



DATE: November 2, 2022

AGENDA ITEM # 4

TO: Design Review Commission
FROM: Jia Liu, Associate Planner
SUBJECT: SC22-0014 – 1074 Riverside Drive

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve design review application SC22-0014 subject to the listed findings

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This is a design review application for a new two-story house. The project consists of 2,005 square feet at the first story and 1,692 square feet at the second story. The project also includes a 779 square-foot, one-story attached Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU); but it is not part of this design review application. This project should be categorically exempt from further environmental review under Section 15303 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: 10,756 square feet
MATERIALS: Standing seam metal, stucco exterior with horizontal wood siding, and fiberglass framed windows and doors.

	Existing	Proposed	Allowed/Required
COVERAGE:	-- square feet	2,945 square feet	3,227 square feet
FLOOR AREA:			
First floor	-- square feet	2,005 square feet	
Second floor	--	1,692 square feet	3,765 square feet
Total	-- square feet	3,697 square feet	
SETBACKS:			
Front	-- feet	26 feet	25 feet
Rear	-- feet	25.17 feet	25 feet
Right side (1 st /2 nd)	-- feet/--	16.4 feet/26 feet	10 feet/17.5 feet
Left side (1 st /2 nd)	-- feet/--	12.33 feet/26.58 feet	10 feet/17.5 feet
HEIGHT:	-- feet	26.25 feet	27 feet

BACKGROUND

Neighborhood Context

The subject property is located on the west side of Riverside Drive between Foothill Expressway and Covington Road. 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 1052 and 1062 Riverside Drive. Most properties in the immediate neighborhood do not appear to have consistent front setback patterns that could be resulted from the curved street line and multiple corner lots. The immediate neighborhood features low to moderate scale horizontal eave lines with wall plates that appear to be between eight to nine feet and six inches in height. Most garages are attached to the existing homes in the front yard facing the street. Roof forms are a combination of simple and complex roof lines due to certain houses renovations/upgrades in the neighborhood over the years. A mix of roofing materials are found in the immediate neighborhood including asphalt shingle and tiles. The exterior materials commonly used include wood shingle, stucco and wood siding with stone veneer or brick accents. Landscapes in the front consist of mature street trees on some properties with dense screening shrubs further in.

Property History

In 2019, the city received, processed, and approved a lot line adjustment (LLA19-0002) and conditional use permit (CUP19-0004)¹ for creation of two lots comprised of the subject site in the front and the flag lot located in the back through the City Council meeting on April 13, 2021. As a result of the approved lot line adjustment application, the original one-story, single-family residence which became a non-conforming structure was required to be demolished. In August 2021, a demolition permit (BLD21-01410), provided in Attachment A, was issued to remove the main house and the site is currently vacant.

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 front elevation's design is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood by incorporating a horizontal eave line to emphasize the low-scale nature of the building, hipped roof forms, low-scale articulated architectural massing on both first and second floors and less predominant garage appearance. The two-story house design has a consistent pitched roof of 3.5:12, which is a common low-scale roof slope found in the neighborhood. The project also utilizes quality exterior materials such as stucco finish with wood siding accents, fiberglass framed windows and doors, and standing seam metal roof, which are integrated into the overall architectural design of the residence and found to relate to the surrounding neighborhood.

The overall height of the proposed residence is 26.25 feet, consistent with the maximum height of 27 feet in the R1-10 zoning district. The proposed residence includes one uniformed plate height of nine feet and six inches at the first story and a uniformed plate height of nine feet at the second story. As shown on the Streetscape Elevations (Sheet A1.0), the proposed second story eave line is compatible with the immediate

¹ CUP19-0004 Staff report and other supporting document can be accessed through the link at [Agenda Report Summary](#).

neighborhood context due to maintaining the horizontal and low-scale emphasis found in the existing neighborhood’s streetscape. Overall, the project complies with Residential Design Guidelines and it is an appropriate design within this Diverse Character Neighborhood setting.

Privacy

On the left (south) elevation, three medium sized windows are proposed at the second floor with a uniformed windowsill height of four feet and six inches. On the right (north) elevation, two medium windows are proposed with the same sill height of four feet and six inches.

Along the rear second story elevation, there will be three large windows and one small windows. The large windows will have a consistent windowsill height of three feet. The small window has a sill height of six feet. A number of screening vegetation will be planted along the rear property line that will be discussed in the next section of staff report to mitigate the privacy impact.

In general, the Design Review Commission has previously considered second story windows with 4.5-foot 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 per the Residential Design Guidelines. As discussed above, with the proposed design of second story windowsill heights and new screening vegetation, staff considers the subject project is designed to avoid unreasonable potential privacy impacts to adjacent the residential neighbors.

Landscaping and Trees

There are nine existing trees on the subject site, including one protected Oak tree with a 21-inch diameter located at the left corner of the rear yard. As indicated on the tree protection plan (Sheet A7), all the trees will be retained onsite. Since the proposed house will not be located within the driplines of any existing protected tree, a tree protection plan from a professional arborist is not required. However, Condition Nos. 10 and 18 will require tree protection fencing requirements to protect the trees during demolition and construction. A Tree Protection Plan is provided on Sheet A7.

A new landscaping plan (Sheet L2) includes two new Japanese Maple trees that will be planted in the front yard and a number of evergreen screening vegetation along the property lines. The proposed screening vegetation are outlined in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Proposed Screening Plant List

Location	Common Name	No.	Size	Description
Right property line	Prunus caroliniana ‘Compacta’ (Cardina Laurel)	10	Condition to 15 gallons or 24-inch box	15’ tall x 6’ wide
Left property line	Prunus caroliniana ‘Compacta’ (Cardina Laurel)	11	Condition to 15 gallons or 24-inch box	15’ tall x 6’ wide
Rear property line	Cupressus sempervirens (Italian Cypress)	13	15 gallons	40’-60’ tall x 6’-8’ wide

To mitigate the privacy impact from the proposed two-story house, two conditions are added to the landscaping plan. Condition #4 is added to require all the screening vegetation to be planted with a minimum size of 15 gallons or 24-inch box. Condition #5 requires that evergreen screening vegetation be planted along the entire rear property line in addition to the areas covered by existing trees’ driplines.

In addition to the evergreen screening plants, the landscape plan also a variety of shrubs/hedges, and groundcover plants mainly located in the front yard. 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.

Environmental Review

This project is categorically exempt from environmental review under Section 15303 of the California Environmental Quality Act because it involves the construction of a single-family dwelling in a residential zone.

Public Notification and Community Outreach

A public meeting notice was posted on the property and mailed to 11 nearby property owners on Riverside Drive, Oak Wood Court, and Parma Way. The Notification Map is included in Attachment C.

The applicant has also provided certified mails to the immediate neighbors for community outreach. A copy of the community outreach summary and a copy of the certified mail receipts is included in Attachment D.

Cc: Roger Liu, Property Owner
Joseph Xu, Applicant and Designer

Attachments:

- A. BLD21-01410 Demolition Permit Record
- B. Neighborhood Compatibility Worksheet
- C. Notification Map
- D. Proof of Community Outreach
- E. Materials Board

FINDINGS

SC22-0014 – 1074 Riverside Drive

With regard to design review for the new two-story house, the Design Review Commission finds the following in accordance with Section 14.76.050 of the Municipal Code:

- a. The proposed new house complies with all provisions of this chapter;
- b. The height, elevations, and placement on the site of the proposed new house, 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 new house has been designed to follow the natural contours of the site with minimal grading, minimum impervious cover, and maximum erosion protection.

CONDITIONS

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GENERAL

1. Expiration

The Design Review Approval will expire on November 2, 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 October 26, 2022, except as may be modified by these conditions.

3. Protected Trees

All the existing trees with the approved privacy screening shall be protected under this application and cannot be removed without a tree removal permit from the Community Development Director. A Tree Protection Plan detailed in the approved arborist report shall be implemented. Prior to the occupancy of the residence, a letter signed by the subject arborist shall be provided to certify the implementation of the Tree Protection Plan.

4. Screening Vegetation Size

All the screening vegetation as outlined in Table 1 shall be planted with a minimum size of 15 gallons or 24-inch box and maintained for the life of the project. The Size information in the Planting Legend table on Sheet L2 shall be updated and incorporated into the construction drawings.

5. Rear Yard Screening Vegetation

Evergreen screening vegetation shall be planted along the entire rear yard property line in addition to the existing trees driplines. An updated landscaping plan shall be prepared and incorporated into the construction plans.

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 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.

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. 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 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 drip-lines 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.).

PRIOR TO ISSUANCE OF BUILDING OR DEMOLITION PERMIT

18. Tree Protection

Tree protection fencing shall be installed around the driplines, or as required by the project arborist, of all existing trees as shown on the Tree Protection Plan on Sheet A7. 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

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.

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).