KSH ARCHITECTS
KORTH SUNSERI HAGEY

349 Sutter Street
San Francisco
California 94108

PROJECT DESCRIPTION – 660 UNIVERSITY AVE, PALO ALTO

Located on a prominent site in Palo Alto, the 660 University project is situated on University Avenue between Middlefield Road and Byron Street. The project proposes a mixed-use 6-story building with two (2) levels of below-grade parking and includes the following: 9,115 square feet of office space on the ground and sixth floors; 66 residential units with an entry lobby; a shared fitness center for office and residential uses; and parking to service both uses.

The residential and office entrances are located on University Avenue with recessed alcoves designed to welcome tenants, connected to the sidewalk grade via ramps and stairs. Separate elevators are also provided for each use and are accessible from the below grade parking levels. Natural finishes have been selected for the exterior of the building, including clear glass, board-formed concrete, simulated wood panels and horizontal siding. The residential and office elevator towers on University Avenue, as well as the stair towers on Middlefield Road and Byron Street, are expressed as sculptural forms highlighted by extensive landscaping at the edges of the site. Changes in plane, setbacks, and projecting balconies further contribute to the character and texture of the proposed building.

Three parcels will be combined and two existing office buildings on the site will be demolished in order for this project to proceed. We are estimating that the approximate start date for construction will be 10/01/2026, and the approximate end date for construction will be 09/01/2027.

On sheet A0.1 of this submittal package (Project Information), detailed information is provided regarding Land Use, FAR, Unit Counts, Building Area, Density, Parking Counts, Site Coverage, Open Space, Building Height and Setbacks, which is also summarized below for reference.

Context

The project is designed to be a high-quality addition to Palo Alto. Features include changes in plane, the expression of varied heights in the building volumes, material and color variation, recessed windows and projecting balconies with glass railings. In addition to the private balconies, a terrace for residents is proposed at the roof, to provide common open space.

The project has taken steps to respond to the surrounding context of the site. The form of the building steps down toward the adjacent residence located at 524 Middlefield Road and responds to the context of the neighboring single-family use lot through setbacks along the common property line. The shared fence between the neighboring property and the site will be updated based on multiple discussions with the resident of 542 Middlefield Road, and the proposal has been received positively by the neighbor. To avoid heavy congestion along Middlefield Road, trash staging has been split along two streets; residential trash is staged on Byron Street, while office trash is staged on Middlefield Road. The vehicular entry to the parking garage is also located on Byron Street to avoid further congestion along Middlefield Road. The preservation of a large oak tree, located on an adjacent parcel, is incorporated into the design, and conforms to all recommendations and setbacks prescribed by a city approved arborist. An outdoor deck will also be constructed beneath

the existing oak tree without disturbing the existing conditions of the root system. The team for this project successfully designed & constructed a similar project at 250 Bryant in Mountain View (3 stories with two levels of below grade parking) around an existing oak tree and has experience with this type of installation.

The project front yard (Middlefield Rd) has a special 24 ft. setback that is required per the current zoning map. The design seeks to comply with the 24 ft. setback, but proposes added height in order to deliver the needed housing to Palo Alto. The setback area proposes a landscaped area trees to transition between the sidewalk and the building. Combined with the 12 ft. sidewalk width, both the proposed buildings is located 36 ft. from the face of the curb on Middlefield Road.

The street side yard setback (University Ave.) requires a 16 ft. setback per zoning, or a 0-20' setback on arterial roadways. The project proposes 6 ft setback is currently proposed, and combined with a 12 ft wide sidewalk, places the building 18 ft. from the face of curb on University Ave. Similarly, the street rear yard (Byron St) proposes a 10 ft setback where 16 ft is required. With the 10ft sidewalk width, the face of the proposed building is 20 ft. from the face of the curb on Byron Street.

The interior side yard requires a 10 ft setback. In order to accommodate the existing oak tree canopy, our building proposes a 25.5 ft. minimum setback, and a 28.5 ft. maximum setback with additional insets. In addition, while the form of the building steps down to respond to the single family residence at 534 Middlefield Rd., it does not fully comply with the daylight plane condition. This is shown in 2/A3.3B in the drawing set.

Open Space – 35% min. required

The proposed design provides 11,189 SF (49.7%) ground level open space as well as the following: 735 SF of private (residential) common terrace area at the ground floor; 4,968 SF of private (residential) balcony area; 1,219 SF of private (residential) terrace area on the fourth floor (subdivided for the 2 units adjacent); and 1,380 SF of private (office) terrace area on the roof. In total, 6,922 SF of private residential balcony & private/common terrace area is provided where 9,900 SF is required.

All units are provided with private balconies of minimum 60 square feet each. The ground floor terrace will provide a private space that allows for small and large gatherings, and acts as an extension of the indoor residential lounge directly adjacent.

The office terrace is located along the rear setback. The proposal includes raised planters with planting to maintain privacy for office users. The layout obscures sight lines from the terrace towards the neighboring properties, with occupiable areas set away from the perimeter guardrail.

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FAR – 0.5:1 max, min. 11 units – max 20 units / acre

The proposed office FAR is 0.875 & the proposed residential FAR is 2.085 (66 units for ~ 0.5 acres where 10 are allowed) for a combined proposed FAR of 2.96. This residential FAR calculation includes the proposed units, stairs, elevators, MEP rooms, lobby, and other residential amenities to support the residential units. The project seeks to exceed the allowable FAR in order to provide much needed housing within the downtown community.

Jobs/Housing Ratio

The existing combined office area (to be removed) on the subject parcels is 9,216 SF, of which 9,115 SF (~100 SF decrease) is proposed to be replaced within the current project. In addition, the project seeks to provide 66 new housing units (combination of studios, 1-BRs & 2-BRs) to the community.

Parking

With the proposed project being less than a mile from the University Ave. Caltrain station, the project has proposed a robust TDM plan to allow for a parking reduction of 30% overall. In addition, the residential parking is proposed primarily of independent mechanical stackers with pits (2 vehicles per stall) in order to limit the below grade scope to two levels and minimize the amount of below grade excavation and potential dewatering that may be required.

Affordability

The project sponsor is also including the housing affordability component for this project and was planning to distribute the 20% inclusionary requirement across three income levels. Here would be the breakdown of the 14 affordable units (20% of total unit count):

	Income Level	A1	B1	B2	C	E1	H	J	Total
Below Market Rate Units (20%, 14 total)	Ext. – low income		1		1		1		3
	Very – low income		1	1		1			3
	Low Income	1		1			1	1	4
	Moderate Income	1	1				1	1	4
								Total	**14**
Unit Typology	**Studio**: Unit Type A1-3, B1-4, C, F1 (431 – 521 SF) **1 Bedroom**: Unit Type D1-2, E2, F2, G, H, J (570 – 877 SF) **2 Bedroom**: Unit Type E1, F2 (840 – 871 SF)								

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Unit Design

A large variety of different unit plans will be provided, ranging from 431 SF to 877 SF. All units will be provided with at least one private balcony of minimum 60 SF. Two units at the fourth floor (2 studios + 1 1BR) provided with larger private terraces of at least ~375 SF each. Each unit will include a full-size ADA compliant bathroom & kitchen with a full-size stacking or side-by-side washer/dryer. Approximately 46% of the units will be 1BR & 2BR, with the remainder provided as studios.

Floor	Unit A1	Unit A2	Unit A3	Unit B1	Unit B2	Unit B3	Unit B4	Unit C	Unit D1	Unit D2	Unit E1	Unit E2	Unit F1	Unit F2	Unit G	Unit H	Unit J	Total per Floor
Second	2	2	1	2	2	3		1	1	1	1	1			1	1		19
Third	1	3	1	2	2	3		1	1	1	1	1			1	1		19
Fourth	1		1	3		2	2			1	1	1	1	1	1	1		16
Fifth			1							1	1	1	1	1	1	1	4	12
Total per Unit	4	5	4	7	4	8	2	2	2	4	4	4	2	2	4	4	4	66

RM-20 Zoning compliance

The proposed project requests City Council consideration of the following adjustments under a PC application, to approve 66 new units to the RM-20 district:

1. Increased height: The max building height allowed for RM-20 is 30'. The proposed project seeks to provide a 6-story building with max. 56'-2" height to the top of the occupied sixth floor (57'-11 ½" from grade), or 70'-2" height to top of the roof slab (71'-11 ½" from grade).
2. Increased FAR: 0.5 to 2.96 as noted above, including increased density of 66 units from 10/0.5 acre allowed.
3. Reduced parking: 111 stalls are required (37 office + 72 residential including assigned + 2 unassigned ADA). The proposed project seeks to provide a minimum of 78 stalls utilizing a 30% TDM reduction.
4. Open Space: 9,900 SF of private and common residential open space is required. The proposed project seeks to provide less open space than required for the residential tenants (6,358 SF).
5. Daylight Plane: Allowance to not comply with the daylight plane condition adjacent to the single family residence at 534 Middlefield Rd.

ARB Ad Hoc Conditions

During the December 2024 ARB meeting, the committee recommended that the Council approve the project with the following conditions of approval to return to an ARB ad hoc committee. The applicant has provided responses to the conditions as follows:

1. Ensure the approved plans do not further increase activity in the TPZ than currently shown in the plans without Arborist review. Remove balconies from within the Oak tree canopy. Support Urban Forestry's COA for the 200% tree value bond.
   Answer: The applicant agrees to the bond value and construction activity stipulations.

2. Include greater specification of all materials include complete material specifications and samples, the corner details, reduce the LRV level of the white paint finish to 83 or less.
   Answer: The applicant has provided physical samples of all proposed materials, including a white paint sample with an LRV level of 82. A detail of the siding corner has been provided as requested.

3. Provide at least 25% of the long-term bicycle parking readily accessible at grade.
   Answer: The applicant has included a residential bike room at the ground floor that provides 18 stalls, which exceeds 25% of the required residential long term bicycle parking. Space has been provided at the ground floor office lobby for secure bike storage capable of 2 stalls, which exceeds 25% of the required office long term bicycle parking – the future office tenant will be required to install the lockers in their preferred location.

4. All residential units shall comply with the City's private open space requirements, excluding the units within the Oak tree canopy.
   Answer: All units are now provided with a balcony of min. 60 SF, which exceeds the PAMC min. private open space requirement of 50 SF.

5. Revise the tree planting plan to eliminate or relocate proposed new trees under the Oak tree canopy, with review from the City Arborist.
   Answer: The proposed trees are located above grade in individual planters, so as to not disturb the roots of the existing oak tree. If the City Arborist does not approve the tree location, the applicant will relocate the trees or pay in-lieu fees in the case of their removal.

6. Reduce the height and total transparent area of glazing on the sixth floor.
   Answer: The project proposes bird-safe glass on all sixth floor windows to address bird safety concerns.

7. Review and revise the elevations to eliminate or mitigate co-planar situations with different building materials.
   Answer: We have incorporated a cornice detail at the Byron and Middlefield elevations to provide separation between different materials. We have also adjusted the University Ave. elevation to eliminate co-planar relationships between different materials.