



June 10, 2016

(By Electronic Transmission)
City of Alameda Planning Board
2263 Santa Clara Avenue
Alameda, CA. 94501

**Subject: Proposed Housing Project at the Northwest Corner of Eagle Avenue and Everett Street
(Item 7-B on Planning Board's 6-13-16 agenda)**

Dear Boardmembers:

The latest plans are a major improvement over the previous submittal. They indicate that the architects have given very careful consideration to the comments in our November 8, 2015 letter to the Planning Board and incorporated many of these recommendations into the drawings. We would like to thank the Planning Board for its support of many of our recommendations at previous meetings and the architects and Housing Authority for incorporating these latest changes.

However, there are still some comments in our November 8, 2015 letter that are not reflected in the plans. Several of these we would like to reiterate and are indicated by asterisks in the listing below. In addition, now that we have reasonably complete architectural details, we are providing additional comments that we could not include in our previous letters.

Comments 1–5 are the most significant. The remaining comments are mostly fine-tuning and/or requests for clarifications.

1. ***Windows should be wood or have a wood-like appearance at least on the street-facing elevations.** However, the detail of the proposed vinyl single hung windows on Sheet A7.1 indicates glazing that is approximately flush with the exterior surface of the stiles and rails. This is inconsistent with the appearance of the wood windows that the design appropriately seeks to emulate, which typically have glazing recessed at least 3/8" from the exterior surfaces of the stiles and rails (see illustration in the Guide to Residential Design). Moreover, a screen is shown covering the lower sash which will obscure the additional depth of the lower sash and further contribute to the window's overall two dimensional quality. If screens are to be provided, they should cover both the upper and lower sash. Finally, Details 1D and 1C indicate the upper sash styles and rails are recessed only 1/2" from the surrounding casings, i.e. almost flush. This is inconsistent with the "punch out" look characteristic of windows in the surrounding neighborhood and the architectural styles that are the design basis for the project. The upper sash styles and rails should be recessed at least 1 1/2" and the lower sash recessed at least an additional 1 3/8".
2. ***Clarify surface materials.** We were pleased to be previously advised that the proposed cement fiber siding will be smooth surfaced rather than have an artificially grained texture. However, the

plans still do not indicate this nor the type of siding (e.g. clapboard, channel rustic, etc.). This information needs to be provided along with material samples. The proposed 1" x 10" dimension looks good.

3. **Building A.** Reduce the 5' projection of two-story center modules to between 1 ½' and 3' to more closely maintain Building A's otherwise consistent 15' setback and the 15' front setbacks of the neighboring buildings to the west.
4. **Reduce porch overhang as much as possible relative to the tops of the porch columns.** Sheet A7.3, Detail 1 shows the front elevation overhang scaling to about 15 ¾" relative to the column top molding and Sheet A7.2, Detail 2 shows the side elevation overhang scaling to about 2 1/2 inches. As designed, the exterior overhangs will cause the porch roofs to look somewhat top-heavy relative to the columns. The projections should be reduced to about 1 ½", i.e. enough to accommodate the roof fascia's drip edge. Note: Historically, the column caps often projected *beyond* the fascia surface.
5. **Sheet A7.3, Detail 15.** The roof rake brackets for the center gable-roofed module facing Eagle Avenue are too underscaled relative to the eave and look somewhat kitschy. The bracket projection is called out as 12" while the eave projection scales to about 22 ½", which is more than necessary. The eave projection should be reduced to about 14" to relate better to the scale of the brackets. Although the other two gable roof modules facing Eagle Avenue do not have brackets under the raking eaves, these eave projections could also be reduced to about 14". The brackets could also be eliminated with or without reduction of the eave projections.
6. **Building A, left module.** The gable brace appears to be two-dimensional and applied directly to the gable wall as shown in the architectural details. It would be better to make this a three-dimensional element approximately flush with the raking eave fascias as shown in Renderings R2 and R5, at least on the Eagle Avenue side.
7. **Sheet A7.1, Detail 1D.** The vertical window casing widths are not called out, but scale to a 4" width. A 5 ½" width would be better.
8. Provide a wider separation between the paired windows with at least a 5 ½" wide vertical casing matching the side casings.
9. ***Delete the transom windows above the second story windows at the corner bay.** The transoms add clutter and disrupt the horizontal alignment of the other upper floor windows.
10. ***Delete the porch overhang over the stairs on the Everett Building's south elevation.** The overhang creates an awkward composition especially with the slender two-story column at the stair base.
11. ***Provide brackets under the horizontal entry hoods for the two-story stick style modules.** Where the entries are recessed and open on one side, either enclose the open side or provide a column at the open corner to attach the bracket. As designed, the horizontal hoods appear to be floating and, without brackets, add an incongruous modernistic element.
12. **Use ogee gutters rather than slanted face gutters.** Ogee gutters read better as architectural moldings and will integrate better into the designs.

13. ***Provide crown moldings at the tops of all gable bargeboards.** Ogee gutters will serve this function for the horizontal fascias.
14. **Sheet A7.3, Details 10 and 6 (cornice/brackets).** Provide a minimum 1 ½” molding at the top of the frieze between the brackets.
15. Provide 1x moldings under the porch gutters.
16. Increase 1 inch batten width to 1 ½ inches.
17. Sheet A7.2, Detail 2 shows 10 inch wide porch columns while Sheet A7.3, Detail 1 shows 8 x 8 columns. Please clarify. The 10 inch columns are preferred.
18. ***Where are the downspouts and leader heads** and how do they tie into the exterior trim/detail/articulation?
19. Gutter, downspout and flashing sizes are not shown, although the gutter and downspout sizes scale on Sheet A7.3, Detail 4 to about 4” and 2 ¾”, respectively. A 4" gutter may appear to be too small when sitting on top of a large fascia. Downspouts may need to be larger than the standard off-the-shelf size too, due to the scale of the total mass of all of the buildings when seen as a whole.
20. **Sheet A7.3, Detail 13.** Is a 1-3/4" concrete landing capable of providing a base to attach the stair railing to when using bolts set in the concrete?
21. The renderings are not always consistent with the architectural drawings. We assume that the architectural drawings prevail.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. Please contact me at (510)523-0411 or cbuckleyAICP@att.net if you would like to discuss these comments.

Sincerely,

Christopher Buckley, President
Alameda Architectural Preservation Society

By Electronic Transmission:

cc: Mayor and City Councilmembers
Anne Phillips and Tze-Yan Szeto
Claudia Young and Rosemary Valeska, Alameda Housing Authority
Debbie Potter, Andrew Thomas and Henry Dong, Alameda Community Development Department
Melanie Wartenberg
AAPS Board and Preservation Action Committee