



DATE: June 1, 2022

AGENDA ITEM #3

TO: Design Review Commission
FROM: Jia Liu, Associate Planner
SUBJECT: SC21-0048 – 466 Raquel Lane

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve design review application SC21-0048 subject to the listed findings

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This is a design review application for the construction of an 831.8 square-foot, second-story accessory dwelling unit (ADU) added to an existing one-story house. The project should be considered categorically exempt from further environmental review under Section 15301 of the California Environmental Quality Act. The following table summarizes the project's technical details:

GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION: Single-Family, Residential
ZONING: R1-10
PARCEL SIZE: 12,944.3 square feet
MATERIALS: Composition shingle roof, Stucco and Hardie board siding, fiberglass window frame with Hardie board trims, metal railing

	Existing	Proposed	Allowed/Required
COVERAGE:	3,525 square feet	3,525 square feet	4,530.5 square feet
FLOOR AREA:			
First floor	3,525 square feet	0 square feet	
Second floor	-- square feet	-- square feet	4,044 square feet
Total	3,525 square feet	3,525 square feet	
SETBACKS:			
Front	27.96 feet	27.96 feet	25 feet
Rear (1 st /2 nd)	32.54 feet/--feet	32.54 feet/40.5 feet	25 feet/4 feet
Right side (1 st /2 nd)	9.75 feet/-- feet	-- feet/17.50 feet	-- feet/4 feet
Left side (1 st /2 nd)	10.15 feet/-- feet	-- feet/55.75 feet	-- feet/4 feet
HEIGHT:	15 feet	22 feet	27 feet

BACKGROUND

Neighborhood Context

The subject property is located on Raquel Lane between Raquel Court and Hacienda Way. The surrounding neighborhood is considered a Diverse Character Neighborhood as defined in the City's Residential Design Guidelines. The homes in the immediate neighborhood context are a combination of one-story and two-story houses, with two-story homes at 472 Raquel Lane and 500 Raquel Court. Residential properties on Raquel Lane share similar front setback patterns with low to moderate horizontal eave lines between eight to nine feet and six inches at first story and low horizontal eave line approximate eight feet at the second story. Most of the garages are attached to the existing homes in the front yard facing the street. A combination of simple and complex roof forms with composition shingle, standing metal seam, and clay tiles materials are found in the immediate neighborhood. The exterior materials commonly used include stucco and horizontal and vertical siding with stone veneer or brick accents. Landscapes in the front consist of mature street trees on most properties with dense screening shrubs further in.

Zoning Compliance

The existing house has a 9.83-foot side setback from the west side property line shown on the survey map where a 10-foot setback is required in the R1-10 (Single-Family) zoning district. The setback deficiency is considered de minimis and can be maintained as it is.

Discretionary Review Process

Pursuant to Section 65852.2 of the Government Code, a local jurisdiction shall not preclude the construction of an accessory dwelling unit with at least 800 square feet in size, 16 feet in height, and four-foot side and rear yard setbacks. Per the Section 14.14.050 of the Los Altos Zoning Code (LAZC), an attached ADU greater than 16 feet may be allowed but shall be subject to the underlying zoning's discretionary review process. Furthermore, the proposed ADU will be 22 feet in height that is greater than 20 feet; therefore, according to Section 14.76.040 (D) of the LAZC, the proposed ADU shall receive Design Review Commission approval through the public discussion process.

DISCUSSION

Design Review

According to the Residential Design Guidelines, in Diverse Character Neighborhoods, a good neighbor design has its own design integrity while incorporating some design elements, materials, and scale found in the neighborhood.

The existing residence will be modified from an existing one-story, ranch style house with crossed gable roof forms to a two-story house with the attached ADU on the second floor. The proposed roof will be consistent with the existing roof forms and remain as the crossed gable. The proposed project consists of an 831.8 square-foot second story ADU, interior remodeling, and exterior modifications to the first story.

At the first floor, the major exterior modification is to alter the existing garage's roof from being a part of the overall gable to a crossed gable roof form with the same 4:12 roof slope. The garage's plate height will be nine feet and six inches, which is greater than the eight-foot tall first story plate height of the existing structure. Interior remodeling will mostly occur under the proposed second story ADU. An independent staircase access for the proposed ADU is incorporated into the first story floor plan. While

staff acknowledges the garage plate height is greater than the existing structure, the applicant's incorporation of horizontal siding in the gables is more rustic and minimizes the massing of the plate alterations. Overall, the first story exterior modifications are well integrated into the existing first-story structure.

The second story will consist of the proposed ADU with two bedrooms, one bathroom, and one living room with a standard kitchen. The new second story ADU plate heights will change from a seven-foot and six-inch plate height in the living room facing the front to an eight-foot plate height for the rest of the second story. The overall height of the proposed residence is 22 feet, consistent with the maximum height of 27 feet in the R1-10 zoning district. Staff found that the new second story ADU with a seven-foot and six-inch plate height front facing gable with further setback from the first story massing is considered a low-scale second story with consistent roof forms and exterior appearance.

Overall, according to the Residential Design Guidelines, the project appears to be an appropriate design within this Diverse Character Neighborhood setting. The proposed are consistent with the eight-foot to nine-foot plate heights of existing residences in the neighborhood. The design uses the existing recessed front porch, low eave lines and horizontal siding in the gables to balance the massing of the structure by creating horizontal lines that break up the front elevation. The second story massing is located above the right side the first story and visually softened by the roof massing and low eave line . Overall, the two-story design is proportioned and articulated to reduce the effect of bulk and mass and is appropriate for the context of the area and meets the intent of the design review findings The proposed building materials, include composition horizontal and shingle siding, fiberglass window frame with Hardie board trims, and composition shingle roof material are high quality and compatible with the character of the neighborhood.

Privacy

On the right (west) elevation at the second story, there will be two windows with one small size and one medium size. Both two windows will have the same windowsill height of four feet and six inches. With a 17-foot and six-inch setback from the right-side property and additional screening vegetation along the property line to be planted, privacy invasion shall be minimized.

On the left (east) elevation at the second story, three windows and one double door with a Juliet balcony will be placed. The three windows perform different windowsill heights: one three-foot and 11-inch windowsill height small window at the kitchen, one two-foot and eight-inch sill height medium sized window at the living room, and two-foot and eight-inch sill height window at the staircase. The double door will be opened at the Bedroom #2 to a passive-used balcony with two feet in depth by 10 feet in length. Overall, privacy invasion should be very minimal as the distance from these windows and balcony will be at least 55 feet away to the east side property line.

Along the rear (south) second story elevation, two two-panel windows are proposed with the same two-foot and eight-inch sill height. Given that the setback from the rear property line to the rear elevation windows will be greater than 40 feet with existing screening vegetation and dense mature trees in the back neighbor's yard along Adobe Creek, staff found the second story windows have very minimal privacy impacts to the rear neighboring property.

In general, the Design Review Commission has previously considered second story windows with four-foot and six-inch windowsill heights acceptable to minimize direct views into neighboring properties. When there are perceived privacy impacts, installation of screening vegetation is another common practice to mitigate the interference with privacy. As discussed above, with the proposed design of second story

windowsill heights, placement of windows, setbacks to the property lines, and new and existing vegetation, staff considers the subject project is designed to avoid unreasonable potential privacy impacts to adjacent the residential neighbors.

Landscaping and Trees

There are 17 existing protected on-site trees, including nine oak trees with a diameter greater than four inches. All the described trees will be protected and retained during the construction.

Additionally, eleven new evergreen screening plants will be planted along the right-side property line to reduce potential privacy impacts. The proposed screening vegetation is conditioned (No. 5) to be planted with a minimum size of 15 gallon. Proposed screening vegetation are outlined in the Table 1 below.

Table 1: Proposed Screening Plant List

Location	Common Name	Number	Size	Description
Right side property line	Magnolia	3	Conditioned to be 15 gallons	25' tall x 25' wide
Right side property line	Oleander	8	Conditioned to be 15 gallons	12' tall x 10' wide

Environmental Review

This project is categorically exempt from environmental review under Section 15301 of the California Environmental Quality Act because it involves the construction of an addition to an existing dwelling in a residential zone.

Public Notification and Community Outreach

On March 31, 2022, a letter including the project scope and a rendering was hand delivered to each surrounding neighbor. At 9:00 am on April 5, 2022, a virtual community meeting was hosted by the applicant. No comment was received in the virtual meeting. The community outreach summary is provided in Attachment C.

A public meeting notice was posted on the property (Attachment D) and mailed to 11 nearby property owners on Raquel Lane, Raquel Court, and Blue Oak Lane. The Notification Map is included in Attachment B.

Cc: Kim & Sergio Monsalve, Property Owners
Kendra Rosenberg, Applicant and Designer

Attachments:

- A. Neighborhood Compatibility Worksheet
- B. Notification Map
- C. Community Outreach Summary
- D. Posting of Notice of Development Proposal
- E. Materials Board

FINDINGS

SC21-0048 – 466 Raquel Lane

With regard to design review for the addition of a second story accessory dwelling unit to an existing one-story house, the Design Review Commission finds the following in accordance with Section 14.76.050 of the Municipal Code:

- a. The proposed addition complies with all provisions of this chapter;
- b. The height, elevations, and placement on the site of the proposed addition, when considered with reference to the nature and location of residential structures on adjacent lots, will avoid unreasonable interference with views and privacy and will consider the topographic and geologic constraints imposed by particular building site conditions;
- c. The natural landscape will be preserved insofar as practicable by minimizing tree and soil removal; grade changes shall be minimized and will be in keeping with the general appearance of neighboring developed areas;
- d. The orientation of the proposed addition in relation to the immediate neighborhood will minimize the perception of excessive bulk;
- e. General architectural considerations, including the character, size, scale, and quality of the design, the architectural relationship with the site and other buildings, building materials, and similar elements have been incorporated in order to insure the compatibility of the development with its design concept and the character of adjacent buildings; and
- f. The proposed addition has been designed to follow the natural contours of the site with minimal grading, minimum impervious cover, and maximum erosion protection.

CONDITIONS

SC21-0048 – 466 Raquel Lane

GENERAL

1. Expiration

The Design Review Approval will expire on June 1, 2024 unless prior to the date of expiration, a building permit is issued, or an extension is granted pursuant to Section 14.76.090 of the Zoning Code.

2. Approved Plans

The approval is based on the plans and materials received on May 25, 2022, except as may be modified by these conditions.

3. Protected Trees

Tree Nos. 1, 3, 5 to 12, 14, 18, 21 and 25 to 28 along with the approved proposed privacy screening as outlined in the staff report shall be protected under this application and cannot be removed without a tree removal permit from the Community Development Director.

4. Landscaping

The project shall be subject to the City's Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance (WELo) pursuant to Chapter 12.36 of the Municipal Code if 2,500 square feet or more of new or replaced landscape area, including irrigated planting areas, turf areas, and water features is proposed. Any project with an aggregate landscape area of 2,500 square feet or less may conform to the prescriptive measures contained in Appendix D of the City's Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance.

5. New Horizontal Siding

The proposed horizontal sidings shall be at least applied to all the front and side exterior walls of the gable elements including the garage and living room facing the front yard.

6. Evergreen Screening Vegetation Size

All the approved evergreen screening vegetation as outlined in Table 1 shall be planted with a minimum size of 15 gallons.

7. Underground Utility and Fire Sprinkler Requirements

Additions exceeding fifty (50) percent of the existing living area and/or additions of 750 square feet or more shall trigger the undergrounding of utilities and new fire sprinklers. Additional square footage calculations shall include existing removed exterior footings and foundations being replaced and rebuilt. Any new utility service drops are pursuant to Chapter 12.68 of the Municipal Code.

8. Indemnity and Hold Harmless

The applicant/owner agrees to indemnify, defend, protect, and hold the City harmless from all costs and expenses, including attorney's fees, incurred by the City or held to be the liability of the City in connection with the City's defense of its actions in any proceedings brought in any State or Federal Court, challenging any of the City's action with respect to the applicant's project. The City may withhold final maps and/or permits, including temporary or final occupancy permits, for failure to pay all costs and expenses, including attorney's fees, incurred by the City in connection with the City's defense of its actions.

INCLUDED WITH THE BUILDING PERMIT SUBMITTAL

9. Conditions of Approval

Incorporate the conditions of approval into the title page of the plans.

10. Applicant Acknowledgement of Conditions of Approval

The applicant shall acknowledge receipt of the final conditions of approval and put in a letter format acceptance of said conditions. This letter will be submitted during the first building permit submittal.

11. Tree Protection Note

On the grading plan and/or the site plan, show all tree protection fencing around the driplines of Tree Nos. 1-28 on the subject site and add the following note: "All tree protection fencing shall be chain link and a minimum of five feet in height with posts driven into the ground."

12. Reach Codes

Building Permit Applications submitted on or after January 26, 2021 shall comply with specific amendments to the 2019 California Green Building Standards for Electric Vehicle Infrastructure and the 2019 California Energy Code as provided in Ordinances Nos. 2020-470A, 2020-470B, 2020-470C, and 2020-471 which amended Chapter 12.22 Energy Code and Chapter 12.26 California Green Building Standards Code of the Los Altos Municipal Code. The building design plans shall comply with the standards and the applicant shall submit supplemental application materials as required by the Building Division to demonstrate compliance.

13. California Water Service Upgrades

You are responsible for contacting and coordinating with the California Water Service Company any water service improvements including but not limited to relocation of water meters, increasing water meter sizing or the installation of fire hydrants. The City recommends consulting with California Water Service Company as early as possible to avoid construction or inspection delays.

14. Green Building Standards

Provide verification that the house will comply with the California Green Building Standards pursuant to Chapter 12.26 of the Municipal Code and provide a signature from the project's Qualified Green Building Professional Designer/Architect and property owner.

15. Underground Utility Location

Show the location of underground utilities pursuant to Chapter 12.68 of the Municipal Code. Underground utility trenches shall avoid the driplines of all protected trees unless approved by the project arborist and the Planning Division.

16. Air Conditioner Sound Rating

Show the location of any air conditioning unit(s) on the site plan including the model number of the unit(s) and nominal size of the unit. Provide the manufacturer's specifications showing the sound rating for each unit. The air conditioning units must be located to comply with the City's Noise Control Ordinance (Chapter 6.16) and in compliance with the Planning Division setback provisions. The units shall be screened from view of the street.

17. Storm Water Management

Show how the project is in compliance with the New Development and Construction Best Management Practices and Urban Runoff Pollution Prevention program, as adopted by the City for the purposes of preventing storm water pollution (i.e. downspouts directed to landscaped areas, minimize directly connected impervious areas, etc.).

18. Kitchen Design

Pursuant to Section 14.14.040 (n) of the Municipal Code, the design plans shall include a kitchen that includes habitable space used for preparation of food that contains at least a sink, a refrigerator of no less than ten (10) cubic feet, and either a cooktop and an oven, or a range. A food preparation counter and storage cabinets that are of reasonable size in relation to the size of the ADU are also required.

PRIOR TO ISSUANCE OF BUILDING OR DEMOLITION PERMIT

19. Tree Protection

Tree protection fencing shall be installed around the driplines of Tree Nos. 1-28 on the subject site shown on the site plan. Tree protection fencing shall be chain link and a minimum of five feet in height with posts driven into the ground and shall not be removed until all building construction has been completed unless approved by the Planning Division.

20. School Fee Payment

In accordance with Section 65995 of the California Government Code, and as authorized under Section 17620 of the Education Code, the property owner shall pay the established school fee for each school district the property is located in and provide receipts to the Building Division. The City of Los Altos shall provide the property owner the resulting increase in assessable space on a form approved by the school district. Payments shall be made directly to the school districts.

PRIOR TO FINAL INSPECTION

21. Deed Restriction

Prior to final inspection from the Planning Division, the owner must record a deed restriction and provide a conforming copy stating that the accessory dwelling unit may not be rented for periods less than thirty (30) days, and that it may not be transferred or sold separate from the primary residential structure. The Planning Division shall provide the deed restriction for recordation purposes upon receipt of a legal description of the property from the current grant deed.

22. Landscaping Installation

All front yard landscaping, street trees and privacy screening trees shall be maintained and/or installed as shown on the approved plans or as required by the Planning Division.

23. Landscape Privacy Screening

The landscape intended to provide privacy screening shall be inspected by the Planning Division and shall be supplemented by additional screening material as required to adequately mitigate potential privacy impacts to surrounding properties.

24. Green Building Verification

Submit verification that the house was built in compliance with the City's Green Building Ordinance (Chapter 12.26 of the Municipal Code).

25. Kitchen Installation

Installation of the kitchen that conforms to the approved design plans and meets the minimum standards per Section 14.14.040 (n) of the Municipal Code.