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## Architectural Review Board Staff Report

**From: Jonathan Lait, Planning and Development Services Director**  
**Lead Department: Planning and Development Services**

**Meeting Date: April 6, 2023**  
**Report #: 2303-1194**

### **TITLE**

3300 El Camino Real [21PLN-00028]: Ad-Hoc Committee Review of Previously Approved Project to Review Architectural and Landscape Element Design Changes

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends the Architectural Review Board (ARB) Ad-Hoc Committee take one of the following action(s):

1. Discuss the details and revisions and recommend that the Director find that they meet the approval conditions and align with the approval findings; or
2. Provide additional direction to the project applicant and continue the item to a later date.

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

On January 19, 2023, the ARB recommended approval of the subject project. The ARB also recommended that the project return to the ARB Ad-Hoc Committee to review revised details, along with the applicant's responses to the ARB's comments.

Links below are to the October 20, 2022 Architectural Review Board hearing documents:

Staff Report: <https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/files/assets/public/agendas-minutes-reports/agendas-minutes/architectural-review-board/2022/arb-10.20.2022-3300-ecr.pdf>

Minutes: <https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/files/assets/public/agendas-minutes-reports/agendas-minutes/architectural-review-board/2022/arb-12.01.2022-minutes-10.20.2022.pdf>

Video: <https://midpenmedia.org/architectural-review-board-10202022/>

### **AD-HOC COMMENTS**

Following is a summary of the Ad Hoc Committee items identified in the previous hearing and the applicant's response to those requests. A memorandum from the applicant is also included in Attachment B and the Project plans reflecting the subcommittee items are included in Attachment D.

#### A. Enhanced Landscape on El Camino Real Frontage

The ARB recommended that the applicant enhance their landscape plan along the El Camino Real Frontage to incorporate a linear park to activate the street and better respond to El Camino Real Design Guideline 2.3.1.2 and 3.2.5.

**ECR Guideline 2.3.1.2** - states that the Stanford Research Park frontage “should reinforce the important of the El Camino Real frontage. New buildings should be built up to or close to the sidewalk, and the frontage improved with street entries, wide sidewalks, street trees and pedestrian amenities.”

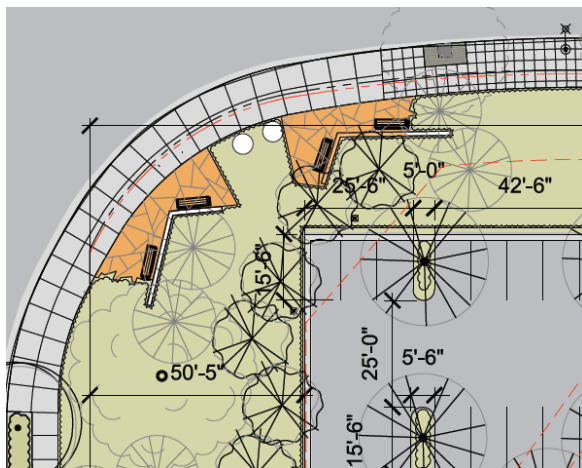
**ECR Guideline 3.2.5** - states that “surface parking areas, including driveways, should not occupy more than 50% of a property frontage along El Camino Real, and continuous parking lot frontage may not exceed 120 feet.”

#### *Applicant’s Response:*

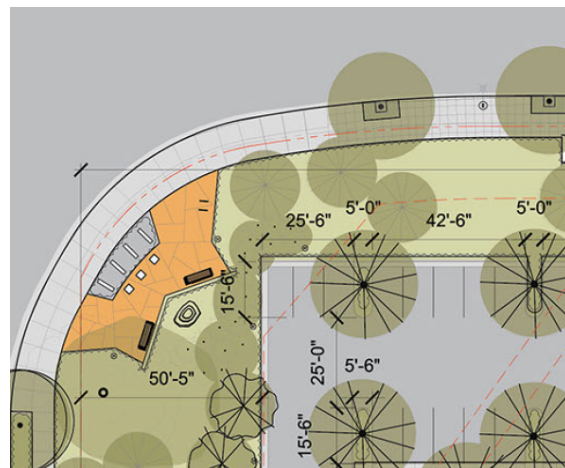
See the attached drawings for refinements to the landscape strip design along El Camino Real.

#### *Staff’s Analysis:*

The applicant has expanded the size of the corner pedestrian plaza at Hansen Way and El Camino Real and added fixtures to attract pedestrians to use the space. However, to create a linear park, staff would suggest the applicant add a decomposed granite (DG) walkway from the corner plaza to the front entrance plazas. The applicant has stated this is infeasible.



10/20 Submittal



4/6 Submittal

#### B. Consider Adding Texture to El Camino Real Façade

The ARB recommended that the applicant modify their existing façade on El Camino Real to incorporate additional textures to add additional articulation to the street facing side of the building.

*Applicant's Response:*

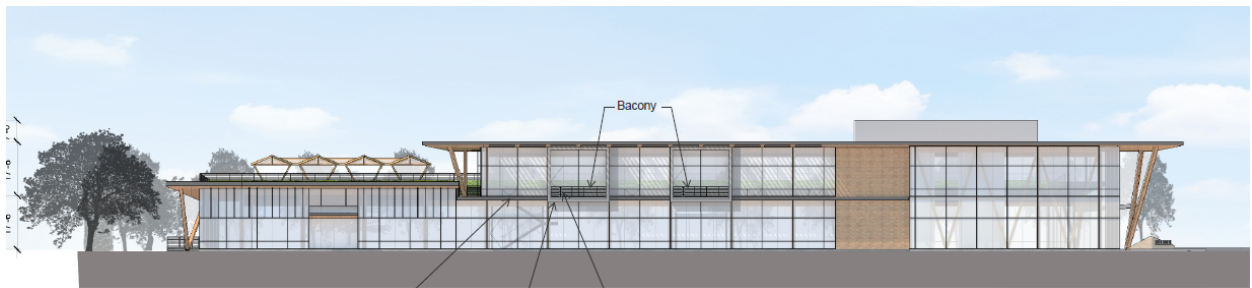
See the attached drawings for the proposed changes to the façade facing El Camino Real. Two new framed balconies are proposed on the second floor that provide for greater articulation and visual texture to the façade.

*Staff's Analysis:*

The applicant has provided the requested modifications.



10/20 Submittal



4/6 Submittal

C. Develop Interior Mechanical System Design

The ARB recommended that the applicant prepare a design for a potential interior mechanical duct system that will demonstrate the visibility of the system from the street. The ARB had concerns that, given the visibility of the space, a mechanical system that was not properly installed will detract from the appeal of the building.

*Applicant's Response:*

The intent is for the future main ductwork design (along with any runners) to be laid out in a way to contain and conceal as much as possible with respect with the interior tenant improvement build out.

*Staff's Analysis:*

The applicant did not provide the requested documentation to satisfy this requirement. When staff reached out to the applicant about this, the applicant communicated that they wanted to discuss this again with the ARB.

#### D. Add Operable Windows to the Building

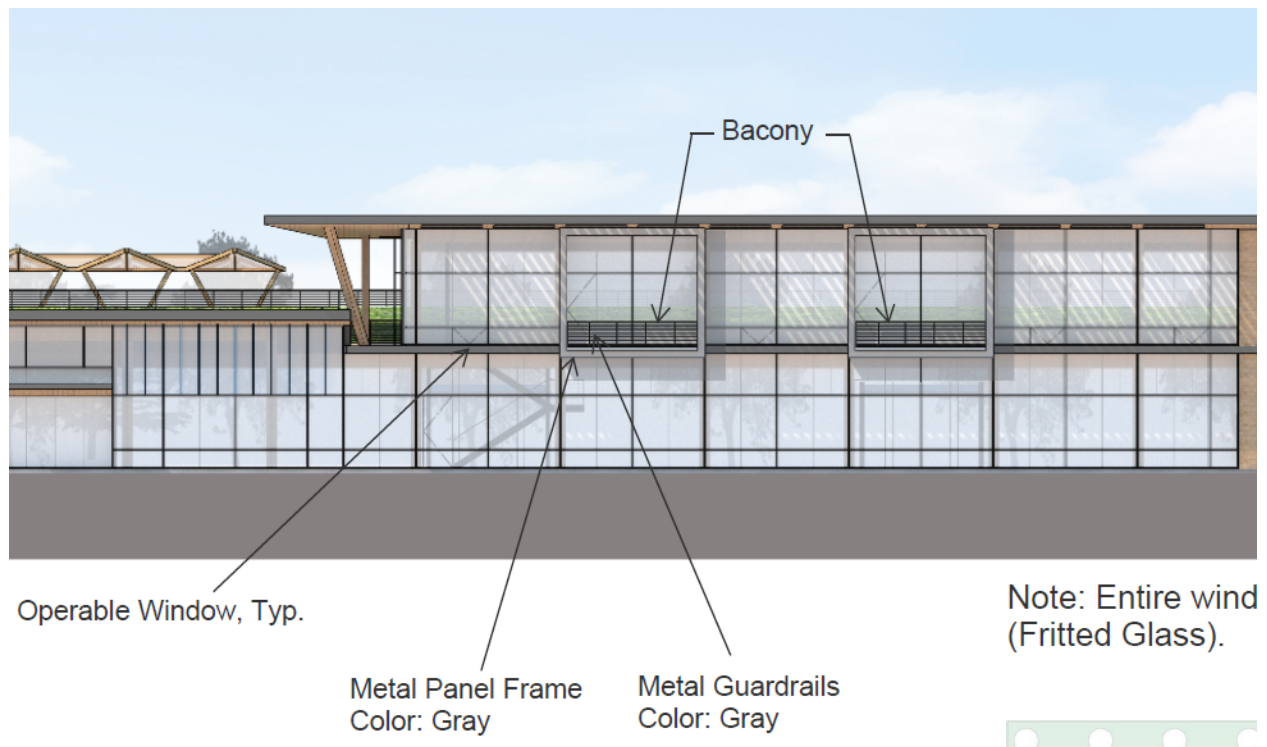
The ARB recommended that the applicant incorporate operable windows into the design of their building.

##### *Applicant's Response:*

See attached drawings for the proposed locations of the added operable windows on the second floor along the El Camino Real façade.

##### *Staff's Analysis:*

The applicant has provided the requested windows on the El Camino Real façade. There does not appear to be any added windows on other façades.



4/6 Submittal

#### E. Consider Activation Element on Ground Floor

The ARB recommended the applicant incorporate an additional element at ground level to encourage pedestrian activity to and through the site. The ARB did not require that ground floor retail be included in the building and discussed broadly that they would be supportive of a mobile facility or other feature that would complement the linear park recommendation they made.

##### *Applicant's Response:*

See attached plans for the proposed site enhancement at the corner of El Camino Real and Hansen Way.

*Staff's Response:*

The applicant has provided pedestrian plazas at the front of the building to activate this area and there are additional seating areas along El Camino Real.

**F. Other Minor Modifications**

Following the October 20, 2022 ARB hearing, staff received a letter from the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society (SCVAS) noting their concerns with the amount of glazing used for the building and the potential impacts it may have on birds migrating near the site. As SCVAS noted, the City's Comprehensive Plan Policy L-6.3 and L-6.3.1 indicates that buildings should incorporate "bird-friendly" designs and that the City should develop guidelines for developers. Typically, these designs seek to incorporate etching, patterns, or other mechanisms visible to bird that will help reduce collisions with glazing.

Staff spoke with the individual who provided the letter to the City and highlighted condition of approval #8 in the draft conditions of approval which requires bird-safe glazing on the building and provides direction to refer to the San Francisco Guidelines for Bird Safe Glazing. The applicant has incorporated bird safe glazing into the building design as shown on Sheet 3 of the Ad-Hoc plan set. This glazing will apply to all sides along the entirety of the building which serves to meet the City's current conditions and Comprehensive Plan policies.

**ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A: Location Map

Attachment B: Applicant Responses to ARB Comments

Attachment C: SCVAS Letter

Attachment D: Project Plans

**AUTHOR/TITLE:**

Garrett Sauls, Planner