



TO: Nick Zornes, Zoning Administrator

FROM: Brittany Whitehill, Senior Planner

SUBJECT: SC24-0010 – 562 Palm Avenue

RECOMMENDATION

Approve design review application SC24-0010 for the construction of a new approximately 1,982-square foot two-story residence with a detached garage subject to the listed findings and conditions of approval; 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: 562 Palm Avenue, located on the west side of Palm Avenue between Sheridan Street and Sherman Street
- Lot Size: 6,646 square feet
- General Plan Designation: Single-Family, Medium Lot (SF4)
- Zoning Designation: R1-10
- Current Site Conditions: One-story house with detached garage

The proposed project includes the demolition of the existing one-story house and construction of a new two-story house and detached garage (see Attachment A – Project Plans). A new detached accessory dwelling unit (ADU) is included in the design but is not part of the design review application and will be reviewed ministerially as part of the building permit submittal.

The proposed two-story home will be situated on the lot in a similar location to the existing home, and the new home’s primary entrance will remain fronting onto Palm Avenue. The site will be improved with a pedestrian walkway from Palm Avenue and ample landscaping, including new trees and screening shrubs. No tree removal is proposed as part of the project.

The home is designed in a traditional architectural style, incorporating high quality materials including a composition shingle roof with gable roof forms, board and batten siding, wood trim, and casement windows. The primary entrance will be accented with a small, covered porch. The detached garage will be placed towards the rear of the property, screened from view from Palm Avenue. The garage will be accessed from the alley at the back of the property, which is consistent with the existing development pattern along Palm Avenue.

Zoning Administrator
SC24-0010 – 562 Palm Avenue
December 18, 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:

	Existing	Proposed	Allowed/Required
COVERAGE:	~1,128 sq. ft. (16.9%)	~1,809 sq. ft. (27.2%)*	1,994 sq. ft. (30%)
FLOOR AREA:			
First Floor	1,128 sq. ft.	1,187.22 sq. ft.	-
Second Floor	-	794.88 sq. ft.	-
Detached Garage	-	343.3 sq. ft.*	-
Total	16.9%	2,325.4 sq. ft (34.9%)	2,326 sq. ft. (35%)
SETBACKS:			
Right side (1 st /2 nd)	26'-4"	25'	25'
Left side (1 st /2 nd)	33'-6"	25'	25'
	8'-1 1/8"	4'(ADU)/18'-10 1/2"	6'-7 1/4"/14'-1 1/4"
	13'-8"	6'-7 1/4" /22'-11 3/4"	6'-7 1/4"/14'-1 1/4"
Right side (1 st /2 nd)	~5'	7'2"/13'7"	5'/12'6"
Left side (1 st /2 nd)	~9'	6'1"/13'7"	5'/12'6"
Front	~20'	Ranges 25'-31'	25'
Rear	~73'	~64'	25'
SETBACKS (garage)			
Right side	-	8'2"	5'
Left side	-	4' (ADU) / 21' (garage)	5'
Front	-	99' (from Palm Ave)	25'
Rear	-	4' (ADU) / 18'8" (garage)	12'
HEIGHT:	~15'	27'	27'

* The project proposes an attached ADU, which will be reviewed ministerially as part of the building permit. Pursuant to Los Altos Municipal Code (LAMC) Section 14.14.060, the ADU has not been included in the floor area or lot coverage calculations for the site.

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 immediate neighborhood is comprised of a combination of one-story and two-story houses. The homes in the neighborhood exhibit similar front setback patterns, massing, and generally feature simple hipped and gabled roof forms. The neighborhood does not have a singular, consistent architectural

style, however, most neighboring homes appear to be older, or designed in a more traditional residential style.

The proposed house has a relatively simple gable roof form, which is characteristic of the proposed traditional architectural style, and compatible with the surrounding neighborhood. The proposed plate heights (8'6" at the first-floor, 8' at the second floor) and significant second-story step backs reduce the perceived massing of the building, creating a design that is of appropriate scale when compared to neighboring homes. The home and detached garage comply with their respective daylight plane requirements.

The windows along the sides of the home at the second story level are relatively small to reduce impacts to privacy for neighbors. A small balcony is proposed at the rear of the house, off the master bedroom. Due to its minimal depth of three feet, it is not anticipated to create significant privacy impacts.

The proposed landscaping includes six new 24-inch box Grecian Laurel trees, 8 new Grecian Laurel screening shrubs, and various additional shrubs, vines and groundcover throughout the site. One neighbor along the left (south) side property line contacted the City expressing concern about potential privacy impacts associated with the proposed ADU. While the City discretion over ADUs is strictly limited by state law, the applicants voluntarily revised the landscape plan to add three additional Grecian Laurel screening trees to be installed along the south side property line, adjacent to the proposed ADU.

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, and enhances onsite landscaping.

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 mailed to property owners within a 300-foot radius and published in the newspaper. The applicant also posted the site with a public notice sign in conformance with the Planning Division posting requirements. The applicant reached out to fifteen neighbors in the immediate area to share their proposed plans. No written comments from neighbors have been received by staff as of the writing of this report.

Attachment:

A. Project Plans

Cc: Jeff Guinta, Architect
Wen Shiau and Pui Wong with Cypress Capitol Group, Property Owners

FINDINGS

SC24-0010 – 562 Palm Ave

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 Los Altos Municipal Code Chapter 14.06.
- C. The natural landscape will be preserved insofar as practicable by minimizing tree and soil removal because the project does not involve removal of trees, and due to the relatively flat lot and fact that the project does not include a basement, grading quantities for the project will be minimal.
- 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 building massing incorporates moderate wall plate heights and second-story step backs, which serve to minimize the perceived mass and bulk of the home.
- 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 because 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 high quality materials including a composition shingle roof, board and batten siding, wood trim, and casement windows, resulting in a design that is consistent with the neighborhood character, which generally features older homes and homes that are designed in a more traditional style.
- 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 the plan incorporates ample softscape surfaces and a drainage plan to minimize off-site stormwater drainage.

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

SC24-0010 – 562 Palm Avenue

PLANNING DIVISION

1. **Expiration:** The Design Review Approval will expire on December 18, 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 December 11, 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. **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.
6. **ADU Not Reviewed:** The proposed ADU included in the plan set is not part of this design review application. Prior to commencement of the ADU construction, a separate building permit issued by the Building Division shall be obtained.
7. **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.
8. **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.

- 9. 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

- 10. 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.
- 11. 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.
- 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. 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.
- 14. Payment of Impact and Development Fees:** The applicant shall pay all applicable development and impact fees prior to issuance of a building permit, including but not limited to Transportation, Park and Recreation, Public Safety, and General Government impact fees as required by the City of Los Altos Municipal Code and current adopted fee schedule.
- 15. 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.
- 16. 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.

17. **Change of Address:** A “Request for Address Assignment or Change” form must be submitted to the Building Division to correlate with the addition of a new dwelling unit on the existing property or reorientation of the front of the home to a different street.
18. **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.
19. **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.
20. **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.
21. **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).
22. **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.
23. **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.
24. **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

25. **Encroachment Permit:** An encroachment permit, and/or an excavation permit shall be obtained prior to any work done within the public right-of-way including frontage work based on City Standard Detail SU-20 and it shall be in accordance with plans to be approved by the City Engineer.

26. **Public Utilities:** The applicant shall contact electric, gas, communication, and water utility companies regarding the installation of new utility services to the site.
27. **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.
28. **Americans with Disabilities Act:** All improvements shall comply with the latest version of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The latest edition of Caltrans ADA requirements shall apply to all improvements in the public right-of-way.
29. **Sewer Lateral:** Any proposed sewer lateral connection shall be approved by the City Engineer. Only one sewer lateral per lot shall be installed.
30. **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
31. **Pollution Prevention:** The improvement plans shall include the "Blueprint for a Clean Bay" plan sheet in all plan submittals.
32. **Grading and Drainage Plan:** The applicant shall submit detailed plans for on-site and off-site grading and drainage plans that include drain swales, drain inlets, rough pad elevations, building envelopes, and grading elevations for review and approval by the City Engineer prior to the issuance of the building permit. 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 Division
33. **Public Infrastructure Repairs:** Prior to final occupancy the applicant shall repair any damaged right-of-way infrastructures and otherwise displaced curb, gutter and/or sidewalks and City's storm drain inlet shall be removed and replaced as directed by the City Engineer or his designee.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

34. **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.

35. **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].
36. **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.
37. **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.
38. **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 corners of the structure is required. Contact your local water purveyor (California Water) for details on how to obtain the fire flow letter.
39. **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.
40. **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.