



August 19, 2019

Mr. Rendell Bustos
City of San Mateo
330 West 20th Avenue
San Mateo, CA 94403-1388

RE: 180 E. 3rd Ave., Mixed-Use Building (SPAR + SDPA)
PA2019-002
Project Address: 180 E. 3rd Ave., San Mateo.
APN 034-172-080

Dear Rendell,

We have reviewed the comments in Cannon Design Group and staff's letters both dated August 6, 2019 regarding the requested smaller windows on the second level and the atrium at the ground floor. Prior to addressing these two issues I wanted to provide a quick summary of the project design process thus far.

The project received a positive response and support from both the neighborhood meeting and the planning commission study session. While the majority of comments from the study session were positive, we reviewed all comments carefully and looked to make refinements to address any concerns and improve the design prior to our first formal submittal. After receiving various comments from Cannon Design Group and staff over the course of the submittal process, we've worked to make design revisions that responded to those concerns as they were received. Throughout this process we have worked successfully with planning staff in an effort to gain consensus moving forward. Since these design revisions began following the November 27, 2018 Study Session, below is a partial list of refinements we have made on the project to date:

- Reduced the height of mechanical screen
- Added green screen and planting in front of the mechanical screen
- Revised and warmed color and material palette
- Reduced contrast in the colors at the mechanical screen
- Added brick detailing, specifically in the frieze at the 1st and 2nd levels
- Refined detailing in the second level entablature
- Increased plantings and pedestrian amenities along the street
- Refined metal canopies
- Adjusted horizontal elements to reinforce transitions to adjacent property
- Significant material and design revisions to South and East facades
- Further recessed retail entry on 3rd Avenue
- Added muntins at 2nd floor windows
- Added metal kickplate at office lobby
- Added column base at the office lobby
- Reduced depth of atrium
- Added display window in atrium

We believe that the changes and refinements made through this collaborative process have resulted in a better project and we have been working to address the two remaining issues regarding the second story windows and the atrium on the ground level. These issues are challenging to address, given that they have implications not only for the exterior design, but also the functionality, operation, and marketability of the building.

The first comment we would like to address specifically is the smaller second level windows. While we appreciate the comment from Cannon Design Group, we believe the 2nd floor window line for this project will have a significant impact on the near-term success and future viability of the project. Below is a list of reasons we wish to move forward with the window design as currently proposed.

- **Leasing Success:** Our goal in leasing the office portion of the project is to find one or two tenants that will anchor this prominent downtown corner for many years to come. The employees that work at these companies will support the existing retail businesses and downtown community. In order to attract quality tenants, it's important to provide an exceptional working environment with views to the exterior and as much natural light as possible. Given the lot line constraints limiting windows to just two elevations, the larger second floor windows allow us to maximize the natural light opportunities and therefore the best chance to attract strong tenants to the project. In addition, many tenants prefer open floor plates populated with workstation benching as opposed to a layout in which private offices line the exterior glass. The larger windows provide the necessary glass line to operate a benching layout efficiently, providing the best opportunity for maximizing employee wellness and productivity.
- **Context.** While Cannon Design Group includes examples of buildings in the Historic District with paired vertical windows, there are an equal number of examples of buildings in the district with windows that maintain the same width from first to second floor. The fabric of the district is made up of a variety of window sizes, layouts, and details. As shown in the submittal, some of the registered or contributing buildings within the district include windows of the same width on both floors.
- **Detail.** The project team has taken great care to incorporate strong detailing throughout the design. This includes the rhythm of the windows on the second floor with large and small panels as well as the added muntins at the top. This rich detailing ties the design into the historic district.
- **Aesthetics.** The majority of the buildings in the historic district are 1 or 2-story structures, thus a logical base and top exist in that hierarchy. The proposed 3-story building reflects a different proportion and hierarchy. Through detail, layering, and proposed materials the design balances the 3-story proportions while creating a strong 2-story base. The continuity of the first and second levels is important to reinforce the 2-story base without creating unnecessary complexity of changing the windows at each level.
- **Historical Consultant:** The City's historical consultant has also reviewed the project and has determined that the proposed design is compatible with the San Mateo Downtown Historic District.

Based upon the above reasons, the significant support the project received from the study session, the refinements made throughout the process, and the overall quality of the project, we respectfully request staff's support moving forward with the current design of the second-floor windows.

The second issue we would like to resolve is the atrium. As noted in previous discussions, the inclusion of the atrium is critical to the viability of the project for both its function to provide as much natural light as possible to the basement level (since it will house an office tenant) and subsequently, the ability to lease this space over the life of the project.

In order to address Cannon Design and staff's concern, we have reduced the size of the atrium and added a display window opportunity. We greatly appreciate both parties' willingness to work with us to solve the concern, however we believe moving the atrium or splitting the atrium over two bays negatively affects and limits the function of the space and therefore the future success of the retail area. The current retail design provides the opportunity for either a one or two tenant solution. This flexibility is critical for leasing, maintaining long-term occupancy in an ever-changing retail leasing environment, and creating an activated street level experience at a corner location since it maintains the option for two tenants with individualized entrances and storefronts on both 3rd and Ellsworth. We will provide retail plans showing these two layouts at the Planning Commission meeting.

Additionally, we believe, the design meets both the requirements and the intent of section SMMC 27.38.11(c)(3) of the zoning code.

We believe the intent of the requirement is to encourage pedestrian activity and provide interesting and engaging views into the buildings along the street frontage.

The requirements per the listed section are below:

(3) View of Interior Space. New or reconstructed building walls at the ground level shall have at least 75% of the width along the street devoted to pedestrian entrances, transparent show or display windows of at least two (2) feet in depth, or windows affording a view of retail, office, or lobby space.

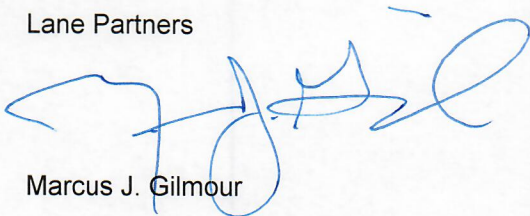
The atrium as designed not only creates a unique and interesting view into multiple levels of the building unlike anything in the downtown area, the addition of the display window opportunity at the back directly meets the intent of the above reference zoning section.

For the reasons listed above, we respectfully ask for staff's support in moving forward with the current design of the atrium.

We appreciate all your time, energy and support throughout this process. We are excited to move forward to the Planning Commission and later into construction and hope to have your support on all the items. Please feel free to contact me if you have any additional questions. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Lane Partners



Marcus J. Gilmour
Principal