



Memorandum

Date: April 24, 2025	
To: Brian Froelich, AICP	Organization: City of Capitola
From: RRM Design Group	Title: Design Review Team
Project Name: Capitola On-Call Architectural and Landscape Review	Project Number: 1783-09-PP25
Topic: 506 Pine Street Review	

Dear Brian,

We have reviewed the proposed design for compliance with the City of Capitola Objective Standards (OS) Ordinance, found within Chapter 17.82 – Objective Standards for Multifamily and Mixed-Use Residential Development in addition to Chapter 17.72 – Landscaping, within the City Municipal Code.

Project documents reviewed include City of El Monte Initial Plan Review in 13 pages; 3D Exterior Views, Sheet A0; Plot Plan, Sheet A1; Planning Data & Roof Plan, Sheet A2; (N) 1st Floor Plans, Sheet A3; (N) 2nd Floor Plans, Sheet A4; (N) SFD Elevations, Sheet A5; (N) SFD Sections, Sheet A6; (N) Duplex Addition Elevations, Sheet A7; (N) Duplex Addition Sections, Sheet A8; (E) Duplex Floor & Demolition Plans & Elevations, Sheet A9; (E) Neighboring Structures, Sheet A10; (E) Landscape, Sheet A11; and Survey, Sheet S1.

Neighborhood Character and Patterns

According to the City of Capitola Zoning Map, the project site is zoned Multi-Family Residential, Medium Density (RM-M). The parcel currently contains an existing duplex and is located along Pine Street, within an existing residential context. The area immediately surrounding the project site is characterized by a variety of residential land uses, including Planned Development (PD) residential parcels to the north, Mixed Use Neighborhood (MU-N) commercial parcels to the south across Pine Street, Multi-Family Residential, Medium Density (RM-M) parcels to the east, and Multi-Family Residential (RM-M) parcels to the west.

Project Design Review

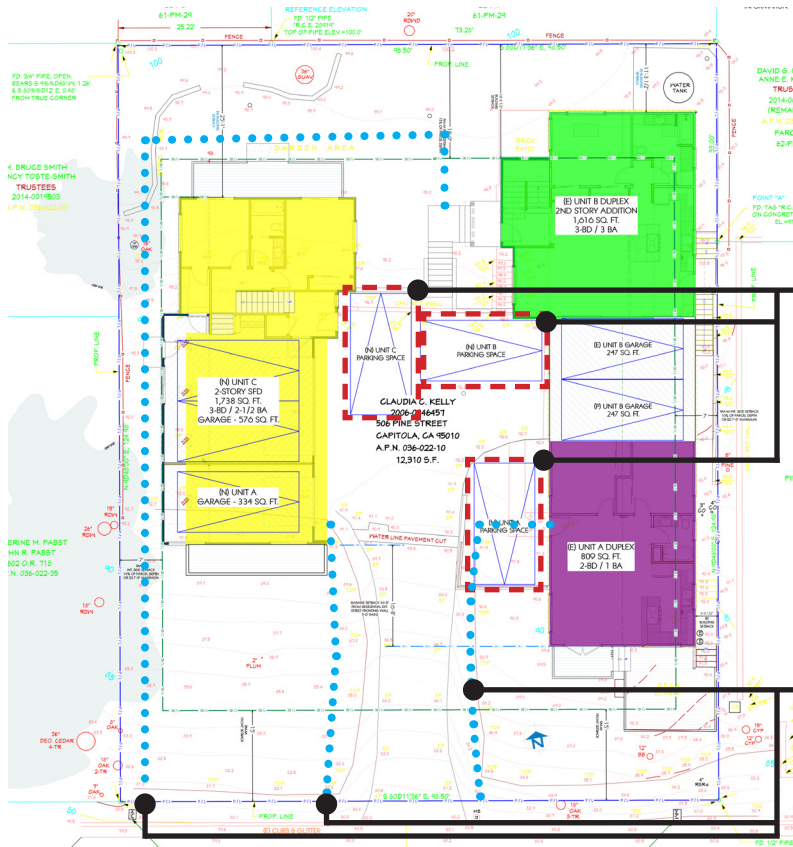
The project proposal consists of modifying the existing duplex through the incorporation of a second-floor addition and constructing a new, two-story, detached unit. The existing duplex's architectural style most closely resembles a "California Ranch" architectural style and it appears the applicant intends to utilize a similar style on the proposed detached unit in an attempt to match the existing structures' style. The proposed projects architectural style will be referred to as "California Ranch" going forward within this review.



Project Location

Site Planning

Site planning involves an understanding of appropriate building placement and configuration, but also the consideration of topography, surrounding uses, landscape design, adjacent uses, hardscape, and parking. The applicant is proposing minor modifications to the existing site plan by maintaining the current site topography and uphill driveway that provides access to Pine Street. The only major modification to the site plan consists of the addition of the detached unit. The applicant has identified three guest parking spaces, found on Sheet A1, located behind the garages of Unit B and Unit C that would impact future residents' ability to enter/exit their designated parking spaces. The site plan should be revised to remove the guest parking spaces shown as the current layout does not comply with OS 17.82.050.B.1 and Figure 17.82-1 and restricts the use of proposed garages. Additionally, City staff has indicated guest parking spaces are no longer required. While a public sidewalk does not exist on the north side of Pine Street adjacent to the project site, the applicant should revise the site plan to establish a pedestrian connection from the existing duplex and proposed detached unit primary entries to the public realm, separate from the driveway (OS 17.82.060.C.1).



Site Plan

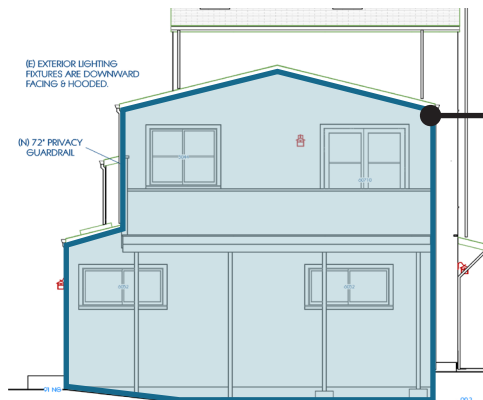
The applicant should remove guest parking spaces from the plans as the proposed locations will cause ingress and egress issues for residents needing to access the detached unit/duplex garages.

Revise the site plan to include pedestrians walkways connecting the public realm and proposed primary entries to provide safe connections for residents and guests.

Architecture

Building massing, or the way the building is sized and appears, is a primary and important component of building design. The applicant has successfully avoided proposing a project with large unbroken masses through the introduction of projected and recessed wall planes and variation in wall plane heights on both the new detached unit and duplex addition (OS 17.82.070.A.1). Furthermore, to avoid privacy issues with surrounding residences, the applicant correctly setback the extents of the second floor on both units to limit views into neighboring yards and further break up the proposed mass and avoid an overbearing appearance (OS 17.82.070.A.3).

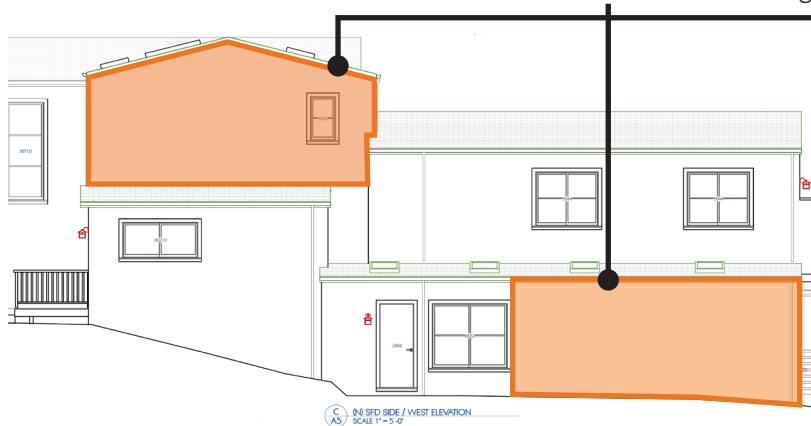
Articulation represents change in the form of a building expressed through proportion, details, wall plane changes, heights, and other design elements. Both the proposed detached unit and duplex addition are successfully designed with architectural integrity on all sides of the building through application of architecturally consistent detailing, thoughtful awning placement over entries, and variation in wall plane depth (OS 17.82.080.A.3). The proposed project primarily avoids blank wall space, however, while not located on an elevation fronting onto a public street, the applicant should revise the north and west elevations of the detached unit to remove any blank wall space larger in area than 10 feet wide by 10 feet high through incorporating additional windows, architectural detailing, and/or any design intervention that adds interest to the elevation (OS 17.82.080.B.1.a). Street facing elevations are required to provide a minimum of two of the following façade design strategies per OS 17.82.080.B.3: projecting windows, window boxes, shutters, prominent front porch, balconies, shade/screening devices, datum lines, varied exterior color, and/or varied building wall materials. The applicant must provide two additional façade design strategies consistent with the selected architectural style to satisfy the objective standard requirement and improve the street facing elevation of the detached unit. Potential solutions to satisfy the additional façade design strategy requirement includes applying similar horizontal wood siding on the ground plane of the proposed detached unit, incorporating a front porch on the street facing elevation, and/or an additional design intervention included on the list of façade design strategies.



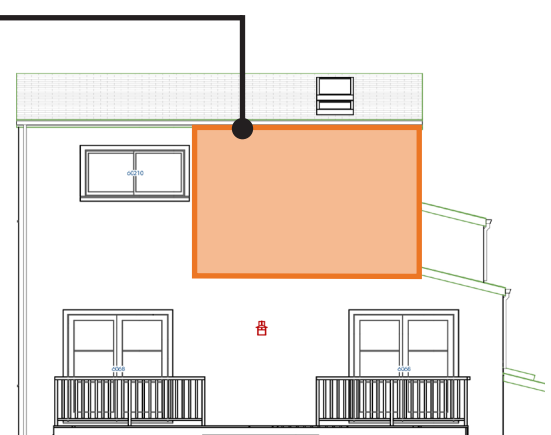
Detached Unit South Elevation

Incorporate a minimum of two façade design strategies per OS 17.82.080.B.3 in a manner consistent with the selected style. Potential solutions include introduction of an additional material on the ground floor similar to the wood paneling on the existing duplex, providing a porch, and/or any additional design intervention that improves the street facing elevation.

Revise the west and north elevations of the detached unit to remove large unarticulated blank wall space per OS 17.82.080.B.1.a. Potential solutions include additional windows, architectural detailing, variation in wall plane, and/or any design intervention that positively impacts the proposed detached unit street facing elevation.



Detached Unit West Elevation



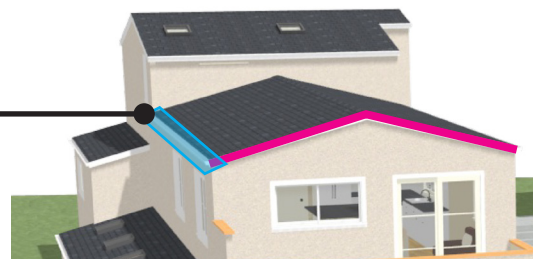
Detached Unit North Elevation

Roof forms are critical elements in providing visual interest within a project and reinforcing architectural style. The applicant is proposing a gabled shingle roof on both the detached unit and duplex addition, considered consistent with the California Ranch architectural style. While the roof style and materials are consistent with the existing duplex and architectural style, the applicant needs to ensure the same roof pitch used on the existing duplex is applied to the proposed detached unit. Moreover, the existing duplex features eave overhangs extended from the extents of the residence and this design intervention should be carried over to the proposed detached unit to solidify consistency with both the existing on-site structure and architectural style. The current proposal of the street facing elevation of the detached unit and duplex addition does not satisfy the roof design variation standards of OS 17.82.080.B.4.a and therefore needs to be revised to include one of the following: a roof eave projecting a minimum of two feet from the street facing building; a minimum of 25% of the linear frontage of the building's street-facing building roof line different from the remainder of the roof line via recessed/projected gabled roof elements, roof dormers, changes in roof height, or changes in pitch of roof slopes; a minimum of eighty percent of the linear frontage of the buildings street facing roof line with roof detail and/or ornamentation.



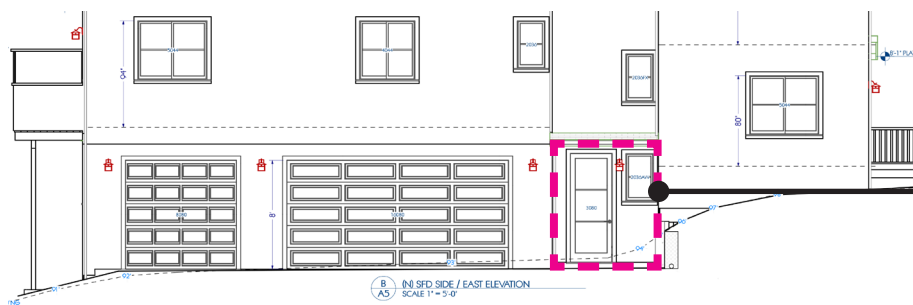
Existing Duplex On-Site

Applicant should match the pitch of the detached unit and duplex addition to the existing duplex. Similarly, utilize the same eave overhang shown on the existing duplex on the proposed detached unit as this design feature is consistent with the selected California Ranch architectural style.



Rendering of Proposed Detached Unit

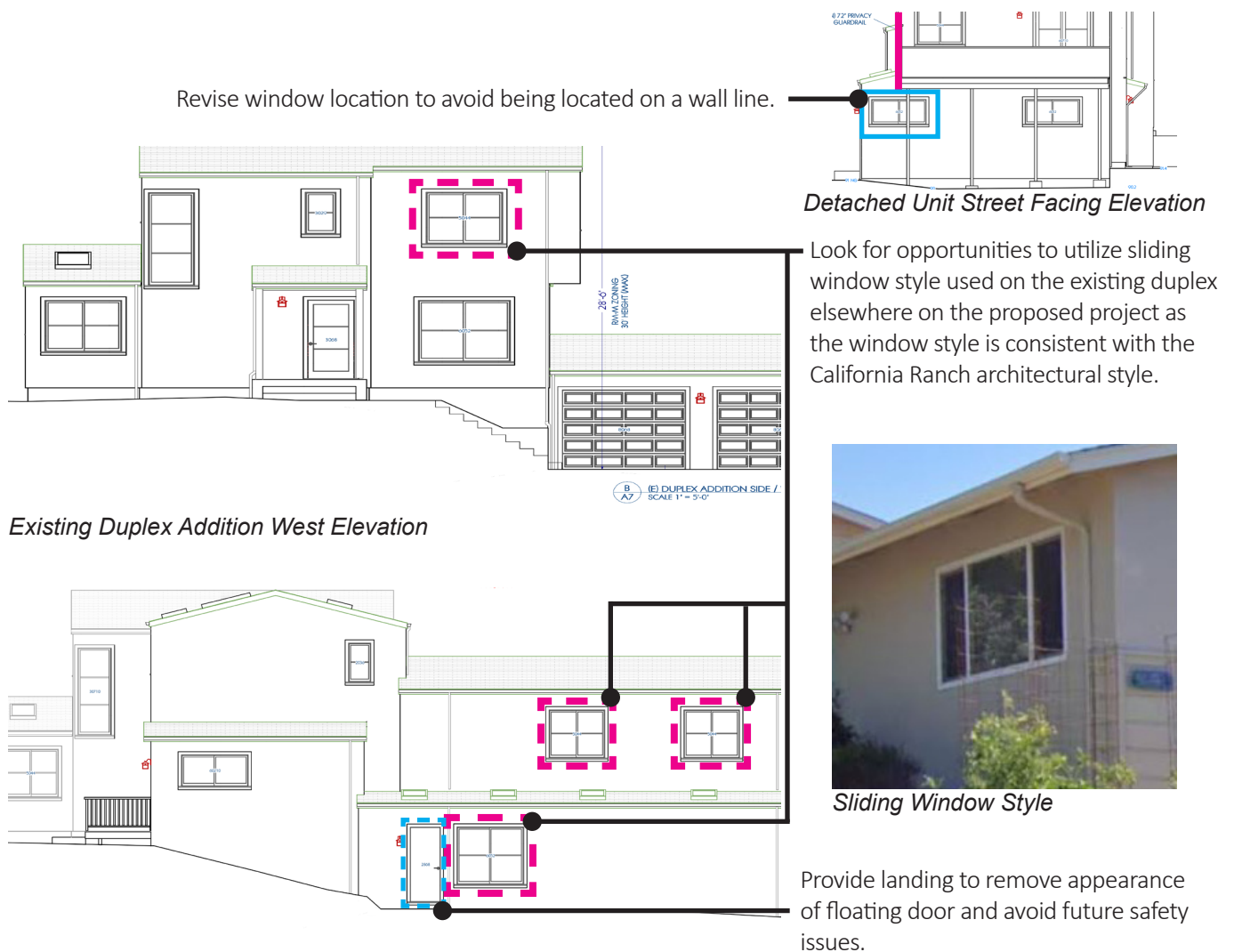
A primary entry contributes to the overall identity of a building by defining the architectural style and engaging with the public realm. While the applicant has minimally emphasized the primary entry of the proposed detached unit, the entry faces inward and is not visible from the public realm. The applicant must revise the floor plan of the detached unit to provide a street facing primary entry and further solidify the connection with the public realm to be in compliance with OS 17.82.060.B.3.b and Figure 17.82-3. The applicant may opt to seek director approval for entry exceptions instead of revising the floor plan per OS 17.82.060.B.3.c, however, this path would require the applicant to satisfy the following requirements: one pedestrian walkway per fifty feet of property street frontage connecting the adjacent sidewalk to the interior of the lot; landscaping between the residences and street; street facing buildings not exceeding a width of 100 feet. The applicant has minimally provided awnings/coverings in an effort to emphasize primary entries on the detached unit and existing duplex addition. However, to further establish and delineate the primary entries for future users, primary entries must include a porch, covered entry, or recessed entry clearly visible from the street (OS 17.82.060.C.1.a).



Detached Unit East Elevation

The applicant must revise the floor plan to relocate the primary entry of the detached unit to be street facing to establish a connection with the public realm (OS 17.82.060.B.3.b).

Windows and doors help define an architectural style and add visual interest to a buildings design. The applicant successfully utilized sliding windows on the existing duplex, a window style considered consistent with the California Ranch architectural style, and the applicant should apply this window style to the windows on the detached unit and duplex addition. Generally, the window placement used by the applicant is proportional and harmonious across both proposed projects, however, to satisfy OS 17.82.080.B.2, the applicant must revise the street facing elevation of the detached unit and duplex addition to project window and door trim/framing a minimum of two inches from the building wall with material that visually contrasts from the building wall. Additionally, the applicant must revise the windows shown on the street facing elevation on the detached unit and duplex addition to be inset a minimum of three inches from the exterior wall or frame surface (OS 17.82.080.B.2). The applicant should provide a window and door schedule to allow for adequate staff review and to ensure door and garage door styles are consistent with the proposed architectural style. Lastly, the west elevation of the detached unit includes a door that appears to be floating on the wall plane. To ensure safe ingress and egress from the doorway, the applicant should provide a step to avoid safety issues in the future.



Detached Unit West Elevation

Colors and materials demonstrate aspects of articulation and complement architectural detail to emphasize a selected architectural style. Sheets A5 and A7 indicate the applicant intends to utilize stucco on the proposed detached unit and duplex addition, similar to the existing duplex on-site, and images have been denoted on the colors selected, however, the applicant should provide a full colors and materials board to allow for adequate staff review and confirm consistency with the proposed architectural style. Lastly, the proposed detached unit does not include the horizontal siding shown on the existing duplex and the applicant should revise both the detached unit and the duplex addition to incorporate this design feature.

Landscaping

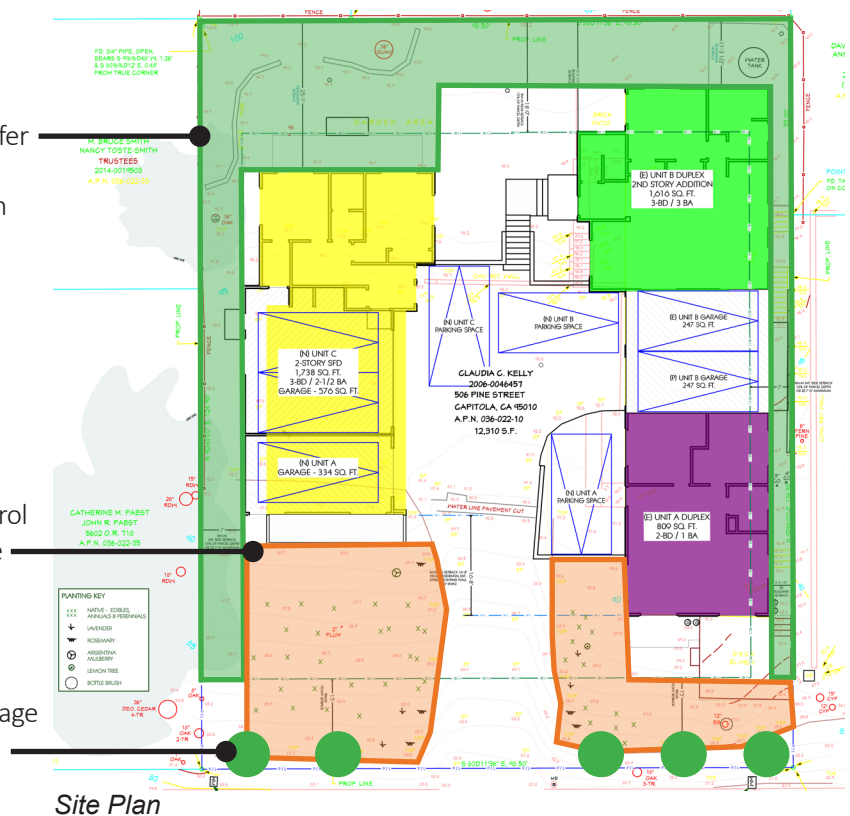
The applicant has provided a Landscape Plan on Sheet A11 with a preliminary plan showing the existing and proposed vegetation. However, the Landscape Plan should provide plant symbols which accurately reflect the width the vegetation will grow and a circle is recommended for trees and shrubs to better reflect the ultimate size the plants will grow (17.72.040 B.6). The tree diameter of existing trees are provided on the Landscape Plan; however, outer limit of tree canopy should be included and a label identifying if the existing trees will remain or be removed (17.72.040 B.5).

In general, the landscape design has an appropriate sense of unity, proportion, and balance with generally harmonious colors and durable plant species. The vegetation appears to be primarily drought-tolerant and generally reflects the "California Ranch" character. However, the Planting Key should list the genus and species of all proposed plants (17.72.040 B.6). In particular, the Native – Edibles, Annuals & Perennials must provide a list of the vegetation that is proposed. Additionally, the water use for each plant should be included in the Planting Key to understand the exterior water requirements for the project and to ensure compliance with the water use efficiency ordinance (17.72.030). Ensure a minimum of ninety percent of plants and trees are drought-tolerant (low or very low water use) as defined by the Water Use Classification of Landscape Species - WUCOLS (17.72.060 A.1).

Consider including fast growing evergreen buffer species between existing adjacent residential homes and proposed second story addition on Unit B and the new Unit C.

Look for opportunities to include erosion control groundcover and shrubs along the steep slope areas to reduce erosion.

Consider including street trees along the frontage to increase the amount of shade along Pine Street.



Site Plan

To further enhance the landscape design consider including fast growing evergreen buffer species between existing adjacent residential homes and the proposed the second story addition on Unit B and the new Unit C. Additionally, consider including erosion control groundcover and shrubs along the steep slope areas to reduce erosion. Lastly, consider including street trees along the frontage to increase the amount of shade along Pine Street.

Moving forward, an Irrigation Plan will be required specifying the location, type, and size of all components of the irrigation system (17.72.040 B.7). Where irrigation is proposed, plants must be grouped in separate hydrozones with plants within each irrigation valve area containing the same watering requirements (17.72.060 A.6). The Irrigation system shall be designed to avoid runoff, low head drainage, overspray, and other similar conditions where water flows outside of landscaped areas and contain the equipment listed in 17.72.060 B.

General Comments

In review of the proposed plans, the applicant appears to satisfy daylight standards established in OS 17.82.070.B.2, however, the plans should be updated to provide daylight line to ensure satisfaction with this requirement.

Additional Information Needed

The following project information is needed to ensure adequate staff review going forward:

1. Include a window and door schedule to allow for adequate staff review and ensure selected doors are consistent with the California Ranch architectural style.
2. Provide a full colors and materials board to verify selected colors and materials are consistent with the surrounding neighborhood and consistent with the intended architectural style.
3. The Planting Key should list the genus and species of all proposed plants (17.72.040 B.6) and the water use for each plant should be included in the Planting Key to understand the exterior water requirements for the project and to ensure compliance with the water use efficiency ordinance (17.72.030).
4. Provide an irrigation plan specifying the location, type, and size of all components of the irrigation system (17.72.040 B.7).

Design Recommendations

The following recommendations are made to better respond to the proposed “California Ranch” architectural style and to enhance the overall project design.

Site Planning

1. Revise the site plan to create a pedestrian connection from the existing duplex and proposed detached unit primary entries to the public realm to allow for safe passage for residents and guests (OS 17.82.060.C.1).
2. Remove the guest parking spaces as the inclusion of the guest parking spaces impacts the applicants ability to comply with OS 17.82.050.B.1 as parking spaces are not permitted to be located between a dwelling structure and front property line.

Architecture

3. Seek opportunities to modify the north and west elevations of the detached unit to remove blank wall space larger than 10 feet wide by 10 feet high through incorporating additional windows, architectural detailing, and/or any design intervention that adds interest to the elevation (OS 17.82.080.B.1).
4. Incorporate two additional façade design strategies on the detached unit and duplex addition street facing elevations. This design intervention could come in the form of applying similar horizontal wood siding on the ground plane of the proposed detached unit/duplex addition or incorporating a front porch (OS 17.82.080.B.3).
5. Utilize the same roof pitch used on the existing duplex on the proposed detached unit to ensure consistency with the intended architectural style and establish consistency with existing structure on-site.
6. Ensure the existing duplex eave overhang design feature extended from the exterior walls is carried over to the proposed detached unit to solidify consistency with both the existing on-site structure and architectural style.

7. Incorporate a roof eave projecting a minimum of two feet from the street facing building; a minimum of 25% of the linear frontage of the building's street-facing building roof line different from the remainder of the roof line via recessed/projected gabled roof elements, roof dormers, changes in roof height, or changes in pitch of roof slopes; or a minimum of eighty percent of the linear frontage of the building's street facing roof line with roof detail and/or ornamentation to satisfy OS 17.82.080.B.4.a.
8. Revise the floor plan of the detached unit to allow for a street facing primary entry and further solidify the connection with the public realm (OS 17.82.060.B.3) or seek director approval for entry exceptions via OS 17.82.060.B.3.c.
9. Modify proposed entryways to include a porch, covered entry, or recessed entry clearly visible from the street (OS 17.82.060.C.1.a).
10. Seek opportunities to utilize the sliding window style used on the existing duplex elsewhere on the project, including the detached unit and duplex addition.
11. Revise the street facing elevation of the detached unit to project window and door trim/framing a minimum of two inches from the building wall with material that visually contrasts from the building wall (OS 17.82.080.B.2).
12. Revise the windows shown on the street facing elevation on the detached unit to be inset a minimum of three inches from the exterior wall or frame surface (OS 17.82.080.B.2).
13. Provide a stepdown from the proposed doorway shown on the west elevation of the detached unit to avoid safety issues in the future.
14. Modify both the detached unit and the duplex addition to incorporate the horizontal siding shown on the existing duplex onto the proposed detached unit.

Landscape

15. Utilize plant symbols which accurately reflect the width the vegetation will grow and a circle is recommended for trees and shrubs to better reflect the ultimate size the plants will grow (17.72.040 B.6).
16. Identify the outer limit of tree canopy with a label indicating if the existing trees will remain or be removed (17.72.040 B.5).
17. Consider including fast growing evergreen buffer species between existing adjacent residential homes and the proposed the second story addition on Unit B and the new Unit C.
18. Look for opportunities to include erosion control groundcover and shrubs along the steep slope areas to reduce erosion.
19. Consider including street trees along the frontage to increase the amount of shade along Pine Street.

Overall, we feel the applicant has proposed a project that is appropriate to the location and surrounding context of the site. However, as addressed above, we have a number of concerns regarding articulation, primary entries, window styles, and materials/colors, among others, that will have to be adequately addressed by the applicant to ensure a project that appropriately reflects the existing neighborhood context while also being consistent with City's desire for high quality new developments.

Very truly yours,

RRM Design Group