

**From:** [George Kauffman](#)  
**To:** [City Clerk](#)  
**Subject:** Written comments about 870 E. El Camino Real, Mountain View  
**Date:** Sunday, September 25, 2022 11:32:12 AM  
**Attachments:** [Reserve Apartments Comments.pdf](#)

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To the Mountain View City Council for the September 27, 2022 discussion about 870 E. El Camino Real

It is my observation that my original comments to the Planning Commission did not lead to any changes to this proposal. It is way too big for the site and the City and residents will suffer harm if it is not scaled back. My original comments are attached. Below is a summary of the problems with the site as now proposed. Please do not approve any building with more than four stories above ground at this site.

1. When the next door Hilton Garden Inn (now Aloft Hotel, 840 East El Camino Real) was built, there was not enough power at the site. As a part of the hotel project, a 20 kilovolt overhead power line was built. This power line traverses the proposed 870 building site. The 870 (all electric) proposal includes 233 additional units and there is not enough power at the site.
2. When the Little Prodigy Daycare building (830 E. El Camino Real) was built, a private storm drain easement was created and built for storm water to flow north to Moraga Drive. The properties that face El Camino Real (870, 840, 830) are all below grade (an average of 2 feet) and storm drains cannot be added under a state highway that is uphill from the property. Moraga Drive does not have the capacity for the run-off with two new buildings that will cover more than 80% of the land.
3. The 870 proposal calls for two subterranean parking garage floors. Storm drain connections cannot go under El Camino Real, a state highway, so the northbound direction leads to Moraga Drive, a residential street. The storm drains on Moraga drive are 8 feet underground. A two floor subterranean garage is 20 feet below grade. Even if the Moraga Drive storm drain pipe was big enough, how will the storm water flow up hill? The scale of the proposed buildings should be reduced to a single level subterranean parking garage with a corresponding reduction in the number of apartments.
4. Mountain View does not own a fire truck that can reach above 4 stories and operate within a 16 foot fire lane. The Hotel Avante (860 East El Camino Real) was built with a setback variance. This four story building is less than five feet from the only driveway that would exist next to the proposed 6 story building at 870.
5. The only source of city water is on Moraga Drive. We already know that the 12 inch water main is at capacity for the neighborhood. There is a decades-old history of water pressure problems. Where do 233 new units connect to the water supply? El Camino Real is not an option, The eastern border of this property is Sunnyvale, so a eastern water connection is not likely.
6. The other six story apartments in Mountain View all have at least three public street access points for cars. This proposal has one. The El Camino driveway fronts into a divided highway, with one way access only with a zero clearance lane at the sidewalk, on a two foot rise in elevation. This is a traffic safety problem for hundreds of vehicle trips per day.

George Kauffman  
[REDACTED]  
Mountain View, CA 94041  
[REDACTED]

**Sent:** Monday, February 21, 2022 at 11:03 PM  
**From:** "George Kauffman" [REDACTED]

**To:** clarissa.burke@mountainview.gov

**Subject:** written comments about 870 E. El Camino Real, Mountain View

Clarissa,

I am writing in response to a proposed apartment project Virtual Community Meeting notice with your name on it.

The project is located at 870 East El Camino Real in Mountain View (The Reserve apartments, 233 new units).

I have attached my comments, written today, in a PDF attachment.

Please let me know that you got this for the record.

Thanks,

George Kauffman

Mountain View, CA 94041

## **Reserve Apartments**

Regarding the Reserve Apartments proposal, 870 E. El Camino Real PL-2019-087

I oppose the proposal as currently presented. My objections are based on several calculations, citing the apartments now in place and similar developments now in Mountain View.

### **Description**

This appears to be a plan to build two six story buildings.

233 apartments total, about 20 apartments per floor, based on a mailed announcement.

A sign posted on El Camino at the site cites 320 apartments, likely an old proposal.

### **Specific Objections**

The proposed buildings are too tall. The hotel 40 feet to the west is four stories. The commercial buildings, 12 feet to the west, are single story. In Mountain View, there are only 9 taller buildings. This includes Hanger 1, the old El Camino Hospital and two high density clusters on San Antonio Road and El Camino at Showers Drive. Three nearby hotels are four stories.

The buildings are too massive. The land under these two proposed 17,400 square feet buildings is just under 1 acre or 43,560 square feet. The proposed floor area ratio (FAR) will be 80% of the lot. The three nearby four story buildings were built with conforming floor area ratios of 40%, per Mountain View ordinances.

The project lot is 150 feet wide and 290 feet deep. This strains the FAR further, given building clearances needed for the property boundaries and the size of fire fighting equipment used for buildings above 4 stories.

The size of the proposed two level basement garage might provide for 233 parking places. With the expected rents, a significant fraction of the households will have multiple wage earners which brings more cars to the site. 40% of Mountain View households include children. This project would add 50 students to nearest district elementary school (Landels) which is 2.1 miles driving distance from the site.

The access to El Camino Real, a divided highway, is a problem. Entrance is eastbound only and exit is westbound only in a 40 MPH zone. There is no safety space from the curb. To leave eastbound, one has to cross three highway lanes of traffic to a cordoned off uncontrolled left turn lane (Dale Ave) that is less than 75 feet west from the only site to highway driveway. This is not designed for the additional traffic volume proposed and it remains under state control. As a contrast, the Dean Apartments on San Antonio Road were built with the same proposed building density, but there are three bidirectional public street access driveways and a conforming FAR for the property. The 533 Dean Apartments were built on 2.5 acres.

The reference to below market rate and rent stabilized homes in the project needs review. Given the current ordinance for this project, the BMR units would rent for \$1746 per month (one bedroom)

The site is on the Mountain View & Sunnyvale border. The development plans for nearby properties are not under Mountain View's control.

Prior projects nearby (last 20 years) have been limited by water, storm drain and locally available power infrastructure. New storm drain connections under El Camino Real are not available at this location. Prior projects have private storm drains to the north and that infrastructure might now be at the limit. Existing power demands to the area had to be supplemented with overhead wires across Highway 85 at El Camino Real. This proposal, by law, is an all electric residence, with electric kitchens, heat, air conditioning and in unit clothing appliances. There are certainly appreciable power requirements beyond the apartments themselves. About 5.6 megawatts of power (233 homes) requires a 100 kilovolt feed at 60 amps.

### **Suggestion: Build four story buildings with 153 apartments**

The owners are entitled to enhance their property and as such, something could be built that is economically feasible that works within the limitations of the site.

17,400 square feet on 4 floors in two buildings = 139,200 sf

At \$200 per square foot of construction cost, the project requires \$27,840,000 to build.

Gross Income with all 153 apartments rented

BMR = 23 @ \$1750 each = \$40,250 / month \$483,000 / year

1BD = 52 @ \$2215 each - \$115,180 / month \$1,382,160 / year

2BD = 78 @ \$3000 each - \$234,000 / month \$2,808,000 / year

Gross revenue \$4,673,160 per year

\$205,929.12 per month on a 4% rate, 15 year mortgage on a \$27,840,000 loan  
\$2,471,150 per year  
Property taxes about \$348,000 per year  
Gross revenue after loan & taxes, before expenses **\$1,854,010**

### **Current rents at 870 E El Camino Real, Mountain View, CA 94040**

1 Bedroom \$2215 to \$2296  
2 Bedroom \$2645 to \$3270  
Shared \$1298 per roommate (rental contract option)

### **Residences Calculations**

Based on the apartments now on site and the project announcement, the new buildings will have

60% 2 bedroom, 140 units (875 square feet)

40% 1 bedroom 93 units (750 square feet)

Interior hallways and an elevator in each building

12 floors at 17,400 square feet each about 208,800 square feet total

120 apartments on six floors is 20 apartments per floor in each building

A construction cost of \$200 per square foot suggests a project cost of \$41,760,000.

The land under these two buildings is about 1 acre or 43,560 square feet.

The floor area ratio is 80% of the lot in area where the FAR is 40%  $((17,400 \times 2) / 43,560)$

<https://www.mountainview.gov/civicax/filebank/blobdload.aspx?BlobID=20859>

### **Parking Calculation**

Two basement levels of 17,400 square feet parking under each building, 69,600 square feet total

233 parking spaces with aisles to access them requires 56,178 square feet.

This leaves 13,422 square feet for elevators, machine rooms and ramps.

233 parking spaces (9 by 18) = 37,746 square feet for the stalls

Every 32 spaces require one 18 foot wide aisle that is 128 feet long (2,304 sf)

233 divided by 32 spaces = 8 aisles at 2304 sf each = 18,432 sf

Rough parking calculation  $(37,746 + 18,432) = 55,908$  sf plus machine rooms & ramps for multiple floors

### **Below Market Rate Calculation**

All of the 33 new below market rate apartments will be reserved for persons earning less than 50% of the Area Median Income (AMI). Rent shall not exceed 30% of gross household income.

Households in Mountain View, CA have a median annual income of \$139,720 monthly = \$11,643 monthly @50% = \$5821, affordable rent @ 30% = \$1746

233 new homes being built, 33 BMR homes would be 14% of the total, ordinance calls for 15%

Rental units. All residential rental unit developments subject to the below -market -rate ( BMR) program requirements shall provide at least fifteen ( 15) percent of the total number of dwelling units or parcels within the development as BMR units or pay a fee in lieu thereof, according to the terms of this article and as specified in the BMR administrative guidelines.

<http://laserfiche.mountainview.gov/WebLink/DocView.aspx?dbid=0&id=228170&page=1&cr=1>

### Tall Buildings in Mountain View

Rank	Building	Address	Floors	Height	Year Built
1	Moffett Field Hanger 1	Moffett Federal Airfield	n/a	211	1933
2	444 Castro	444 Castro	12 floors	146	1971
3	Avalon Towers South	2400 West El Camino	11 floors	134	2002
4	Avalon Towers North	2400 West El Camino	11 floors	134	2001
5	The Village Parking Garage 1374 spaces	San Antonio Road at California St.	8 floors	(no data)	2017
6	The Dean Apartments	458 San Antonio Road	7 floors 583 units in 450,000 SF on 2.5 acres	85	2019
7	Integrated Medical Office Bldg	2495 Hospital Drive	7 floors	85	2019

8	El Camino Old Main Hospital	2500 Hospital Drive	7 floors	85	1961
9	Office Tower	2440 West El Camino	7 floors	85	1983
10	The Village Office Building II	391 San Antonio Road	6 floors	73	2018
11	The Village Office Building I	401 San Antonio Road	6 floors	73	2018
12	Google Office Building	1625 Plymouth Street	6 floors	73	2018
13	Hyatt Centric Mountain View	409 San Antonio Road	6 floors 100,000 SF (est.)	73	2019
14	Office Building	650 Castro Street	6 floors 116,912 SF	73	1989
15	Office Building	2570 West El Camino Real	6 floors 63,268 SF	73	1972
16	Mountain View Parking Structure	850 California Street	5 floors	(no data)	2007
17	Synopsys Building B	690 East Middlefield Road	5 floors 339,716 SF	61	2014
18	Synopsis Building A	690 East Middlefield Road	5 floors 339,716 SF	61	2014
19	The Village Residences	545 San Antonio Road	5 floors 330 units on 5.497 acres	61	2013
20	The Village Residences	565 San Antonio Road	5 floors 330 units on 5.497 acres	61	2013

The proposed	The Reserve	870 E. El Camino Real	6 floors 233 units on 1 acre	73	TBD
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### Driveway Plan



### Apartments Currently Available at the site

**\$3,270** [Lease Terms](#) i

2 Bed / 1 Bath

874 sq. ft.

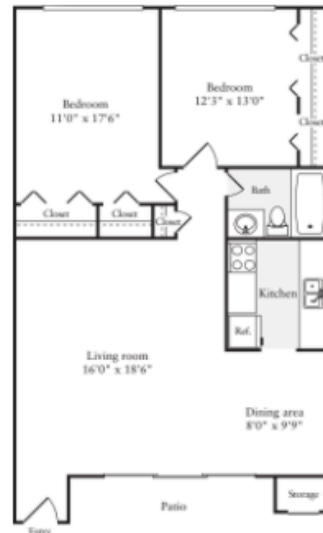
Available 5/10/2022

This ground level, single level apartment has no neighbors above. The home has a wall to wall bedroom closets, kitchen skylight and a large enclosed patio with a storage that is perfect for pets or relaxing in your own private sanctuary.

[Renovated](#) [Single Story Apartment](#)

[Western Exposure](#) [White Appliance Package](#)

### Floorplan





**\$2,645** [Lease Terms](#) i

2 Bed / 1 Bath

874 sq. ft.

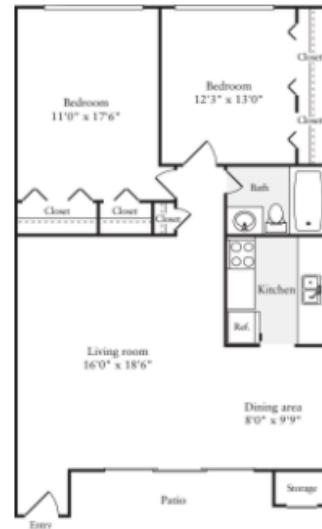
Available 3/25/2022

This ground level, single level apartment has no neighbors above. The home has a wall to wall bedroom closets, kitchen skylight and a large enclosed patio with a storage that is perfect for pets or relaxing in your own private sanctuary.

[Single Story Apartment](#) [Western Exposure](#)

[White Appliance Package](#)

Floorplan



**\$2,296** [Lease Terms](#) i

1 Bed / 1 Bath

748 sq. ft. / 2nd Floor-Bottom Floor

Available 3/22/2022

This elevated, single level apartment has no neighbors above or below. There is carpeting in the living, dining and bedrooms. The home has a wall to wall closet, kitchen skylight and a large deck that runs the length of the apartment.

[Air Conditioning](#) [Northern Exposure](#)

[White Appliance Package](#)

Floorplan



**\$2,215** [Lease Terms](#) i

1 Bed / 1 Bath

748 sq. ft. / Floor 1

Available 3/18/2022

This ground-level apartment home has a wall to wall bedroom closet and a large enclosed patio that is perfect for pets or relaxing in your own private sanctuary.

Floorplan

