



**TO:** Nick Zornes, Zoning Administrator  
**FROM:** Jia Liu, Associate Planner  
**SUBJECT:** SC24-0002 – 962 Riverside Drive

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## RECOMMENDATION

Approve design review application SC24-0002 for the construction of a new 3,914 square-foot, two-story residence with a 1,234 square-foot basement; and find the project categorically exempt under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15303 (“New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures”).

## BACKGROUND

### Project Description

- Project Location: 962 Riverside Drive, located at the northwest corner of Covington Road and Riverside Drive
- Lot Size: 11,647 square feet
- General Plan Designation: Single-Family, Medium Lot (SF4)
- Zoning Designation: R1-10
- Current Site Conditions: One-story house

The proposed project includes the demolition of the existing single-story house and replacement with a new two-story house (see Attachment A – Project Plans). The new residence is designed in a traditional architectural style, incorporating high-quality materials including a standing seam metal roof, smooth stucco exterior finish with stone veneer wainscoting at first floor and horizontal wood siding finish at the second floor, Hardie board accents, and aluminum wood clad windows and doors with integral aluminum trims.

The subject property is located at the northwest corner of Covington Road and Riverside Drive, with Hale Creek crossing the rear yard. The proposed two-story home will be situated on the subject lot similar to the existing home but at least 20 feet from the top of the Hale Creek bank to enhance creek protection and stabilization. The orientation of the house will remain the same as the existing house with its front entry facing Riverside Drive. The proposed site improvements include a modified driveway to the attached garage facing Riverside Drive, along with new hardscape and softscape throughout the property.

There are nine trees on the property, including eight protected trees. Five of these protected trees, specifically three Modesto Ash trees, one Camphor tree, and one Crabapple tree are proposed for removal.

Zoning Administrator  
SC24-0002 – 962 Riverside Drive  
August 7, 2024

## ANALYSIS

### Design Review

The proposed home complies with the R1-10 district development standards found in LAMC Chapter 14.06, as demonstrated by the following table:

	<b>Existing</b>	<b>Proposed</b>	<b>Allowed/Required</b>
<b>COVERAGE:</b>	3,269 square feet	2,872 square feet	3,494 square feet
<b>FLOOR AREA:</b>			
First floor	3,187 square feet	2,516 square feet	3,915 square feet
Second floor	-- square feet	1,398 square feet	
Total	3,187 square feet	3,914 square feet	
<b>SETBACKS:</b>			
Front	25.00 feet	25.58 feet	25 feet
Rear	21.29 feet	35.54 feet	25 feet
Right side (1 <sup>st</sup> /2 <sup>nd</sup> )	10.38 feet/-- feet	13.63 feet/22 feet	10 feet/17.5 feet
Left side (1 <sup>st</sup> /2 <sup>nd</sup> )	17.92 feet/-- feet	20.42 feet/24.25 feet	10 feet/17.5 feet
<b>HEIGHT:</b>	20.00 feet	26.83feet	27 feet

Pursuant to Chapter 14.76 of the LAMC, new two-story residences shall be consistent with policies and implementation techniques described in the Single-Family Residential Design Guidelines. The proposed home complies with the Single-Family Residential Design Guidelines because it exhibits an appropriate design with elements, materials, scale, and landscaping that are consistent with the neighborhood.

The surrounding neighborhood is considered a Consistent Character Neighborhood according to the Design Guidelines. The immediate neighborhood is comprised of one-story and two-story houses. The homes in the neighborhood exhibit similar front setback patterns, massing, and a combination of simple and complex roof forms due to past renovations and upgrades. The horizontal eave lines at the first story typically range from approximately eight to nine feet in height. Many of the homes feature attached garages in the front yard facing the street.

The front elevation of the proposed two-story house is designed in a traditional architectural style, incorporating elements such as a 5 in 12 hipped roof, aligned and balanced fenestrations on the facade, as well as traditional exterior finish materials including stucco finish at the first floor with stone veneer wainscoting and red cedar siding at the second floor.

The massing of the proposed new residence is compatible with the immediate neighborhood. The first story features three different plate heights: eight feet six inches for the rooms fronting Riverside Drive, nine feet one inch for the office facing Covington Road, and nine feet seven inches as the primary plate height throughout the rest of the first floor for the living room and kitchen area. The lower plate heights along the streets are intended to maintain a similar massing within the immediate neighborhood. The second story features two plate heights: eight feet one inch as the primary height, except for two dormers facing Riverside Road, which are nine feet one inch. All design considerations and alignments reflect a thoughtful approach to achieving a harmonious architectural composition within the neighborhood.

According to the arborist report prepared for the project by Dave Laczko of Anderson's Tree Care Specialists, Inc., the five protected trees proposed for removal, except for the Crabapple tree, are structurally unsound and cannot be restored back to good health. The Crabapple tree is proposed for removal as it's in the footprint of the proposed rear yard improvements. The three remaining protected trees will be preserved and protected during construction. To mitigate the loss of the protected trees, a tree replacement plan with a 1:1 replacement ratio is included in the landscaping plans.

The proposed landscaping includes 14 new trees and evergreen screening vegetation along the perimeter of the site which will be integrated with existing vegetation to remain. The landscaping plan will comply with the Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance, which requires water-efficient landscaping for new residences with landscaping over 500 square feet.

The proposed project meets the development standards in the R1-10 zoning district and complies with the Single-Family Residential Design Guidelines because it is compatible with the character of the neighborhood as the design maintains an appropriate relationship with adjacent structures, minimizes bulk, preserves existing trees, and enhances landscaping to the extent possible.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

This project is categorically exempt from environmental review under Section 15303 ("New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures") of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) 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, mailed to property owners within a 300-foot radius, and published in the Town Crier newspaper. The applicant also posted the public notice sign (24" x 36") in conformance with the Planning Division posting requirements.

The applicant reached out to nine neighbors in person or by email in the immediate area for the community outreach. No comments from neighbors have been received by staff as of the writing of this report.

Attachment:

A. Project Plans

Cc: David V. Hernandez, Heritage Architecture, Applicant  
Mangesh & Rajashree Pimpalkhare, Property Owners

## FINDINGS

SC24-0002 – 962 Riverside Drive

With regard to the proposed new two-story residence, the Zoning Administrator finds the following in accordance with Section 14.76.060 of the Municipal Code:

- A. The proposed new two-story residence complies with all provisions of this chapter because the proposed residence is consistent with the development standards of the R1-10 zoning district and policies and implementation techniques described in the Single-Family Residential Design Guidelines.
- B. The height, elevations, and placement on the site of the proposed new house is compatible when considered with reference to the nature and location of residential structures on adjacent lots, and will consider the topographic and geologic constraints imposed by particular building site conditions as the proposed home maintains a similar finished floor elevation and orientation on the lot as the existing home and complies with the allowable floor area, lot coverage, height maximums, and daylight plane requirement pursuant to LAMC Chapter 14.06.
- C. The natural landscape will be preserved insofar as practicable by minimizing tree and soil removal; grade changes shall be minimized because the existing site is relatively level and does not require substantial grading and does not involve the removal of soil. Five protected trees will be removed mainly due to structural unsoundness. To mitigate the loss of these protected trees, the landscaping plan includes a tree replacement ratio of more than 1:1.
- D. The orientation of the proposed new residence in relation to the immediate neighborhood will minimize the perception of excessive bulk and mass because the proposed structure incorporates architectural design features such as moderate scale, horizontal eave lines, building articulation, and roof forms that break up the massing and minimize excessive bulk.
- E. General architectural considerations, including the size and scale, 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. The proposed home complies with the allowable floor area, lot coverage, and height maximums as well as the daylight plane requirement pursuant to LAMC Chapter 14.06 and the design of the home incorporates consistent and compatible features including standing seam metal roofing, stucco and wood siding exterior finish with stone veneer and Hardie board accents, and aluminum wood clad windows and doors with integral aluminum trims.
- 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 because the site is relatively flat and has incorporated softscape and hardscape surfaces into the plan and proposes a drainage plan to minimize off-site stormwater drainage.

## CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

SC24-0002 – 962 Riverside Drive

### PLANNING DIVISION

1. **Expiration:** The Design Review Approval will expire on August 7, 2026 unless prior to the date of expiration, a building permit is issued, or an extension is granted pursuant to the procedures and timeline for extensions in the Zoning Code.
2. **Approved Plans:** The approval is based on the plans and materials received on June 28, 2024, except as modified by these conditions as specified below.
3. **Revisions to the Approved Project:** Minor revisions to the approved plans which are found to be in substantial compliance with the overall approvals may be approved by the Development Services Director.
4. **Notice of Right to Protest:** The conditions of project approval set forth herein include certain fees, dedication requirements, reservation requirements, and other exactions. Pursuant to Government Code Section 66020(d)(1), these conditions constitute written notice of a statement of the amount of such fees, and a description of the dedications, reservations, and other exactions. You are hereby further notified that the 90-day period in which you may protest these fees, dedications, reservations, and other exactions pursuant to Government Code Section 66020(a) began on the date of approval of this project. If you fail to file a protest within this 90-day period complying with all of the requirements of Section 66020, you will be legally barred from later challenging such exactions.
5. **Building Design/Plan Modifications:** The following modifications shall be made to the architectural design, building materials, colors, landscaping, and/or other site or building design details and shall be shown on building permit drawings:
  - a. Civil drawings shall be updated to be consistent with the approved architectural drawings in the construction drawing set.
6. **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.
7. **Protected Trees:** Trees Nos. 3, 7, & 9 shall be protected under this application and cannot be removed without a Tree Removal Permit from the Development Services Director.
8. **Tree Removal Approved:** Trees Nos 1, 2, 4, 5, & 8 shown to be removed on plan Sheet A1.1 of the approved set of plans are hereby approved for removal. Tree removal shall not occur until a building permit is submitted and shall only occur after the issuance of a demolition permit or building permit. Exceptions to this condition may be granted by the Development Services Director upon

submitting written justification.

9. **Replacement Trees:** The applicant shall offset the loss of each protected tree with one replacement tree, for a total of five replacement trees. Each replacement tree shall be no smaller than a 24” box and shall be noted on the landscape plan as a replacement tree.
10. **Tree Protection Fencing:** The grading and tree or landscape plan of the building permit submittal shall show the required tree protection fencing which shall be installed around the dripline(s), or as required by the project arborist, of trees Nos. 3, 7 & 9. Verification of installation of the fencing shall be submitted to the City prior to building permit issuance. 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.
11. **Landscaping:** The project shall be subject to the City’s Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance (WELo) pursuant to Chapter 12.36 of the Municipal Code. 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. **Landscaping Installation and Verification:** All landscaping materials, including plants or trees intended to provide privacy screening, as provided on the approved landscape plans shall be installed prior to final inspection. The applicant shall also 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 prior to final inspection.
13. **Mechanical Equipment:** Prior to issuance of a building permit, the applicant shall show the location of any mechanical equipment and demonstrate compliance with the requirements of Chapter 11.14 (Mechanical Equipment) and Chapter 6.16 (Noise Control) of the Los Altos City Code.

## **BUILDING DIVISION**

14. **Building Permit:** A building permit is required for the project and building design plans shall comply with the latest applicable adopted standards. The applicant shall submit supplemental application materials as required by the Building Division to demonstrate compliance.
15. **Conditions of Approval:** Incorporate the conditions of approval into the building permit submittal plans and provide a letter which explains how each condition of approval has been satisfied and/or which sheet of the plans the information can found.
16. **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.
17. **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 prior to issuance of a building permit. Payments shall be made directly to the school districts.

18. **Swimming Pools, Water Features, and Outdoor Kitchens:** The proposed pool and associated equipment, water feature, and/or outdoor kitchen require a separate building permit and are subject to the City's standards pursuant to Section 14.06.120 and Chapter 14.15.
19. **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.
20. **Underground Utility and Fire Sprinkler Requirements:** New construction and 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.
21. **California Water Service Upgrades:** The applicant is 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.
22. **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.
23. **Green Building Verification:** Prior to final inspection, submit verification that the house was built in compliance with the City's Green Building Ordinance (Chapter 12.26 of the Municipal Code).
24. **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.
25. **Work Hours/Construction Site Signage:** No work shall commence on the job site prior to 7:00 a.m. nor continue later than 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, and no work is permitted on Sunday or any City observed holiday. The general contractor, applicant, developer, or property owner shall erect a sign at all construction site entrances/exits to advise subcontractors and material suppliers of the working hours and contact information, including an after-hours contact.
26. **Off-Haul Excavated Soil:** The grading plan shall show specific grading cut and/or fill quantities. Cross section details showing the existing and proposed grading through at least two perpendicular portions of the site or more shall be provided to fully characterize the site. A note on the grading plans should state that all excess dirt shall be hauled from the site and shall not be used as fill material unless approved by the Building and Planning Divisions.

## **ENGINEERING DIVISION**

27. **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.
28. **Storm Water Management:** Show how the project is in compliance with the 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. All large single-family home projects that create and/or replace 10,000 sq. ft. or more of impervious surface on the project site and affected portions of the public right-of-way that are developed or redeveloped as part of the project must also complete a [C.3. Data Form](#) available on the City’s Building Division website.
29. **Municipal Regional Stormwater Permit:** The project shall comply with City of Los Altos Municipal Regional Stormwater (MRP)NPDES Permit No. CA S612008, Order No. R2-2022-0018 dated May 11, 2022.
30. **Americans with Disabilities Act:** All improvements shall comply with the latest version of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Latest edition of Caltrans ADA requirements shall apply to all improvements in the public right-of-way.
31. **Sewer Lateral:** Any proposed sewer lateral connection shall be approved by the City Engineer. Only one sewer lateral per lot shall be installed.
32. **Transportation Permit:** A Transportation Permit, per the requirements specified in California Vehicle Code Division 15, is required before any large equipment, materials or soil is transported or hauled to or from the construction site. Applicant shall pay the applicable fees before the transportation permit can be issued by the Traffic Engineer.
33. **Pollution Prevention:** The improvement plans shall include the “Blueprint for a Clean Bay” plan sheet in all plan submittals.
34. **Grading and Drainage Plan:** The design of drainage system and sewer lateral is not approved at this point, and it will be reviewed during the building permit phase. The applicant shall submit on-site grading and drainage plans that include (i.e. drain swale, drain inlets, rough pad elevations, building envelopes, drip lines of major trees, elevations at property lines, all trees and screening to be saved) for approval by City Engineer. No grading or building pads are allowed within two-thirds of the drip line of trees unless authorized by a certified arborist and the Planning Department.
35. The Applicant shall repair any damaged right-of-way infrastructures and otherwise displaced curb, gutter and City’s storm drain inlet shall be removed and replaced as directed by the City Engineer or his designee prior to final occupancy.

## **FIRE DEPARTMENT**

36. **Applicable Codes and Review:** The project shall comply with the California Fire (CFC) & Building (CBC) Code, 2022 edition, as adopted by the City of Los Altos Municipal Code (LAMC), California Code of Regulations (CCR) and Health & Safety Code Review of this developmental proposal is limited



to acceptability of site access, water supply and may include specific additional requirements as they pertain to fire department operations, and shall not be construed as a substitute for formal plan review to determine compliance with adopted model codes. Prior to performing any work, the applicant shall make an application to, and receive from, the Building Department all applicable construction permits.

37. **Violations:** This review shall not be construed to be an approval of a violation of the provisions of the California Fire Code or of other laws or regulations of the jurisdiction. A permit presuming to give authority to violate or cancel the provisions of the fire code or other such laws or regulations shall not be valid. Any addition to or alteration of approved construction documents shall be approved in advance. [CFC, Ch.1, 105.3.6].
38. **Construction Site Fire Safety:** All construction sites must comply with applicable provisions of the CFC Chapter 33 and our Standard Detail and Specification S1-7. Provide appropriate notations on subsequent plan submittals, as appropriate to the project. CFC Chapter. 33.
39. **Fire Sprinklers Required:** Approved automatic sprinkler systems in new and existing buildings and structures shall be provided in the locations described in this Section or in Sections 903.2.1 through 903.2.12 whichever is the more restrictive and Sections 903.2.14 through 903.2.21. For the purposes of this section, firewalls and fire barriers used to separate building areas shall be constructed in accordance with the California Building Code and shall be without openings or penetrations.
40. **Required Fire Flow:** The minimum required fire flow for this project is 1000 Gallons Per Minute (GPM) at 20 psi residual pressure. This fire flow assumes installation of automatic fire sprinklers per CFC [903.3.1.3]. Provide a fire flow letter from a local water purveyor confirming the required fire flow of 1000 GPM @ 20 psi residual from a fire hydrant located within 600' of the farthest exterior corner of the structure is required. Contact your local water purveyor (California Water) for details on how to obtain the fire flow letter.
41. **Water Supply Requirements:** Potable water supplies shall be protected from contamination caused by fire protection water supplies. It is the responsibility of the applicant and any contractors and subcontractors to contact the water purveyor supplying the site of such project, and to comply with the requirements of that purveyor. Such requirements shall be incorporated into the design of any water-based fire protection systems, and/or fire suppression water supply systems or storage containers that may be physically connected in any manner to an appliance capable of causing contamination of the potable water supply of the purveyor of record. Final approval of the system(s) under consideration will not be granted by this office until compliance with the requirements of the water purveyor of record are documented by that purveyor as having been met by the applicant(s). 2019 CFC Sec. 903.3.5 and Health and Safety Code 13114.7.
42. **Address Identification:** New and existing buildings shall have approved address numbers, building numbers or approved building identification placed in a position that is plainly legible and visible from the street or road fronting the property. These numbers shall contrast with their background. Where required by the fire code official, address numbers shall be provided in additional approved locations to facilitate emergency response. Address numbers shall be Arabic numbers or alphabetical letters. Numbers shall be a minimum of 4 inches (101.6 mm) high with a minimum stroke width of 0.5 inch (12.7 mm). Where access is by means of a private road and the building cannot be viewed from the public way, a monument, pole or other sign or means shall be used to identify the structure. Address numbers shall be maintained. CFC Sec. 505.1.