



**Barron
Square**

Urgent Notice to Residents

February 6, 2017



Preliminary Review for 4146 El Camino Real Property

***Palo Alto City Council
Meeting - Monday, Feb 13,
2017 6PM***

Barron Square Owners and

Residents are urged to attend or write to the Council to oppose the upzoning of the adjacent property at 4146 El Camino Real from RM-15 to RM-30.

Most, if not all, residents of Barron Square have received notices from the City of Palo Alto that the City Council will hold a "Preliminary Review to Rezone the Vacant Property" at 4146 El Camino Real, adjacent to Barron Square. As of this time, the plans submitted to the City are for 21 condominiums to be built on the 3/4 acre parcel with access from El Camino Real and under the building parking, essentially the same as was submitted to the Architectural Review Board in 2014.

Many of our current residents are new to Barron Square and may not be familiar with the history of the adjacent property, but clearly the upzoning of this property and the construction of a three-story block of houses could have a significant impact on Barron Square. [An article describing the proposed project](#) appeared here in 2014. The "Adjacent Property Committee" appointed

by the Board has been monitoring the situation and one of the members, Ruth Lowy, has provided [an excellent write-up on the history of the property](#) and the problems we envision for the new development. Additional documents are available:

[Staff Report for February 13, 2017 City Council meeting.](#)

[Submitted Plan set for 4146 El Camino Real](#) (very large document)

There are several basic questions which need to be considered:



Ingress/Egress to the property – The current design clearly indicates that access to the property will be via El Camino Real and NOT via Thain Way. Thain Way ENDS at the cul-de-sac adjacent to buildings 7 and 10 and the only point of connection which could be made is the 10' section of fence which abuts the cul-de-sac. The current designs shows that ***at that point the adjacent property would be 10' below ground level*** for under the building parking. So, in spite of the desire by the former head of the ARB for 'connectivity between the communities' and a bike path for the kids going to school, unless the laws of gravity are repealed, such a connection is not feasible. Both the fire lane from

the cul-de-sac to the gate at El Camino and the parking area along building 10 are the PRIVATE property of Barron Square and not available for access.

Privacy and Security – A number of residents have expressed concerns regarding access from El Camino Real to Thain Way via the new property. Before the fire lane was gated and locked we experienced a considerable amount of vandalism and petty crime and recently there have been a number of autos vandalized and an attempted break in at one of the condominiums. Again, if the current design is maintained, the vertical separation of the properties will serve as a deterrent. We are also planning additional deterrents to entry from the El Camino side of the Barron Square property.

Zoning and Compatibility – Palo Alto Code, [chapter 18.13.060](#) establishes “Multiple Family Context-Based Design Criteria” It states that “development in a multiple-family residential district shall be responsible to its context and compatible with adjacent development.” “**Context**” used in this section is intended to indicate relationships between the site’s development to adjacent street types, surrounding land uses, and on-site or nearby natural features, such as creeks or trees. Effective transitions to these adjacent uses and features are strongly reinforced by Comprehensive Plan policies...” “**Compatibility**” is achieved when the apparent scale and mass of new buildings share general characteristics and establishes design linkages with the overall buildings to maintain visual unity of the neighborhood or street.

The developer is currently asking for rezoning of the El Camino parcel from RM-15 (15 residential units per acre) to RM-30 to allow building 21 units. This would be a continuation of the disproportionate amount of high density development in the South Palo Alto area.

The three-story buildings present a significant visual impact and encroachment on the daylight plane. One Barron Square owner has [requested that a ‘daylight plane’ study be required](#) to determine if there would be a detrimental effect on the residents in the nearby Barron Square buildings.

We urge all owners and residents at Barron Square review the facts here and express their opinions to the City Council.

The Adjacent Property committee is urging that we oppose the upzoning to RM-30 by [writing to the City Council](#) and/or attending the Council

meeting on February 13th at 6PM. Council Chambers are located in the Civic Center at 250 Hamilton Ave., Palo Alto, CA. Carpooling is recommended if you plan to attend.
