



Planning Department
Community Development Department, Town of Los Gatos
110 E. Main Street
Los Gatos, CA 95030

May 30, 2019

RECEIVED

JUN 04 2019

TOWN OF LOS GATOS
PLANNING DIVISION

Re: The Carlton Office Building, 400 Carlton Ave
Project Description/ Letter of Justification

Mr. Sean Mullin:

On January 10, 2018, the Planning Commission voted unanimously to approve this new project. Unfortunately, due to major cost overruns (primarily for the subterranean parking structure) the project was deemed financially unfeasible to build. The new application is for a new two-story medical office building redesigned to have on-grade parking only. This letter accompanies the submitted building plans and additional exhibits for the above referenced project.

ORIGINAL PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The originally approved building was 7,996 square feet, with a 7,141 square foot below grade parking structure that provided for 16 spaces accessed in and out from the Carlton Ave driveway. Fourteen additional on grade parking spaces were provided (nine covered, five open) in the same general location of the existing parking and two more spaces were on the east side. A total of 32 parking spaces were provided, which allowed for 8,000 square feet of medical office space, based on the Town's parking formula.

REVISED DESIGN

The proposed two story building is 6,500 square feet and has eliminated the below grade parking structure completely. The new design provides 26 total parking spaces, for a net reduction of 6 spaces. The majority of the spaces are located in the same area (behind the building) with the main difference being these new ones will not be covered by the second floor. Five spaces are situated on the Carlton Ave access drive, and eight more will be covered by the second floor and accessed from the rear drive.

The exterior look and feel of the proposed building is very similar to the original both in architectural style and massing. The signature Spanish style is expressed with stucco walls, arched openings and clay barrel tile roofing. The main facade has a pair of two story gable forms that bookend three center arches that lead into the center courtyard. Traditional Spanish detailing is found throughout the exterior, with dark bronze windows and railings, ceramic tile details, "scalloped" corbel details at cantilever, wood trellis elements and shaped corbels.

The building shape is now longer and narrower when compared to the original. However, the height of the structure is identical to what was approved. There will be less floor area on the ground floor as that is where the majority of the area reductions were made. As previously mentioned, the second floor will no longer span over the rear parking spaces, making for a more traditional looking Spanish style building. A concerted effort has been made with the front and side elevations to conceal the covered parking area from street views without making the building appear bulky.

One main selling point to the neighborhood is that by eliminating the underground parking garage, the disruption caused by construction will be significantly reduced. There will be only minimum excavation and off-haul for the slab on grade construction. The duration of construction will be reduced by 3-4 months, which alone should ease their concerns.

LANDSCAPING AND SITE WORK

Preliminary landscape plans prepared by David Fox, Landscape Architect are included with the application. The plan has been updated to reflect the new footprint and parking layouts while reflecting the original theme of drought tolerant landscape areas along with pathways leading to the public ways. Five of the thirteen existing olive trees are to be removed, as two more will be saved with this new design.

Updated Preliminary Grading and Drainage plans prepared by the engineering firm Hanna Brunetti are included in the package. It should be noted that this new design provides 650 sq. ft of additional permeable landscape area over the original.

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The following questions and answers were from the original planning application process and have been updated to reflect the current design:

How is the project compatible to the adjacent commercial and residential properties in terms of mass and scale?

- Proposed building is two stories high with on grade parking in order to keep the proposed building around the same height as other adjacent 2-story buildings. Both medical buildings nearby are two stories tall, as are the single family residences located across the street on Carlton.
- One story roof over arched walkway on Carlton breaks down two story facade of primary elevation
- Reduction in width of the façade facing Jo Drive, as well as addition of scalloped corbels in order to reduce the overall massing facing that side in an attempt to relate to the one story duplexes on Jo.
- Building façade is segmented to avoid a large boxy looking façade, with different architectural features added to blend in with the residential homes.
- Gable and/or hip roof shapes are used to reduce building massing and create a more residential look, as opposed to more typical flat-roofed commercial designs.
- Covered open parking and walkways are incorporated into the design to reduce the overall building massing.
- Exterior wall heights have been set for the bare minimum standard for offices: Ten foot ceiling heights at both First and Second floors. Higher ceilings are preferred but these have been lowered to blend with the neighbors.

How is the project in compliance with the Commercial Design Guidelines?

- There is a long standing tradition in Los Gatos for medical office buildings to be designed in the Spanish style, so this continues the trend.
- Building facades and massing are segmented with various architectural elements to minimize the overall scale and blend in with the residential neighborhood.

- Quality design and materials implemented (e.g. lighter building colors, variety of architectural elements, etc) to articulate the building elevations to maintain the town's standard architectural style. All elevations are addressed, including the building side facing the rear open lot.
- Covered walkway, easy access to covered parking and direct walkways to public sidewalk to encourage a pedestrian-friendly access approach.
- Preserving trees- both existing street trees and on-site olive trees so they can continue to provide screening to the proposed building.
- New, smaller scale plants and landscape species are introduced on site along the pedestrians/ visitors' paths, as well as to break up continuous parking spaces to provide visual enhancement.
- Carefully planned roof and parapet placement to disguise roof top equipment from public's view of sight.
- Parking is easily accessible, situated on the side and rear of the building, to avoid creating 'a strip mall look' in front of the building.
- Newly proposed utility lines are placed underground. Trash enclosure integrated into the design.

CONCLUSION

This proposed redesign maintains several of the elements of the originally approved project, including the architecture, massing and relationship to the neighborhood, while eliminating the underground parking and any cons associated with that. Vehicular circulation (ingress/egress) follows the historical routes and the majority of the parking is hidden by the building. In the end, this project still replaces a poorly maintained and under utilized older building on a site in the medical/ hospital core of Los Gatos with a handsome, high end office building.

Sincerely,



Gary Kohlsaat
Architect C19245

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