



**TO:** Nick Zornes, Zoning Administrator  
**FROM:** Nazaneen Healy, Associate Planner  
**SUBJECT:** SC23-0007 – 226 Solana Drive

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## RECOMMENDATION

Approve design review application SC23-0007 for the construction of a new approximately 4,103 square foot, two-story home 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: 226 Solana Drive, located on the west side of Solana Drive between Almond Avenue and Jardin Drive
- Lot Size: 13,912 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 the existing one-story home and replacement with a new two-story home (see Attachment A – Project Plans). The proposed home incorporates traditional hipped roof forms and exterior materials that include a standing seam metal roof, stucco exterior finish with stone veneer, and painted wood trim. The proposed home is situated on the lot similar to the existing home and the proposed site improvements include a new driveway to the attached garage and new landscaping throughout the property. Ten existing protected trees and several smaller trees and shrubs are proposed for removal as part of the project due to their poor condition.

## 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>	2,300 square feet	3,151 square feet	3,189 square feet
<b>FLOOR AREA:</b> First floor Second floor Total	2,152 square feet -- square feet 2,152 square feet	2,694 square feet 1,409 square feet 4,103 square feet	4,051 square feet
<b>SETBACKS:</b> Front Rear Right side (1 <sup>st</sup> /2 <sup>nd</sup> ) Left side (1 <sup>st</sup> /2 <sup>nd</sup> )	29.9 feet 64.1 feet 20.1 feet/-- feet 16.1 feet/-- feet	25.4 feet 38.2 feet 10.3 feet/19.1 feet 10.3 feet/27.8 feet	25 feet 25 feet 10 feet/17.5 feet 10 feet/17.5 feet
<b>HEIGHT:</b>	16.3 feet	25.6 feet	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 minimizes bulk by inseting portions of the second story, incorporates greater side setbacks than required, and proposes a lower height than the maximum. In addition, to minimize potential privacy impacts, the second-story egress windows face the street except for one window facing the south side yard and a balcony facing the rear yard, which will be screened with evergreen trees planted along the property lines.

Seven new trees will be planted in the front and rear yards and three existing trees in the public right-of-way, one small oak tree in the front yard, and a group of existing shrubs in the rear yard will 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, and minimizes potential privacy impacts.

**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 also contacted 10 neighbors in the immediate area. No comments from neighbors have been

received by staff as of the writing of this report.

Attachment:

A. Project Plans

Cc: Wanchen Cai, Applicant  
Ana Bertran and Roberto Angulo, Property Owner

## FINDINGS

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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 is situated on the lot similar to the existing home and complies with the allowable floor area, lot coverage, and height maximums as well as the 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 or removal of soil. Ten existing protected trees and several smaller trees and shrubs are proposed for removal due to their poor condition. Seven new trees will be planted in the front and rear yards and three existing trees in the public right-of-way, one small oak tree in the front yard, and a group of existing shrubs in the rear yard will remain.
- D. The orientation of the proposed new house in relation to the immediate neighborhood will minimize excessive bulk because the proposed design insets portions of the second story, incorporates greater side setbacks than required, and proposes a lower height than the maximum.
- 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 exterior finish with stone veneer, and painted wood trim.
- 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 proposed grading provides for drainage away from the home and away from adjacent properties and conforms to existing grades along the property lines.

## CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

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### **GENERAL**

**1. Expiration**

The Design Review Approval will expire on September 20, 2025 unless prior to the date of expiration, a building permit is issued, or an extension is granted pursuant to Section 14.76.090 of the Zoning Code.

**2. Approved Plans**

The approval is based on the plans and materials received on August 11, 2023, except as may be modified by these conditions.

**3. Plan Revisions**

The building permit application shall include the following plan revisions:

- a. Correct the North Arrow orientation on the architectural plans to match the survey.

**4. Protected Trees**

Tree Nos. 3, 5-7, 9, 17, and 36 (row of oleanders), shall be protected under this application and cannot be removed without a tree removal permit from the Development Services Department or Public Works Department.

**5. Fireplaces**

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

**6. 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 right-of-way shall be in compliance with the City's Shoulder Paving Policy.

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

**8. Underground Utility and Fire Sprinkler Requirements**

New residences 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.

**9. 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**

### **10. Conditions of Approval**

Incorporate the conditions of approval into the title page of the 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.

### **11. Tree Protection Note**

On the grading plan and site plan, show 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. Water Efficient Landscape Plan**

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

### **13. 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.

### **14. 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.

### **15. 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.

### **16. 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.

### **17. Outdoor Condensing Units**

Show the location of any outdoor condensing unit(s) on the site plan including the model number of the unit(s), nominal size (i.e. tonnage) of the unit, and setback to the nearest property line. Provide the manufacturer's specifications showing the sound rating for each unit. The condensing unit(s) 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.

### **18. 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**

### **19. Tree Protection**

Tree protection fencing shall be installed around the driplines, or as required by the project arborist, of Tree Nos. 3, 5-7, 9, 17, and 36 (row of oleanders) and the existing trees on neighboring properties that overhang the subject property as shown on the site plan. Tree protection fencing shall be chain link and a minimum of five feet in height with posts driven into the ground and shall not be removed until all building construction has been completed unless approved by the Planning Division.

### **20. 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**

### **21. 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.

### **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).