



DATE: MAY 17, 2023

AGENDA ITEM #3

TO: Nick Zornes, Zoning Administrator
FROM: Sean Gallegos, Senior Planner
SUBJECT: SC22-0036 – 960 Parma Way

RECOMMENDATION

Approve design review application SC22-0036 for the construction of a new 4,142 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: 960 Parma Way, on the southwest corner of Parma Way and Covington Road
- Lot Size: 14,134 square feet
- General Plan Designation: Single-Family, Medium Lot (SF4)
- Zoning Designation: R1-10
- Current Site Conditions: Two-story house

The proposed project includes the demolition of an existing two-story house and replacement with a new two-story house with 2,714 square feet on the first story and 1,428 square feet on the second story (see Attachment A – Project Plans). The new residence features a neo-eclectic architectural style that combines a variety of decorative techniques from different house styles. The design incorporates elements of a ranch house, with its simple massing and roof forms, stripped-down details and practical aesthetic, and contemporary architecture, as seen in its use of a flat roof at the front entry and minimalistic details. This blend of styles creates a cohesive design that strikes a balance between tradition and modernity. The exterior materials include asphalt shingle roof, flat stucco siding, fiber cement horizontal siding, wood veneer and stone veneer, as well as wood-clad aluminum-framed windows and doors.

The proposed design of the residence maintains the front facade facing Parma Way and expands the driveway in width. The driveway will not exceed 50% of the required front yard area. The new house will increase its front setback, which eliminates the nonconforming front yard setback of the previous house.

The subject property has eight trees, five of which are classified as protected trees under the city's Tree Protection Regulations. Of the five protected trees, tree numbers 3-6 and 8 are slated to remain, while tree numbers 1, 2, and 7 will be removed. The arborist report found the Black Acacia tree (No.

1) is in poor health, the California Pepper Tree (No. 2) is both in poor health and highly impacted by the new driveway, and the Evergreen Ash tree (No. 7) exhibits signs of poor health and weakened structural stability in its limbs. The decision to remove these trees is based on criteria No. 1 of the Tree Protection Regulations, which specifies the removal of diseased trees and those that pose a hazard of falling, and criteria No. 3, which allows for tree removal for economic or aesthetic reasons related to property enjoyment. Overall, the preservation of the other protected trees and the removal of these three trees are in compliance with the Tree Protection Regulations and are intended to balance the property's landscape aesthetics and safety concerns.

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:	2,600 square feet	4,020 square feet	4,240 square feet
FLOOR AREA:			
1st Floor	1,978 square feet	2,714 square feet	
2nd Floor	400 square feet	1,428 square feet	
Total	2,378 square feet	4,142 square feet	4,164 square feet
SETBACKS:			
Front	22.8 feet	26.2 feet	25 feet
Rear	65.6 feet	55.75 feet	25 feet
Right side(1 st /2 nd)	29 feet	20.2 feet/23.75 feet	20 feet (Exterior)
Left side (1 st /2 nd)	10.3 feet/24.25	17.5 feet/24.5 feet	10 feet/17.5 feet
HEIGHT:	21 feet	23.5 feet	27 feet

As per Chapter 14.76 of the LAMC, new two-story residences must comply with the Single-Family Residential Design Guidelines. The guidelines suggest that designs in a Diverse Character neighborhood should incorporate some design elements, materials, and scale that are present in the neighborhood while maintaining its own unique design integrity. The proposed design follows this recommendation and will be compatible with the surrounding properties.

The neighborhood context map, depicted on Sheet A1.4 of the plan set, provides a visual representation of the physical characteristics of the neighborhood, including its boundaries, streets, buildings, and natural features. The streetscape elevations, on Sheet A1.5, show the architectural style, massing, and bulk of the proposed residence in relation to the surrounding residences.

The design guidelines and design review findings require designs to minimize the bulk of the structure. The proposed use of stucco, stone veneer, and wooden veneer rainscreen material on the first story visually breaks down the massing of the first story, while horizontal siding and wooden veneer rainscreen material soften and reduce the appearance of bulk at the second story. The use of different

materials on the exterior of the building also helps to break down the massing and create a more visually interesting facade.

The proposed wall plate heights of 9.5 feet for the first story and 8.5 feet for the second story are compatible with the scale of the surrounding residences, which have plate heights between 8 and 9 feet. This helps to ensure that the building does not appear out-of-scale or out of place when viewed from the street. The eight-foot, six-inch second-floor wall plate height is concealed within the existing roof along the elevation, which helps to maintain the overall scale of the structure and ensure that it fits in with the surrounding properties.

The low-pitched roof and roof form contribute to reducing the perceived bulk of the structure. The first-story roof form and horizontal eave line breaks up the wall plane, while the building's articulation and roof forms at the second story break down the massing into smaller portions, making the building visually interesting and less bulky.

The proposed 23.5-foot-tall house is also in keeping with the scale of other houses found in the neighborhood. In a neighborhood with one-story houses that are 14 feet to 17 feet tall and two-story houses that are 22 feet to 26 feet tall, the proposed height of 23.5 feet is shorter than the maximum permitted 27-foot height. This helps to ensure that the building does not stand out or detract from the overall character of the neighborhood.

New trees will be planted on the property for privacy, and existing trees (Nos. 3-6 and 8) will be kept. 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 preserves existing trees to the extent possible.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

This project is categorically exempt from environmental review under Section 15303 (“New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures”) of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because it involves the construction of a single-family dwelling in a residential zone.

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION AND 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. The applicant also posted the public notice sign (24” x 36”) in conformance with the Planning Division posting requirements.

The applicant sent out letters to 20 neighbors in the immediate area by certified mail. No comments from neighbors have been received by staff as of the writing of this report.

Attachment:

A. Project Plans

Cc: Shweta Sing, Open Remodel, Applicant
Ashutosh Gupta, Open Remodel, Designer
Babak Salamat 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 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 orientation on the lot as the existing house 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 and will be in keeping with the general appearance of neighboring developed areas 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. The proposed landscaping including new trees, shrubs, and ground cover will be in keeping with the surrounding neighborhood.
- D. The orientation of the proposed new residence in relation to the immediate neighborhood will minimize the perception of excessive bulk and mass because the proposed structure incorporates architectural design features such as low scale, horizontal eave lines, stone veneer and horizontal siding, building articulation, and roof forms that break up the massing and minimize excessive bulk.
- E. General architectural considerations, including the character, size, scale, and quality of the design, 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 design incorporates durability, high-quality and architecturally integrated asphalt shingle roof, flat stucco siding, fiber cement horizontal siding, wood veneer and stone veneer, as well as wood-clad aluminum-framed windows and door finishes. The size and scale of the building also fits well with the neighborhood, based on overall building height and height of each story.
- F. The proposed residence has been designed to follow the natural contours of the site with minimal grading, minimum impervious cover, and maximum erosion protection because the site is relatively flat and has incorporated softscape and hardscape surfaces into the plan and proposes a drainage plan to minimize off-site stormwater drainage.

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

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GENERAL

1. Expiration

The Design Review Approval will expire on May 17, 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 March 20, 2023 except as may be modified by these conditions.

3. 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.

4. Protected Trees

Tree Nos. 3-6 and 8 as shown on Sheet A-1.2 shall be protected under this application and cannot be removed without a tree removal permit from the Development Services Director. The tree protection plan outlined in the arborist report (Heartwood Consulting Arborists, dated 11/8/22) shall be incorporated into the building permit plans and implemented before and during construction.

5. 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.

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

7. 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.

8. 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

9. 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 found.

10. 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.

11. Tree Protection Note

On the grading plan and/or the site plan, show all tree/landscape 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. 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. 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.

14. Outdoor Condensing Units

The plans shall show the location of any outdoor condensing unit(s) on the site plan including the model number of the unit(s) and nominal size of the unit. The Applicant shall provide the manufacturer's specifications showing the sound rating for each unit. The condensing units 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.

15. Storm Water Management

The Plans shall 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.).

16. 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.

17. Underground Utility Location

The Plans shall 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.

PRIOR TO ISSUANCE OF BUILDING OR DEMOLITION PERMIT

18. Tree Protection

Tree protection shall be installed around the dripline(s) of the trees as shown on the site plan approved with the building permit plans. 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.

19. 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

20. 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.

21. 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).