ALLIED
Neighborhoods Association

BOARD OF OFFICERS

Mary Turley
President

Bonnie Donovan
Secretary

Chris Barros
Treasurer

MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS .

Citizens for Livable Neighborhoods

Citizens Planning Association

Flamingo Neighborhood Association

Grove Lane Area Neighborhood Assoc.

Hidden Valley Residents Assoc.

La Mesa Neighborhood Association

Mesa Protection Alliance

West Beach Neighborhood

March 30, 2025

To: Architectural Board of Review

Re: NEW ITEM: PROJECT DESIGN APPROVAL 2. 418 N. MILPAS ST & 915-923 E. GUTIERREZ ST

Dear Chair Anderson and Board Members,

Allied Neighborhoods Association appreciates the opportunity to provide comment on the above agenda item.

1. STUDY THE HALEY MILPAS DESIGN MANUAL which applies to this project. A critical objective stated in this document is “to assist small business and industry” while “encouraging continuity consistency and harmony of design”. The many small businesses adjacent to this property will be severely disrupted by the project, as will the residences. Moreover, the design is failing to meet the criteria. Notably, this district is recognized as “Hispanic Pueblo Blvd.” As for design, they write: “in this district walls are very important to articulate the form of the buildings.” The stark white walls fail to conform and have been compared to prison walls by many.

Examples of how to approach color, landscaping, lighting, signage, paving, wall treatments, roofs are all described in great detail. “The single most important design element for the Boulevard District is street trees’”. They recommend a minimum 20-foot setback from the front property lines to create a ““green corridor” effect.” Furthermore, it emphasizes “residential preservation” to provide “design continuity and compatibility.” Additionally, these design elements apply to this project:

- Buildings, no matter what the use, should be set back from the street to match the setback of adjacent residences

- Building forms should mimic residential character massing and volume

- The rhythm and scale of buildings along the street should be of a residential pattern as seen in the example below

- Street character should be residential through the use of planted parkways between the curb and sidewalk and large trees building height should not exceed 2 stories or 25 feet

Please review the Haley Milpas Design Manual and the useful examples they provide of correctly and incorrectly addressing this, complete with informative pictures. The Planning Commission discussed “deinstitutionalizing” the design.

2. MASSIVE PROJECT This project is very, very large. The mass, bulk, scale, height, and size are out of character with the immediate neighborhood full of cottages and 1-2 story businesses and residences. It is not compatible. The design of the project is NOT compatible with desirable architectural qualities and characteristics that are distinctive of Hispanic Pueblo and of the particular neighborhood surrounding the project. The size, mass, bulk, height, and scale of the project are inappropriate for this location and neighborhood.

3. STORY POLES The renderings are visually misleading by showing a 4-story building of a similar size and scale to the surrounding single-story structures. The publicly posted images mischaracterize the massive scale of the project. The neighborhood needs to understand the scope, size and scale of the project. During the Planning Commission’s meeting, they agreed story poles would be important because a majority of people living in the neighborhood will not attend PC and ABR meetings. Nor do they have the knowhow to access plans on the City website to view mock ups for size, bulk, scale, heights, etc. Thus, we strongly recommend story poles in keeping with City Council’s vote on the matter. We request one per corner to serve as a NOTICE of the proposed project.

4. SOLAR PROTECTIONS Despite the Shade/Shadow/Solar study, we are concerned that the height will prevent neighboring properties from accessing solar once it is built. Please investigate this more rigorously.

5. SIMULATIONS The views from Haley St. and Alisos St. should be included in the elevations and the simulation.

6. SPANISH LANGUAGE NOTIFICATION The neighborhood is mixed with roughly 50% speaking Spanish. No notifications were sent in the language people could read. This sidelines a significant number of renters and property owners who will be impacted by this project. We strongly request notifications go out in Spanish and English.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments and questions.

We’d also like to thank ABR members for your service.

Sincerely,

Allied Neighborhoods Association