



PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

September 10, 2007

7:00 p.m.

City Council Chambers

701 Laurel Street, Menlo Park, CA 94025

CALL TO ORDER – 7:02 p.m.

ROLL CALL – Bims (Absent), Bressler, Deziel (Vice chair) (Absent), Keith (Chair), O'Malley, Pagee, Riggs

INTRODUCTION OF STAFF – Deanna Chow, Senior Planner; Justin Murphy, Development Services Manager; Thomas Rogers, Associate Planner; Lorraine Weiss, Contract Planner

A. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were none.

B. REGULAR BUSINESS #1

1. **Reconsideration of Use Permit/Rick Loretz/1371 Sevier Avenue:** Request for a use permit to demolish an existing single-story, single-family residence and construct a new two-story, single-family residence on a substandard lot with regard to lot width and lot area in the R-1-U (Single-Family Urban) zoning district. ***Item was conditionally approved at the meeting of August 27, 2007.***

Chair Keith noted the item was brought back for reconsideration at the request of Commissioner Riggs. Commissioner Riggs said his intent was to ask the Commission to revisit this project in terms of aesthetic control as he felt that there was some inconsistency in how aesthetic control has been applied to projects reviewed by the Commission. He asked whether the Commission supported reconsidering this project and if so, would look at whether it added to the quality of the neighborhood.

Commissioner Pagee said the elevations were not included in the agenda packet. She asked what Commissioner Riggs was looking for in enhancements, noting the garage had been moved back, the second story stepped in from the sides, and that the number and size of windows on the side had been minimized.

Commissioner Riggs said the most relevant items in terms of aesthetics were the materials and composition of the project. He provided the other Commissioners with copies of the front elevation of the original design.

Commissioner O'Malley asked Commissioner Riggs to specify what the Commission was being asked to reconsider.

Commissioner Riggs said he would like a continuation for a redesign of the front elevation as he did not think the windows as drawn were possible and would be uneven in appearance. He said the original design offered divided light windows, but the proposed revised design indicated only the most basic and economic windows. He said as neighborhoods build and improve, some were trying to maintain an existing quality while others, such as the Sevier neighborhood, were striving toward a newly defined quality. He said this project was awkward because the most inexpensive materials were proposed and the composition was also weak.

Commissioner Bressler asked whether the property owners had been afforded an opportunity to respond to the issues being raised, and if they were present. Planner Rogers said the applicant was present.

Recognized by the Chair, Mr. Rick Loretz, Menlo Park, said the existing house did not sit straight on the property but was situated at an angle. He said it was the only home in the neighborhood with a 12 by 12 pitched roof; that it was 20-feet in height and did not really match anything in the neighborhood. He termed it an eyesore. He said the owners had bought the property with the intention of remodeling it, and had hired a previous architect who designed without consideration of what the owners wanted. He said they then consulted him. He noted that this was the only house on the block that was impacted by being in flood zone. He said the design had been revised in response to direction by the Commission. The second floor was now recessed and "curb appeal" had been created by moving the garage back and adding a front porch, which created a larger front yard. He said they had originally proposed three heritage trees and noted that the property currently has no trees. He said the Commission asked for another row of trees on the side for landscape screening, bringing the total of trees to seven.

Chair Keith asked Mr. Loretz to address Commissioner Riggs' concern about the proposed window design. Mr. Loretz said there would be six-inches of clearance and flashing between the top of the windows and the roof. He said the property owners did not want windows with grids as they would have plantation shutters and felt those and the grids would have too busy of a look. He said the property owners wanted a composition roof and not more expensive shingle roof. He said the project would be an improvement over the existing structure and would be nicer looking for the most part than other houses in its immediate area.

Commissioner Bressler asked if any neighbors had expressed concerns about the project. Mr. Loretz said one neighbor had expressed privacy concerns and the landscape screening was to address those concerns.

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Commissioner Riggs said the overall plan was an improvement to the property, and noted that the side and rear improvements were fine. His concern related to the shape, style, and placement of the windows on the front elevation.

Mr. Loretz said that because of egress requirements there was not much more they could do the windows.

Commissioner Pagee said she could understand Commissioner Riggs' desire to bring the project back after further thought about it. She said the project did achieve the goals of stepping in the second floor and providing landscape screening, and she thought it would be a nice home. She said there were unique factors in its design related to the narrow lot and being situated in a flood zone.

Commissioner Bressler noted that neighboring residents were not complaining about the proposed project.

Commissioner O'Malley said a discussion of the aesthetic control in general was valid, but should not be placed upon this project. He said he was comfortable with his vote of approval.

Chair Keith said she would have liked to have seen the original design again in the packet, but she was comfortable with her vote of approval on this project. She said the Commission could schedule a future discussion to consider standards and guidelines of aesthetics control.

Commissioner Riggs said he thought it would be valuable to have that discussion.

C. PUBLIC HEARING

1. **Use Permit Revision/Conor Medsystems/1003 Hamilton Ct:** Request for a use permit revision for the use and storage of hazardous materials and for outside storage of equipment in the M-2 (General Industrial) zoning district, in association with a proposal for an emergency generator.

Staff Comment: Planner Rogers said staff had no additional comments.

Questions of Staff: Commissioner Pagee asked a number of questions related to the proximity of the storm drains to the parking lot and the location of the proposed generator in regard to measures to prevent accidental spillage or leaking of fuel into the storm drains. Planner Rogers said that he did not know what safety and containment measures were required specifically by the agencies who reviewed this project, but the applicant might be able to respond to those questions.

Commissioner O'Malley said that the Fire District did not check the approval box on Page D.4, although their letter indicated approval. He confirmed with staff that the only revision to the use permit related to the diesel fuel for generator.

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Chair Keith, said that the Fire District's letter on Page D.5 was called an advisory notice, but it used "shall" language. She asked whether it should be a condition of approval. Planner Rogers said the Fire District had indicated this was standard language and a specific condition for it was not necessary.

Commissioner O'Malley said that Page C.6 showed approval for 25 gallons of acetonitrile but indicated it only weighed 20 pounds, which was not possible in that it should weigh much more.

Public Comment: Mr. Larry Hamowitz, said he was an environmental consultant for the applicant, and said that the hazardous category marked by the Fire District of 25 gallons of acetonitrile was not correct. He said that up to 240 gallons stored was acceptable in a controlled area. He said a controlled area was surrounded in such a way to allow an hour of time for response by the Fire District; the site has two inside control areas and the materials stored were well within the allowable quantities of flammable and combustible materials permitted in a controlled area. He said that controlled areas were intended to mitigate fire and to have a limited amount of flammable materials.

Commissioner Pagee asked where the two control areas were located. Mr. Hamowitz said there were two internally located control areas and the outside storage area with the diesel fuel was also a control area. He said in response to Commissioner Pagee that the diesel tank held 3,000 gallons of fuel. Commissioner Pagee asked about the potential for seepage of fuel into the storm drain system. Mr. Ham Ovitiz said the tank would have a secondary containment and other requirements for filling so there would not be spillage in the tank. Commissioner Pagee asked about exterior components and whether the generator directly connected with the belly tank so there was no leakage. Mr. Hamowitz said the design was that everything that contained or carried fuel was over the secondary containment, but lines under pressure could spray out fuel. Commissioner Pagee said that would be a concern for fire personnel.

Chair Keith asked if the exterior met the requirements of a controlled area. Mr. Hamowitz said it did and that there was required separation from the building and a certain distance from the doors of the building.

Mr. Fernando Rosaro, Redwood City Electric, said they were the design build contractor for the project. He said the fuel tank was a dual contained device with a concrete fill; inside the concrete fill was a leak detector that would send a warning if there was leakage from the primary to the secondary containment tank. He said that there were pressure sensors on the fuel lines and those detect leaks, which automatically shuts down the generator. He said the generator had a multi-gallon container to contain any possible spillage during fueling. He said the Fire District monitors these warning systems.

Commissioner Pagee asked who received the alarms. Mr. Rosao said that at the facility there was a generator enunciator, who would receive an alarm and that those were also

monitored by the fire alarm system, which would alert the Fire District. Commissioner Pagee asked if a fuel line or hose broke whether the housing would hold it. Mr. Rosaor said that a limited amount would fall into the spill containment on top of the belly tank, but that would trigger a cutoff of fuel and the generator would automatically shut down.

Chair Keith closed the public hearing.

Commission Comment: Commissioner O'Malley moved to approve as recommended by staff. Commissioner Bressler seconded the motion. Chair Keith said she would like to add the first two sentences of the last paragraph of the Fire District's letter, shown on Page D.5, as condition 3.g. Commissioner O'Malley said that the applicant had indicated an error made by the Fire District related to the quantity of acetonitrile. Chair Keith said she would like staff to confirm that with the Fire District. Planner Rogers asked if Chair Keith wanted that as a condition or if it was advisory comment. Chair Keith indicated as a condition. This was acceptable to Commissioners O'Malley and Bressler as the makers of the motion and second. Commissioner O'Malley said that the official letter from the Fire District was in error and the correction of that should be included in the record for the project.

Commission Action: M/S O'Malley/Bressler to approve with the following modification.

1. Make a finding that the project is categorically exempt under Class 1 of the current CEQA Guidelines.
2. Make findings, as per Section 16.82.030 of the Zoning Ordinance pertaining to the granting of use permits, that the proposed use will not be detrimental to the health, safety, morals, comfort and general welfare of the persons residing or working in the neighborhood of such proposed use, and will not be detrimental to property and improvements in the neighborhood or the general welfare of the City.
3. Approve the use permit revision subject to the following **standard** conditions:
 - a. Development of the project shall be substantially in conformance with the plans prepared by DGA, consisting of two plan sheets, dated received June 13, 2007, and approved by the Planning Commission on September 10, 2007, except as modified by the conditions contained herein.
 - b. Prior to building permit issuance, the applicants shall comply with all Sanitary District, Menlo Park Fire Protection District, and utility companies' regulations that are directly applicable to the project.
 - c. Prior to building permit issuance, the applicants shall comply with all requirements of the Building Division, Engineering Division, and Transportation Division that are directly applicable to the project.
 - d. If there is an increase in the quantity of hazardous materials on the project site, a change in the location of the storage of the hazardous materials, or the use of additional hazardous materials after this use permit is granted, the applicant shall apply for a revision to the use permit.

- e. Any citation or notification of violation by the Menlo Park Fire Protection District, San Mateo County Environmental Health Department, West Bay Sanitary District, Menlo Park Building Division or other agency having responsibility to assure public health and safety for the use of hazardous materials will be grounds for considering revocation of the use permit.
 - f. If the business discontinues operations at the premises, the use permit for hazardous materials shall expire unless a new business submits a new hazardous materials business plan to the Planning Division for review by the applicable agencies to determine whether the new hazardous materials business plan is in substantial compliance with the use permit.
- 4. Approve the use permit revision subject to the following specific conditions:**
- a. ***Concurrent with submittal of a complete building permit application, the applicant shall submit documentation from the Menlo Park Fire Protection District that all applicable requirements are being met with regard to acetonitrile, subject to review and approval of the Planning Division.***

Motion carried 5-0 with Commissioners Bims and Deziel not in attendance.

D. STUDY ITEM

1. **Study Session on a Use Permit, Architectural Control, and Tentative Parcel Map/Joe Colonna/1706 El Camino Real:** Request for a use permit, architectural control, and tentative parcel map to demolish an existing one-story, 6,875-square-foot commercial building (formerly Gaylord's Restaurant) and construct a new two-story, 10,934 square-foot office building for medical/dental use, the related site improvements, and 52 parking spaces based on the proposed uses where 66 spaces would be required in the C-4 (General Commercial, Applicable to El Camino Real) zoning district. The application includes a request for a tentative parcel map to subdivide one parcel into four commercial condominium airspaces.

Staff Comment: Planner Weiss said that one additional public comment was received by e-mail and the writers of it requested that the Commission require the ordinance requirement of 66 parking spaces as there would be a problem with overflow parking in the residential area.

Public Comment: Mr. Joe Colonna, 1706 El Camino Real LLC, said they wanted the Commission's direction so that they might return with revisions to satisfy the Commission and design intent. He said the project would not require any zone change or variances, and it would comply with the new floor area requirements established by the City Council and the City's Use Based Parking Guidelines. He said the project would consist of 10,400 square feet of dental/medical space and four condominium

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units. He said that they would make sidewalk and curb gutter improvements and install landscaping along El Camino Real and Buckthorn Way, where currently none or partial improvements exist. He said they wanted the study session to get an early read on the proposed architecture and site plan because of the City's ongoing review of the El Camino Real related to creation of the Grand Boulevard.

Commissioner O'Malley asked about the difference in the square footage as represented in the staff report. Mr. Colonna said that this was an issue they would work to resolve with staff, but the end result would be a 10,400 square foot building.

Mr. Bob Peterson, project architect, reviewed the building architecture and site planning. He noted that Illustration #1 looked at the site moving north on El Camino Real and showed the parking layout and building. He said the building would gently slope from north to south and would create a sense of pointing toward the entrance for vehicles. He said the building would have a ground floor pedestrian entrance in the middle and also from the parking area. He said they would use high quality materials including slate on the ground floor, Tresep panels on the upper floor, metal roofs, and stone pavers to show the pedestrian circulation pattern. He said they wanted to create an interesting look along El Camino Real with trees set back at two locations to accent the pedestrian access. He said that Illustration #2 was a photo montage facing south that showed how the proposed building would be set within the surrounding existing properties. He said that they would use two varieties of trees along El Camino Real. He said Illustration #3 was a bird's eye view of the parking. He said the parking would be screened from El Camino Real and there would be trees as well as shrubs along the rear property line to provide screening for the neighbors. He said that Illustration #4 showed the parking lot facing north. He said the second story was offset from the first story to provide weather protection to patients coming to the facility. He said staff had suggested (Illustration #1) to have a 22 foot separation from adjacent parking; he said they currently showed it at 20 feet but could increase to 22 or 23 feet. He said that staff had also recommended that the trees and sidewalk be a straight line along El Camino Real. He said although they did not think that would be as interesting as what they were proposing they could make that change. He said staff had suggested more trees to which they fully agreed, and they proposed to plant 10 to 15 more trees along the rear and south property lines, which would provide landscape screening for the neighbors and shading for the parking lot.

Commissioner Pagee asked about the access shown on sheet A1.0 for another business that appeared to be an access easement for the subject property, and asked why that was not proposed for use. Mr. Colonna said that the easement was for egress only. He said that the new driveway was separated from this existing driveway. Commissioner Pagee said it appeared this would create a sharp right turn on to El Camino Real from the other property. He said the other business' driveway would not be changed and although they were proposing sidewalk, curb and gutter improvements that the existing driveway would not be changed and their proposed new driveway would be 20 feet away and for ingress only. Commissioner Pagee asked if they had discussed with the other property owner using the existing driveway for ingress. Mr.

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Colonna said they had discussed this but it had not gotten anywhere; also doing so would create a dead end to the south of their proposed parking lot. Commissioner Pagee noted another business had limited visibility for its signage and encouraged the applicant to be considerate of that and not create greater impact to the sign's visibility. She asked if there was parking along El Camino Real in front of the proposed building. Mr. Colonna said that there were three existing spaces and the proposed building would not limit access to those spaces. Commissioner Pagee said she visited the site on a Friday afternoon and noted cars parked in the subject property's lot as well as on adjacent properties. She said that there was nothing to prevent other businesses from parking in the subject property's lot or to stop overflow to residential parking. Mr. Colonna said that a traffic study was being prepared that would look at the parking and traffic. He said that there were some adjacent uses coming up for review because they have added to parking problems in the area, but he thought the future owners and patrons of the proposed site would guard the parking. Commissioner Pagee asked about bike storage and showers for employees who bicycle to work. Mr. Peterson said there were two bicycle storage racks at the rear of the building, under the overhang, and that the provision of facilities for showering would be at the new owners' discretion. Commissioner Pagee asked if the bicycle storage would impede pedestrian circulation. Mr. Peterson said that they would not as the sidewalk was quite wide being 10-feet. Commissioner Pagee asked about the thickness of the slate veneer and if it would be mounted on wood. Mr. Peterson said it was ¾-inch slate and would be mounted over metal studs. Commissioner Pagee said the drawings indicated the proposed monument sign would be in the public right-of-way. Mr. Peterson said that it did but the sign would be moved onto the property.

Commissioner Riggs asked what types of trees were planned along the rear and south property lines. Mr. Peterson said he thought evergreen would be appropriate there.

Commissioner O'Malley said that the design had entrance from El Camino Real and entrance and exit on Buckthorn Way. He asked whether ingress/egress could be limited to El Camino Real. Mr. Colonna said that would be considered also in the traffic study, but that the City's Transportation Division had indicated that there should only be ingress from El Camino Real because of its proximity to an intersection. Commissioner O'Malley asked who was doing the traffic study. Mr. Colonna said the City contracts with a consultant and the applicant pays for it. He noted that they have had no input to the consultant.

Chair Keith asked whether they were seeking LEED certification. Mr. Peterson said they had not considered that, but noted that many of the materials would apply and they would look into doing that. Chair Keith said this proposal reminded her greatly of the project the applicant and architect had designed for 1906 El Camino Real. Mr. Peterson said there were similarities in that the lots were almost identical in size, they were for the same functions, and the orientation similar but the forms and materials were quite different. He said while this project would look compatible with the other project, it would also look and feel quite different.

Mr. Brian Blackford, Menlo Park, said parking was a big issue and the project should be held to the requirements in the zoning ordinance. He said the proposed parking was inadequate for a medical use. He said that the medical offices would ask their staff to park on the streets to keep parking available for their clients. He said that the project site currently provided overflow parking for a business on Buckthorn Way, but even with that parking, the business' clients park on Buckthorn Way. He said if they could not create 66 parking spaces then either the building size should be reduced or they should install underground parking. He said he was concerned that the traffic study was done over the summer and Stanford University and Menlo College were not in session; he said the traffic impacts would not be properly counted and should be re-done to be accurate. He asked if the City wanted to increase sales tax revenue that perhaps this was not the best use for this site. He cited Crane Street as an example of medical and dental use that was under-parked. (Ms. Debra Kohling donated her time to Mr. Blackford.) He said this project would increase traffic on Buckthorn Way. He said the idea that the owners of these condominiums would jealously guard the parking was a presumption at best and that if parking occurred in the residential area, those owners would never feel the impact, but the neighbors would. He said this was similar to the projects at 99 and 1906 El Camino Real and that it was out of character with other properties in the area.

Mr. Jack Aluney, Menlo Park, said he developed the corner of Buckthorn Way and El Camino Real. He said the size of the building was determined by the number of parking spaces they could locate on the site. He said parking in the public right-of-way along Buckthorn Way was granted as a variance to his project. He said he was given a blanket use permit at that time and the only uses not allowed were fast food and medical/dental. He said his salon has 60 clients a day and the upstairs of the building houses Curves for which there were customers every 30 minutes. He said the area was very impacted already and many of his staff and clients, and Curves' clients use the parking at the subject property. He said he also lives in the area and feels the impact.

Ms. Susan Basso, Menlo Park, said she owned property right across from this project. She said her town home has private parking that is noticed as private, but these spaces are taken often by strange cars. She said that she had been a Transportation Commissioner and this area has a very severe parking problem already, and the project had to have the required parking, or else there would be more complaints from the residents.

Ms. Anne Moser, Menlo Park, said she would have liked to have seen some nice cottage-type homes in this area to enhance the neighborhood and allow more people to live there. She said that a Grand Boulevard design was needed to create a look that typified Menlo Park as people entered the City. She said she hoped the proposed building would be set back a great distance from the street. She said the plans did not show the additional trees mentioned by the applicants. She said that coming out of Buckthorn Way and making a left to go south was very dangerous.

Mr. Martin Massner, Menlo Park, provided photographs showing that in the afternoon there were 17 cars parking at the Gaylord site. (Gentleman walked away from the microphone and comments were inaudible.) He said that the proposed building was sterile and belonged more appropriately in a business park rather than the entry way to a City. He said he hoped the Commission would limit, if it was in their power, the number of occupants or provide greater parking. He said the parking lot needed trees as it looked like barren concrete.

Mr. Mike Brady, Menlo Park, asked the Commission to look at the transcript of the July 17, 2007 City Council meeting during which 1906 El Camino Real was discussed. He said the majority of the Council members had grave reservations about the design and had sent it back to the Commission for further review. He said this was one of the most densely populated parts of Menlo Park, with 100 town homes and private residences, and 40 apartment units. He said the apartment tenants obtain a cheaper permit to park overnight and the parking structure underneath their units, which was more expensive, was hardly parked at night. He said Mr. Massner had studied both a 1,000 and 2,000 square foot medical site and had determined that this proposal would need 70 parking spaces at the least.

Mr. Alan Bushell, Menlo Park, said since writing his letter of August 8 to the Planning Commission, he had done a one week survey of overnight parking on the Stone Pine Lane section between El Camino Real and the train tracks. He said that the vast majority of vehicles were apartment dwellers' vehicles and their apartment unit underground garage was virtually empty. He said that there would be four owners at this site; they would keep their allotted parking for their own use and there would be no shared parking. He asked that the Commission not add to the neighborhood's suffering from an already over-parked area.

Mr. Sagar Patel, Red Cottage Inn, said that he had moved to Stone Pine Lane and walks to work. He said that clients of the hair salon and the pilates studio park on the former Gaylord's lot. He said people from the nail salon park on his site. He said he thought the applicant should try to work with the owners of the nail salon for access. He said the power poles were unsightly going north on El Camino Real, and the proposed building had a corporate look that he would prefer not to have in this neighborhood.

Commissioner Riggs asked about the access easement and what property was served by it. Planner Chow said that it was for the nail salon and the Red Cottage Inn.

Mr. Craig Largent, Menlo Park, said the traffic study needed to be updated to include winter traffic, noting he rides his bike until it rains and then drives his car to Palo Alto for work in the winter. He said the proposed building was too urban for the area. He said the parking should be paid for by the building owners not the neighbors.

Ms. Kathy Ingleman, Menlo Park, said she lives across the street from the rear of the project property. She said over the past year they had done much to update their town home. She said putting a commercial building there did not fit with the neighborhood

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and would make the residential owners bear the brunt of the commercial buildings. She said that she hardly ever was able to park in front of her house as the folks who worked in the commercial area now park all along the streets. She urged the Commission to require the parking at a minimum as specified by the zoning ordinance and to take into consideration the reality of the existing density of the Buckthorn Way businesses and look at underground parking. She said she was concerned with traffic being pushed onto their street.

Mr. Morris Brown, Menlo Park, said he hoped the Commission would hold this project to the degree of standards previously discussed about the residential project earlier. He said whether a restaurant could be successful at this site was a possibility, noted that there had been prior successful restaurants at the site. He thought that there were other more appropriate uses for the site than medical/dental. He said the 145 El Camino Real project was 10,841 square feet and had 63 required parking spaces; 47 of those were underground. He said underground parking was needed for this project.

Chair Keith closed the public hearing.

Commission Comment: Chair Keith said that the Commission had received a lot of correspondence related to the proposed project.

Commissioner Bressler said the input from the neighbors was credible and usable. He said the design was a box with parking and minimal greenery. He said underground parking was needed. He said he was concerned with the traffic study being done in the middle of the summer. He said he was very influenced by the salon owner and his concerns at how dense his building had become.

Commissioner Riggs said there had been very relevant public comment that needed to be addressed. He asked regarding parking requirements if the Planning Department had a typical square footage per doctor. Planner Chow said it was based on the use not per doctor. Commissioner Riggs asked about the Council's comments on 1906 El Camino Real as he thought the concern was basically the square footage and how it was calculated. Planner Chow said that the Council agreed with the calculation of square footage but wanted the Planning Commission to look at the project again and address the corner of the property in terms of improving it as a part of the gateway to the City.

Commissioner O'Malley said he had noticed the parking of many cars at Gaylord's. He said his experience with dental offices was that significant parking was needed per office, and the maximum parking was at least needed. He said he was concerned about the adequacy of the traffic study done as the time of the year and day were extremely important when the study was done. He said parking and traffic were the issues and had been articulated well by the audience.

Commissioner Pagee said she had not voted for 1906 El Camino Real as it did not feel suitable for the entrance to El Camino Real. She said this one was similar enough to

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the other project that she would not be able to support it. She said she was very concerned if the parking would be supported for the employees and patients at this site. She said she was concerned that the building was being built to the maximum, and if the parking was insufficient for that then there needed to be reconsideration of what was best at this project site. She said that important concerns were the safety at the intersection of Buckthorn Way and El Camino Real. She said she was concerned that the neighbor did not want to enhance the existing driveway as that would help all three businesses.

Chair Keith said this project reminded her of the 1906 El Camino Real project and she had not been particularly enthralled with the look of that. She said numerous people had expressed interest in something similar to the property on the corner of Encinal and El Camino Real that was done in a Santa Barbara-type style. She said the applicant should consider underground parking. She said comments were made to get retail or restaurant use to bring revenue to the City. She said she would like a building that was warmer looking. She said she would like the trees moved closer to El Camino Real and to have the sidewalk closer to the building. She encouraged the applicant to work further with the nail salon owners and develop some sort of shared access easement.

Mr. Colonna said that they had asked for the study session so they could get input from the Commission and neighbors. He said he understood the desire for underground parking but for them to do that they would need to make the building larger. He noted that the Floor Area was at 40 percent and not at the maximum. He said if they did a larger building they would need to re-do the traffic study. He said they wanted to do a project that was light on the traffic generation and was small on this site. He said the office at 145 El Camino Real was about the same square footage as this one but that project had less lot square footage. He said they would look at the architecture again and they would prefer to not build a 15,000 to 20, 000 square foot building.

Commissioner Riggs said he had to concur with the issue of the traffic study. He said there were a couple of functional issues and the rest was aesthetics. He said it was time to request that projects along the 1600 to 1900 section of El Camino Real work with Caltrans to update the median design so that left turns were possible. He said regarding parking that there were several groups currently trying to find parking in a limited area, and while this project should not have to provide those groups parking there should definitely be adequate parking for the project itself. He said he would like more input but he was not prepared to follow the use based parking guidelines. He said there was a consensus that this dynamic interesting design with good massing and excellent materials did not appear to be as welcome at the corner of Buckthorn Way as it would be at other locations on the El Camino Real. He suspected that the proposed contemporary architecture would not be approved by the City Council and that the application would need a project with warmth of color and vertical rhythm. He said the City had no requirement for the amount of landscaping in a parking lot to address heat islands, but thought they should. He said the proposed had large challenges to make it through City Council and it was to the applicant's advantage to reconsider it.

The following is a summary of comments by the Planning Commissioners and members of the public:

- There is a current parking problem in the area and the proposed project should not exacerbate the situation.
- The proposed number of parking spaces should be determined by the Zoning Ordinance requirements not the use-based guidelines.
- Concern that the traffic study was done during the summer when the traffic counts are lower.
- Concern that the proposed project would increase traffic in the area.
- Concern that vehicle circulation near the site is difficult and dangerous.
- Housing options should be considered.
- Project should have a deep setback from El Camino Real to allow more open space.
- Trees should be planted between the building and the street and in the parking lot.
- Underground parking should be considered to gain more on-site spaces or alternatively, reduce the size of the building to match the proposed number of parking spaces (per the Zoning Ordinance ratio).
- Building architecture is not compatible with the neighborhood.
- Building design is too similar to 1906 El Camino Real.
- The building should use warmer colors and materials (1600 El Camino Real was provided as an example).
- Shared access with the adjacent property owners along El Camino Real should be explored.
- Provide bike racks and showers at the site.

E. REGULAR BUSINESS

1. **Consideration of minutes from the August 13, 2007, Planning Commission meeting.**

Commission Action: M/S Riggs/Bressler to approve the minutes as modified.

- Page 16, 1st paragraph, 3rd line, Add the word "box" after the word "24-inch."
- Page 16, 2nd paragraph, 1st line, Add the word "box" after the word "36-inch."
- Page 16, 2nd paragraph, 2nd line, Add the word "box" after the word "36-inch."
- Page 29, 1st paragraph, 1st line, Change the word "HPD" to "HDPE."

Minutes were approved 2-0 with Commissioners Keith, O'Malley and Pagee abstaining and Commissioners Bims and Deziel not in attendance.

F. COMMISSION BUSINESS, REPORTS, AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Review of upcoming planning items on the City Council agenda.

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Planner Chow provided a brief review of upcoming planning items on the City Council agenda.

Recognized by the Chair, Commissioner Riggs said that he would like a discussion to address aesthetic standards for the City of Menlo Park and he would appreciate comments from other jurisdictions on their guidelines. He said he would invite someone from the City of San Mateo to talk about their guidelines for aesthetics or get a memo from them. He said other locales have a Design Review Team (DRT) and ask more of their applicants' designs. Planner Chow said her recommendation was to check with her team and come back to the next meeting with a potential date for this discussion.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 10:05 p.m.

Staff Liaison: Deanna Chow, Senior Planner

Prepared by: Brenda Bennett, Recording Secretary

Approved by Planning Commission on November 5, 2007.