



ZONING ADMINISTRATOR AGENDA REPORT

TO: Nick Zornes, Zoning Administrator

FROM: Naz Healy, Associate Planner

SUBJECT: SC24-0018 – 1053 Echo Drive

RECOMMENDATION

Approve Design Review application SC24-0018 for the construction of a new 3,933 square-foot two-story single-family home subject to the listed findings and conditions of approval; and find the project categorically exempt from environmental review under Section 15303 (New Construction or Conversion of Existing Structures) of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

BACKGROUND

Project Description

- Project Location: 1053 Echo Drive, located on the east side of Echo Drive, between Foothill Expressway and Covington Road
- Lot Size: 11,834 square feet
- General Plan Designation: Single-Family, Medium Lot (SF4)
- Zoning Designation: R1-10
- Current Site Conditions: One-story home

The proposed project includes the demolition of an existing one-story home and replacement with a new two-story home (see Attachment 1 – Project Plans). A 1,021 square-foot attached accessory dwelling unit is also shown on the plans but is not subject to design review and therefore not part of this application. The proposed home incorporates hipped roof forms with a flat entry porch and exterior materials that include stucco walls, standing seam metal roofing, and stained horizontal wood siding accents (see Attachment 2 – Material Board). The proposed home is situated on the lot similarly to the existing home and the proposed site improvements include a new front driveway, walkways, and rear yard deck. Two protected trees are proposed for removal due to poor health and to accommodate the new home.

ANALYSIS

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*:	2,673 square feet	3,029 square feet	3,550 square feet
FLOOR AREA*:			
First floor	2,612 square feet	2,396 square feet	
Second floor	----	1,537 square feet	
Total	2,612 square feet	3,933 square feet	3,933 square feet
SETBACKS:			
Front	32.3 feet	25.0 feet	25 feet
Rear	44.0 feet	49.1 feet	25 feet
Right side (1st/2nd)	9.8 feet/0 feet	10.2 feet/25.5 feet	10 feet/17.5 feet
Left side (1st/2nd)	13.8 feet/0 feet	10.8 feet/24.0 feet	10 feet/17.5 feet
HEIGHT:	14.5 feet	26.9 feet	27 feet

** The project includes 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 minimizes bulk by inseting the second story and incorporating greater setbacks than required. The design locates second floor egress windows facing the front and rear yards and existing trees along the side and rear provide screening for the rear balcony.

The project site contains nine protected trees. One protected juniper tree in the front yard and one photinia tree in the side yard are proposed for removal and replacement with one ginkgo tree and one jacaranda tree, both in 24-inch box size. The seven other protected trees will be preserved. The landscaping plan proposes shrubs, groundcovers, and turf throughout the site and 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, and preserves existing trees.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

This project is categorically exempt from environmental review pursuant to 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 a public notice sign on the property in conformance with the Planning Division posting requirements.

The applicant contacted 16 neighbors in the immediate area by providing a letter with hard copies of the project plans. Staff received public comments from one neighbor opposed to the project and signatures of four neighbors in support of the project, as of the writing of this report (see Attachment 3 – Public Correspondence).

Attachment:

1. Project Plans
2. Material Board
3. Public Correspondence

Cc: Mike Ma, Applicant
Di Wu and Gaoxiang Liu, Property Owner

FINDINGS

SC24-0018 – 1053 Echo 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 complies with the allowable floor area ratio, lot coverage, setbacks, maximum height, and daylight plane requirements pursuant to LAMC Chapter 14.06.
- C. The natural landscape will be preserved insofar as practicable by minimizing tree and soil removal because the site is relatively level and therefore does not require substantial grading and seven protected trees will be preserved.
- D. The orientation of the proposed new residence in relation to the immediate neighborhood will minimize excessive bulk because the proposed design insets the second story and incorporates greater setbacks than required.
- 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 ensure 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 stucco walls, standing seam metal roofing, and stained horizontal wood siding accents.
- F. The proposed home has been designed to follow the natural contours of the site with minimal grading, minimum impervious cover, and maximum erosion protection because the proposed grading provides for drainage away from the home and away from adjacent properties and conforms to existing grades along property lines.

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

SC24-0018 – 1053 Echo Drive

PLANNING DIVISION

1. **Expiration:** The Design Review Approval will expire on June 4, 2027 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 April 21, 2025, 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 approval may be approved by the Development Services Director.
4. **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.
5. **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.
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. **Protected Trees:** Tree Nos. 2, 10, and 12-16 shall be protected under this application and cannot be removed without a Tree Removal Permit from the Development Services Director.
8. **Tree Removal Approved:** Tree No. 1 and 17 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 a minimum of one replacement tree. 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 driplines, or as required by the project arborist, of Tree Nos. 2, 10, and 12-16. 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 which complies 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 be 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. Payments shall be made directly to the school districts.
18. **Payment of Impact and Development Fees:** The applicant shall pay all applicable development and impact fees in accordance with State Law and the City of Los Altos current adopted fee schedule. All impact fees not paid prior to building permit issuance shall be required to provide a bond equal to the required amount prior to issuance of the building permit.
19. **Swimming Pool:** The proposed pool and associated equipment require a separate building permit and are subject to the City's standards pursuant to Section 14.06.120 and Chapter 14.15.
20. **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.
21. **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.
22. **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.
23. **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.
24. **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).
25. **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.
26. **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.

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. **Public Utilities:** The applicant shall contact electric, gas, communication, and water utility companies regarding the installation of new utility services to the site.
29. **Sewer Lateral:** Any proposed sewer lateral connection shall be approved by the City Engineer. Only one sewer lateral per lot shall be installed. All existing unused sewer laterals shall be abandoned according to the City Standards, cut and cap 12" away from the main.
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. The applicant shall pay the applicable fees before the transportation permit can be issued by the City Engineer.
31. **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.
32. **Storm Water Management Plan:** The applicant shall submit a Storm Water Management Plan (SWMP) in compliance with the San Francisco Bay Region Municipal Regional Stormwater (MRP) *National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES)* Permit No. CA S612008, Order R2-2022-0018, Provision C.3 dated May 11, 2022. 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.
33. **Storm Water Filtration Systems:** Prior to the issuance of the building permit the applicant shall ensure the design of all storm water filtration systems and devices are without standing water to avoid mosquito/insect infestation. Storm water filtration measures shall be installed separately for each lot. All storm water runoff shall be treated onsite. Discharging storm water runoff to neighboring properties or public right-of-way and connections to existing underground storm water mains shall not be allowed.

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:** An automatic residential fire sprinkler system shall be installed in accordance with National Fire Protection Association's (NFPA) Standard 13D in all new one and two-family dwellings. Sprinklers notes on Sheet A1.0.
38. **Required Fire Flow:** The minimum required fire flow for this project is 1,000 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 875 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.
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 system, 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.