

March 16, 2011

Mr. Stephen Scott, AICP  
City of San Mateo  
Department of Community Development  
330 West 20th Avenue  
San Mateo, CA 94403-1388

**RE: Saint Matthew Parish Gymnasium**

Dear Stephen:

I reviewed the revised drawings for a somewhat smaller building than the previous proposal located between the existing Auditorium and the main pedestrian walkway into the parish complex. The existing structures in the complex provide the substantial context for this project. Other developments along El Camino Real are mixed in scale and design, and have little influence on this campus-like site. While there are single family homes to the north of the parish grounds, the proposed new gymnasium structure is relatively far removed from them, and should have little if any visual impact. Photos of the site are shown below.





*Auditorium*



*View north along El Camino Real to the site*



*View south along El Camino Real to the site*



*View across El Camino Real*



*Parish Hall at the west edge of the site*



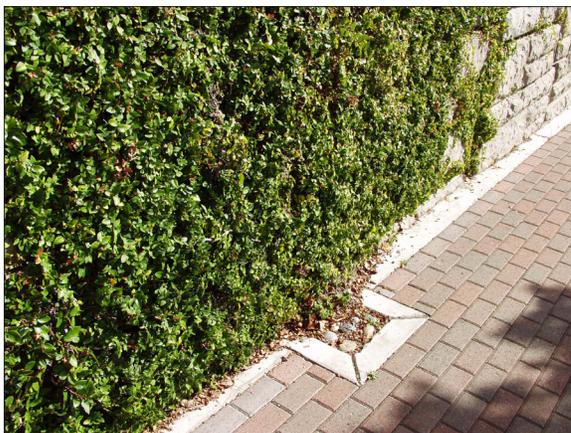
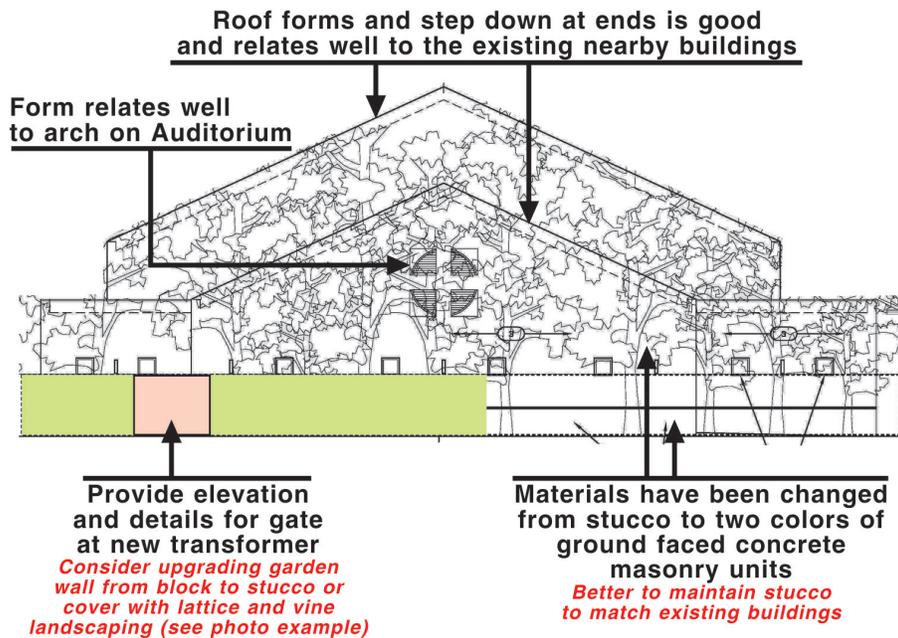
*View south to the site*

### Issues and Recommendations

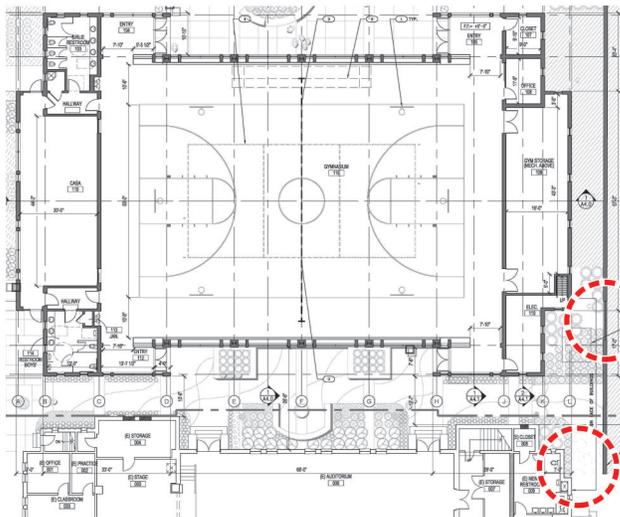
The revised design looks pretty good. The change in roof form from an arch to a gable, and the stepping down of the structure at both the east and west ends of the building are both very positive, and should allow the gymnasium to be a better fit with the nearby existing parish structures. The round form treatment of the return air grills on the east elevation is a nice touch that relates to the arch at the entry to the adjacent Auditorium structure immediately to the south.

I have only a few comments and recommendations as follows:

1. The exterior wall material has been changed from stucco on the earlier design to two colors of ground face concrete masonry units. This seems inappropriate for such a large building in the context of the traditional adjacent parish structures. I would strongly recommend a return to the stucco exterior wall finishes.
2. A new transformer has been proposed near the southeast corner of the new building. Although not called out on the drawings, it appears that there is an access gate to it in the garden wall along the El Camino Real property line. This gate will be visually prominent, and deserves some careful design consideration. The applicant should provide elevation and detail drawings along with photos of similar gate designs, if available.
3. The existing garden wall along the El Camino Real property line is proposed to remain. The wall is not currently very attractive, and tends to negatively impact the otherwise strong visual quality of the Auditorium and El Camino Real streetscape. It would be desirable to finish this wall with stucco to match the existing buildings and the new structure. Alternatively, vine landscaping could be installed over the existing wall. One example is shown in the photos below.



4. There is currently a rather unattractive chain link gate located at the juncture of the above referenced garden wall with the Auditorium (see photo to the right). It would be desirable, as part of this project, to eliminate, relocate, or replace this gate with a more attractive gate more in keeping with the design and character of the buildings.



Elevation and details of gate at new transformer should be provided

Current location of unattractive chain link gate - Will it be removed or replaced?

Stephen, I have no further comments or recommendations. Please let me know if there are any questions or if there are issues that I did not address.

Sincerely,  
CANNON DESIGN GROUP



Larry L. Cannon AICP  
President