
Joint meeting February 6 Item #2: Design Consideration

From Maria Bautista <maria@specker.com>

Date Thu 2/6/2025 12:47 AM

To Public Comment <publiccomment@losaltosca.gov>; Public Comment - HC <HCpubliccomment@losaltosca.gov>; Public Comment - PC <PCpubliccomment@losaltosca.gov>; City Council <council@losaltosca.gov>

The design-related analysis of the Library Patio Project focuses primarily on the patio's relationship to the Historic Landmark Orchard, but fails to provide relevant consideration of the era-defining the Los Altos Civic Center buildings and their unique campus setting.

The Civic Center, with buildings built in succession from 1960, was designed by architect Ernst J Kump (1911-1999) who is renown for Foothill College in Los Altos Hills, and credited with establishing a paradigm for community colleges throughout the world

Kump's notion of campus went on to influence the corporate headquarters throughout what became Silicon Valley. The Civic Center campus with a focus on a direct connection to the outdoors and a sense of adventure evolved to be what is found today just down the road at the likes of Google where open space and pathways are still prized. The Civic Center is an early example of a municipal park in what was then a burgeoning suburban setting. The Civic Center is a rare example of the transition from farmland to corporate campus.

With origins in the Mission Revival style made famous in California by architect Clifford May, the Los Altos Civic Center has a derivative low, Ranch aesthetic with its deep eaves and floor to ceiling windows. With a shape that speaks to both an agrarian past and a period of national expansion in the 1950s and 60s, the Civic Center buildings are a combination of a rambling rancher and a monitor barn characterized by board and batten siding and, originally, cedar shake roofs. The Civic Center is quintessential 20th century California architecture. It's style is characterized by relaxed, informal indoor-outdoor qualities where the outdoors comes inside with ample gardens to assist with a seamless transition. This seamless transition is never broken as

expansive windows allow for unobstructed site lines out to the natural landscape, in the case, an expansive orchard. Lucky us!

Thank you for your mindful consideration of our unique place.

Best,

Maria Bautista