DATE: JUNE 7, 2023

AGENDA ITEM #1

TO: Nick Zornes, Zoning Administrator

FROM: Sean Gallegos, Senior Planner

SUBJECT: SC22-0001 – 1000 Crooked Creek Drive

RECOMMENDATION

Approve design review application SC22-0001 for the construction of a new 4,928 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: 1000 Crooked Creek Drive, on the west side of Crooked Creek Drive at the terminus of Robinhood Lane
- Lot Size: 23,087 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 3,125 square feet on the first story and 1,803 square feet on the second story (see Attachment A – Project Plans). The new residence features a neo-eclectic architectural style that combines decorative techniques from different architectural styles. The design incorporates elements of a ranch house, with its simple massing and hipped roof architectural features, 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 a standing seam metal roof, flat stucco siding, wood vertical siding, limestone, and composite-framed windows and doors.

The proposed design of the residence maintains the front façade with garage entry facing Crooked Creek Drive. The driveway will not exceed 50% of the required front yard area.

The subject property has 15 trees, 12 of which are classified as protected trees under the City's Tree Protection Regulations. Of the 12 protected trees, tree numbers 6, and 8 to 16 are slated to remain, while tree numbers 4, 5 and 7 will be removed. The arborist report found the Ginkgo tree (No. 4), Chinese Elm tree (No. 5) and Bay Tree (No. 7) are in fair health. The decision to remove these trees is based on criteria No. 3, which allows for tree removal for economic or aesthetic reasons related to

property enjoyment. Overall, the preservation of 9 protected trees and the removal of 3 protected trees comply with the Tree Protection Regulations and are intended to balance the site's existing tree canopy and proposed redevelopment consistent with the City's standards.

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:	2,504 square feet	3,557 square feet	6,926 square feet
FLOOR AREA:			
1st Floor	2,504 square feet	3,125 square feet	
2nd Floor	450 square feet	1,803 square feet	
Total	2,954 square feet	4,928 square feet	5,058 square feet
SETBACKS:			
Front	26.2 feet	25 feet	25 feet
Rear	47.1 feet	45.1 feet	25 feet
Right side(1st/2nd)	32.5 feet/32.5 feet	10 feet/25 feet	10 feet/17.5 feet
Left side (1st/2nd)	10 feet/20.3 feet	10 feet/65 feet	10 feet/17.5 feet
HEIGHT:	18.1 feet	26.1 feet	27 feet

The project also includes a 489 square-foot attached accessory dwelling unit (ADU) at the first story, which is not included in the floor area total in the above table per state law and city ordinance per Chapter 14.14 of the Municipal Code and the ADU is not to be considered in the design review approval.

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 guidelines recommend integration of design elements, materials, and scale found within the neighborhood's Diverse Character, while still retaining its own distinctive design integrity. The proposed design aligns with this recommendation and is thoughtfully crafted to ensure compatibility with the surrounding properties. By incorporating elements that resonate with the neighborhood, the design achieves a harmonious balance between honoring the existing character and introducing its own unique architectural identity.

The neighborhood context map, found on Sheet A-1. A of the plan set, offers a comprehensive visual depiction of the neighborhood's physical attributes, encompassing boundaries, streets, buildings, and natural elements. The streetscape elevations featured on Sheet A-R present a detailed representation of the proposed residence, which provides a greater understanding of architectural style, scale, and overall compatibility with the surrounding homes.

The design guidelines and design review findings require designs to minimize the bulk of the structure. The proposed use of stucco, stone siding, 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 façade.

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 3:12 roof and its hipped roof form play a vital role in minimizing the perceived bulk of the structure. Additionally, the first-story roof form, along with the horizontal eave line, effectively breaks up the wall plane, adding visual interest and preventing a monolithic appearance. Moreover, the carefully considered articulation and roof forms at the second story contribute to further breaking down the massing of the building into smaller, distinct portions making the building visually interesting and less bulky.

The 26.1-foot height of the proposed house remains consistent with the scale of neighboring residences, contributing to a harmonious streetscape. In a neighborhood characterized by one-story houses ranging from 14 to 17 feet in height and two-story houses ranging from 22 to 26 feet, the proposed height is slightly below the maximum allowable limit of 27 feet. This deliberate adherence to the height regulations ensures that the building seamlessly integrates into the existing neighborhood fabric without standing out or compromising the overall character of the area.

The Residential Design Guidelines recommend minimizing the use of tall or two-story design elements, including two-story entryways. However, in this particular design proposal, the applicant and staff have worked together to improve the fenestration sizes, shapes, and configurations of the two-story entryway. To further mitigate the perceived bulkiness while still maintaining an inviting entrance that aligns with the residential guidelines, the applicant has incorporated a flat roof above the entry doorway visually breaking up the entryway. These refinements have resulted in a design that integrates more harmoniously within the guidelines while offering an inviting and visually appealing entrance.

There are limited views towards the rear of the site that are attributed to the downslope context and existing mature trees and vegetation. However, views towards the sides of the property are also limited due to mature trees and vegetation. The photographs on Sheet A-2.2.1 of the plan set provide a comprehensive visual representation of these restricted off-site views. Following a thorough evaluation, the deck placement and off-site views have been found satisfactory by staff, ensuring a reasonable level of privacy will be preserved.

New trees will be planted in the front yard for further bulk reduction of the house, and existing trees (Nos. 6, and 8 to 16) 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 9 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: Anat Sokol, Sokol Design Inc., Applicant/Designer
Tal Friedman, Property Owner

FINDINGS

SC22-0001 1000 Crooked Creek 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 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 consistent finished floor elevation and orientation on the lot, aligning with the existing house. It also adheres to the permissible limits for floor area, lot coverage, and height as stipulated by the applicable regulations, such as the LAMC Chapter 14.06. Furthermore, the design meets the daylight plane requirement, ensuring adequate access to natural light in accordance with the regulations. The proposed house complies with the Residential Design guidelines to ensure its appropriate placement and adherence to the specified design guidelines.

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 existing trees on the property, which are protected by city ordinance, are planned to be retained as part of the proposed project. There will be no significant alterations to the grade or removal of soil during the construction of the residence. In terms of landscaping, the proposed plan aligns with the surrounding neighborhood by incorporating new trees, shrubs, and ground cover that complement the existing environment. This approach ensures the preservation of the natural elements and contributes to the overall aesthetics and character of the 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 features such as a low-scale design, horizontal eave lines, stone veneer, horizontal siding, and roof forms that effectively break up the massing and minimize excessive bulk. The first- and second-story roof forms, along with the horizontal eave line, add visual interest and prevent a monolithic appearance by creating distinct sections. The wall plate heights of 9.5 feet for the first story and 8.5 feet for the second story reduce the overall appearance of 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 effectively incorporates elements of both ranch house architecture, characterized by its simplistic massing, hipped roof features, and practical aesthetic, as well as contemporary design principles, seen in the use of a flat

roof at the front entry and minimalistic detailing. The design features durable and high-quality architectural elements, including a standing seam metal roof, flat stucco siding, wood vertical siding, limestone accents, and composite-framed windows and doors. The building's size and scale have been carefully considered to align with the neighborhood, ensuring compliance with building height standards.

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 location of the house on the site is relatively flat and has incorporated softscape and hardscape surfaces into the plan and 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

SC22-0001 1000 Crooked Creek Drive

GENERAL

1. **Expiration**
   The Design Review Approval will expire on June 7, 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 April 22, 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. 6, and 8 to 16, as shown on Sheet A-1-1.1.2 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 (Urban Tree Management, dated 10/25/22) 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).