

From: [Maxine Turner](#)
To: [Wendy Lao](#)
Subject: Draper alley
Date: Monday, June 24, 2019 6:44:24 PM

Follow up from our meeting today.

2018.09.19



2019.06.19



2019.06.08



June 14, 2019

Ms. Wendy Lao, Associate Planner
City of San Mateo
330 West 20th Avenue
San Mateo, CA 94403

SUBJECT: PA18-054 44-55 E. 3rd Ave. Pre-application

Dear Ms. Lao,

I am writing to express my deep concerns regarding Tim Draper's proposed alterations to two Draper University buildings: the former Benjamin Franklin Hotel and the former Collective Building. These two buildings are both individually eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, the California Register of Historic Resources, and part of our locally designated downtown historic district.

Re 44 E. 3rd Ave., my concerns revolve around two primary issues: First, the "elevator enclosure and associated structures" as proposed would remove a major rear portion of the decorative Churrigueresque ornamentation that defines the character of both the front and rear facades, and result in the loss of more than a dozen original window openings. The proposed structure would significantly alter the rear facade, which like the front is a "primary" facade, risking the building's individual National Register eligibility and possibly damaging the integrity of the historic district.



Second, considering the original use of the building as a hotel, the current use of the building for student housing, and the pressing need for more housing downtown, the proposal to convert 3 floors of housing to office use, would seem inappropriate and contrary to the trajectory of the current General Plan process.

Re 55 E. 3rd Ave., my concerns are:

The overwhelming impression of both the front and rear facades of this wonderful Tudor style building is one of symmetry. I am concerned that the proposed alterations to the window openings on both elevations may compromise that symmetry and possible historic integrity. The building facades exhibit visible signs of deferred maintenance including peeling paint, missing roof tiles, etc. Any alterations should be conditioned on maintaining, repairing, and repainting the building facades.



My recommendations for proposed alterations on both buildings is to require early stage involvement by a preservation architect/consultant who can:

1. Review, evaluate and comment on the proposed alterations in the context of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation;
2. Propose alternative means for achieving code requirements under the California Historical Building Code;
3. Evaluate and comment on any potential impacts the proposed alteration would have to historic integrity of the building, and it's individual eligibility for the National Register; and
4. Evaluate and comment on any potential impacts the proposed alterations would have to the integrity of the downtown historic district and it's National Register eligibility.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Keith Weber
San Mateo

CC: Kohar Kojayan, Community Development Director

From: [Keith Weber](#)
To: [Wendy Lao](#)
Cc: [Christina Horrisberger](#); [Aaron Aknin](#); [Ellen Mallory](#); [Ramiro Maldonado Jr.](#); [John Ebnetter](#); [Mike Etheridge](#); [Margaret Williams](#)
Subject: 44 E. Third Ave. (Draper University) Elevator Enclosure Pre-app
Date: Wednesday, November 4, 2020 1:26:56 PM
Attachments: [Ltr. re PA18-054 Draper U..pdf](#)

Dear Wendy,

I am writing in regards to the preliminary planning application for the addition of an exterior elevator enclosure, staircase and associated structures at 44 E. 3rd Avenue, currently known as Draper University. My comments are consistent with my June 14, 2019 letter to you (attached) and our in person meeting with Julia Klein regarding the same application.

As you know, 44 E. 3rd Ave., historically known as the Benjamin Franklin Hotel, is one of San Mateo's most iconic and recognizable downtown landmarks. It is individually eligible for the National Register of Historic Places and the California Register of Historic Resources. It is a significant contributor to the Downtown Historic District, anchoring the district at its western edge. Designed by W. H. Weeks in the Spanish Colonial Revival style, its most striking character defining feature is the elaborate exterior sculptural ornamentation known as Churrigueresque. The Churrigueresque ornamentation is most prominent on the upper floors of both the front and rear facades. Visible from 4th Avenue and parts of Central Park, ornamentation on the rear facade is clearly identifiable.

The new elevator enclosure proposes to replace a large portion of this ornamentation on the rear facade and irreversibly alter the most significant visible exterior "character defining feature" of one of San Mateo's most treasured buildings.

Has the applicant or the City staff consulted with an historic preservation architect to explore a more sensitive design solution, one that would retain the ornamentation and integrity of the rear facade?

Has the City staff contacted the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) to discuss the impacts the proposed addition would have on the building's individual eligibility for the State or National Registers and as a contributor to the Downtown Historic District? ([Julianne Polanco](#), SHPO 916-445-7000).

I believe answers to these questions are essential to the processing of this application and should be in hand before the project goes to the Planning Commission.

Also, I am requesting copies of all evaluations, studies, reports or letters relevant to the architectural or historical significance of this structure.

Thank you,
Keith Weber
San Mateo