



DATE: February 15, 2023
 AGENDA ITEM #4

TO: Design Review Commission
FROM: Sean K. Gallegos, Senior Planner
SUBJECT: SC22-0023 – 435 Casita Way

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve design review application SC22-0023 subject to the listed findings and conditions

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This is a design review application for a first and second-story addition to an existing single-story residence. The project includes adding a 58 square-foot front porch and 561 square-foot addition at the first story and a new ~~705~~⁷⁰⁴ square-foot second story. This project should be considered categorically exempt from further environmental review under Section 15301 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) since it involves an addition to an existing single-family residence in an area zoned for residential uses. The following table summarizes the project's technical details:

GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION: Single-Family, Medium Lot
ZONING: R1-10
PARCEL SIZE: 10,266 square feet
MATERIALS: Tile shingle roof; stucco exterior precast cap, hardi trim, aluminum clad wood windows, and wood entry doors and garage doors

	Existing 2,605	Proposed 3,080	Allowed/Required 3,080
COVERAGE:	2,825 square feet	2,993 square feet	3,120 square feet
FLOOR AREA:	2,777 square feet 2,339	3,519 square feet 3,591	3,640 square feet 3,593
SETBACKS:			
Front	25 feet	25 feet	25 feet
Rear	38.5 feet 47.42	38.5 feet 43.58	25 feet 10.0/32,25
Right side (1 st /2 nd)	10.2 feet 10.0	10.2 feet/18.1 feet	10 feet/17.5 feet
Left side (1 st /2 nd)	10 feet 10.0	10.3 feet/17.6 feet 10.08/23.08	10 feet/17.5 feet
HEIGHT:	15.75 feet 14.0	23.5 feet 24.0	27 feet

BACKGROUND

Neighborhood Context

The subject property is located in a Consistent Character Neighborhood as defined in the City's Residential Design Guidelines. The parcels in the neighborhood are similar sizes, consistent front setbacks and the structures are a combination of older and new one- and two-story, single-family structures, with low wall plate heights and simple roof forms (low-pitched gable and hipped roofs) and rustic materials. While there is not a distinctive street tree pattern on either street, there are many large trees along both streets.

DISCUSSION

Design Review

According to the Design Guidelines, in Consistent Character Neighborhoods, good neighbor design has design elements, material, and scale found within the neighborhood and sizes that are not significantly larger than other homes in the neighborhood. The emphasis should be on designs that "fit in" and lessen abrupt changes.

As depicted in the design plans (Attachment E), the applicant is proposing a 58 square-foot front porch and 548 square-foot addition to the first story and a new 704 square-foot second story.

First-Story Addition and Exterior Modifications

A 548 square-foot addition is proposed along the northeast corner of the house, which would add a master bedroom, walk-in closet and master bathroom along the left side and rear elevation. The additional exterior changes include:

- Along the front (west) elevation:
 - A 548 square-foot addition with hipped roof form along the rear elevation
 - A 12.8 square-foot addition that fills in a portion of a recessed front porch
 - The addition of a 58 square-foot projecting and defined front porch with a projecting hipped roof form with stone veneer detailed columns
 - Removal of the brick wainscoting, and its replacement with a stacked stone wainscoting
 - Removal of four small- to medium-sized windows and their replacement with one large three panel window in bedroom No. 3, one large sized three panel window in bedroom No. 4, and one large sized three-panel window in the kitchen
 - Replacement of a three-panel window with two, two-panel windows in the garage
 - Addition of a projecting and defined porch with a hipped roof form and stone veneer detailed columns
 - A new garage door

- Along the interior right-side (south)elevation
 - The replacement of two windows and a door with a small sized window and door in the garage, and two medium sized windows in the kitchen
- Along the interior left-side (north) elevation
 - The replacement of two windows, with one new medium sized window in the master bedroom, a large sized window in the office, a small sized window in bathroom no. 2, and a new medium sized window in bedroom No. 2
- Along the rear (east) elevation
 - The addition of a 128 square-foot covered terrace with a hipped roof form and stone veneer detailed columns
 - The replacement of two windows and a two-panel sliding door, with a large three-panel window in the kitchen, a small window in the mater bathroom, a five-panel sliding door in the great room, and a four-panel sliding door in the master bedroom

Staff finds the proposed first-story addition and exterior modifications to be in compliance with the R1-10 zoning district development standards, the Single-Family Residential Design Guidelines, and the design review findings pursuant to Section 14.76.060 of the Zoning Code and therefore recommends design review approval of the first-story addition and exterior modifications. A materials board is provided in the project plans.

Second-Story Addition

The design plans include a 705 square-foot second story addition to the existing one-story house. The second story will include an area for a loft, two bedrooms, two walk-in closets and two bathrooms. With regards to building setbacks, the second story addition exceeds the second-story setbacks as described in the table on Sheet A-1, and it is in conformance with the required standards. Please refer to the table above for more specific setbacks.

With regards to exterior materials, the project is matching the aesthetics of the existing residence and utilizing materials of similar quality to those found in the existing neighborhood. The first-story addition and the second story addition will use smooth hand troweled stucco siding, and it is compatible with other residences in the neighborhood. The proposed first and second floor roof materials are concrete tile. The other materials will include stone veneer with a precast cap, Hardie trim, aluminum clad wood windows, and wood entry doors and garage doors.

For the wall plate height at the second story, the proposed addition will feature a nine-foot-tall plate height, which is compatible with the existing house and immediate neighborhood context. The second floor is centered over the first story and visually softened by being recessed within the roofline of the structure. The design does not create an abrupt change and is well proportioned and articulated to reduce the effect of bulk and mass.

The second story addition's roof forms will match the existing 4:12 pitched roof that are integrated with the existing roof forms. The low-pitched roof provides articulation of the eave line facing the street, limits the height of the building in comparison to adjacent houses and diminishes the overall scale of the structure. The proposed second story addition will have an overall height of 24 feet, which will be less than the allowed maximum height of 27 feet. Consistent with the design review findings, the modest sized second-story addition with its lower scale wall plate heights and roof forms will minimize the perception of excessive bulk and mass.

Overall, the design of the project appears to be an appropriate design within this Consistent Character Neighborhood and conforms to of the Residential Design Guidelines and Design Review findings.

Privacy

Along the right (south) elevation, there is one small window with a minimum windowsill height of five feet, ~~ten inches~~ in bedroom Nos. 4 and 5. Due to the tall sill heights of the windows in the bathroom, the proposed window does not create unreasonable privacy impacts. Due to tall sill heights of the windows in the bedrooms, the proposed window does not create unreasonable privacy impacts.

Along the rear (east) second story elevation, there are four proposed windows: one small-sized ~~5'-0"~~ window with a sill height of ~~four feet, nine inches~~ for a loft, a large two-panel window in bedroom No. 4 with a three-foot, six-inch sill height, and one medium-sized window in bathroom No. 4 ~~5'-0"~~ with a ~~four-foot, nine-inch sill height~~. The rear elevation may have potential privacy impacts due to the large window with a lower sill height. Staff considered the privacy impact will be minimal because the setback from the rear property line to the window will be 47 feet and ? inches, greater than the required rear setback of 25 feet. The applicant will retain the existing evergreen screening and trees along rear property line and the project includes new bay laurel trees along the rear property line and Pittosporum Tenuifolium along the right property line to mitigate potential privacy impacts. The details of the proposed screening vegetation are provided in the "Landscaping and Trees" section of this staff report and on Sheet L-2.

Landscaping and Trees

16 existing trees are depicted within the proximity of the subject site, please see sheet A1 for the table identifying all trees on the site. The applicant proposes the removal of no protected trees. The applicant proposes the removal of two orange trees (No. 7 and 9), one persimmon tree (No. 10), one lily magnolia tree (No. 11), one lemon tree (No. 12), and two smoke trees (Nos. 13 and 14), but the trees are not protected under the City's Tree Protection Ordinance. Consistent with the Submittal Requirements for Two-Story Residential Design review handout, an arborist report is not required for the proposal due to the proposed addition not falling within the inner 2/3rds of the dripline of any protected tree.

A new landscaping plan is proposed including a number of evergreen screening vegetation on Sheet L-2. The proposed screening vegetation will be planted along all the property lines and are outlined in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Proposed Screening Plant List

Location	Common Name	No.	Size	Description
Rear	Bay Laurel Standard	8	15-gallon	10-55' tall x 5-20' wide
Rear	Bay Laurel Standard	1	15-gallon	10-55' tall x 5-20' wide
Right Side	Pittosporum tenuifolium	2	24-inch box	15'-20' tall x 6'-8' wide

Since the project includes a new house and new landscaping area that exceeds 500 square feet, it is subject to the City's Water Efficient Landscape regulations. Overall, the existing and proposed landscaping meets the intent of the City's landscape regulations and street tree guidelines.

Environmental Review

This project should be considered categorically exempt from environmental review under Section 15301 of the California Environmental Quality Act because it involves an addition to an existing single-family residence on an existing lot in an area zoned for residential uses.

Public Notification and Community Outreach

A public meeting notice was posted on the property and mailed to 12 property owners in the immediate vicinity on Casita Way, Alicia Way, and Jardin Drive. The applicant also posted the public notice sign (24" x 36") in conformance with the Planning Division posting requirements.

Based on neighborhood outreach efforts, the applicants have provided documentation showing outreach to the neighbors in the immediate neighborhood context. A document from the applicant regarding outreach is included in Attachment C.

Public Correspondence

One email was received from a neighboring property owner, and it raised concerns regarding potential privacy concerns.

Cc: Steve Collom, Architect and Applicant
Gupta Pravir Kumar and Shaikhar Sugandh, Property Owners

Attachments:

- A. Public Notification Map
- B. Neighborhood Compatibility Worksheet and Neighbor Review Document
- C. Applicant Outreach
- D. Public Notice Poster
- E. Design Plans

FINDINGS

SC22-0023 – 435 Casita Way

With regard to the first-story modifications and second story addition to an existing one-story house, the Design Review Commission finds the following in accordance with Section 14.76.060 of the Municipal Code:

- a. The proposed residence complies with all provision of this chapter;
- b. The height, elevations, and placement on the site of the new residence, 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 new residence in relation to the immediate neighborhood will minimize the perception of excessive bulk and mass;
- 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 residence has been designed to follow the natural contours of the site with minimal grading, minimum impervious cover, and maximum erosion protection.

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

SC22-0023 – 435 Casita Way

GENERAL

1. Expiration

The Design Review Approval will expire on February 15, 2025 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 February 2, 2023, except as may be modified by these conditions.

3. Protected Trees

The existing trees shall be protected under this application and cannot be removed without a tree removal permit from the Development Services Director.

4. Encroachment Permit

An encroachment permit shall be obtained from the Engineering Division prior to doing any work within the public right-of-way including the street shoulder. All work within the public street right-of-way shall be in compliance with the City's Shoulder Paving Policy.

5. New Fireplaces

Only gas fireplaces, pellet fueled wood heaters or EPA certified wood-burning appliances may be installed in all new construction pursuant to Chapter 12.64 of the Municipal Code.

6. 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 over 500 square feet or more of new landscape area, including irrigated planting areas, turf areas, and water features is proposed.

7. Underground Utility and Fire Sprinkler Requirements

Additions exceeding fifty (50) percent of the existing living area (existing square footage calculations shall not include existing basements) 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. Tree Protection Note

On the grading plan and/or the site plan, show all tree protection fencing 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.”

11. Water Efficient Landscape Plan

Provide a landscape documentation package prepared by a licensed landscape professional showing how the project complies with the City’s Water Efficient Landscape Regulations and include signed statements from the project’s landscape professional and property owner.

12. Reach Codes

Building Permit Applications submitted on or after January 1, 2023 shall comply with specific amendments to the 2022 California Green Building Standards for Electric Vehicle Infrastructure and the 2022 California Energy Code as provided in Ordinances No 2022-487 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 drip-lines of all protected trees unless approved by the project arborist and the Planning Division.

16. Outdoor Condensing Unit Sound Rating

Show the location of any air conditioning unit(s) on the site plan including the model number of the unit(s), the nominal size of the unit, and setback to the nearest property line. 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

PRIOR TO ISSUANCE OF BUILDING OR DEMOLITION PERMIT

18. Tree Protection

Tree protection fencing shall be installed around the dripline(s), or as required by the project arborist, of the existing trees as 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.

19. 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

20. Landscaping Installation and Verification

Provide a landscape Certificate of Completion, signed by the project's landscape professional and property owner, verifying that the trees, landscaping and irrigation were installed per the approved landscape documentation package.

21. 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.

22. 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).