Architectural Review Board
Staff Report (ID # 10523)

Report Type:	Subcommittee Items	**Meeting Date:**	8/1/2019

Summary Title: 3265 El Camino Real: Subcommittee Review of Louvre Window and Stair Mesh

Title: 3265 El Camino Real [15PLN-00312]: Subcommittee Review of a Previously Approved Project That was Conditioned to Return With Project Changes Related to Louvre Window and Stair Well Trellis Mesh. Environmental Assessment: Use of Mitigated Negative Declaration Prepared for 15PLN-00312. Zoning District: CS (Commercial Service). For More Information Contact the Project Planner Adam Petersen at apetersen@m-group.us

From: Jonathan Lait

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

1. Discuss and provide direction or approve project revisions.

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

Architecture Review Condition:

- The louvre window screen on the elevation fronting El Camino Real shall be designed to have a better opening and filtered light consistent with the El Camino Real Design Guideline Goals.

Applicant's Response:

City of Palo Alto
Planning & Community Environment
250 Hamilton Avenue
Palo Alto, CA 94301
(650) 329-2442

- The applicant has proposed three options for the window with two frame designs. The approved window is shown in Figure 1, while the proposed windows are shown in Figure 2. The window options can be described as moving from a wide window to a narrower window. Figure 3 provides sample images of the window frames.

Figure 1 – Approved front Elevation

Figure 2 – Three Proposed Window Designs

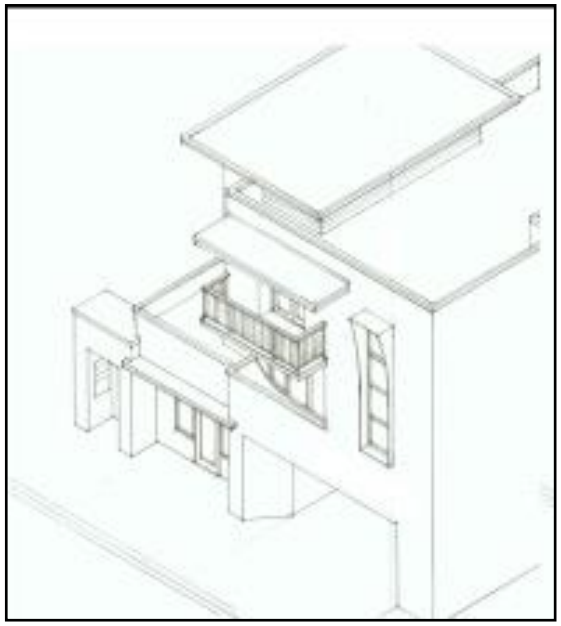
Option 1

Option 2

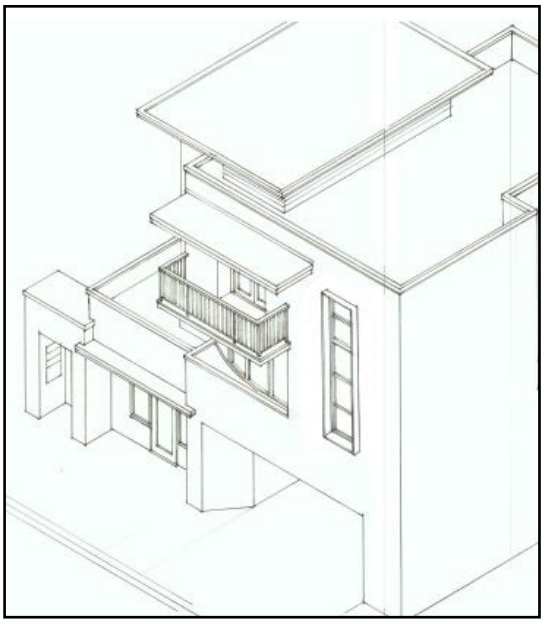
Option 3

Figure 3 – Two Proposed Window Frames

Window Frame – Option 1



Window Frame – Option 2



Architecture Review Condition:

- Rework the mesh around the stairs to make it less oppressive.

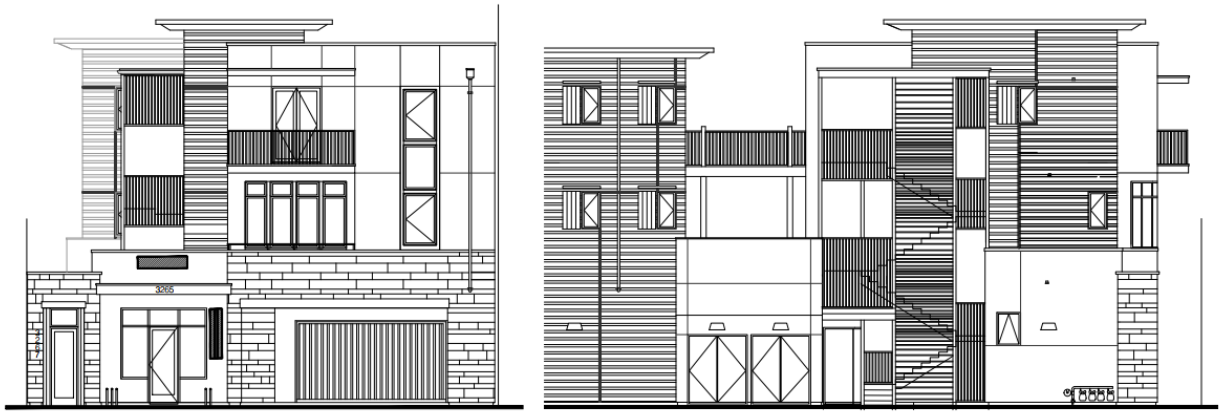
Applicant's Response:

- The applicant has proposed two stair design options. These are described in further detail in Attachment A, ARB Subcommittee letter. Option One proposes a combination of typical railing designs at landings and a flowing rhythm of one-by-one metal bars at the center stair run. Option Two proposes flowing rhythm metal bar option at entire system. Figure 4 shows the approved mesh while Figure 5 shows the two options.

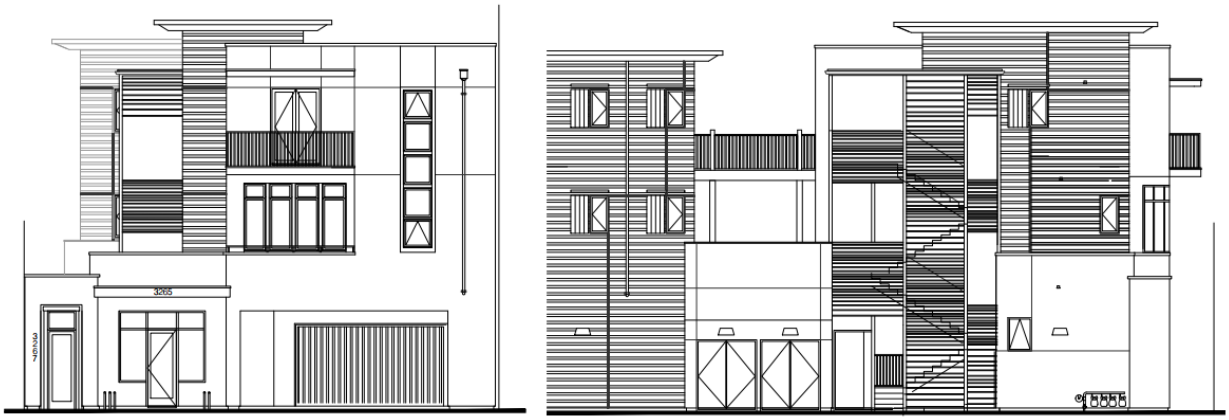
Figure 4 – Approved Mesh Around Stairs

STAIR ENCLOSURE

Stair Option 1



Stair Option 2



A video recording of the Board's last meeting on this project is available online: https://midpenmedia.org/architectural-review-board-74-2-3/

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

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Attachments:

- Attachment A: April 5, 2018 ARB Minutes (PDF)

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

- Attachment B: Applicant's Project Description (PDF)
- Attachment C: Project Plans (DOCX)

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD
MINUTES: April 5, 2018

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

Call to Order/Roll Call

Present: Chair Wynne Furth, Vice Chair Baltay, Board Member Alexander Lew, Robert Gooyer, Osma Thompson

Absent:

Chair Furth: Good morning. Welcome to the April 5th meeting of the Architectural Review Board. Could we have the roll call, please? Thanks.

Oral Communications

Chair Furth: Now is the time for any member of the public who wishes to do so to speak to the ARB on a matter not on the agenda but within our purview. Are there any…

Board Member Lew: We do have one. David Carnahan.

Chair Furth: Do we have one? We have David. I believe there's a card I've just buried it. Mr. Carnahan. For the tape, C-a-r-n-a-h-a-n I think.

Mr. David Carnahan, Deputy City Clerk: Good morning Chair Furth and Commissioners or Board Members. Please don't bury me anywhere else today. I'm here to speak with you about Board and Commission recruitment. We've -- the City's extended the application deadline for one position on the Historic Resources Board and three positions on the Human Relations Commission. So, we're hoping that you all if you have not yet or if you have reached out to community members and would be willing to reach out to a few more to see if they are interested in either of these bodies. The deadline is now April 23rd at 5:30 p.m. Again, we're looking for – to fill one position on the Historic Resources Board and three on the Human Relations Commission. I will pass out flyers for you to serve as a reminder to reach out to a few folks to consider having them consider applying.

Chair Furth: Thank you and how is it that we have an opening on the Historic Resources Board?

Mr. Carnahan: Beth Bunnenberg resigned prior to the end of her term.

Chair Furth: Thank you. Certainly, she's given us long and wonderful service.

Agenda Changes, Additions and Deletions

Chair Furth: Alright any agenda changes, additions or deletions Staff? Board Members?

City Official Reports

1. Transmittal of 1) the ARB Meeting Schedule and Attendance Record, 2), Administrative Staff-Level Architectural Review Approvals, and 3) Tentative Future Agenda items.

Chair Furth: Then let's go ahead to City official reports. Our schedule, attendance, reports on matters that have been approved. Any comments? Just note that two of us are staying behind today for subcommittee. Not me and we have at our next meeting 2755 El Camino Real, a 57-unit proposal back for its third review and a first review on 3945 El Camino Real, Comfort Inn renovation. Thank you.

Action Items

2. PUBLIC HEARING / QUASI-JUDICIAL. 3265 El Camino Real [15PLN-00312]: Request for Architectural Review for a new Three Story Mixed Use Project with 282 Square Feet of Commercial Space and Three Residential Units (4,492 Square Feet). The Applicant Also Seeks a Variance to the Minimum Mixed-use Ground Floor Commercial Floor Area Ratio and Design Enhancement Exception to Reduce the Required Driveway Width From 20-Feet to 16-Feet six-Inches. Environmental Assessment: An Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration was Circulated for Public Comment From March 23, 2018 to April 23, 2018. Zoning District: CS (Service Commercial). For More Information Contact the City's Consultant and Project Planner Adam Petersen at APetersen@m-group.us.

Chair Furth: Alright if we could have Item Number Two which is a public hearing/quasi-judicial on 3265 El Camino Real. This is a request for architectural review for a new three-story mixed-use project with 280-square feet of commercial space and three residential units totaling about 4,500-square feet. There's a request for a Variance to the minimum mixed-use ground floor commercial floor area ratio and a request for a Design Enhancement Exception to reduce the required driveway width from 20-feet to 16-feet 6-inches. A Negative Declaration has been circulated for our consideration and I guess the comment period has not yet ended is that correct?

Mr. Adam Petersen, Project Planner: That's correct.

Chair Furth: Public comment period will continue till April 23rd.

Mr. Petersen: Correct.

Chair Furth: Alright. Staff report, please.

Mr. Petersen: Alright good morning Chair Furth, Members of the Architectural Review Board. I'm Adam Petersen from the Planning and Community Environment Department. I'm here today to present the project at 3265 El Camino Real. As Chair Furth noted this is an architectural review and request for a Design Enhancement Acceptation in a Variance. The project proposes three residential units and about 280-square feet of commercial space on this site. This is a – as noted this project was previously reviewed on December 15th of 2016 and on June 1st of 2017. The recommendation before you today is a recommendation for approval to the Director of Planning and Community Environment. The project is located in an urbanized area of the City. It's predominately surrounded by other commercial type developments. To the left of the screen, you'll see a hotel. It's a two-story hotel and beyond the hotel is another three-story sort of mixed-use type building. There's a single-story restaurant located to the right of the project and behind the project is a parking lot and parking is also on the other side of the street along El Camino Real. When this project came before the Board at the June 1st, 2017 meeting there were some various items that the Board noted that they wanted to see. The first was a material and colors board, that board is before you today. It's on the dais for you take a look at. The Board also had questions about the breezeways. Those breeze ways remain unchanged. There is a breezeway sort of on the second level and the third level that provides access to the residential units. To two residential units that are located in the back. It's sort of individual access there. The driveway width, again that remains unchanged. It's about 16-feet at the garage door opening. If this project were strictly a residential project

that driveway width would be acceptable but because it's a mixed-use project it triggers a need for a wider driveway. The Transportation Divisions reviewed that and there's been no comments about the driveway width. They are fine with the acceptation that's being requested and the again the reduced driveway width enables the driveway to essentially remain the same on the site. There was also the problem at the last hearing of a deck that was over the drip line of the tree. The applicant has removed that deck. The floor places have also been amended on the second-story – second and third-story of the front unit along El Camino Real. There's been a bedroom that's been removed and sort of this play space that's been removed and instead, you have a vaulted ceiling in that unit. It creates a little bit more of a logical floor plan and then it also reduces the massing of the building along El Camino Real. There were comments about the size of the commercial retail space and that again remains unchanged. There were questions about the proximity to the restaurant located to the right of the project. Again, the front of the project is located along the property line but other portions of the project are located 10-feet or more from that side property line adjacent to the restaurant to try to buffer that. To try to give some space and try to buffer that and lastly, the project does provide two entrances. One to the commercial space and then one to the residential units. This is the site plan. Again, there were also some questions and some issues regarding the rear deck and sort of this opening and some potential safety questions. The applicant has proposed to enclose this area with a metal screen so to really separate the driveway and the entry area from the backyard – from the play space area. As you can see there is a separate residential entry at the front and there is also an entry to the commercial space at the front. Whoops, excuse me. This slide here presents the proposed front oblique rendering. The new rendering that you see is at the top. This is what's before you and you can see the bottom – you can see the rendering at the bottom. They've really reduced the mass in this area. They've pulled this back and lost a bedroom. They've also gone with sort of a metal lattice screen around the stairway just to try to again reduce the mass adjacent to the parking lot for the hotel. I think really quickly I want to go through some of the materials that you'll find here. You'll find some stone veneer along the front, along the garage door that's sort of framing the garage door. You're going to have a stucco finish along the main front of the building and then you're also going to have aluminum (inaudible) screened windows as well. Again, these are renderings. You'll see the back of the building on the top left and on the lower right you're going to see just a simple front elevation of the building. So again, as noted the entitlements are for a Major Architectural Review, a Design Enhancement Exception to reduce the driveway width from 20-feet to about 16-feet and a Variance to the ground floor commercial office space requirement. Staff did prepare an Environmental Review for this. It was circulated from March 23rd to April 23rd. We haven't received any comments to date and the initial study and Mitigated Negative Declaration includes the standards Condition of Approval or excuse me, standard mitigation measures related to items regarding construction noise, cultural resources and biology. So, based on this information the recommendation before the Architectural Review Board is to consider a motion or to consider the Mitigated Negative Declaration and recommend approval to the Director of Planning and Community Environment. Thank you and I'm available for any questions that the Board may have.

Chair Furth: Any questions of Staff before we hear from the applicant?

Vice Chair Baltay: Yes.

Board Member Lew: I just – oh, go ahead Peter.

Vice Chair Baltay: Sorry Alex. I'm supposed to know the answer to this but why is the Mitigated Declaration or the whole EIR thing required to begin with?

Mr. Petersen: This project is actually located in the plumb area of the City. There's groundwater intrusion and so we wanted to make sure that we documented that plumb area and then disclosed that to the public with the Mitigated Negative Declaration.

Vice Chair Baltay: Thank you.

Chair Furth: You also had noted possible concerns about noise and biological resources.

Mr. Petersen: That is correct, yes.

Chair Furth: That probably could have handled them with standards conditions. Thanks. Alex.

Board Member Lew: Thank you, Adam. You've included the Variance Findings in the ARB packet or just a narrative about that and I think in the past I'm understanding that was like the purview of the Planning Director and not the ARB. I just wanted to – if you want a – if you're looking for comments from the Board about that?

Mr. Jonathan Lait, Assistant Director of Planning: Thank you Board Member. We – that's correct. It is the Director's purview but what we like to do when there's a Variance with an ARB application, we like to daylight that so the public has a chance to at least see our thinking. Certainly, if the Board has comments or perspectives we certainly welcome those comments.

Board Member Lew: Then my second question or comment is in the Findings I think you used – well it's on numerous – it's all throughout the Packet but you use the word Heritage tree in reference to the oak tree. I think my comment is my understanding is that I think we in Palo Alto we use the word protected or regulated. Heritage tree means something that the Council has designated for like a cultural or a historical artifact or object. That's all that I have, thank you.

Chair Furth: Thank you so shall we hear from the applicant? You have 10-minutes.

Mr. Lait: I'm sorry if I missed this but were there any disclosures to report?

Chair Furth: Oh, first of all, has anybody visited the site? You can just…

Vice Chair Baltay: Yes, I visited the site Tuesday morning.

Chair Furth: I visited the site on several occasions.

Board Member Gooyer: So, did I.

Board Member Lew: I've visited the site on previous occasions not recently.

Chair Furth: It hasn't changed a lot as far as I can tell. Does anybody have any conversations they'd like to disclose or need to disclose? Alright, we'll proceed, you have 10-minutes.

Mr. Bob Iwersen: Good morning members of the Architectural Review Board and thank you for hearing our project at 3265 El Camino. I am Bob Iwersen with Hunt Hale Jones Architects and I represent the (inaudible)(crosstalk)

Chair Furth: I'm sorry to interrupt your flow but for the transcriber could you spell your name? You'll be glad you did.

Mr. Iwersen: I-w-e-r-s-e-n where ever – whoever the transcriber is.

Chair Furth: Great thanks.

Mr. Iwersen: Alright thank you. We've had several formal and informal review between the Planning Department and yourselves. I think hopefully we've reached a point where we have something that the City of Palo Alto can be – of which they can be proud. So, with that real quick – let's see if I can – is that right? Ok. To go back to the site and how I see the site and some of the challenges yet I think something that we can – we turned into benefits especially it's not a Heritage oak but what's the term? I guess it's the – and so but the fact that it's bounded on three sides. We had to keep a street tree and maintain the curb cut which we apparently are going to be doing at this point. We will diminish that a little bit since

part of the curb cut goes onto the adjacent property line and that it's part of the Cal/Ventura corridor. Then the site context is mixed and it mixed with what the desire of the future is with what it presently is and so those for me are some of the major elements of the site. From our previous reviews, if you can see the slides up here, our initial scheme when we came into the Planning Department and that's where we discovered the street tree needed to be kept. The next view was where we realized that we did not quite meet the fifty percent build to line and so we came up with this project. Then we discovered the Heritage oak with another version but we didn't quite meet the fifty percent build and then we were a little bit too tall at El Camino and we tried to pull everything away from the Heritage oak. Then it was the wrong character and then it was too massive and so we ended up -- in a way to accommodate all these issues we ended up with this latest project you saw which had some peculiarities. Then when it went through planning again there was some planning comment where we were miss calculating the residential portion a little throughout the whole project. So, we had to diminish a little bit of the residential and that included, which I think ended up being quite a nice solution, is enclosing the stairwell. We did actually on the east property line pull back a little bit so that there is some opportunity for openings on the east property line, not all of it. Then also we had to accommodate through engineering the back-flow preventers and the gas meters which we had thought we had resolved earlier but they needed to be brought all the way to the front. So, there's a lot of challenge at the front of the building trying to come in and provide all the services as well as an entrance. So then where your concerns which we hope we addressed and one of them was the bow window at the front. We brought that to the same character as all the other windows using the same window. It's an aluminum clad window, Anderson window, that does meet our ETC values for the front. I think the nice part of that is when you get to the interior it will have a wood finish so it brings a more residential feel to the interior of the unit. The other item that we have addressed is the residential entry. That was deemed a little too subtle or a little to diminished along that side and so we just wanted to enhance it a little more. Then we also had the issue of this opening and the turnaround space that we thought we needed for the cars that went out towards that nice little oasis in the rear. We found out from transportation that we had enough backup space so we were able to screen that off and secure it which was another concern. So, we have a man door from there but it will be secured and we still want to screen it though to allow for airflow into the garage. Then I want to address the curb cut issue as well or the louver as well. That was one concern that was brought up as far as whether or not it met the El Camino Real Design Guidelines. I think in recent years that has proven to be something that's made a little bit of a comeback. You can see it on some of Stanley Saitowitz's buildings such as 8 Octavia and Octavia Market on Harrison Street and several other buildings. I think it can be quite an elegant for that window which provides light but you still want some privacy from El Camino. I think it's a dynamic part of the front elevation as well. So here are our solutions to these issues and you can see the little more opening of that corner. Especially with the stairwell becoming sort of a latticework and a detailed of layering of metal work around the stair. Then the enclosure of the rear and really isolating that little oasis in the rear of the building. Then the entrance to the units to the residential portion has come out a little offering a little bit of shelter for people as well as for the mailman who comes in and drops off the mail. So, -- and packages. That we hope is an improvement to the project. Finally, I would like to discuss the curb cut which is actually not 16-feet. It's 16-feet at the garage door, it's 18-feet for the drive isle itself. While it is a 20-feet requirement that kind of points towards a larger project which has a lot more commercial and a lot more residential aspect to it in the mixed-use aspect. We're only servicing seven cars and it seems like a reasonable solution to cut back to 18-feet from 20 and then we do have a standard 16-foot garage access door. Then the other comments that came up where our detailing issues and I brought a more robust board if you care to pass this around (inaudible). (Inaudible) from a siding standpoint we will be – the base of the building on El Camino will be a limestone finish with a granite cap. A black granite water table which will, in a very traditional way, extend beyond the limestone base. Then the remaining of the El Camino façade will be stucco and we feel this is a durable material, a durable aspect for El Camino and it will be scored in a more contemporary way as far as the stucco itself. So, we feel that's an appropriate material as we – in front of El Camino and then we – as we step back we get to a more residential application with the premier version of Hardy. Then, however to make it as sort of this tension between urban and residential, I want to penalize it with these easy trims which that's not really a good example of easy trim there. It comes in a much larger – the metal reveal joints but you can do corners and you can horizontal and vertical that will actually meet the depth of that – of a staggered lap that we would be

having for the siding. Then we would be – to add privacy around the decks we'd be using a (inaudible) screening metal which we think is quite elegant and nice and that will be through the project. That will be what we're using at the rear of the – at the screening for the garage from the rear yard. Then – whoops I guess I kind of went ahead of my screen here. So, this is kind of an idea of or an imagery of what we'd be – of how we see the screening at the stairs. Then there's the other metals along the line, the copings, the – and then the cladding of the windows and such that we feel are appropriate for the urban yet residential aspect of the project. Thank you very much and I'll be willing to answer any questions.

Chair Furth: Peter.

Vice Chair Baltay: Sure. To save me diving through the plans the opening on El Camino for the garage entrance, the opening through the stone wall. What part is 16-feet and what part is 18-feet? (inaudible)(crosstalk)

Mr. Iwersen: The 16-feet is just the garage door itself and then there's – it's a – the curb cut itself is going to be 18-feet and then there's a little bit of an area over there for staging of the – when you bring out your garbage for the garbage trucks to pick up. That will encroach a little bit on the 18-feet but – so it's actually 20 – let's see, I have to take a look at the drawings. It's actually 20-feet wide on the – I think it's 20-feet for the garage opening or for the actual opening.

Vice Chair Baltay: As I'm looking at your elevation at the El Camino level, what's the width stone to stone on that portal opening?

Mr. Iwersen: Stone to stone is 22-feet.

Vice Chair Baltay: 22-feet and the reason it's not symmetric is why?

Mr. Iwersen: Well partially – let's go back and take a look at the front elevation here. Whoops. We could bring it down I guess a little bit more, I think that's a reasonable request. The – oh the vision triangle. That's why we – the vision triangle for when you exit out. Right, that's why we're there.

Vice Chair Baltay: So, through the Chair could I ask Staff to example what the vision triangle thing is.

Chair Furth: Yes.

Mr. Petersen: So, the one comment and the one issue that came up from the Transportation Department is that because you are exiting the site and going onto El Camino Real. They do need a clear vision triangle and it's basically – I'm trying to (inaudible). It's basically you need to be able to look beyond a wall and see diagonally so that's why that corner is pulled – it's recessed or it's not as wide.

Vice Chair Baltay: So that's for safety for (inaudible)(crosstalk)…

Mr. Petersen: Correct, it's for safety purposes.

Vice Chair Baltay: …vehicles approaching from El Camino.

Mr. Petersen: Right so it's for safety purposes for vehicles along El Camino, it's for pedestrians and cyclists who are on the sidewalk. It's for all safety purposes.

Vice Chair Baltay: Thank you for that question.

Chair Furth: Any other questions of the application? Osma.

Board Member Thompson: The material for the louver in the front is that on the material board?

Mr. Iwersen: It is on the material box. It will be an aluminum louver but it will be painted so with a powder coated finish.

Board Member Thompson: Could you point it out on the (inaudible)? I kind of missed it.

Chair Furth: Any other questions? Does any member of the public wish to comment on this proposal? Hearing none I'll close this part of the hearing. Any further comments from Staff before we deliberate? Alright, start on the left, Board Member Gooyer. Comments?

Board Member Gooyer: Well I must admit it's – this project has had a great improvement since the first couple of times we've seen it. It's come a long way. The problem that I see with it, it's just too big for where it needs to go. I mean there are some sites that are just tough to develop and this is one of those. I'm well aware of that. The problem is I mean we're being presented here by a mixed-use project which has about 4,500-square feet of residential and the commercial end is a one car garage so to me that's not mixed-use. That's putting a one car garage little I don't know what you'd put in there for a walk by commercial space between two areas that aren't commercial so you'd literally have to find it. I don't see that would even be a viable commercial space. Like I said it's come a long way but I just can't see that – it doesn't work for me. I can't see the justification of this project. I mean it's a shame that not all sites are readily developable but to me, this is one of those that isn't.

Chair Furth: Thank you. Alex.

Board Member Lew: Well I can recommend approval of your project. I think your project has changed over the years far more than any of the other projects that we've seen. I think that it goes back – I think ties back to what Robert just said, it's a very difficult site, it's narrow, you have suburban parking requirements or mixed-use requirements and you have that – and the oak tree. It's a challenge and we've seen other – the Board has seen other difficult sites on an El Camino and they've required a lot of creativity to get them to work. I think the – in the spirit of the code I think the hardest thing on my end is the minimal – the very small commercial space but I'm willing to still recommend approval of the project. I can recommend that the DEE as well for the narrower driveway. I think you've made a lot of progress on the building. I think that the front façade is – you've provided a lot of depth and a lot of high-quality materials in there and a lot of detailing. The – I think also, in particular, the residential entrance is way better than it was previously and so I can recommend approval. I did want to point out a couple little thing. One is in the Conditions of Approval I think the Staff has recommended there's a Condition of Approval for no planting within 10-feet of the oak tree trunk. That's pretty standard in Palo Alto as well as I think a lot of California Native Plants Society recommendations. They don't want any planting near the trunk of the tree and you're showing planting near the trunk.

Mr. Iwersen: Oh, we are? Ok.

Board Member Lew: Near the trunk and we do that because – the recommendation is because we don't really want to add any irrigation close to the trunk where it will cause root rot. And then also on – for Staff under – on Page 21 of our Packet, this is the ARB Findings. There's a reference to Oxford Avenue which I believe is for another project so maybe we could edit that and make it – I don't know exactly how to edit it but I think something is not quite right there. That's all.

Chair Furth: Thank you. Peter.

Vice Chair Baltay: Good morning. I can support this project. I find it to be – let me start it's a great presentation, it really is. It's really well put together. I can understand what's going on and the material board you just showed us especially is wonderful and how well it shows what's going on. I can commend to Staff that it's the kind of thing you should show another applicant because it really clearly explains to us what they are thinking. What I find I'm thinking is that it's a very refine details and very high-quality materials and it shows in the plans, it shows in the material board and it will show in the finished project. I think the design also has come an awful long way. Robert is correct, it's a very challenging site. It's

challenging because of the Zoning Ordinances and the tree and their location and I think you've done a good job getting three houses in there. That's what the City needs and wants and I, of course, agree that it's ridiculous to have a 200-square foot commercial facility there but that's the politics that be. That's the way the code is and I think you'll make some use out of it. I think you've also done a good job respecting the neighbors the way its set back from the motel to the left is well done. I think it will be a good neighbor that way. I think to the right you didn't show the large palm tree which sets off that part of the façade as you're coming up El Camino. I think again the tree and the building will complement each other very nicely so it's a good architectural touch. I also find it refreshing to see you're rethinking the trash and the bicycle and the utility, all those details that have to be dealt with and they've been dealt with on this application. Many times, what we see is that's not dealt with. It's pushed off till later and it affects the design. It's wonderful, it's great that you've tackled those issues, you've resolved them; you've put them on paper. That said I wonder if there's a way to get that masonry poured entrance off El Camino to be symmetric. It bugs me that it's wider on one side than the other and if that is being cut off for a vision triangle it's certainly not the direction traffic is coming from so it doesn't make sense from an automobile safety point of view. It seems to me you could put some sort of a buzzer or a warning system with the door which is recess back there. There must be some other way to solve this to allow that symmetric façade improvement so if there's a way to get that done I'd really encourage Staff to help them navigate through the transportation logistics. It would really make a difference on the façade composition and I mean it's the garbage cans you're showing there. It really is better to shield them off. I've also noticed that there's a monument sign for the motel which is right on the property line there which will need to be moved. I understand that will have to be a separate application from the motel property owner etc. but I would like for the Architecture Board to at least be able to say that if it were a similar monument sign, just pushed further along the street and have the parking slightly reconfigured that's certainly very acceptable. I'd just hate to see another round of applications for the motel owner and a lot of paperwork for something that has to be changed but it's the one thing where you didn't show what's going to happen on that sign and I wish that were dealt with. Lastly, I read through the Mitigated Negative Declaration and it's fine, it's all pretty straightforward. I just find it crazy that Item 4-D references bird's nests in the oak tree in the back and for some reason, this application is being required to either not build during bird nesting season or to provide an on-going arborist or bird watcher to make sure that the bird nests aren't hurt. While I'm all for helping birds, it seems, to me, an unfair requirement. Every other residential development in town near a tree is not required to hire a bird watcher to protect the nests and it just doesn't seem fair to me to have to develop that level of mitigation. It's fine if this is a 100-unit apartment building. If this is a large office building. If the tree is a central important thing but these guys have been pushed around by this tree all the past couple of years and this just seems to add insult to injury. So, I would support if the Staff can find a way or if we can find a way to just remove that requirement. Again, it's Item 4-D in the Mitigated Negative Declaration. Thank you.

Chair Furth: I guess we're to me or Osma, have you spoken? Osma.

Board Member Thompson: Hi there. Yes, this is one of my first time looking at this project. I did get a chance to look over the meeting minutes from the June 1st meeting and I've passed by the site a lot of times in the past. Unfortunately, didn't get to visit in the last two weeks. I really like the concept in general of the breezeway in the back. That's really exciting. I feel like the façade still – it's close but it's not there for me right now. In particular, I take a big issue with the louver screen on the – you know that long louver screen on the side. It's still – I understand the comments from the last meeting that it become more proportional which I can see that you've tried to do but it still feels like a wall in general. It seems like that part of the façade seems ignored in the way that it's being rendered and even in the material choice. It's true I've seen some of Saitowitz's stuff that you were referring to but I don't know that this is performing in that way. In that sense it's a huge – still, it's a big sore thumb. I think there's really some exciting ways to deal with that given that you have a stair in plan. There are really exciting opportunities for filtered light that aren't the solution that I think could contribute to the project and to the street. In that sense, I think that's a big item for me. I do appreciate the presentation with the material board. It is very helpful but at the same time, I'm not a fan of the limestone choice. It's quite dark and I don't know that's its as high quality as it could be. I agree with my Board Member – Board Member Baltay about the garage symmetry. If there's a way to make it more symmetric in some way,

maybe there's – I was just looking at it in the plan. There are some potential things that I think could be done to sort of create a little bit more balance there. Let's see what else. The material for the stair enclosure – the image that you show as the president, even that's a very strong, heavy grid with a heavy gauged metal. It's a little imposing. It's sort of hard to see why it would be nice to go up a stair. Now that we can see it from the front it might be nice if there's a concept in there about including greenery and that might make it a bit nicer but even that material I'm not a huge fan of. Let's see, the screen in which you're screening the garage, I didn't see a material on there for that. The material between…

Mr. Iwersen: It's the (inaudible) material. It's a fairly large sample.

Board Member Thompson: Is that the…

Mr. Iwersen: Yeah.

Board Member Thompson: Ok. That – I actually really like that one. I think there's something there in terms of the filtered light and maybe that's a concept that you can kind of bring into these other areas that call for filtered light. That kind of does it in a little bit more of an exciting way than these other kinds of ways that seem a little bit more oppressive. Yes, and in terms of the commercial area, you know I understand that it's small. I still think a little bit more – it seems like it's sort of is recessed in the back and that's a choice to bring more of the façade in the front. As – because the façade needs a lot of work I wonder if there's more that could be done to bring more prominence to the commercial area to actually make it usable because you have it and it needs to get used. So, if there's a way to detail it a little differently such that its sort of is a different thing I think that could benefit the project. As it stands I think it still needs a bit of work and I would like to see it again.

Chair Furth: Well I'm prepared to support the project as submitted. It is a pleasure to see how responsive the applicant and their architect has been in thinking about how to modify their earlier proposals. It is a complicated site. It is a set of uses that are highly desired by our City as evidenced by the City Council and our new Comprehensive Plan which we all now have copies of to read from cover to cover before the next meeting or at least to get the policies. I actually like the way this looks and more to the point perhaps I think you've created attractive places to live. I was looking at a lot of projects in the City this week that have been forced to build around oak trees and, in every case, there are losses of building space. In every case, there are enormous enhancements of the quality of that building space – that build space once people live there or work there. So, I actually am in support of the policy and in it's supportive your response to it. I think building residential on El Camino presents a huge problem in terms of noise. I think that – it was interesting to read the noise study part of the Negative – Mitigated Negative Declaration. I think that – I'm always curious as to what's going to happen on those balconies but living on a somewhat heavily traveled but much smaller street myself I do notice that there's a psychological benefit to having that additional construction outside my big windows. It gives an additional sense of privacy and buffering and I think that you've managed to provide outdoor spaces that are going to be quite sheltered from the noise. I've been thinking a lot about the Variance and the zoning constraints within which you and we are working. I actually like the recessed commercial entry. I was buttonholed on the way over here this morning when I was walking to City Hall by somebody who wanted to tell me how much we hated all of our development going to the sidewalk and how much he preferred recessed spaces. I think having this space to step off the sidewalk before you enter the commercial space is a good thing. I like this. These certainly are traditional of developing downtown and this is clearly not downtown but I would disagree with the idea that moving it forward makes it better. I trekked to Oakland – well drove to Oakland earlier this week to go to somebody's textile design studio and her showroom was a heck of a lot smaller than this but I drove all the way over there to be delighted by the work she does. In fact, I wonder what the chances are of this being essentially a work/live space for somebody who both lives in the area – lives in the project and uses that as the public –the place to interact with clients. So, it's a tiny office or retail space for somebody, these are three units in an enormous housing deficit but I can make the findings for approval. I'm not particularly bothered by the asymmetry but I – and I'm very aware of the problem that happens when you come out of a driveway and people on bicycles or on foot with headphones come charging by without any regard for their own

safety. So, I would not be in favor of modifying that unless the Transportation Department felt that it was quite safe. That's it for me. Does anybody care to make a motion? Oh, and with respect to the bird's nest, I'm not going to try to deal with our standard CEQA requirements today but I think the comments are worth noting.

Board Member Thompson: With regard to the bird mitigation I disagree. I think it's important to protect in place with nests.

Vice Chair Baltay: I'd like to push this along but I wonder if I could ask Osma, are there changes to the façade that could earn your support? What if we pushed back on the louvered grill or something like that?

Board Member Thompson: Yeah, maybe. I think – yeah if there was a way to conceptually show how that would change I think potentially – I wasn't prepared to support this project coming in because of how much the façade needs work. In terms of just concept, I mean maybe. I don't know. I think it needs some high concept of filtered light to actually show justification for creating such a flat façade. Especially when there's so many more exciting things. There's a landing there, there could be other type of fenestration or -- and such. You know there's more opportunities there.

Vice Chair Baltay: When I look at the floor plan this is a window in front of stair next to the kitchen and over a two-story space so the notion of it protecting privacy I don't really by. I think it's an architectural element that the architect seems to want. Generally, I want to give the architect that sort of latitude. They are the architect and I don't want to be designing from here but it's better if we can earn your support to approve this. So, I'm wondering if, for example, we suggested that that be redesigned and come back on a subcommittee. Do you think that would work for you?

Board Member Thompson: I think I'd want to see that and I'd want to see the stair enclosure again.

Vice Chair Baltay: What's – what would we want to do with the stair enclosure?

Board Member Thompson: It's heavy and oppressive. It needs – its kind of a – I don't know. It's not – I don't know that it's in conformance with the El Camino street frontage.

Board Member Lew: Can you clarify? You're talking about the stair inside that unit at the corner or the exterior stair with the metal mesh?

Board Member Thompson: The exterior stair with the metal mesh.

Board Member Lew: I would be fine if those two elements came back to subcommittee and I would – I think the Board would need to be clearer – as a majority the Board would need to be clearer. Give clearer direction as to what we're looking for in those.

Chair Furth: I certainly agree with that. I mean we appear to have three votes to move the project ahead. It's always good to get more consensus if we can but I would be reluctant to refer this to subcommittee unless we were quite clear what we are looking for. Since I'm not looking for anything I leave it to the three of you to figure that out if you can.

MOTION

Vice Chair Baltay: Let me make a motion and Osma you should feel free to second it or I mean to amend it with changes on things you wish. I recommend --- I move that we recommend to the Director to approve this project as submitted with the condition that the garage portal be made symmetric by widening the left-hand piece so I'm looking for a second on that motion.

Chair Furth: I'm not going to second it because -- I realize this is a non-second – because I'm not in favor of widening it unless the traffic – transportation experts feel that it's safe.

Vice Chair Baltay: Far enough, let me rephrase that. I recommend that we – I move that we recommend approval the Director of Planning with the request that the garage portal be widened on the left-hand side to be symmetric if the applicant can prove that the vehicular safety is satisfactory to the Transportation Department with some other mechanism. Perhaps a timer or I mean a beeper or something but it has to be safe by City Standards of course.

Board Member Gooyer: I'll second that.

Chair Furth: Do you want a friendly amendment about…

Board Member Thompson: Yes.

Chair Furth: … referral to…

Board Member Thompson: So perhaps – so I'd like to make a friendly amendment…

Chair Furth: Start there.

FRIENDLY AMENDMENT

Board Member Thompson: … to see this project again in subcommittee with regard to further development on the louver side of the project that further creates more conformance with El Camino in terms of openings and filtered light and further creates a different sense of scale than -- a smaller sense of scale, than what it's creating right now. In addition to that louver area, the mesh around the stair I would also like to come back to subcommittee for also a less oppressive material and construction.

Vice Chair Baltay: If you don't mind let me clarify that. You're asking that the large louvered cover over the window on the right-hand side of the façade be redesigned to meet the goals that you just mentioned or the whole façade? I can support redoing the louvered window and stair but I want to be clear that that's what we're asking them to reduce.

Board Member Thompson: Yes.

Vice Chair Baltay: Not everything else.

Board Member Thompson: Just those two areas.

Vice Chair Baltay: I can accept that amendment.

Chair Furth: Discussion.

Board Member Lew: (crosstalk) Robert needs to…

Chair Furth: (inaudible)

Board Member Gooyer: Yeah, I'm fine.

Chair Furth: So, I still don't understand what – I understand – you're very clear as to the areas you want to address. You want this large louvered window to the right of the façade and the left exterior stairwell screening. I don't understand what it means to make this more in conformance with the El Camino Real. I do understand about filtered light and more – so doe this mean at night, for example, you'd see light through it differently than in the day? I'm not – I understand the filtered light part. That's about it.

Board Member Lew: So, do you know – so in the El Camino Design Guidelines there's a picture of the I think it's the Wells Fargo Bank on El Camino and California. It has screens covering all of the windows.

Chair Furth: Right, it does.

Board Member Lew: That was a popular thing in the – like Edward Earl Stone, late 50s/60s and I think the guidelines say they don't like it because it is blocking views and transparency and making things more interesting. I mean they're trying to screen something and…

Chair Furth: Yeah because you're trying to hide something and that's bad.

Board Member Lew: Right and we're trying to have it more open and interesting and visually interesting.

Board Member Thompson: I think also the bigger thing in addition to that is that it's a big wall of blank really right now on that side which is a problem. So, if there could be a way to break that scale and maybe create some more visual interest I think that would be what we would need.

Chair Furth: Part of my problem is this is a very skinny site and you charge by on El Camino Real this is just a flash so I don't see it as a big blank wall but that's one person's opinion.

Board Member Lew: I think is it the sidewall that's blank because it's on the property line but it's not long. It's not going down the full length of the property line. It's just a relatively short wall.

Vice Chair Baltay: Don't forget there's a nice palm tree just to the right of this building which really compliments the sidewall beautifully and I think the whole façade actually. It has the same vertical sense about the louver.

Chair Furth: Then the direction to make the stairwell less oppressive. How would we translate that into perhaps clearer language? Maybe it's all perfectly clear to the applicant.

Mr. Iwersen: I'll take – I can understand what Osma's getting at and I'll work it – designing it in a more careful and delicate way.

Board Member Thompson: Ok.

Chair Furth: Alright. Are we ready to vote or does – ok. There is a motion, I forgot to say this last time, made by Board Member Baltay – Commission – Vice Chair Baltay. I can never get the last names right. Seconded by Board Member Gooyer to approve the project as submitted. There was a friendly amendment which added that this project should come back to a subcommittee for further work on two items. The louvered window screen to the right – on the right portion of the façade to provide a better opening and filtered light more consistent with the El Camino Real Design goals and a reworking of the mesh around the stairwell to make it less oppressive. All those in favor say aye. Opposed?

Board Member Gooyer: Nay.

Chair Furth: It passes 4 to 1. Board Member Gooyer dissenting. Would you care to amplify on your dissent?

MOTION PASSED WITH A VOTE OF 4-1 WITH BOARD MEMBER GOOYER OPPOSING.

Board Member Gooyer: I don't know the – it's like I said, you've come a long way on this but there are just too many things that. It's one of these things if you take one or two items at a time then it's really not the big of deal but there are like six or seven things that I don't really like about this. I think it's just

trying to put too much in spot. It's tough to do but that doesn't mean – and also it just seems like an impractical place to put three residences.

Chair Furth: Alright, thank you.

Mr. Iwersen: Thank you very much Board Members.

Chair Furth: We'll give Staff a minute to set up before our next item which is 620 Emerson Street.

[The Board took a short break]

3. PUBLIC HEARING / QUASI-JUDICIAL. 620 Emerson Street (17PLN-00331): Recommendation on Applicant's Request for Approval of a Minor Architectural Review to Allow Demolition of an Existing Single Story Building and Construct a New Two Story 4,256 Square Foot Commercial Building for the Expansion of Nobu Restaurant. The Project Includes Replacement of Three On-Site Parking Spaces with Five In-Lieu Spaces in the Downtown Parking Assessment District. Environmental Assessment: Exempt from the Provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) per Guideline Section 15303 (New Construction). Zoning District: CD-C(GF)(P) (Downtown Commercial). For More Information Contact the Project Planner Samuel Gutierrez at samuel.gutierrez@cityofpaloalto.org.

Chair Furth: Alright our next item is a public hearing, it's quasi-judicial concerning 620 Emerson Street. A request for a Minor Architectural Review to allow demolition of existing single-story building and construction of a new two-story building of about 4,250-square feet to permit the expansion of a Nobu restaurant and the replacement of three on-site parking space with five in lieu spaces within the Downtown Parking Assessment District. This project has been found to be exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act. May we have the Staff report, please? Oh sorry, has anybody – first of all, we should report on our visits to the site and conversations that we may have had about this project. Osma.

Board Member Thompson: I don't have anything to disclose.

Chair Furth: Peter.

Vice Chair Baltay: Yes, I've visited the site numerous times and I also has a telephone conversation with community member Elizabeth Wong who relayed to me that she has great concerns about the City allowing the in-lieu parking exception to be made for this project. It wasn't entirely clear in my conversation but she said she had some sort of traffic report that proved her position that parking could be accomplished on this site. I just thought it was important that everybody here – at least that was my conversation with Elizabeth Wong that she claims that the case. Thank you.

Chair Furth: I have visited the site repeatedly both on foot and by car.

Board Member Lew: I have no disclosures.

Board Member Gooyer: Just maybe reiterate that what needs to happen. I mean I assume visiting the site was just part of the normal routine of what we need to do. I didn't – this is the first time I've heard that we really need to indicate that we've visited the site. I figured that was given.

Chair Furth: Well it often is. The only reason for disclosing that is if something has changed since we visited.

Board Member Gooyer: I mean ok yes, I visited the site but you can pretty much assume – I mean I've done that to all the projects but it…

Chair Furth: We'll assume that you have unless you tell us otherwise.

HUNT HALE JONES

23 July, 2019

ARB Subcommittee
City of Palo Alto
Palo Alto, CA

Re: 3265 El Camino Real
15PLN-00312
Palo Alto, CA

To Whom It May Concern,

Per the conditions of approval, we are submitting documents for the redesign of the window at the El Camino façade and the more detailed design for the stair system.

Please find attached the following items for the conditions of approval request

1. 2-story Window at El Camino Real Elevation
    a. (3) Window Configuration Options
    b. (2) Outline Frame Options
        i. Shaped
        ii. Square
2. (2) Stair Design options
    a. Option 1
        i. This option is a combination of typical railing designs at landings and a flowing rhythm of 1x1 metal bars at the center stair run.
        ii. The continuous flowing pattern
            1. Recalls the siding pattern
            2. Provides proper guardrail requirements
            3. Acts as a climbing wall for planting per the landscape drawings
            4. Provides a visual interest through the feeling of movement that supports the concept of a stair system
    b. Option 2
        1. Flowing rhythm metal Bar option at entire system
            a. The consistency simplifies an already multi-faceted building and includes some of the advantages from above

Sincerely,

Bob Iwersen
Architect at HHJA

Attachment C

Project Plans

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

Directions to review Project plans online:

1. Go to: bit.ly/PApendingprojects
2. Scroll to find "3265 El Camino Real" and click the address link
3. On this project specific webpage you will find a link to the project plans and other important information

Direct Link to Project Webpage:

https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/news/displaynews.asp?NewsID=3867&targetID=319