

July 23 2020

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

RE: Peninsula Heights Residential

Dear Rendell:

I reviewed the drawings, evaluated the site context, viewed the video of the Planning Commission Study Session, prepared review letter on March 19 and June 18, participated with staff in a video conference with the applicant's team, and reviewed interim applicant materials. My comments on the current plans and elevations are as follows:

SITE CONTEXT

The site is located near the intersection of Highway 92 and Hillsdale Blvd. The current office structures on two parcels will be removed and replaced with single family and multifamily structures. Photographs of the site and surroundings are shown on the following page.





Aerial of Sites looking North



Aerial of North Area looking south



Aerial of South Area looking south



Residential Neighborhood adjacent to North Area



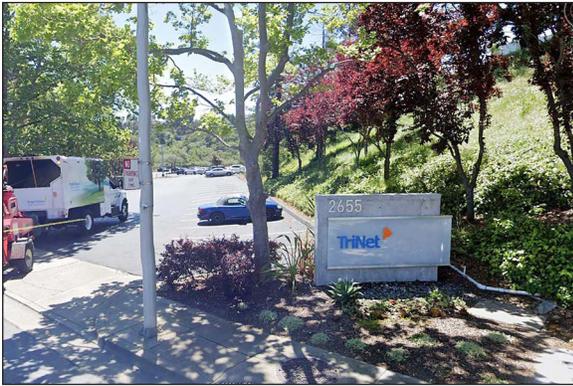
Upper Entry to North Area and adjacent residential neighborhood



Campus Drive near North Area



Campus Drive near North Area



Campus Drive entry to South Area



Campus Drive entry to South Area



Roundabout at the end of Campus Drive



EVA at the end of Campus Drive

ISSUES AND CONCERNS

Overall, the project is well planned and designed. There were, however, a few conditions and issues identified in the March 19 and June 18 review letters that were considered worthy of addressing. The applicant has provided some clarifying information, and refined designs. Below is a summary of previous concerns and current design refinements.

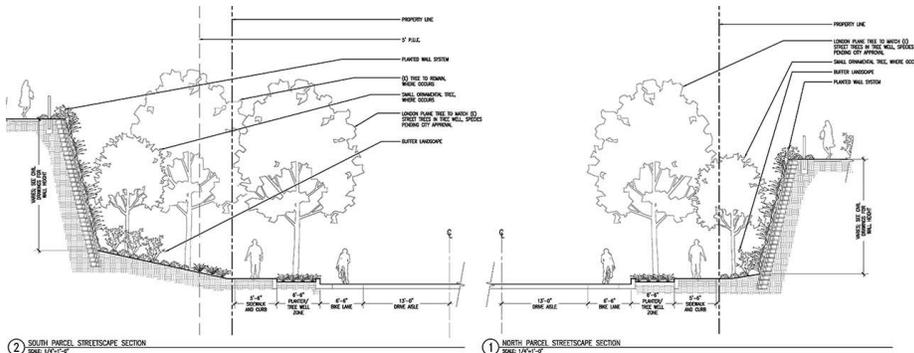
SITE PLANS

1. The previous review letter noted that some edges of Campus Drive at the North Area had limited setbacks and little room for buffering landscaping. The South Area had a greater setback and more landscaping, but there was no information provided at that time to indicate any privacy walls or the general streetscape appearance.



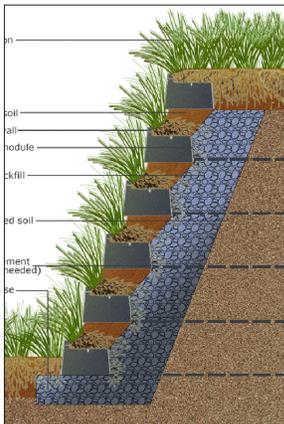
Applicant's Response

The applicant has now refined their approach to the site's new retaining walls, and provided Campus Drive edge sections and visual examples - see below.



2 SOUTH PARCEL STREETSCAPE SECTION
 SCALE: 1/4"=1'-0"

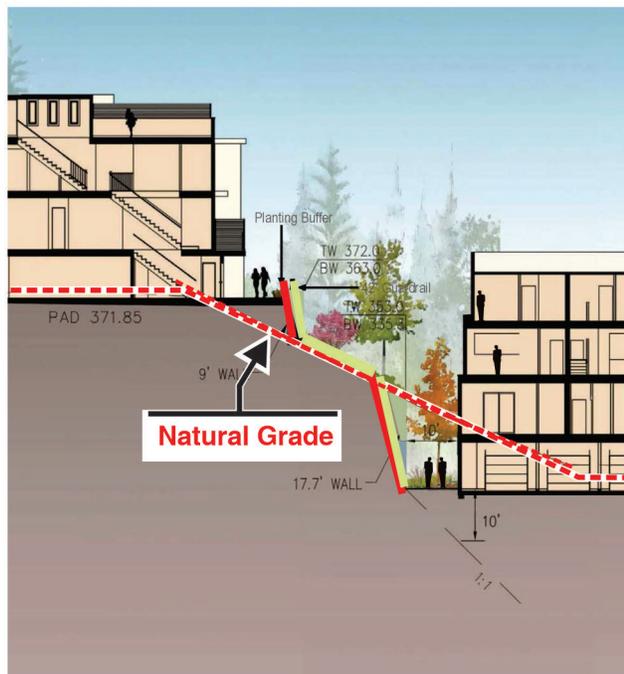
1 NORTH PARCEL STREETSCAPE SECTION
 SCALE: 1/4"=1'-0"



2. A concern was raised related to the degree to which the topography of both the North and South Areas are being altered. Both areas are currently divided into two flat pads separated by heavily landscaped slopes. The current plans envision the removal of most of the natural landscaping, and the sculpting of the land forms to increase the amount of flat land area to accommodate more residential units. This will result in some tall retaining walls in areas that are today gradual landscaped slopes.

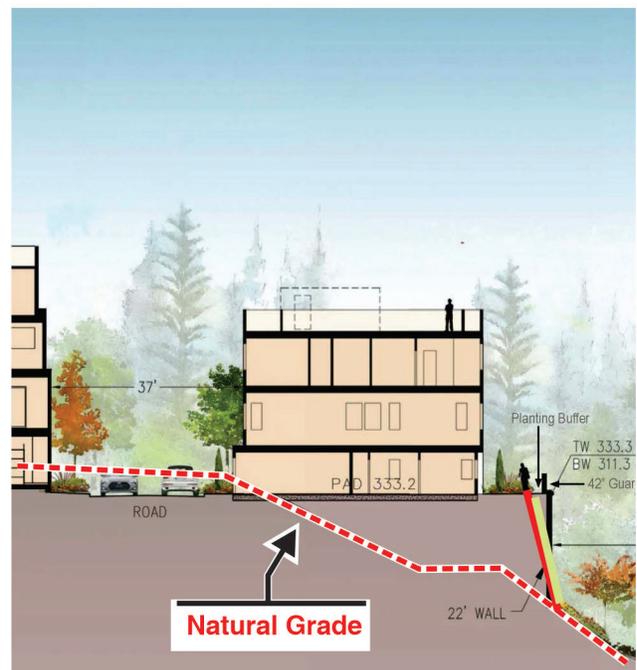


Sloped Open Space in middle of North Area



North Area: Mid-Site

Currently proposed North site section



North Area: Bottom Edge

Applicant's Response

Given the topography of the site, there were inherent site challenges to meet the Planning Commission's request of 1) wider array of unit types 2) maintain or increase density 3) increase functional open space and 4) maintain or increase the parking ratio. The applicant believes the project addresses the requests of the community and Planning Commission. In order to meet these requests, the project relies on a retaining system for hill stability. Further, the existing hillside stability relies on methods used during the 1960s and is inferior to the retaining system being proposed which will materially improve the hillside performance during a seismic event. This will improve the public health and safety for the project and existing neighbors. To mitigate the visual impacts of a retaining system, the applicant has proposed a four-layer landscaping approach along the frontage of Campus Drive that will enhance the current experience along the street frontage. Today, there is only one layer of landscaping. Additionally, the retaining system that is proposed for the project is fully plantable, providing native landscaping across the face of the wall, mitigating the "tall wall" perception. This proposed system includes a batter vs. vertical retaining wall which helps the retaining system mimic the existing hillside - see illustrations on page 4.

Recommendations: Staff believes that the applicant has responded to comments in ways that adequately address the Planning Commission's comments. There are no recommendations for changes.

RESIDENTIAL STRUCTURES

SFD 1

Previous Concerns

1. There was a conflict between the floor plans on SFD 1 and the elevation and sketches.
2. The stripes on the stucco of the SFD 1 units were not described.
3. Entry face second floor balcony was filled in to provide a larger living room, a powder room and a storage closet.



Previous Design



CURRENT DESIGN



Applicant's Response

1. Floor plans and elevation drawing inconsistencies were eliminated.
2. Colored stripes were removed.
3. The applicant has spent considerable time designing an architecturally appealing project and addressing Larry's concerns while taking into account the requests from Planning Commission to maintain density and offer a wider array of unit types. The 4" plane projection coupled with the use of various materials and color schemes will provide the visual plane breaks that Larry has referenced. Side setbacks for the SFD are typically tight and any projections more than 4" will result in larger blank wall conditions between units as we will not be able to provide windows due to the 1 hr. fire rating requirement. The other option would be to compress the interior living areas which would ultimately lead to a less functional floor layout and less diversity of size ranges within the project.

Recommendations: Staff believes that the applicant has responded to comments in ways that adequately address the staff's concerns. There are no recommendations for changes.

SFD 2

Previous Concerns

1. Stacked balconies without any variation or setback were quite boxy..
2. The stair element rising to the roof level was very tall and boxy.
3. The entry was not well articulated.



Applicant's Response

1. *Corner staircase massing has been pushed back to create a less boxy elevation. A pitched roof creates a deliberate step back at the upper-most level to reduce the facade height.*
2. *Entry has been redesigned and pushed back onto a different plane along the frontage accompanied by a single, covered balcony instead.*
3. *Single, covered balcony has been provided within a new break in plane to create a more articulated facade and deeper porch entry.*

Recommendations: Staff believes that the applicant has responded to comments in ways that adequately address the staff's concerns. There are no recommendations for changes.

MULTIFAMILY BUILDINGS

The design of original and current building types are include in this letter to provide a contextual reference for staff and the Planning Commission.

4 DU TOWNHOMES



Previous Design



CURRENT DESIGN



Previous Design



CURRENT DESIGN

Applicant's Changes

Pitched facade fronts have been added in lieu of the flat parapets.

6 DU TOWNHOMES



Previous Design



CURRENT DESIGN



Previous Design



CURRENT DESIGN

Applicant's Changes

- *Pitched facade fronts have been added in lieu of the flat parapets.*
- *Second floor balcony railings in the center of the front elevation has been reduced in width, allowing more visual variety to the ground floor wall height.*

7 DU TOWNHOMES



Previous Design



CURRENT DESIGN



Previous Design



CURRENT DESIGN

Applicant's Changes

- *Pitched facade fronts have been added in lieu of the flat parapets.*
- *Another projecting bay form has been added in the mid section of the front facade.*
- *Second floor balcony railings in the center of the front elevation has been reduced in width, allowing more visual variety to the ground floor wall height.*
- *A change in color was made on the mid-section of the front facade ground floor.*

8 DU TOWNHOMES



Previous Design



CURRENT DESIGN



Previous Design



CURRENT DESIGN

Applicant's Changes

- *The flat parapets of the previous design have been maintained.*
- *Another projecting bay form has been added in the mid-section of the front facade.*
- *Second floor balcony railings in the center of the front elevation have been reduced in width, allowing more visual variety to the ground floor wall height.*
- *A change in color was made on the mid-section of the front facade ground floor.*

9 DU TOWNHOMES



Previous Design



CURRENT DESIGN



Previous Design



CURRENT DESIGN

Applicant's Changes

- *The flat parapets of the previous design have been maintained.*
- *Two projecting bay forms have been added in the mid-section of the front facade.*
- *Second floor balcony railings in the center of the front elevation have been reduced in width, allowing more visual variety to the ground floor wall height.*
- *A change in color was made on the mid-section of the front facade ground floor.*

10 DU TOWNHOMES



Previous Design



CURRENT DESIGN



Previous Design



CURRENT DESIGN

Applicant's Changes

- *Pitched facade fronts have been added in lieu of the flat parapets.*
- *Two projecting bay forms have been added in the mid-section of the front facade.*
- *Second floor balcony railings in the center of the front elevation have been reduced in width, allowing more visual variety to the ground floor wall height.*
- *A change in color was made on the mid-section of the front facade ground floor.*

12 DU OVER FLATS



Previous Design



CURRENT DESIGN



Previous Design



CURRENT DESIGN



CURRENT DESIGN: Pitched Roof



CURRENT DESIGN: Pitched Roof

Applicant's Changes

- *Two facade versions have been developed - one flat and one pitched.*
- *Projecting bay forms have been changed in width and depth of projection in the mid-section of both the front and rear facades.*

Recommendations: Staff believes that the applicant has responded to comments in ways that adequately address the staff's concerns. There are no recommendations for changes.

Rendell, please let me know if you have any questions, or if there are specific issues of concern that I did not address.

Sincerely,
CANNON DESIGN GROUP



Larry L. Cannon