

**PHASE 2 HISTORIC STRUCTURES/SITES REPORT  
EL PRADO INN  
1601 STATE STREET  
SANTA BARBARA, CALIFORNIA  
APN: 027-181-080 and 090**

**FINAL**

**Prepared for  
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**June 2016**

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EL PRADO INN, 1601 STATE STREET  
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**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The owners of the El Prado Inn propose to demolish the El Prado Inn Annex and build an addition in its place at the rear of the property. The new vehicle entry and check in will be at the rear in this addition, and the present entrance shall be reconfigured to include a putting green, low landscaping, and a new porte cochere modeled on the original 1959 plans which were not executed. When presented before the Historic Landmarks Commission (HLC) on June 1, 2016, the concept was considered acceptable and a recommendation was to add the port cochere to the Arrellaga Street entrance as an element that would retain the integrity of original entrance as a significant mid-century car related architecture and still dominate the site as pedestrian access even though it will become a secondary entrance.

Because this building is a City Structure of Merit, Nicole Hernandez, Urban Historian, requested that a Phase 2 report be prepared to evaluate the impacts if any of this addition and the alteration of entrances. This report meets the Master Environmental Assessment requirements for a Historic Structures/Sites Report. Alexandra C. Cole of Preservation Planning Associates prepared the report.

The El Prado Inn was determined eligible as a Structure of Merit in my HSSR Phase 1 report, dated May 2013, presented and accepted at the HLC meeting of June 5, 2013, and designated a City Structure of Merit by the HLC on November 20, 2013.

**2.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The proposed project will demolish the existing 6,399 square foot annex and construct a 38,052 square foot addition to the existing hotel consisting of a new three-story hotel addition, with 66 new hotel rooms. Along with the hotel rooms, the building will include 4,985square feet of support space for hotel functions. Uncovered parking spaces will be demolished and replaced with 122 covered parking spaces. The new vehicle entry and check in will be at the rear in this addition, and the present entrance shall be reconfigured to include a putting green , low landscaping, and a new porte cochere modeled on the original 1959 plan which was not executed.

**3.0 ARCHITECTURAL AND SOCIAL HISTORY**

The land where the building at 1601 State Street is now located lies in Block 47 of the City, laid out in 1853 as part of the Salisbury Haley survey. The block was sparsely settled, with the

Canfield residence, constructed in 1889, facing State Street and two other two-story Victorian houses facing Arrellaga Street. The project site at the corner was undeveloped. By 1907, the block was still largely undeveloped, and the project site was empty. By 1931, the block was largely infilled with one-story cottages and a four-apartment unit (1625) added to the block. However the project site was still vacant (see Figure 1).

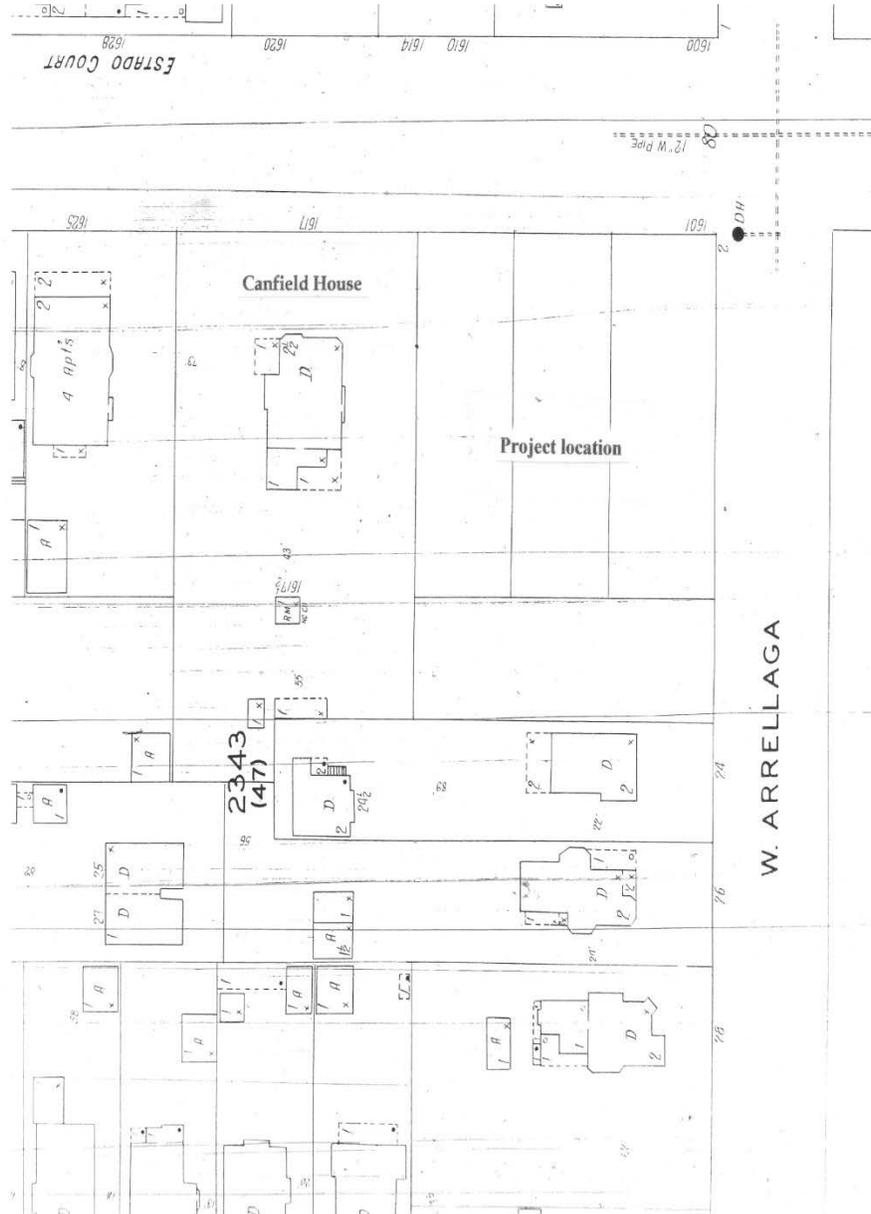


Figure 1. 1931 Sanborn Map

By the 1950s, the subject area at the corner was a used car lot, known as Fiesta Motors, owned by Sterling Morton. In 1952, a permit was applied for to add a 12' x 25' by 6' billboard facing

State Street. This permit was not approved because it was too near a residential zone. In 1953 a small 8' x 12" office was moved via truck onto the site from 25 North Milpas Street and a porch was added (City Permit F-809, March 26, 1953). A year later the lessee Howard Peterman added a metal-frame car polish canopy, designed by the young architect Peter Edwards (City Permit F-2115, May 20, 1954).

By 1957, the property had been sold to Lester A. Girsh, an optometrist with an office at 802 State Street. In September of 1957, Girsh submitted preliminary plans for a 54-unit motel for the vacant lot, with the engineer Alvin Isaacs listed on the permit. After four preliminary designs were presented to the Architectural Board of Review (ABR), the fourth plan was approved on October 28, 1957 ("Motor Hotel for Dr. Lester A Girsh" 1960).

As well, Girsh bought the adjacent lot at 1617 State Street, which contained the three-story Victorian house, formerly the home of Judge Robert Canfield. For an unknown reason, the approved plans of 1957 for the motel were not carried forward until 1959, when the plans, prepared by Carl J. Madsen and Albert Dothee were again approved by ABR on January 20. The final plans were approved on May 11, and the colors on January 25, 1960. By the end of 1959, Girsh applied for a demolition permit for the Canfield house (City Permit 6014, December 3, 1959). When the motel was constructed in 1959, the vacant lot where the Canfield building had been located became a putting green and parking. The sandstone entry posts and low sandstone curbing from the Canfield house landscaping were retained.

In 1961, preliminary plans for a 15-unit motel, meeting room, and parking area, designed by Ernie Watson and Alex D'Alfonso, and to be built on the Canfield House site, went before ABR. On February 28, 1961, final plans were approved, subject to the colors conforming to the existing motel. Again there was a two-year delay before the permit was pulled (City Building permit 2445, April 9, 1963).

#### **4.0 BUILDING DESCRIPTION**

This L-shaped three-story building has an entrance lobby and offices in the central core of the ground floor, flanked by two garages hidden by pierced concrete screens. The second and third floors contain the bedroom units. A shallow one-story wing on the west houses a barber shop, and the shallow three-story bay on the east houses the exterior staircase, also hidden by a pierced concrete screen. To the rear is a swimming pool. A driveway leads from W. Arrellaga Street to the front entrance and to the two garages. A large sign in jazzy script which complements the style of the building is the word "Inn" affixed to the tall concrete wall flanked by pierced concrete screens. The flat roof has deep canted eaves. On the roof centered above the entrance is an elevator and stairway shaft with canted walls and a flagpole. The walls consist of 8" scored concrete blocks on the first floor with rough-finished plaster walls on the upper floors. The second and third floor balconies alternate narrow metal railings with trapezoidal plastered walls containing single lights sheltered by rectangular metal hoods. Doors to the rooms are

solid core, and windows are large dual-pane aluminum horizontal sliders with aluminum trim. Doors on the first floor to the entrance and to the barber shop are paired glass in aluminum frames.

### Exterior Alterations

At some time the “Motor” section of the large sign on the pierced concrete screen was removed. The metal sash windows were replaced with aluminum sash.

## **5.0 ASSESSMENT OF IMPACTS OF THE PROJECT**

### CEQA Guidelines for Determining Project Effects

CEQA defines a potential adverse effect as one that would cause a substantial change in the significance of a resource. Such a substantial change means demolition, destruction, relocation, or alteration of the physical characteristics of the resource or its immediate surroundings that justify its eligibility for the CRHR or its inclusion in a local register of historic resources (PRC Section 15064.5 (b) (1, 2)).

According to the latest CEQA guidelines, if a project involving significant historical resources follows *The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties With Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic Buildings (Standards)* (Weeks and Grimmer 1995), the project is considered to be mitigated to a level of less than a significant impact on the historic resource (PRC Section 15064.5 (b) (3)).

The *Standards* are as follows:

1. A property shall be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.
2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, shall not be undertaken.
4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest

means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used.

8. Archeological resources shall be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a way that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

### Analysis of Proposed Project According to CEQA Guidelines

#### **Summary**

Designated a City Structure of Merit November 20, 2013, as a "Vernacular Mid-Century Modern Motor Inn", the building is considered an historic resource according to CEQA standards.

#### **Analysis**

The proposed project of demolishing the 1963 Annex, creating a rear addition, reconfiguring the parking, and relocating the present and original entrance to the rear will be analyzed according to the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

Standard 1. *A property shall be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships*

The demolition of the Annex, built in 1963 and not included in the boundary of the Structure of Merit will not constitute an impact. My May 2016 letter addendum to the HLC indicated that other D'Alfonso buildings were more evocative of this designer's work (Preservation Planning Associates 2016). The distinctive materials, features, and spatial relationships of the main building include the scored concrete blocks on the first floor, canted balcony walls on the second and third floors, the canted eaves, the pierced concrete screens, the overscale "Inn" sign, and the open-tread staircases will remain. Because the proposed changes leave this part of the building intact, the project will not change its distinctive materials.

The spatial relationship of the drive pulling up in front of the entrance of the Motor Inn is an important relationship of the Mid-Century Modern style, as stated in the accepted HSSR: "Its dramatic presence is a physical reminder of the car-related architecture that developed after World War II and is significant under criterion E." Adding the original port cochere with low landscaping would minimally change this space and spatial relationship as it would still read as a mid-century car-related architecture, even though it may not be used by the cars. The addition of the low-key putting green is not motor-related, but will allow the area to remain central to

the Inn's activities. Therefore the proposed project meets Standard 1.

Standard 2. *The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.*

No distinctive materials will be altered for this proposed project. The spatial relationship will be retained as the port cochere for the original entrance will be reconstructed, accenting the original entrance and its relationship to its car-related architecture. The addition of the low-key putting green is not motor-related, but will allow the area to remain central to the Inn's activities. Therefore the proposed project meets Standard 2.

Standard 3. *Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, shall not be undertaken.*

No conjectural features or elements from other historical properties will be added. Therefore the proposed project meets Standard 3. The putting green, although originally at the rear of the property, is an element that was part of the history of the site.

Standard 4. *Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved*

No alterations have acquired significance in their own right, and no changes will be made to them. This Standard is not relevant to the project.

Standard 5. *Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved*

The distinctive materials, features, finishes and construction techniques that characterize the property, including the scored concrete blocks on the first floor, canted balcony walls on the second and third floors, the canted eaves, the pierced concrete screens, the overscale "Inn" sign, and the open-tread staircases are being preserved. Therefore the proposed project meets Standard 5. It is important that the Porte Cochere is being added to highlight that this was the original motor entrance, and although now a pedestrian entrance with low landscaping, it mimics the original pattern so that it is clear what the entrance originally was.

Standard 6. *Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence*

The proposed project includes an addition to the north of the El Prado building, not connected to it, and therefore this Standard is not relevant.

Standard 7. *Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used.*

No chemical treatments are being proposed. Therefore the project meets Standard 7.

Standard 8. *Archeological resources shall be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken*

This Standard is outside the purview of this report.

Standard 9. *New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.*

### New building

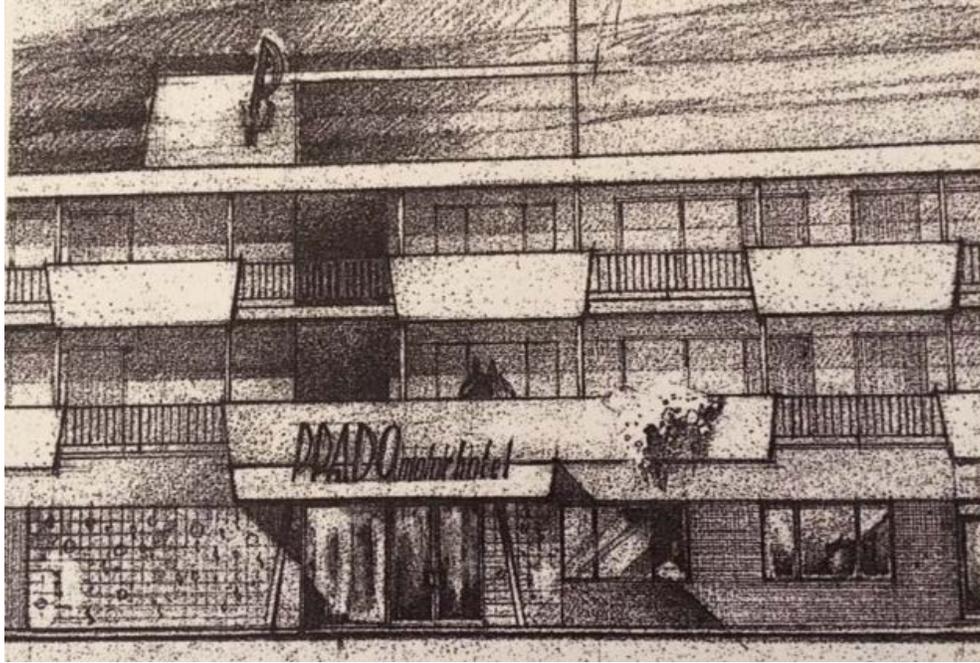
The proposed project will add a separate three-story addition at the north end of the property, connected only at the underground parking level, in an area where the former Annex, dating to 1963, was located. There are no historic materials or spatial relationships which will be destroyed. The new building is compatible with the existing in scale, massing, features, and materials (see Proposed Site plan in Appendix).

The horizontality, emphasized by the flat roofs with canted eaves, makes reference to the existing roof line. The flat-roofed canopies at the roof decks make reference to that on the existing roof at the West Arrellaga Street side. The transparent metal balconies with canted sides make reference to the character-defining concrete canted balconies on the existing building yet are differentiated in layout and materials. The verticality of the windows makes reference to the existing doors, yet the proposed muntin breakup will be varied and off-center according to Mid Century Modern ideas as well as the examples put forth by Piet Mondrian in his paintings.

The separation of the new building from the old allows the existing building to “read” as its own Mid-Century Modern statement. The cement panel screen wall on State Street which links the buildings visually at the new entrance on State Street makes reference to the character-defining screen wall elements on the West Arrellaga Street façade, yet its design is differentiated from them. Because the addition is differentiated from the old and is compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale, and proportion, the proposed new building meets Standard 9.

### Alterations to existing building

The part of the project that could have the potential to impact historic spatial relationships is the relocation of the present entrance from the south to the north and the removal of the automobile pass-through at the front. The two entries into the garage would remain, and the central automobile driveway connecting them would be removed. To counteract the loss of the drive through, and the loss of this entrance as the primary check-in site, the proposed porte cochere,



El Prado Inn porte cochere design as shown on approved plans dated January 20, 1959

which showed on the 1959 plans but was not built, will be added. The original approved design for the inn, prepared by Carl Madsen and Albert Dothee, showed the flat-roofed porte cochere at the entrance with canted eaves matching the angle of the canted trapezoidal balcony walls and supported on steel tube posts of the same dimension as those on the balconies.

The present small canopy would be removed and the 1959 proposed porte cochere added over the entry. As well, the former drive-through would be bisected by the entry pathway with each side planted with turf to serve as a putting green, to mimic that which was at the rear of the property before the Annex was built in its place. The proposed low planting would allow the view of the character-defining concrete screens to remain (see Original Elevations, Proposed Elevations, and Landscape plan in Appendix).

Although the functional check-in entrance will be transferred to the new building, this entrance will remain in use as clients retrieve their cars, step out to walk down State Street, or enter the hotel at this activity area. The creation of the putting green with low planting to outline the original drive will not only return a sport found at the north end of the property in the late 1950s, but also will allow a continued view of the character-defining features such as the screens and canted balcony walls. As well, the proposed addition of the 1959 porte cochere allows the entrance to retain architectural prominence and to illustrate that the building was designed as car-related architecture that was important in the mid-century. Therefore this part of the project meets Standard 9.

### Streetscape Compatibility

To the immediate north of the proposed addition, separated by a driveway and set on a rise, is the American Four Square style house at 1625 State Street, which is considered a potential City Structure of Merit. It was built in 1908 and remodeled in 1922 with extensions to the front and rear to become a four-unit apartment building (Suzanne Elledge, personal communication). Set on a raised foundation, this two-story house has a hipped roof with overscale dormer, open second floor porch, and enclosed first floor porch. Two mature oak trees on the subject property and a mature Norfolk Island Pine on the 1625 property act as partial screens.

To preserve the streetscape view of the house, the proposed addition will be set back 22 feet from the edge of the property (as opposed to the present Annex which is set on the property line), so that its front wall will be behind the porch corner of the house (see Proposed Site Plan and Schematic in Appendix). As well, additional trees will be planted to screen the new addition from the driveway and the house. Balconies on the north elevation will be decorative rather than useable as sitting areas to provide further privacy to the house's occupants. As a result of these proposed setback and screening, this part of the project meets Standard 9.

*Standard 10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a way that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.*

If the proposed project were removed, the essential form and integrity of the El Prado Inn would be unimpaired. Therefore the proposed project meets Standard 10.

### **Recommended Action/Mitigation Measures**

Because the proposed project's impacts are considered less than significant (Class III), there is no required mitigation.

### **Residual Impacts**

Because the proposed project's impacts are considered less than significant (Class III), there are no residual impacts.

## **6.0 BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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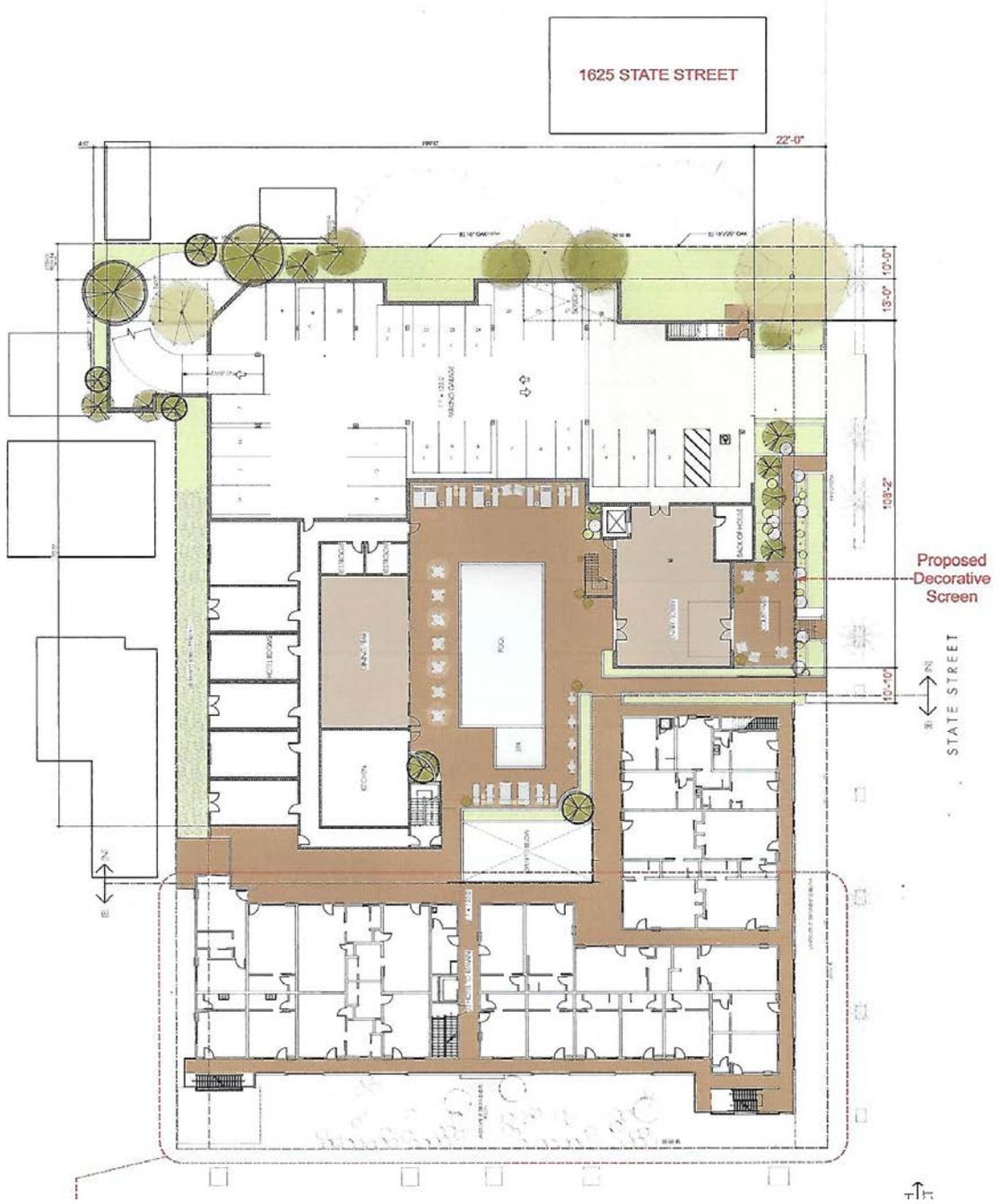
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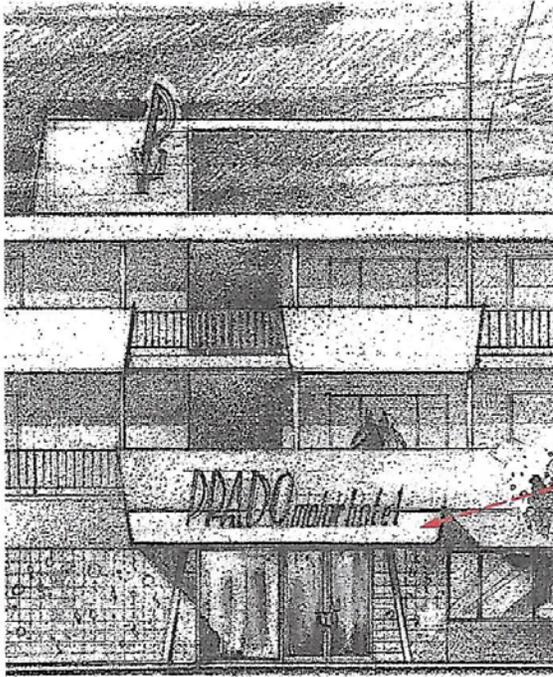
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**7. APPENDIX**

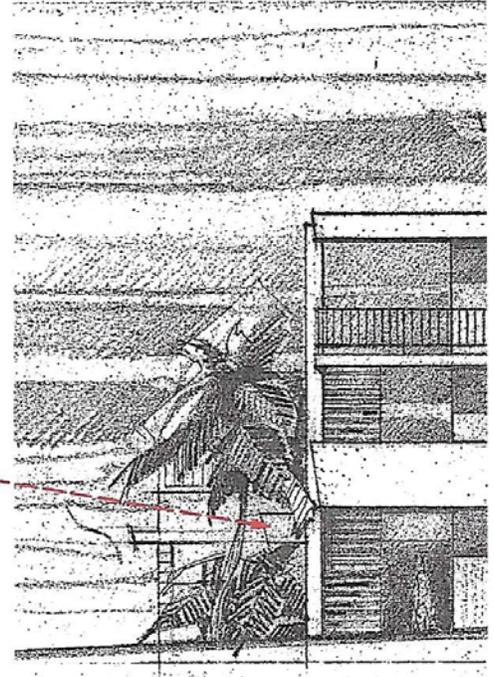
# Proposed Site Plan



Original Elevations from 1959 Board of Architectural Review Approval

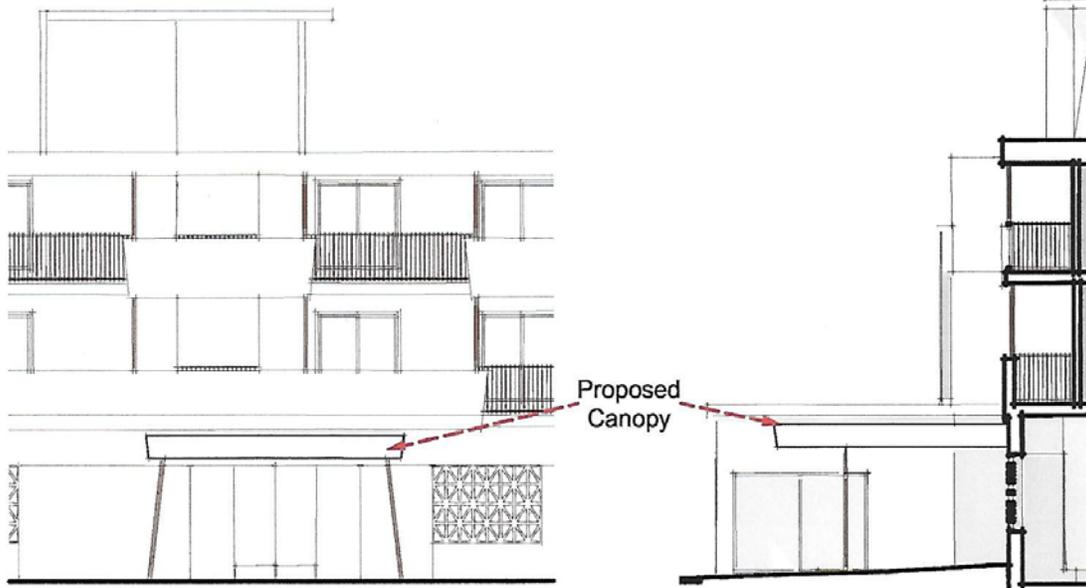


Arrellaga Street Elevation



State Street Elevation

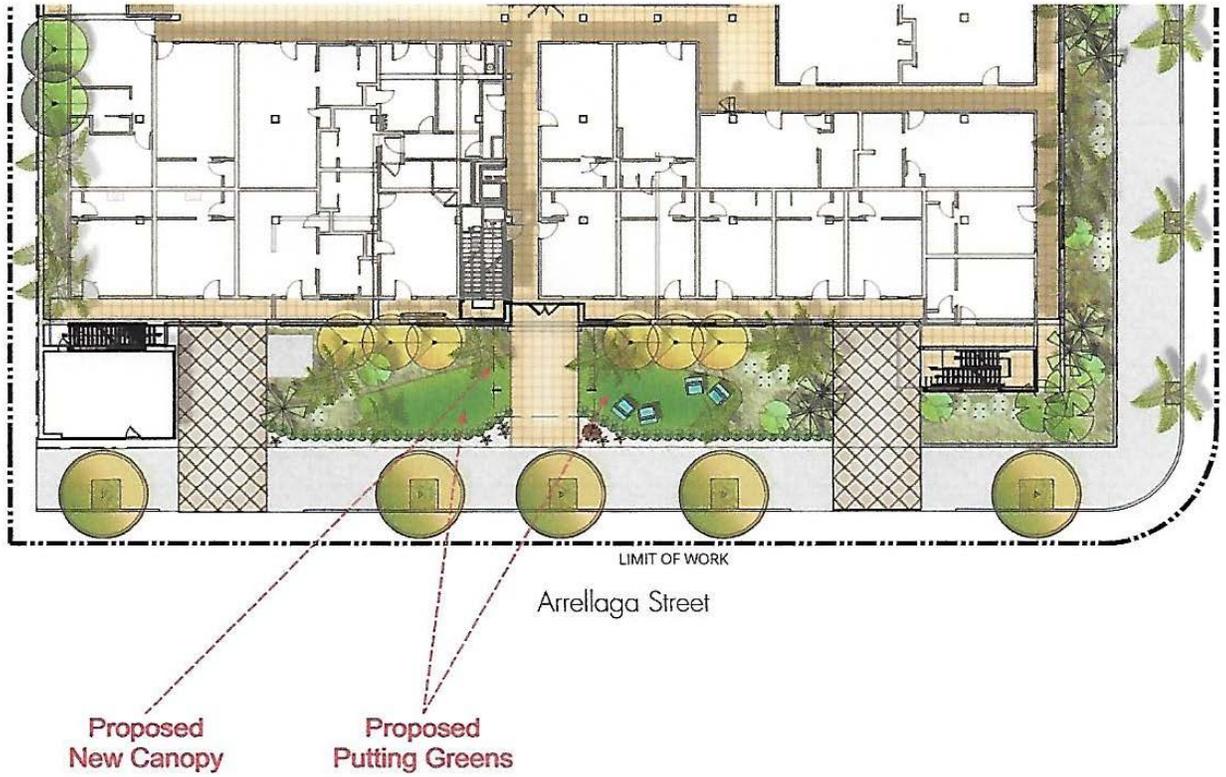
Proposed Canopy Addition



Arrellaga Street Elevation

State Street Elevation

**Proposed Landscape Plan at West Arrellage Street entranceshowing  
putting green and outline of new canopy**



Schematic view showing relationship of 1625 State Street to proposed addition



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