

# ATTACHMENT E

May 20, 2022

Planning Commission  
City of Los Altos  
One North San Antonio Road  
Los Altos, CA 94022

**SUBJECT: 4350 EL CAMINO REAL – REVISIONS**

Dear Honorable Chair Doran:

Thank you for the opportunity to present our project on April 7, 2022. We appreciated hearing the Planning Commission, Complete Streets Commission, staff and public concerns and present to you a substantially revised project. We addressed building design and site planning concerns as well as our affordable housing program. This letter discusses the changes in broad detail; please also see our architect's summary of changes for a more technical description.

**Building Design Changes**

We modified the building corner to make it more welcoming and reduce its massing. We added a steel and wood canopy over the newly enhanced entry area; the landscaped entry plaza incorporates special paving, bench seating and lighting. The distinctive canopy also provides an attractive location for the building address. Above the corner element we recessed the parapet and opened up the canopy over the fifth floor providing more transparency, lowering the height and reducing the building mass at the corner. We also lightened the color of the stone material, which further reduces the bulk.

Addressing the newly adopted design standards we carried the main stone material around the base of the building to help emphasize its base as well as break up the four-story elevations facing our neighbors at Peninsula Real. On the other sides the fourth story overhangs were redefined and additional articulation added to emphasize the middle of the building. The overhangs and glazing at the fifth story were coordinated with changes to the parapet to reduce the appearance of the upper floor and to create a distinctive top to the building. We also redesigned and recessed the stairway tower on Los Altos Avenue to minimize and recess the height of that element and emphasize the intermediate bay of the building.

We added metal sunshades, horizontal metal railings, projecting precast sills, and recessed the remaining windows for a more residential appearance. We also changed the window frames to metal. The same elements were incorporated into the stoops on Los Altos Avenue where possible to improve their detailing.

We reviewed the privacy impacts of the closest building wings to our neighbors. We reaffirmed that the main windows facing Peninsula Real are set high up on the wall maintaining privacy. We found an opportunity to reduce the closet windows in those units to very small windows further enhancing the privacy between the buildings. We also reaffirmed our landscape approach to enhance privacy as much as practical in the multiple-family context by planting strategically located trees complementing our neighbor's landscape and installing perimeter hedging.

### **Added Building Amenities**

We added a bar-be-cue, herb garden, and sculptural seating "pebbles" to the courtyard. Our desire is to maintain the courtyard as a mostly passive element; however, adding the BBQ adds a desirable community element. The addition of seating pebbles serve as a playful element that invites more imaginative yet passive uses.

We added a more adult-oriented rooftop deck to the northwestern corner of the roof. The rooftop deck will afford spectacular views as well as a small community seating area and BBQ.

### **Site Plan Changes**

We aligned the garage door opening to provide a simplified vehicular entry and loading area. We adjusted the landscape plan to incorporate an on-site loading space to facilitate deliveries to the building and recessed the bus stop pad to improve the bus stop safety and to provide better sight-visibility from the driveway. The pedestrian safety is also enhanced by a new Stop Bar at the sidewalk.

Since the bus stop is set into the landscape, we are working with the VTA to design a custom bus stop enclosure to reflect the quality of the new project and to enhance the entry to the City. We are also including a new bus parking pad improving the roadway.

In response to a comment from a concerned neighbor, we reaffirmed that our grading and drainage plan is appropriately designed to contain as much water on site as practical, appropriately treat any runoff to the street, and avoid any runoff onto our neighbor's property.

### **Affordable Housing Changes**

We refined the mix and distribution of the seven proposed affordable housing units. We replaced a two-bedroom, Moderate unit with a three-bedroom, Moderate unit, which is located at the first-level facing Los Altos Avenue. We kept the location and designation of the

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second- and third-floor below-market-rate units. And, we improved the location of the fourth-floor affordable unit to face the interior courtyard.

Overall we propose four Moderate Income units (one, three-bedroom, two, two-bedroom, and one, one-bedroom), and three Very-low Income units (three, one-bedroom units). Please see Pages A0.0.1 and A2.2 through A2.5 of the plans for their locations. The three, Very-low Income units maintain our potential for two development incentives and a density bonus.

By including a three-bedroom BMR unit we believe our affordable housing program better reflects the mix of units and includes the potential for housing a larger family affordably. The remaining two, two-bedroom BMR units and the four, 1-bedroom units demonstrates our project intention to provide more affordable housing opportunities at the entry level. The upper level remains market rate to help underwrite the development risk of project—even more uncertain now due to market changes—and to help make up the cost of providing the affordable units as discussed in the Density Bonus Report.

### **Administrative Story Pole**

We continue to work with the staff to resolve concerns related to the Story Pole requirements per the City Council's direction. We previously updated the pedestrian-level and 3D flyover to include more information about the sidewalk widths, the proposed development and the adjacent buildings. We resolved the link on the billboard QR codes so they point to the flyover and 3D models. We reaffirmed the photorealistic image on Billboard No. 1 is correct to reflect the input from the Council ad hoc subcommittee and the Peninsula Real HOA. Finally, we are presently adjusting the location of Billboard No. 1 to address safety and visibility concerns.

Sincerely,

Angie and Greg Galatolo  
Owner/Applicant  
4350 El Camino Real

Encl: Letter from Seidel Architects, dated May 11, 2022  
Revised Density Bonus Report, dated May 20, 2022

Seidel Architects- May 11, 2022

### **Complete Streets Commission**

On October 23, 2019, the Complete Streets Commission (CSC) held a duly noticed public meeting to consider the Project. Pursuant to Section 14.78.090 of the Zoning Code, an application for the City Council design review shall be subject to a multimodal transportation review and recommendation to the Planning Commission and City Council by the Complete Streets Commission as part of the approval process in order to assess potential project impacts to various modes of transportation such as but not limited to bicycle, pedestrian, parking, traffic impacts on public streets, and/or public transportation. The CSC members expressed the following concerns regarding the project which in turn have been reflected in the draft Conditions of Approval in Attachment B, which are recommended if the project is approved.

1. Install a “STOP” sign and stop bar at the garage exit to advise motorists to STOP before exiting the driveway.  
**Response: A “STOP” sign and bar will be installed at the driveway. See C2.0**
  
2. The outbound garage ramp shall have a maximum slope of 2 percent within 20 feet of the top of the ramp.  
**Response: The garage ramp has been recessed further into the building and a “level” (2%) grade extends from the ramp to the property line. See A1.0, A 2.2, A 3.5, C3.0**
  
3. No parking shall be permitted along the El Camino Real frontage.  
**Response: no parking is planned on the El Camino Real frontage.**
  
4. The truck loading space shall be no less than ten (10) feet wide by twenty-five (25) feet long.  
**Response: A 10’x25’ truck loading space has been provided adjacent to the garage entrance. An interior pedestrian ramp has been provided in the trash staging/loading area for deliveries to the building. See A1.0, C2.0, C3.0**
  
5. The loading space shall be accessible from a public street, and it shall not interfere or conflict with the driveway for the below-grade parking garage.  
**Response: The loading space is accessible from El Camino Real and does not conflict with the vehicular driveway. See A1.0, C2.0**
  
6. Replace existing shelter with a new VTA standard shelter (17’ Full Back with Ad panel) consistent with VTA direction.  
**Response: Space for the standard VTA shelter has been provided. See A1.0, C2.0, L1.0**

7. Locate the shelter out of the sidewalk by pushing it into the landscaping; provide a 7'x25' shelter pad consistent with VTA direction. This will improve sight distance from the driveway entrance if the driveway is not relocated.

**Response: A 7'x25' shelter pad has been located consistent with VTA standards, further back from the curb. See A1.0, L1.0, C2.0**

8. Install a new bus pad 10'x75' minimum per VTA Standards (see attachment "VTA Bus Stop Passenger Fac Standards 2010 (37)")

**Response: A 10'x 75' bus pad has been located in the El Camino Real right of way. See A 1.0, A2.2, L1.0, C2.0**

9. Remove street tree and landscaping adjacent to bus stop area consistent with VTA direction.

**Response: Landscaping and tree locations have been redesigned for consistency with the new bus shelter location. See A1.0, L1.0**

Following the discussion, the CSC voted 4-0 to recommend approval of the Project to the Planning Commission and City Council. The CSC agenda report and minutes is contained in Attachment D.

### **Design Review Permit**

**B.** (pg. 14) The proposal has architectural integrity and has an appropriate relationship with other structures in the immediate area in terms of height, bulk and design.

*Staff review: The proposal is taller by an entire floor in relationship with the neighboring structures. Its bulk can be reduced further by articulating the vertical facade more, providing appropriate scale back using design as detailed in the design control chapter of the CT district.*

**Response: The building has been designed as a series of Primary Bays ranging from 24' to 34' wide, that are punctuated by narrower intermediate bays ranging from 9' to 10'. The Primary Bays are clad in either plaster or weathering metal, and the bays are clad in masonry, wood, or color contrasting plaster.**

**The ground level facades facing El Camino Real and Los Altos Avenue have been redesigned to have a strong masonry base expression with a precast water table course, as well as a projected precast belt course at the level of the second floor window sills. Additional sun shades have also been added at the windows along the street level frontages. See A3.1, A 3.0 a through e**

The stoops at the individual unit entries facing Los Altos Avenue have been redesigned with decorative painted metal railings standing on masonry stem walls, providing a welcoming appearance. Decorative lighting has been added at the stoop entries. See A3.1, 3.0c

The base is now clearly differentiated from the building mid-section, as well as the set back, and more transparent 5<sup>th</sup> floor. Additional articulation added in the mid-section includes setting back all the windows in the Primary bays, adding projected precast window sills at the recessed windows (1, 2 on A7.2), and providing painted metal railings in place of most of the glass railings in the previous submission (4 on A7.1). The projecting eaves at the top of the fourth level have been emphasized, and projecting metal cap detail (for shadow) has been added at the fourth floor parapets (2 on A 7.1). See A3.1, A3.0 a through d

We note the Design Controls discourage the smaller bays projecting in plane above the primary bays, and therefore we reconfigured the exit stair along Los Altos Avenue setting it back further from the street to create a deeper intermediate bay, as well as lowered its height to the standard parapet height. See A 3.1, A3.0c, A2.2 through A2.7

A distinctive Top to the building is emphasized by setbacks, more transparent glazing and projecting horizontal eaves. The parapet planes have now been staggered in plan so that parapets do not exceed 25' in a single run. At the corner of Los Altos Avenue and El Camino Real the parapet height has been significantly reduced to lower the profile at this important corner. See A 3.1, A3.0a, A2.7

C. (pg. 14) Building mass is articulated to relate to the human scale, both horizontally and vertically. Building elevations have variation and depth and avoid large blank wall surfaces. Residential or mixed-use residential projects incorporate elements that signal habitation, such as identifiable entrances, stairs, porches, bays, and balconies.

*Staff review: The vertical and horizontal articulation of the building mass can be further detailed and broken down, as addressed in the Design Control section of the CT zone. The pedestrian entrances and vehicular entrances are not detailed with elements that distinguish the spaces other than the stairs and a door. The use of architectural elements can help break up the massing further in these areas and make more inviting. There are large vertical surfaces that extend five stories, that results in a more bulky appearance and massing. Design elements could be incorporated to break down these planes into smaller elements which would provide for a less bulky and less massive appearance.*

**Response:** The primary building entrance at the corner of El Camino Real and Los Altos Avenue has been provided with additional design and detailing. A projected steel and wood canopy has been added to emphasize the front door and provide welcoming dappled sun and protection. The building address is planned on the canopy. Enhanced paving is now planned creating an intimate plaza at the building entrance. Landscaping pots and a bench will enhance the plaza. The projecting canopy at the 5<sup>th</sup> story has also been redesigned similar to the first floor canopy and now contains spaced wood elements through which the sky can be viewed, lightening the effect of the building at the corner. A number of additional horizontal sunshades have been added further modulating vertical walls, as do the projected sills and belt courses. The stair that formerly rose vertically to the roof, is now broken

into 3 separate stepped back planes to mitigate it's verticality. The expression of the building base as a distinct element also reduces effective height. See A3.0a, A3.0d, A3.1

Among the updated details that reflect a strong residential character are recessed windows, projected precast sills, painted metal railings, additional sunshades, precast belt courses, detailed stoop entries, and decorative lighting. See A3.1, A7.1, A7.2

On the elevations facing the side and rear property lines, the masonry base has been extended on the first floor, similar to the street frontages. As discussed in the CT Design Controls, no primary spaces have full size windows facing the property line or adjacent residential building. The windows in the center of these facades have been further reduced in size. See 3.2

D. (pg. 14) Exterior materials and finishes convey high quality, integrity, permanence and durability, and materials are used effectively to define building elements such as base, body, parapets, bays, arcades and structural elements. Materials, finishes, and colors have been used in a manner that serves to reduce the perceived appearance of height, bulk and mass, and are harmonious with other structures in the immediate area.

*Staff Review: The current material and finishes include a limestone base with stone and wood siding material for most of the primary street facades. The corner of the building has a portion of the façade finished in Corten Steel panels and aluminum storefront windowpanes for the corner lobby entrance leading to the mailbox. The upper stories have vinyl windows which result in a lower quality appearance and is a less durable material than other exterior window materials available and as compared to the metal cladded windows. The rear of the building is shown to be finished in plaster. While there are several quality materials proposed, the use of these materials on the facades are not entirely serving to reduce the height, mass and bulk because of the lack of articulation and consistent visual elements to read base, body, parapets and other structural elements. The design can be articulated further to provide some relief between upper floors, body of the project and base level details.*

**Response: As discussed above, the articulation of the base body and top have been revised to emphasize variation between the levels, provide further articulation in massing as well as detailing. Metal windows are now proposed in lieu of vinyl windows. The typical balcony railing has been revised to painted metal for a more fine grained residential appearance.**

**The varied exterior material palate, including masonry, plaster, wood, weathering steel (Corten), precast sill details, and painted metal architectural details will provided a rich and high quality appearance for this residential community. See A3.1, A3.0 a through e, A7.1, A7.2**

E. (pg. 14) Landscaping is generous and inviting, and landscape and hardscape features are designed to complement the building and parking areas, and to be integrated with the building architecture and

surrounding streetscape. Landscaping includes substantial street canopy, either in the public right-of-way or within the project frontage.

*Staff Review: Landscaping is generous and inviting, however, the project could incorporate more hardscape features at the lobbies and entrances to signify entry elements. The tree canopy is substantial along the street sides. The landscaped courtyard area could include additional amenities to be used for active and passive open space areas for the residents living in the development which may include families and children.*

**Response: Architectural and Landscape improvements at the building main entry are discussed above including a new entry canopy, enhanced paving, lighting, planting and benches. Additional amenities have been added in the resident courtyard including a grill for outdoor cooking, edible herb plantings, and sculptural “pebbles” that can also serve as a children’s play area. A small roof top deck has been added at the corner of the building facing El Camino Real. See L1.0, L1.1, L1.3, L1.4, A1.0**

F. (pg. 15) Signage is designed to complement the building architecture in terms of style, materials, colors and proportions.

*Staff Review: Staff has not received a signage package for review. If the project is approved, this would be a made a condition of project approval. However, most likely signs would be limited to address and directional signs.*

**Response: A signage package will be provided. The address signage has been conceptually added to the elevations. See A3.1, A3.0a**

G. (pg.15) Mechanical equipment is screened from public view and the screening is designed to be consistent with the building architecture in form, material and detailing.

*Staff Review: The rooftop mechanical and other mechanical equipment are not shown in the drawings. If the project is approved, screening of rooftop mechanical equipment could be a made a condition of project approval.*

**Response: The roof top mechanical is shown on the Roof Plan A 2.7. Mechanical screening is shown on A 7.1 “Exterior Details.”**

H. (pg. 15) Service, trash and utility areas area screened from public view, or are enclosed in structures that are consistent with the building architecture in materials and detailing.



*Staff Review: The garbage staging area on the first floor is screened and is consistent with the building architecture.*

**Response: Noted. The garage entry has been revised to a single opening for more convenient access. See A2.2, A3.0b**



**Community Development Department  
One North San Antonio Road  
Los Altos, California 94022**

April 11<sup>th</sup> 2022

Gregory and Angela Galatolo  
Via Email: [angiegalatolo@gmail.com](mailto:angiegalatolo@gmail.com)  
4350 El Camino Real  
Los Altos, CA 94022

**Subject: 4350 EL CAMINO REAL (Application No. 19-D-01, 19-UP-01 and 19-SD-01)  
Planning Commission feedback**

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Galatolo:

This letter is an update to the April 7<sup>th</sup>, 2022 hearing with the Los Altos Planning Commission, detailing the required changes and edits to the proposed plans and documentation for the Design Review, Use Permit and Subdivision applications for a new multiple-family building at 4350 El Camino Real.

This letter is a list of the items that will need to be addressed or provided at a minimum of 30 days prior to scheduling another Planning Commission meeting. This allows staff to review the revised proposal, publish a staff report, and notify the community members prior to the hearing.

On April 7<sup>th</sup>, the Planning Commission Motioned to continue the hearing of the proposed project with certain conditions to be met by the applicant prior to bringing it back to another hearing.

Link to the April 7<sup>th</sup> - Planning Commission meeting is here -  
<https://www.losaltosca.gov/planningcommission/page/planning-commission-meeting-0>

Link to the published report – [click here](#) –

The requested list of conditions which need to be addressed is listed below:

**1. Design Review update:**

Revise the design to address issues listed in the Discretionary Permit Findings detailed in page 13-17 of the Planning Commission staff report.

Respond to Commissioner's input on the project design by listening to the meeting again. Provide clear responses to requested design changes and improvements including but not limited to: changing glass railings, addressing corner entrance details, providing articulation of material on facades, reducing large bulky facades at the rear of the property, among others listed in the Findings sections of the staff report.

Comment  
No. 1:

Please see  
our revised  
plans,  
Architect's  
May 11, 2022  
Letter, and  
our letter to  
the Planning  
Commission  
dated May  
20, 2022.

Comment  
No. 2:

**2. Inclusionary Housing**

Revise the distribution of the affordable units to address the inconsistencies in the staff report and respond to Planning Commission's suggestions for equitable distribution. Provide a revised density bonus report.

Please our  
letter to the  
Planning  
Commission  
dated May  
20, 2022 for  
changes to  
the affordable  
housing.

**3. Story Pole Conformance.**

Provide a letter documenting conformance to all conditional requirements of the approved modified story pole for your project. Using clear photographs and a line-item response to the required condition in the letter for story pole compliance.

Comment No.  
3:

Your timely response to these comments will help expedite your project's review. For questions regarding the following comments from the Planning Division, please contact Radha Hayagreev, Consulting Senior Planner at (408) 796-4370

Please our  
letter to the  
Planning  
Commission  
dated May 20,  
2022 on our  
conformance  
with the story  
pole  
requirements.

Sincerely,



4.12.22

Radha Hayagreev

Consulting Senior Planner

Please note  
that our  
engineer's  
certification of  
the height and  
location of the  
story pole  
elements is on  
file with the  
City.

Cc: Architect