

Attachment E:
Context-Based Design Criteria Consistency
824 San Antonio 23PLN-00181

Pursuant to PAMC 18.16.090(b), the following context-based design considerations and findings are applicable to this project. These context-based design criteria are intended to provide additional standards to be used in the design and evaluation of development in a commercial district. The purpose is to encourage development in a commercial district to be responsible to its context and compatibility with adjacent development as well as to promote the establishment of pedestrian oriented design. Complete code language for the commercial context-based design criteria can be found online at https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/paloalto/latest/paloalto_ca/0-0-0-78138.

1. Pedestrian and Bicycle Environment

The design of new projects shall promote pedestrian walkability, a bicycle friendly environment, and connectivity through design elements

Project Consistency

This finding can be made in the affirmative in that the project will provide new short-term and long-term bike racks to comply with the code. The entrances to the building are recessed and covered. The ground floor includes storefront windows for visibility and access. The vehicle access is located on the northern side of the site, into the underground garage. The streetscape includes a bench for senior who may be waiting for a ride, though the majority of the front setback is dedicated to required infrastructure items. The front setback landscaping potential is constrained by the required transformer, standpipes, trash staging area, and on-site loading space. However, overall the project is consistent with this criterion.

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

The entrances are easily identifiable from the street. The façade includes overhangs and plate heights that are appropriate to a pedestrian scale. The shared residential and commercial lobby space creates a street presence that is not inwardly oriented. The upper floors are not setback, but this is not necessary in the neighborhood context. Overall the project is consistent with this criterion.

3. Massing and Setbacks

Buildings shall be designed to minimize massing and conform to proper setbacks

The proposed design includes façade articulation on all sides of the building and has been designed to accommodate the preservation of two existing redwood trees in the side yard, incorporating them into the open space design. The building respects the required 24 ft special setback along San Antonio. The proposed 5-ft side setbacks meet fire code requirements. There is adequate usable open space in the rear yard as well. The project is consistent with this criterion.

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 project is not adjacent to low-density residential development.

5. Project Open Space

Private and public open space shall be provided so that it is usable for the residents and visitors of the site

Each independent living unit has a balcony that is at least 60 sf. The assisted living units do not for safety, however the second floor has a shared 1,441 sf courtyard for these residents. The project also includes a smaller 380 sf third floor balcony and 1,188 sf rooftop garden. The rooftop garden meets code requirements and is contextually appropriate in this location. The project also includes approximately 1,550 sf of usable common open space in the rear yard and 1,500 sf of public open space in the front, though this area is not counted as “usable”. The project is consistent with this criterion.

6. Parking Design

Parking shall be accommodated but shall not be allowed to overwhelm the character of the project or detract from the pedestrian environment

The proposed parking is located below grade and will serve the residential and commercial users. The proposed driveway is the minimum required 20 ft wide. There is one parking spot proposed at grade to serve the seniors who are unable to drive and may get picked up from their residence.

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 property is less than one acre.

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 is subject to the California Green Building Code (CalGreen, Tier 2) and includes a variety of sustainable elements. The project will be subject to the most recently adopted building code standards.