 18, 2013

To: Architectural Review Board

From: Clare Campbell, Planner **Department:** Planning and
Community Environment

Subject: 537 Hamilton Ave [13PLN-00087]: Request by Korth Sunseri Hagey Architects, on behalf of Smith Equities III LLC, for Architectural Review for a new 14,567 square foot two-story commercial office building with below grade garage. Zone: CD-C(P). Environmental Assessment: Exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) per CEQA Guidelines Section 15332.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Architectural Review Board (ARB) recommend the Director of Planning and Community Environment approve the proposed project, based upon the required findings (Attachments A & B) and subject to the conditions of approval (Attachment C).

BACKGROUND

Site Information

The 8,925 square foot project site has an existing one-story, commercially used building. The site is located in Downtown Palo Alto within the Downtown Parking Assessment District. The site is bordered by a two-story commercial building on the left (west side) and a three-story office building on the right, and backs up to the Webster Cowper garage, a five-story public parking garage. A public access alley is on the right side of the building and provides a pedestrian connection to the parking garage from Hamilton Avenue. The existing development does not provide on-site parking spaces and was assessed for 18 spaces that were not provided on site, in association with the existing 4,588 square foot (sf) building. The site is zoned Downtown Commercial Community with Pedestrian Shopping Combining District.

Project Description

The applicant proposes the demolition of the existing one-story 4,588 square foot structure and the construction of a new two-story 14,567 square foot office building with one floor of below grade parking for 19 spaces, utilizing vehicle lifts for 10 spaces. The project would also provide an open space area with a roof-top terrace.

The street-facing façade would include a three-story tower element painted red (viewed inside the building for the first two floors) emphasizing the primary entrance on the right front corner of the building. The entrance to the below grade parking garage is shown located on the opposite side of the façade to maintain a balanced ground floor design. The front façade would be comprised of textured beige colored stone and clear glass with dot frit coating for the for the ground floor base. Above the ground floor, glazing would extend across the full elevation and would include two glass sunshades providing screening for the second floor occupants.

The rear and alley side of the building would have similar aesthetic treatments with many tall inset windows. These two painted (white) cement plaster elevations would include clear glass, aluminum panels at each window base, and textured stone at the corners to provider interest. The west elevation would have a simple treatment with the cement plaster wall painted white would employ a clear anodized fixed grille treatment.

The project includes a 3,580 sf roof deck with a row of planters separating the mechanical enclosure from the usable area. The roof deck includes pavers, outdoor furniture, and possibly a sun shade element. In addition to the roof-top planters, the project includes new landscaping along the front of the building. The project includes the removal of seven existing non-regulated trees within the site, and the two London Plane street trees would remain.

The below grade garage would provide 19 parking spaces, with 10 of them utilizing car lifts. In addition to vehicle parking and long term bike storage, some mechanical uses, including a new transformer, would be placed within unusable (for vehicle parking) areas of the garage. To accommodate the new driveway curb-cut to the garage, it appears that two to three on-street parking spaces would be eliminated.

Please refer to the applicant's project description and plans for additional clarification (Attachments D and F).

DISCUSSION

Previous Review

The ARB reviewed an earlier project concept on December 20, 2012 in a Preliminary Review. A repeated comment that was conveyed to the applicant was that the façade needed more articulation and further development. Other comments made at the meeting were regarding: (1) relocatiing the transformer to a less intrusive location; (2) making the landscape area usable for people and not just ornamental; and (3) keeping the roof terrace as a desirable amenity for the project. Overall the project was well received by the ARB.

Zoning Compliance

A summary indicating the project's conformance with the Development Standards of the Commercial Downtown Zone District is provided as Attachment E. The standard for development of a 100% commercial project in the CD-C zone district is limited to a maximum of 1:1 (8,925 sf) for the floor area ratio (FAR). Additional floor area for commercial use is allowed with the use of Transferrable Development Rights (TDR's). The project's proposed FAR (14,567 sf) complies

with the CD-C development standards, given the benefit of TDRs that could allow a total building floor area of 17,850 square feet (2:1).

Due to the proximity of a residential zone (RM-40), the project is limited to a 40 foot height limit, instead of the standard 50 foot limit in the CD-C zone district. This height limit impacts the originally proposed roof-top shade structure. The applicant may choose to remove this completely or place a shade structure outside the 150 foot distance from the RM-40 residential zoning. This 150 foot boundary falls roughly down the middle of the building, leaving enough room to still have a shading element on the unaffected area of the roof.

Parking

The proposed project, with 14,567 sf of FAR, requires a total of 58 parking spaces, and with the inclusion of specific credits, the project qualifies for a reduction in the required on-site parking spaces. The on-site parking spaces required for this project is based on 4,779 sf and is equal to 19 spaces. The proposed plan includes the required 19 spaces within the below grade garage and complies with the on-site parking requirements.

Required Spaces before credits	58 spaces
Credits	
Assessed Spaces (based on 4,588 sf)	18 spaces
Transfer of Development Rights (based on 5,000 sf)	20 spaces
One-time 200 sf bonus	1 space
Required Spaces after credits	19 spaces

With the recent concerns regarding parking in the downtown, staff also reviews the loss of on-street parking due to new development. For this project, it appears that two to three on-street spaces would be lost due to the new driveway curb-cut for the garage. To mitigate this loss, the applicant would be required to pay parking in-lieu fees for the number of spaces lost.

Pedestrian Shopping Combining District

The project is required to comply with the Pedestrian Shopping Combining District (P), which requires new construction and building alterations to provide design features intended to create pedestrian or shopper interest, to provide weather protection for pedestrians, and to preclude inappropriate or inharmonious building design and siting. The required features include: (1) Display windows, or retail display areas; (2) Pedestrian arcades, recessed entryways, or covered recessed areas designed for pedestrian use with an area not less than the length of the adjoining frontage times 1.5 feet; and (3) Landscaping or architectural design features intended to preclude blank walls or building faces.

The project includes large windows for the majority of the ground floor elevations, meeting the retail/display window requirements. For the primary street frontage, the one large window is separated from the sidewalk by the new landscaping and includes a partial dot frit treatment on the lower portion of the glazing. The project has 85 feet of street frontage, and therefore is

required to provide 128 sf of covered recessed area for pedestrian use. The project includes a four foot overhang along the front elevation, providing 340 sf of covered area, meeting the area requirement. Staff requests feedback from the ARB on the project's compliance with the pedestrian friendly elements described.

Downtown Urban Design Guide

The Downtown Urban Design Guide (Guide) provides direction to the applicant, staff and ARB regarding development and design in the downtown area. The Guide divides the downtown area into districts, each having a unique identity and design characteristics. The project site is in the Hamilton Avenue District (Hamilton Avenue), which extends from Alma Street to Middlefield Road. The Guide recommends promoting this area as "an active mixed use district which comfortably accommodates larger scale commercial office, civic, and institutional buildings" while maintaining the "tree-lined pedestrian environment with complementary outdoor amenities to offset the urban intensity." The proposed commercial office project is consistent with the Guide and with the open glass design would create a new energy for the street. The new roof-top terrace and landscaping will also enhance and enliven the site and immediate vicinity.

Context-Based Design Considerations and Findings

In addition to Zoning Compliance and Architectural Review approval findings, Context-Based Design Considerations and Findings found in PAMC Chapter 18.18 are applicable to projects in the downtown commercial zone district. The applicable findings are provided in Attachment B, Draft Context Based Design Findings.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Pursuant to California Environmental Quality act (CEQA), this project is Categorically Exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15332 (In-fill Development Projects). The proposed project would not result in any new significant effects relating to traffic, noise, air quality or water quality.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment A: Draft ARB Findings
- Attachment B: Draft Context-Based Design Findings
- Attachment C: Draft Conditions of Approval
- Attachment D: Project Description*
- Attachment E: Zoning Compliance Table
- Attachment F: Development Plans (Board Members Only)*

* Prepared by Applicant; all other attachments prepared by Staff

COURTESY COPIES

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Prepared By: Clare Campbell, Planner

Manager Review: Amy French, Chief Planning Official



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Architectural Review Board

Staff Report

Agenda Date: August 15, 2013

To: Architectural Review Board

From: Clare Campbell, Planner **Department: Planning and
Community Environment**

Subject: **636 Waverley Street [13PLN-00262]**: Request by Hayes Group Architects for a Major Architectural Review of the demolition of a one story, 1,406 sq. ft. office building and construction of a four-story, 10,528 sq. ft. mixed-use building with commercial uses on the first and second floors and two residential units on the third and fourth floors on a 5,278 sq. ft. site in the CD-C(P) zoning district. Environmental Assessment: Exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) per Section 15303.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Architectural Review Board (ARB) recommend the Director of Planning and Community Environment approve the proposed project, based upon the required findings (Attachments A & B) and subject to the conditions of approval (Attachment C).

BACKGROUND

Site Information

The 5,278 square foot (sf) project site has an existing one-story, 1,406 sf commercially used building (originally developed as a residence) located in Downtown Palo Alto within the Downtown Parking Assessment District. The site is bordered by a one-story commercial building on the left and a two-story apartment building on the right (14 units), and backs up to a public parking lot, as shown in Attachment G. At the end of the block, fronting Forest Avenue, the two corner parcels are developed with residential and mixed-use buildings that are five stories tall, and greater than five stories. The project site is approximately one and a half blocks away from University Avenue and provides five vehicle spaces at the rear of the lot, though the site was never assessed as having parking spaces. There is one existing city street tree along the frontage; a Ginkgo tree.

Project Description

The project includes the demolition of the existing 1,406 sf structure and construction of a new four-story, 10,528 sf mixed-use building with two floors of commercial use (office proposed), approximately 5,050 sf, and two three-bedroom residential units (3,021 sf and 2,123 sf) with large open terraces above, including one on the roof. The required vehicle parking spaces are to be provided in a below grade parking facility, accessed through a proposed gate-controlled driveway on Waverley Street. The project utilizes parking lifts to meet the project's parking requirements.

The design of the building, as described in the applicant's letter, "creates a dramatic modern form" with "vertical and horizontal zigzags of the concrete structural frame." The project features a fully glazed front façade and the prominent use of glazing on the remaining three elevations. The proposed materials include grey-toned, smooth integral color concrete, structural glazed window systems with aluminum frames; the glazing would be clear, insulated low-e glass. Grey corrugated metal panels are proposed for the roof screen element.

The outdoor treatments include concrete pavers for the garage ramp and the side walkway, one non-standard bike rack in front of the building, and landscaping elements, including a new 24-inch box Ginkgo street tree; the existing Ginkgo street tree will be removed due to the new driveway placement. The roof-top terrace would be furnished with landscape planters and outdoor seating. For each above-grade level, substantial open space is provided with outdoor terraces.

Additional information is provided in the applicant's project description and plans, Attachments D and G.

DISCUSSION

Zoning Compliance

A table indicating the project's conformance with the Development Standards of the Commercial Downtown is provided as Attachment F. The standard for development of a mixed-use project in the CD-C zone district is limited to a maximum of 2:1 for the floor area ratio (FAR), limited to 1:1 FAR for commercial and 1:1 FAR for residential. The project generally complies with the CD-C development standards.

Open Space Requirements

Mixed-use development in the CD-C zone is required to provide 20% Landscape Open Space (1,055 sf) in addition to 200 sf of Usable Open Space per residential unit. "Usable" open space can be private or common, but must have a minimum dimension of six feet to be considered usable. The project provides private balconies for each of the residential units providing more area than the required usable open space area. The project includes landscaping at grade and on the roof-top terrace.

Pedestrian Shopping Combining District

The project site is within the Pedestrian Shopping Combining District (P), which requires new construction and building alterations to provide design features intended to create pedestrian or shopper interest, to provide weather protection for pedestrians, and to preclude inappropriate or inharmonious building design and siting. The required features include: (1) Display windows, or

retail display areas; (2) Pedestrian arcades, recessed entryways, or covered recessed areas designed for pedestrian use with an area not less than the length of the adjoining frontage times 1.5 feet; and (3) Landscaping or architectural design features intended to preclude blank walls or building faces.

The project includes a glass front for the ground floor elevation, meeting the retail/display window requirements. The project has 50 feet of street frontage, and therefore is required to provide 75 sf of covered recessed area for pedestrian use. The plans indicate a 100 sf covered area along the building front to comply with this requirement.

Parking

The required parking for this project, without any credits or exemptions, is 24 spaces; four for the residential units and 21 for the commercial space. The Zoning Code does allow the Planning Director to approve a Shared Parking Facilities reduction, for up to 20% of the required spaces (PAMC 18.52.080), based on the impacts of the project. The City's Transportation Division reviewed a parking analysis (Attachment E) for this project, prepared by TJKM Transportation Consultants, which made the determination that the project requires 21 parking spaces, and staff concurred with this finding. Based on this analysis, an 11% reduction in the parking requirements would be supported. With this reduction applied to the project, the required parking would be a total of 21 spaces. The project provides these spaces in a below grade parking facility and utilizes five four-stacker parking lifts.

Downtown Urban Design Guide

The Downtown Urban Design Guide (Guide) provides direction to the applicant, staff and ARB regarding development and design in the downtown area. The Guide divides the downtown area into districts, each having a unique identity and design characteristics. The project site is in the Hamilton Avenue District (Hamilton Avenue), which extends from Alma Street to Middlefield Road. The Guide recommends promoting this area as "an active mixed use district which comfortably accommodates larger scale commercial office, civic, and institutional buildings" while maintaining the "tree-lined pedestrian environment with complementary outdoor amenities to offset the urban intensity." The project implements the goal stated in the Guide about massing along Hamilton Avenue, since the Guide indicates a preference for two to four story buildings "to complement the existing streetscape and enhance the building wall of Hamilton Avenue." The ARB is requested to provide comments on additional options for ground floor pedestrian amenities for the project.

Context-Based Design Considerations and Findings

In addition to Zoning Compliance and Architectural Review approval findings, Context-Based Design Considerations and Findings found in PAMC Chapter 18.18 are applicable to projects in the downtown commercial zone district. The applicable findings are provided in Attachment B, Draft Context Based Design Findings.

- (1) **Massing and Setbacks.** *Buildings shall be designed to minimize massing and conform to proper setbacks.* This finding can be made in the affirmative in that the project has incorporated articulation that facilitates the appearance of reducing the mass of the building.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Pursuant to California Environmental Quality act (CEQA), this project is Categorical Exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15332 (In-fill Development Projects). The proposed project would not result in any new significant effects relating to traffic, noise, air quality or water quality.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment A: Draft ARB Findings
 - Attachment B: Draft Context-Based Design Findings
 - Attachment C: Draft Conditions of Approval
 - Attachment D: Project Description*
 - Attachment E: 636 Waverley Street Parking Evaluation, 05/21/13
 - Attachment F: Zoning Compliance Table
 - Attachment G: Development Plans (Board Members Only)*
- * Prepared by Applicant; all other attachments prepared by Staff

COURTESY COPIES

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