

Public Comment #1

From: [Pete Feldman](#)
To: [Community Development ABRsecretary](#)
Cc: [Christine Feldman](#)
Subject: 425 Santa Barbara St project for May 31, 2022 ABR meeting
Date: Friday, May 27, 2022 2:59:03 PM

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EXTERNAL

To Santa Barbara ABR,

This email is in reference to the project proposed at 425 Santa Barbara Street in Santa Barbara. As a neighbor to this area, I vigorously oppose this project as proposed.

I have many objections and concerns about this project. This is a massive project on a small lot. The project goes from lot line to lot line on what used to be a single-family residence. The sheer bulk of the project does not conform to the neighborhood.

The design of the structure is a problem in general. The west face of the project on Santa Barbara Street is a flat 15' 17 1/2" wall creating a prison like look. The overall height of the project being a four-story structure and the absolute height as well is not consistent with the neighborhood. There are no windows on the street side of this project. The storage area seems inadequate, and the internal courtyard seems to only add to the bulk of the design.

A significant deficiency in the project is the absence of on-site parking. This is absurd for a 19-unit project in this part of town much less anywhere in Santa Barbara. Since when has no on-site parking been acceptable for any residence in Santa Barbara? No on-site parking will push cars onto the already crowded streets or into private parking (e.g., Smart and Final). Many projects have been abandoned due to the city's insistence of sufficient on-site parking. If this can be accepted, it would be inconsistent and arbitrary.

This project is a bad idea for this site and should not be allowed to progress without significant modifications to address these and likely other defects.

Sincerely,
Pete Feldman

CAPPELLO
& NOËL LLP
TRIAL LAWYERS

A. Barry Cappello

May 27, 2022

Via Email Only
ABRSecretary@SantaBarbaraCA.gov

Architectural Board of Review
David Gebhard Public Meeting Room
630 Garden Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

PLN2020-00426 - 425 Santa Barbara Street
APN: 031-271-008

Dear Board Members:

We represent Platform SB, LLC, the entity that owns “The Platform” office space located at 126 E Haley Street, directly adjacent to the proposed development at 425 Santa Barbara Street, and offer the following comments regarding the proposed development:

First, Applicant’s submission for the 425 Santa Barbara Street development appears to rely on the collective amnesia of the Board.

On December 14, 2020, this project came before the ABR. Board members expressed concern about the lack of parking, and the impact on the limited street parking. The Board was also “very concerned” with the neighborhood compatibility, and concluded the project did not comply with either the Urban Design Guidelines or Infill Design Guidelines. Just eighteen months later, Applicant has re-submitted a project that is substantively *identical* to that previously submitted.

There is still no on-site parking a significant concern given the occupants will inevitably own their own cars and need somewhere to park them. In an area with extremely limited parking already, the burden will fall entirely on neighboring residents and business-owners, resulting in hostility and discord. The lack of on-site parking takes on particular importance given the recent announcement from the Santa Barbara MTD that it is *reducing* service, while at the same time, the Cota public parking lot is being removed with the anticipated development of the new Police Station, with no replacement envisaged.

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The Haley Street corridor is not State Street or State Street-adjacent, where there are multiple parking structures in close walkable distance. Nor is this Isla Vista, or Applicant's project at Beach City, where the majority of residents are students who can manage with bicycles. These are market-rate apartments designed for professionals who need and will buy cars, and need somewhere to put them.

Second, the exterior massing and visual appearance is essentially identical to that proposed previously, with the building set to tower over neighboring properties. The Haley neighborhood is almost exclusively single and two-story buildings, amply demonstrated by Applicant's plans. In fact, the only substantive changes to this project are to the interior floor plan, which shuffles the square footage and introduces two "tiny home" sub-300 square foot apartments.

Finally, the Board must not view this project in isolation, but must also consider the cumulative impact of other proposed AUD projects in the neighborhood, including but not limited to the potential development at 425 Garden Street project, which was roundly panned by the Board for its disregard for neighborhood impact and compatibility.

Our client is sympathetic to the concerns about housing availability within the City. However other AUD projects demonstrate a far more thoughtful and considered approach with appropriate deference and respect for neighborhood compatibility. For example, the 219 E Haley Project which came before the Board on March 7, 2022 provides 34 off-street parking units for the 34 residential units, and an architectural approach that limits the visual impact on the neighborhood. Just two days ago, the Historic Lands Commission reviewed an AUD project proposed for 1815 State Street, which incorporates private outdoor spaces, a measured architectural approach and includes a 16-space car stacker to support the proposed 16 residential units. These are the types of AUD project the ABR should encourage.

Ultimately the ABR should send a clear message on the project, just as it did in November with the nearby 425 Garden Street project. The AUD program serves a purpose in providing much-needed residential housing in the City. But it is not a "blank check" for developers to stack and pack four-story apartments to the curbside, without the slightest regard for the impact on neighboring residents or business owners. This project must be downscaled significantly, including appropriate accommodations for parking and consideration for neighborhood compatibility.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "A. Barry Cappello".

A. Barry Cappello
CAPPELLO & NOËL LLP

Public Comment #3

From: [Robin Donaldson](#)
To: [Community Development ABRsecretary](#)
Cc: [Stephanie Swanson](#)
Subject: 425 Santa Barbara St. , ABR Letter of opposition , May 31st mtg.
Date: Friday, May 27, 2022 4:48:44 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[425SantaBarbaraST2ndabr.docx](#)
[425SantaBarbaraSTa.docx](#)

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EXTERNAL

Please let me know that you got this letter attached. thank you , Robin

Date: May 27, 2022

To: Chair Moore and honorable members of the Architectural Board of Review

From: Robin Donaldson AIA. 412 Anacapa Street, Santa Barbara, CA 93101

RE: OPPOSITION to 425 Santa Barbara Street proposal

This letter is to voice my OPPOSITION to this project.

I am surprised and very disappointed that the drawings in this proposal appear to be exactly what was submitted and reviewed by this board on Dec. 14, 2022. I voiced and wrote my opposition to this project then (see attached letter) and am writing again my profound opposition to this damaging and sub standard proposal. Completely ignoring the comments of the ABR is a waste of everyone's time.

Having said that, I will voice again what a BAD idea this proposal is and how it sets a very damaging precedent for the City. The City Development concessions they are requesting on top of a bad design (see ARB notes from 12.14.22 mtg.) make this untenable and imminently appealable.

The "Storage Units" are a BAD idea unless included in the rental unit area. Otherwise it's obviously a way to game the City's Average Unit Size Density Incentive (AUD) Program. Please apply the square footage of those storage units to the rental units they're supposedly assigned. Bike parking can be provided per the city's standards like any other rental building.

The project does not comply with the Urban Design Guidelines or Infill design guidelines. The courtyard design that adds mass and bulk to the project and pushes the building out to its property lines is a fundamentally flawed approach.

Under the right circumstances there could be an argument for supporting the notion of offsite parking. HOWEVER, there must be some aspect of the design that benefits the city, not just the applicant. How about some green space around the building? Easily achievable without the courtyard. In essence, give the courtyard square footage to the community with landscaping. No reason to exceed the height limits, with 10 ft plates. How about a building with gwindows that face Santa Barbara St., that follows the guidelines for proper urban oriented development? The basics.

As I said at the last meeting, this project needs to be completely re-designed. It appears by re-submitting the same project that the applicant is looking to attempt to force this project on the community. I look forward to opposing this project as submitted and will appeal any form of approval of this proposed design based on all my comments and the comments of the ABR.

I don't like having mine and the communities time wasted by what appears to be a cynical attempt by Ed St. George and Jarrett Gorin to game the system.

Sincerely,

Robin Donaldson, AIA

Attachment:

Date: December 14, 2020

To: Chair Moore and honorable members of the Architectural Board of Review

From: Robin Donaldson AIA. 412 Anacapa Street, Santa Barbara, CA 93101

RE: OPPOSITION to 425 Santa Barbara Street

This letter is to voice my OPPOSITION to this project.

While I support the goals of adding housing downtown, increased heights to provide affordability, and the possibility of off site parking, this project as designed is inappropriate for this site. If the applicant is going to pursue a building with no parking then the building needs to be very well designed and an asset to the community. As designed it fails at almost every metric.

First, the building massing from the street needs to be completely re-thought. Even though there is no parking on site, the building appears to be sitting on a parking podium! The central courtyard should open to the street. The building does not address the street properly, and misses an opportunity to enliven a challenged area of the block. At street level there should be a commercial component or living units that have windows to the street.

The building is the wrong style. A pseudo mediterranean building is not compatible with the commercial/ manufacturing buildings that surround it. This site is bound by a recently remodeled commercial building. This proposal should be compatible with the commercial/industrial materials of that building. A more contemporary building with larger windows is what would be appropriate to this site.

The unit planning is unfortunate and uninformed, missing opportunities for the rental units to have views to the mountains in the north and east and views to the south as well.

Summary of Architectural Design comments:

- Provide an alternate style. “Pseudo Mediterranean” is exactly what this site does not need.
- Provide a more contemporary design taking into account its neighboring buildings, particularly the buildings it shares the site with.
- Address the street with commercial or residential units, and open to the courtyard by eliminating the walls on the street.
- the 10’1” plate height is too high and unsupportable for a pseudo med building with small units and little mediterranean windows.
- Height request is supportable with a good contemporary design, larger windows. (no need for any fake chimney’s and the like)

I believe the applicant needs to study the context/neighborhood around this site, gain an understanding of the community in which they are designing then go back to the drawing board. The City of Santa Barbara has opened the door to innovative housing projects, the project as submitted is a long way from providing anything acceptable.

Sincerely,
Robin Donaldson, AIA

Robin Donaldson AIA Founding Partner

[@robindonaldsonaia](#) | [@sd_rplusd](#)

ShubinDonaldson