

Attachment F:
Context-Based Design Criteria Consistency
3200 Park Boulevard 22PLN-00287

Context-Based Design Criteria Consistency-Cannery Building Parcel

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 project will be required to provide an enhanced bikeway connecting Park Boulevard to Portage Avenue, and will provide an opportunity, through dedication of land and funds, for the City to provide improved connections across Matadero Creek. There are pedestrian pathways throughout the site, providing connectivity across proposed parcels. Pedestrian connections to Acacia could be improved and discussions regarding this are ongoing and the design of the Park to Portage connection is also ongoing. 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

On the cannery building site, the cannery building would be retained as-is on the west end and large portions of the southern façade closest to Ash Street/Portage Ave. A pedestrian mews would be provided between the parking garage and the existing cannery building to improve the pedestrian environment in this area. An access easement would be provided over Street B in order to accommodate an enhanced bicycle connection and public access to and from the park and future affordable housing project. Design changes to create a more inviting retail area are proposed. 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 cannery building height and massing would not increase as a result of the proposed project. The new parking garage is the minimum height necessary to provide replacement parking for the commercial uses while accommodating the future park. The new parking garage meets the setback and daylight plane requirements that would typically be required for an RM-30 Zone District. The daylight plane next to the R-1 is based on the R-1 zone

district requirements and has been met. The revised plans lowered the parking garage even further by lowering the grade of the garage. This aligned the garage with the datum of the awnings rather than the height of the historic building. This reduced the scale of the new building, prioritizing the historic building. 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

The scale of the garage is the minimum necessary to replace the surface parking; improvements were made based on ARB and staff feedback to lower the garage and better respect the privacy of adjacent uses. A line-of-sight diagram has been provided to show how views between neighboring yards and the parking garage are screened. Tree removal along the property line was reassessed. A couple of additional mature trees will be retained. Overall trees along the property line that are mature are planned to be retained. The majority of the trees along the property line are either not mature or small trees that do not contribute to screening. Revised planting is planned to provide trees that provide better screening along the new property boundary to screen the parking garage.

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

There is no public or private open space requirement for the cannery building parcel. However, open space areas on the north side (between the cannery and parking garage) and at the southwest corner (adjacent the retail space) are provided. It is anticipated that areas on the north side would be utilized primarily by private employees. The area adjacent to the retail space is designed for public use. An interpretive display portraying important historical information about the site would be located within this outdoor area and/or within the retail space under the monitor roofs. The development agreement includes dedication of 2.25 acres for the purposes of a public park, which would provide additional public open space opportunities on site.

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 existing parking is at-grade and revised parking will be both at grade and within a new parking garage. The parking garage is necessary to achieve the goal of providing a park, and possibly future naturalization of the creek in this area, while not creating parking impacts on the surrounding neighborhood. It is not located along a street frontage and is therefore desirable with respect to how the project looks from public streetscapes, especially with the intent that a public access connection from Park to Portage will be a desirable area for residents to access the public park and use as a connection across the Ventura neighborhood between Park and El Camino Real.

7. Large Multi-Acre Sites

Large sites (over one acre) shall be designed so that street, block, and building patterns are consistent

The surrounding neighborhood, with the exception of Olive Avenue, is commercial. The remaining portion of the

with those of the surrounding neighborhood

cannery building and the building at 3250 Park would not change. The small commercial building at 3040 Park (commercial recreation use) would be removed. The new parking garage on the cannery building parcel would be set back 23 feet from adjacent single-family residential parcels. The parking garage is designed to be well under the single-family residential daylight plane requirements (the most restrictive abutting zoning district).

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, including increased energy efficiency standards that became effective January 1, 2023.

Context-Based Design Criteria Consistency-Townhomes

Pursuant to PAMC 18.13.060(b), the following context-based design considerations and findings are applicable to the townhome parcel for the proposed project. These context-based design criteria are intended to provide additional standards to be used in the design and evaluation of development in a multi-family district. The purpose is to encourage development in a multi-family district to be responsible to its context and compatibility with adjacent development as well as to promote the establishment of pedestrian oriented design. The multi-family context-based design criteria can be found online at: https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/paloalto/latest/paloalto_ca/0-0-0-77575

9. Massing and Building Facades

Massing and building facades shall be designed to create a residential scale in keeping Palo Alto neighborhoods, and to provide a relationship with the street(s).

The proposed townhome parcel will be zoned Planned Community; however, the project proposes to comply with most of the development standards set forth in the RM-30 zone district to ensure a natural transition from single-family residential to medium-density multi-family housing. The proposed height is 35' consistent with the RM-30 zone district. The daylight plane is required to comply with that of the abutting R-1 requirements. Therefore, the project will comply with the side yard daylight plane (10 feet up and 45-degree angle from property line). The project is setback in compliance with the RM-30 requirements and provides screening and open space area between the townhomes and residential use. Although the project proposes increased floor area in comparison to the base zoning; however, this is reflective of the dedication of a substantial portion of the existing property's land to the City for the purpose of a public park and future affordable housing.

The project provides stoops for many of the units, particularly the units facing Park Boulevards. This is a desirable feature that does not wall off the building, creating a sense of place that connects directly to the street. This helps to create a quality, pedestrian-oriented transition from single-family detached to medium-density attached housing. Further improvements to the façade to provide better articulation and break up the design across the extensive frontage of the project on Park Boulevard would improve the design. The plans have been revised to provide more modulation in the roofline, improving the vertical articulation of the building. The revised plans also provide more horizontal articulation through the introduction of bays and changes in materials to help to break up the facades and provide a better pedestrian/human-scale connection at entrances. Overall the project, as revised, is consistent with this finding.

10. 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.

The project is set back from the R-1 zone district and maintains the R-1 daylight plane where it abuts single-family uses. The style of development works well as a transition from single-family residential to medium-density residential use. A future affordable housing project designed as a single building would be anticipated on the City dedication parcel, providing for a denser use that provides a second unit type further from the single-family residences.

11. Project Open Space

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

The project complies with common, private and useable open space requirements through the use of paseos through the site. However, because of the significant dedication of land to the City for the purposes of a public park, it does not meet the minimum site open space requirements. However, the park presumably would provide a recreational area for residents, including additional play area for children for these 3-4 bedroom townhomes. Improvements were made to the pedestrian mews to create more privacy for residents and to provide a more greenery to improve the environment for residents. Sheet AR1.2.0 does not accurately show private open space areas versus landscape open space areas. Private balconies should be relabeled as private open space and should not be counted toward landscape space. If the area near the single-family residences cannot be used for common open space, more clarity as to why this cannot be achieved should be provided. It seems that providing more open area for children should be considered without impacting the use of this space to meet the bioretention requirements for the site.

12. 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.

Parking is provided for each individual unit within the garage as part of the townhome style design. Guest parking is provided along the private streets that provide primary access to the site (Streets A, B, and C that form a U shape around the project) The parking does not overwhelm the character of the project or detract from the pedestrian environment. However, on the private street connecting Portage Avenue and Park Boulevard.

13. Large (multi-acre) Sites

Large (in excess of one acre) sites shall be designed so that street, block, and building patterns are consistent with those of the surrounding neighborhood.

Generally, the type of unit development and design of individual doors accessing the street on Park Boulevard is encouraged. The street façade along Park Boulevard is commercial in nature; but care has been taken to consider the single-family residential uses on Olive Avenue in the design of the townhomes and their scale (through setbacks, daylight plane, and height). Improvements were made to improve the design of the side of the units, which are very visible from various streets and some from Olive Avenue and those residents. Some of the units were revised to bring entrances around to the side street and changes in materials and breaks have been provided to improve the end-designs of units.

14. Housing Variety and Units on Individual Lots

Multifamily projects may include a variety of unit types such as small-lot detached units, attached row houses/townhouse, and cottage clusters in order to achieve variety and create transitions to adjacent existing development.

The proposed project is a Development Agreement; therefore, the type of housing being provided aligns with the negotiated terms with the Council ad hoc committee, which was endorsed by Council. The project includes townhome style units on a 3.8 ac net lot area as well as a future affordable housing project on a one-acre parcel. The medium-density, townhome style, use on the townhome parcel is an appropriate type of housing for a transition from single-family residential to higher density residential/commercial areas. The future affordable housing project is anticipated to be a different type of design, likely a single structure with apartments on one acre.

15. Sustainability and Green Building Design

Project design and materials to achieve sustainability and green building design shall be incorporated into the project. Green building design considers the environment during design and construction. Green building design aims for

compatibility with the local environment: to protect, respect and benefit from it. In general, sustainable buildings are 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 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, including increased energy efficiency standards that became effective January 1, 2023.