



TO: Nick Zornes, Zoning Administrator
FROM: Sean Gallegos, Senior Planner
SUBJECT: SC23-0018 – 131 San Juan Court

RECOMMENDATION

Approve design review application SC23-0018 for the construction of a new 3,502 square foot, two-story house 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:** 131 San Juan Court, located on the east side of San Juan Court, north of Jordan Avenue.
- **Lot Size:** 10,013 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 one-story house and replacement with a new 3,502 square-foot two-story house (see Attachment A – Project Plans). An 849 square foot attached accessory dwelling unit is also proposed but is not subject to design review and will be reviewed under a separate Building Permit application.

The new residence is designed in a neo-eclectic architectural style that combines various decorative techniques from different house styles with exterior materials that include a standing seam metal roof, stucco exterior and stone veneer finish with wood trims, aluminum framed windows, and wood doors.

The subject property is an interior lot, and it does not have a uniform rectangular shape. The proposed construction involves maintaining a footprint similar to that of the original house and the proposed site improvements include a new driveway to the attached garage along the southern side of the property and new hardscape and softscape throughout the property.

On the subject site, there is a single protected Crape Myrtle tree, measuring 18 inches in diameter, located in the front yard. An arborist’s evaluation determined that the tree's health is fair and that it would not withstand the development due to its five-foot distance from the new house. The decision to remove the tree adheres to the criteria outlined in the Tree Protection Regulations, specifically criterion No. 5, which permits removal for reasons related to the impact of preserving the tree

impeding the use of real property and no reasonable or feasible alternative existing to preserve the tree in the current location.

ANALYSIS

Design Review

The proposed house complies with the R1-10 district development standards found in Los Altos Municipal Code (LAMC) Chapter 14.06, as demonstrated by the following table:

	Existing	Proposed	Allowed/Required
COVERAGE:	2,204 square feet	2,762 square feet	3,003 square feet
FLOOR AREA:			
1st Floor	2,204 square feet	1,990 square feet	
2nd Floor	-	1,512 square feet	
Total	2,204 square feet	3,502 square feet	3,505 square feet
SETBACKS:			
Front	25.08 feet	25.08 feet	25 feet
Rear	43.75 feet	27.5 feet	25 feet
Right side (1 st /2 nd)	10 feet/-	10 feet/20.3 feet	10 feet/17.5 feet
Left side (1 st /2 nd)	11.66 feet/-	10.2 feet/ 20.6 feet	10 feet/17.5 feet
HEIGHT:	18.6 feet	24.8 feet	27 feet

Per Chapter 14.76 of the LAMC, new two-story residences must comply with the Single-Family Residential Design Guidelines. The surrounding neighborhood is considered a Diverse Character Neighborhood according to the Design Guidelines. In a Diverse Character neighborhood, the guidelines advise integrating existing design elements, materials, and scales while maintaining distinctiveness. The immediate neighborhood is comprised of one-story and two-story houses. Homes in the neighborhood exhibit similar massing, a combination of simple and complex roof forms, and distinctive front setback patterns due to the cul-de-sac, resulting in irregular front yards. The horizontal eave lines at the first story typically range from approximately eight to nine feet in height. The homes in the neighborhood feature attached garages in the front yard facing the street.

The design of the new residence adopts a neo-eclectic architectural style, blending various decorative techniques from different house styles. It incorporates elements of a traditional two-story layout, such as simple massing and a projecting front porch, alongside contemporary features like simplified forms, open floor plans, and flat roof and mansard roof forms. Notably, the inclusion of flat roof forms along the front elevation contributes to a modern aesthetic, while hipped mansard elements along the sides and rear maintain a traditional appearance. This balanced fusion of styles results in a cohesive design that respects both tradition and modernity. Externally, carefully chosen materials, including standing seam metal roof, stucco exterior, stone veneer finish with wood trims, aluminum-framed windows, and wood doors, ensure compatibility with the surrounding area.

The design guidelines and review findings emphasize the importance of minimizing the structure's bulk. In line with these requirements, the design effectively breaks down the massing and enhances the visual interest of the facade. The low-pitched roof and roof form play a crucial role in reducing the perceived bulk of the structure. The first-story roof form and horizontal eave line create visual breaks in the wall plane, while the articulation and roof forms of the first and second story further break down the massing into smaller sections, resulting in an aesthetically appealing and less bulky appearance. Additionally, the second story, recessed and centrally positioned over the first, contributes to a softened appearance.

Moreover, the proposed height of the 24.8-foot-tall house aligns with the scale of neighboring houses in the area considering that the neighborhood consists of one-story houses ranging from 14 to 17 feet in height, as well as two-story houses ranging from 22 to 25 feet. This ensures that the building blends in harmoniously with the overall character of the neighborhood, avoiding any visual discrepancies or disruptions to the character of the neighborhood.

The design incorporates a single balcony facing the rear yard, though its depth exceeds the recommendation outlined in the Single-Family Residential Design Guidelines. While the guidelines suggest a maximum depth of four feet, the proposed balcony extends to five feet in depth. To mitigate potential privacy concerns, the proposal includes a five-foot-tall screening wall along the right side elevation and landscaping with evergreen trees along the side and rear property lines. However, to align with Single-Family Residential Design Guidelines, staff recommends two conditions: Condition No. 4a, which mandates reducing the balcony depth to a maximum of four feet, and Condition No. 4b, requiring the landscape plan be revised to show evergreen screening plants along the unscreened portions of the side and rear property lines.

The proposed landscaping includes one new Chinese Pistache tree in the front yard, one new Water Gum tree in the rear yard, and evergreen screening vegetation along the left property line 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, ensuring compatibility with neighboring structures, reducing perceived bulk, and prioritizing the preservation of existing trees.

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 CORRESPONDENCE

A public meeting notice was posted on the property, mailed to property owners within 300 feet of the subject site, 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 sent out emails to nine neighbors in the immediate area. As of the drafting of this report, staff has received no comment letters from neighbors.

Attachment:

A. Project Plans

Cc: Joanna Li, Applicant
Jackie Terrell, Designer
Aditya Kuruganti and Jolly Diya Trustees, Owners

FINDINGS

SC23-0018 - 131 San Juan Court

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 residence complies with all provision 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 house maintains a similar finished floor elevation 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 trees on the property protected by city ordinance are proposed to remain and there will not be any substantial grade changes nor soil removal to construct the residence. A total of one protected tree in the front yard is set for removal. The proposed landscaping including a new Chinese Pistache tree, shrubs, and ground cover will be in compliance with the Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance.
- D. The orientation of the proposed new house in relation to the immediate neighborhood will minimize excessive bulk because the proposed structure incorporates architectural design features first-story roof form and horizontal eave line create visual breaks in the wall plane, while the articulation and roof forms of the second story further break down the massing into smaller sections, and the proposed design utilizes stucco and board and batten siding along segments of the first story and second story visually break down the massing and minimize excessive bulk.
- E. General architectural considerations, including the size and scale, the architectural relationship with the site and new house, 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 on the same project site. The proposed house meets the floor area, lot coverage, and height limitations specified in LAMC Chapter 14.06, and its size and scale harmonize with the neighborhood. This is achieved through a combination of a low-pitched roof and flat roof forms, horizontal eave lines on both the first and second stories, segmented massing, and a height that avoids excessive bulkiness.
- F. The proposed new house has been designed to follow the natural contours of the site with minimal grading, minimal impervious cover, and maximum erosion protection because the 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

SC23-0018 - 131 San Juan Court

PLANNING DIVISION

1. **Expiration:** The Design Review Approval will expire on May 15, 2024, 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 9, 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. **Building Design/Plan Modifications:** The following modifications shall be made to the architectural design and landscaping, and/or other site or building design details and shall be shown on building permit drawings:
 - a. The project plans shall be revised to reduce the balcony depth to a maximum of four feet.
 - b. The landscape plan be revised to show evergreen screening plants along the unscreened portions of the side and rear property lines.
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/JADU Not Reviewed:** The proposed ADU/JADU included in the plan set is not part of this design review application. Prior to commencement of the ADU/JADU construction, a separate building permit issued by the Building Division shall be obtained.
7. **Tree Removal Approved:** The 18-inch Crape Myrtle tree shown to be removed on plan Sheet A0.4 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.
8. **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). 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.

9. **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.
10. **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.
11. **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

12. **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.
13. **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.
14. **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.
15. **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.

16. **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.
17. **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.
18. **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.
19. **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.
20. **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).
21. **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.
22. **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

23. **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.

24. **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.
25. **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 Traffic Engineer.
26. **Grading and Drainage Plan:** The building permit submittal shall include 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 the 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.
27. **Public Infrastructure Repairs:** 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.
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. **Sewer Cleanout:** The building permit submittal shall show the relocation of the existing sewer cleanout from the public right-of-way to private property within 5' from the property line.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

31. **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.
32. **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].

33. **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.
34. **Required Fire Flow:** The minimum required fire flow for this project is 875 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.
35. **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.
36. **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.
37. **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.
38. **Fire Sprinklers Required.** (As Noted on Sheet A0.1) 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. 1.An automatic sprinkler system shall be provided

throughout all new buildings and structures, other than Group R occupancies, except as follows:

- a. Buildings and structures not located in any Wildland-Urban Interface and not exceeding 1,200 square feet of fire area.
- b. Buildings and structures located in any Wildland-Urban Interface Fire Area and not exceeding 500 square feet of fire area.
- c. Canopies, constructed in accordance with CBC 406.7.2, used exclusively for weather protection of vehicle fueling pads per CBC 406.7.1 and not exceeding 5,000 square feet of fire area.
- d. Group S-2 or U occupancies, including photovoltaic support structures, used exclusively for vehicle parking which meet all of the following:
 - i. Noncombustible construction.
 - ii. Maximum 5,000 square feet in not less than three (3) sides nor 75% of structure perimeter.
 - iv. Minimum of 10 feet separation from existing buildings, or similar structures, unless area is separated by fire walls complying with California Building Code 706. 2.

An automatic sprinkler system shall be installed throughout all new buildings with a Group R fire area. Exception: Detached Accessory Dwelling Unit, provided that all of the following are met:

- a. The unit meets the definition of an Accessory Dwelling Unit as defined in the Government Code Section 65852.2.
- b. The existing primary residence does not have automatic fire sprinklers.
- c. The accessory detached dwelling unit does not exceed 1,200 square feet in size.
- d. The unit is on the same lot as the primary residence.
- e. The unit meets all apparatus access and water supply requirements of Chapter 5 and Appendix B of the 2022 California Fire Code. An approved automatic fire sprinkler system shall be installed in new manufactured homes (as defined in California Health and Safety Code Sections 18007 and 18009) and multifamily manufactured homes with two dwelling units (as defined in California Health and Safety Code Section 18008.7) in accordance with Title 25 of the California Code of Regulations.

4. An approved automatic sprinkler system shall be provided throughout all existing buildings, when additions are made that exceed fifty (50) percent and/or seven hundred and fifty (750) square feet of existing floor areas (area calculations shall not include existing basement floor areas).
5. An approved automatic sprinkler system shall be provided throughout all new basements regardless of size and throughout existing basements that are expanded by more than 50%.
6. An approved automatic sprinkler system shall be provided throughout existing buildings and structures when alterations or additions are made that create conditions described in Sections 903.2.1 through 903.2.18.
7. Any change in the character of occupancy or in use of any building with a fire area equal to or greater than 3,600 square feet which, in the opinion of the fire code official or building official, would place the building into a more hazardous division of the same occupancy group or into a different group of occupancies and constitutes a greater degree of life safety 1 or increased fire risk 2, shall require the installation of an approved fire automatic fire sprinkler system.
8. The obligation to provide compliance with these fire sprinkler regulations may not be evaded by performing a series of small additions and/or alterations undertaken over a three-year period and/or two code cycles. The permit issuance dates of past additions and/or alterations where these regulations were in effect shall be used for determining compliance.

- a. Any submittal for building permits which exceed fifty (50) percent and/or seven hundred and fifty (750) square feet of existing floor areas (area calculations shall not include existing basement floor areas and any non-habitable floor areas i.e., garages) during the three-year period shall comply with fire sprinkler regulations.