

MIDDLE PLAZA AT 500 EL CAMINO REAL
REVISED PROJECT DESCRIPTION
September 28, 2015
Revised April 7, 2016

After several months of community outreach, Stanford University is excited to submit a revised project description for the development of “Middle Plaza at 500 El Camino Real”. In respond to the feedback we received during our community outreach efforts, this revision includes a dramatically increased plaza space, a new site design with more residential and less office space, and a new architectural look and feel to better align with the community’s village character.

Background

Stanford University is proposing to redevelop the properties currently addressed 300 through 550 El Camino Real, which is an 8.4-acre site that is part of the “*El Camino Real / Downtown Specific Plan*” area. The property is near the Menlo Park and Palo Alto Caltrain stations, and also within close proximity to Safeway and other neighborhood amenities.

The project parcels are included in the Specific Plan's "ECR SE" zoning district and have a "El Camino Real Mixed Use" land use designation. The existing buildings (former auto dealerships) and site features will be replaced with a new mixed-use development consisting of housing, offices, and retail.

The proposal adheres to the Specific Plan's "base" level standards, which were established to achieve inherent public benefits, such as the redevelopment of underutilized properties, the creation of more vitality and activity, and the promotion of healthy living and sustainability. Based on a project site totaling 8.43 acres, the 1.25 base level FAR standard for the “ECR SE” zoning district would allow up to 459,013 total square feet of development on the site.

The proposal is required to comply with the Specific Plan's detailed standards and guidelines, which include requirements to limit building mass (particularly on the upper floors), encourage articulation and architectural interest, provide wider sidewalks, and mandated LEED Silver compliance.

Middle Plaza

The project’s focal point is the 120-foot-wide, publicly accessible plaza at Middle Avenue. The expansion of Middle Plaza contributes to a significant increase in overall open space for the project, and reflects community input to significantly increase the size of Middle Plaza. This plaza, approximately one-half acre in size, will provide open space with seating, drought tolerant landscaping and abundant shaded sitting areas. The plaza at Middle Avenue provides additional open space amenity to both the community and the private development. The plaza will be a formal yet flexible space which can accommodate a variety of community-oriented activities and uses. Elements include a glass sound wall that will provide physical and acoustical separation from El Camino traffic, a variety of seating options, play areas, and possible pop-up events. An elevated, landscaped area to the rear provides a “stage-like” setting for small entertainment events.

Adjacent to and integrated with Middle Plaza, the project proposes a mixed-use center. The retail node will occupy the entire first floor of this building, containing approximately 10,000 square feet of shops and cafes. This location will both activate and integrate with community activities and events that will take place in the plaza. This building could have a variety of uses from coffee shops, restaurants and eateries to, bike shops and fitness studios. Above the retail space, approximately 24,500 square feet of

articulated office space are located on the second and third floors, with the intention of daytime workers utilizing the shops and cafes in the plaza during the work week, and bring weekday vitality to the plaza. The expansion of Middle Plaza contributes to a significant increase in overall open space for the project.

An important community feature of Middle Plaza will be its role as a linking element to the City's potential grade-separated pedestrian/bicycle undercrossing of the Caltrain tracks. Middle Plaza will integrate with both the pedestrian promenade along El Camino Real, pedestrians and bicyclists undercrossing at Middle Avenue, as well as providing a linkage to the future grade-separated pedestrian/bicycle crossing of the Caltrain right-of-way.

Residential Component

The residential component of the project will consist of four buildings comprised of 215 rental units located in approximately 305,100 – 305,500 gross square feet. (Note: The combination of residential, commercial office and retail square footage of the project cannot exceed the 1.25 base level FAR standard for the "ECR SE" zoning district, which based on the project size, would be up to 459,013 total square feet of development on the site.)

Forty-two percent (42%) of the apartments will be one-bedroom units and fifty-eight percent (58%) will be two-bedroom units. The one-bedroom units average 880 square feet in size, while the two-bedroom units average 1,312 square feet in size.

The residential units are planned as rental apartments, with priority given to eligible Stanford Faculty and affiliates.

Residential Amenities

The interior amenity space within the residential component is geared toward providing onsite convenience to the residents. These facilities include:

- A state-of-the art fitness center.
- A library/business center with high speed "Wi-Fi" and remote conference technology, which will allow residents to work remotely or take advantage of flexible work hours. This area will be designed as part of the project's overall Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program to reduce single-occupancy drivers during peak morning and evening commute times
- Do-it-yourself bicycle repair stands offer an air pump and basic tools for bicycle commuters and residents.
- A community workshop area to allow residents space to work on hobbies and projects.

The design of the residential buildings will create a private interior courtyard, including a swimming pool, within a landscaped environment. Lush tranquil interior and perimeter courtyards for the residences are designed to buffer the residents from the adjacent activities on El Camino Real and the Caltrain railroad tracks. Residents will have individual private decks or patios. Rooftop terraces serving as outdoor gathering spaces will be located on upper floors.

Residential Architecture

The residential architecture is inspired by traditional California craftsman design. The architectural design, structured by refined detail finishes and community amenities will provide a new style of apartment living in Menlo Park. The residences are a contemporary interpretation of a design that reflects handcrafted details, possesses a distinct individuality, is constructed of high quality materials, and created with a careful attention to detail. The richness of materials, colors, and details are critical to the successful execution of this architectural style. From the front porches and overlooking verandas, to the graceful terracing of the building, to the public plazas and gardens, the residences have been designed to be a welcoming unique place for both its residents and the Menlo Park community.

Office/Retail Component

Three buildings across the site will make up the office component of the project, with an approximate total of between 143,000 to 143,900 square feet devoted to general commercial office uses. As per Specific Plan requirements, 10,000 square feet of retail space is proposed on the first floor level of one of the buildings at the plaza. No medical professional offices are proposed. The buildings are three and four stories in height and step back from El Camino Real in conformance with the Specific Plan requirements. (Note: The combination of residential, commercial office and retail square footage of the project cannot exceed the 1.25 base level FAR standard for the "ECR SE" zoning district, which based on the project size, would be up to 459,013 total square feet of development on the site.)

Mixed Use Building

The retail node will contain approximately 10,000 square feet of shops and cafes at this location to both activate and integrate with community activities and events that take place in the plaza. Above the retail space, approximately 24,600 square feet of offices are located on the second and third floors.

Office Building 1

Office building 1 is an articulated four-story building with a total area of approximately 88,400 square feet. This building is located on the north side of the Cambridge Avenue entrance. The building's central feature is a courtyard plaza providing a visual break along El Camino Real. The building will also have rooftop terraces that face El Camino Real and the foothills in the distance.

Office Building 2

Office building 3 is a three-story building with a total area of approximately 30,900 square feet. This building is located on the south side of the Cambridge Avenue entrance and adjacent to the Stanford Park Hotel. This building features a graceful courtyard entrance and driveway access.

Office Architecture

The architectural concept for these buildings is to reflect the look, feel and quality of Menlo Park. Neighborhood character is further promoted through the use of highly articulated architecture, buildings that address El Camino and balconies and building entrances that embrace the outdoors.

The architectural style is a contemporary interpretation of Mission Revival, an early 20th century mainstay of California downtowns that will blend nicely with the adjacent residential architecture. This modern interpretation preserves the romantic character of this very humanistic approach to building. At the same time these buildings introduce a more modern update in the use of materials, lack of ornamentation, and attention to detail while achieving a strong pedestrian scale. Windows are scaled to

suggest the uses within, massing pushes in and out to create interesting interior spaces while helping model the facades. Materials that are used provide the opportunity to pronounce color, detail, warmth and variety. Light building colors will contrast with modern, zinc roofing materials. Accent elements will include the use of natural stone, ceramic ornaments and modern wrought iron artistic features.

A major aspect of this architecture style is the use of the roofs for usable outdoor spaces. Offices open onto large upper floor terraces, providing the opportunity for outdoor meetings and activation of the buildings as experienced from the street. These buildings connect to their users, to those passing by, to their immediate environment, and help establish a new pedestrian sense of scale along El Camino Real.

The northern-most building will house retail on the first floor, opening out onto the large, public Middle Plaza. This building can accommodate a variety of retail uses to reflect the retail needs and character of Menlo Park. These uses will help enliven Middle Plaza as they will be encouraged to include outdoor seating and allow their uses to spill out onto the plaza.

Project Access and Parking

The project site is located off of El Camino Real. The primary access points for the project will be at two signalized intersections, Middle Avenue at El Camino Real and Cambridge Avenue at El Camino Real

Consistent with the El Camino Real/Downtown Specific Plan and related environmental documents, the project will complete the fourth leg of the signalized Middle Avenue and Cambridge Avenue intersections. The site design also allows for exiting the Stanford Park Hotel at Cambridge, allowing for those leaving the hotel to go southbound on El Camino, without having to make a U-turn at Cambridge. (Currently, hotel patrons leaving and wish to go southbound on El Camino Real need to make a U-turn at Cambridge.)

In addition to the two signalized intersections, there are two non-signalized entrances into the project. The most northern of these access points is located north of Middle Avenue, and provides a “right-in/right-out” opportunity. This northern entrance is located to serve a small surface parking area for the retail and commercial office opportunities located at Middle Plaza, as well as access to the underground parking garage. The second “right-in/right-out” entrance is located between the Middle Avenue and Cambridge Avenue intersections across from Partridge Avenue.

As proposed, the majority of the project parking will be provided in underground parking garages, allowing for ample open space throughout the project. There will be some surface spaces available for the retail node at Middle Plaza, as well as some short term loading and visitor spaces located around the residential and office buildings.

Based on the El Camino Real/Downtown Specific Plan, the project parking requirements are as follows:

USE	Gross Floor Area	Parking Required	Parking Provided
Office Use	143,226 sf	545 (3.8/1000 sf)	545
Residential Use	215 units	400 (1.85/unit)	420
Retail Use (at plaza)	10,000 sf	40 (4.0/1000 sf)	40
Total		985	1,005