



TO: Nick Zornes, Zoning Administrator
FROM: Nazaneen Healy, Associate Planner
SUBJECT: SC23-0013 – 241 Sunkist Lane

RECOMMENDATION

Approve design review application SC23-0013 for the construction of a new approximately 4,619 square foot, two-story single-family residence 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: 241 Sunkist Lane, on the east side of Sunkist Lane, between Almond Avenue and Jardin Drive
- Lot Size: 18,711 square feet
- General Plan Designation: Single-Family, Medium Lot (SF4)
- Zoning Designation: R1-10
- Current Site Conditions: Two-story home and detached garage

The proposed project includes the demolition of the existing two-story single-family residence and garage and replacement with a new two-story residence (see Attachment A – Project Plans). An 850 square foot attached accessory dwelling unit is also proposed but is not subject to design review. The proposed home incorporates flat roof forms and exterior materials that include stucco, standing seam metal, and stained wood exterior finishes, painted metal window surrounds and trellis, and a stained wood garage door. Compared to the existing home, the two-story portion of the proposed home would be located closer to the street and more centered on the lot, with a one-story portion extending along the south side of the property. The proposed site improvements include a new driveway leading to a side-facing attached garage and new landscaping and landscape features throughout the site. Several existing trees were approved for removal earlier this year due to their poor condition. One protected date palm tree in the rear yard is proposed for removal as part of the project due to its condition and location close to the proposed development.

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:

	Existing	Proposed	Allowed/Required
COVERAGE:	2,511 square feet	4,244 square feet	5,613 square feet
FLOOR AREA: First floor Second floor Total	2,153 square feet 504 square feet 2,657 square feet	2,758 square feet 1,861 square feet 4,619 square feet	4,621 square feet
SETBACKS: Front Rear Right side (1 st /2 nd) Left side (1 st /2 nd)	24.0 feet 33.3 feet 53.1 feet/50.0 feet 8.9 feet/19.0 feet	25.1 feet 26.1 feet 21.3 feet/24.9 feet 46.0 feet/37.3 feet	25 feet 25 feet 10 feet/17.5 feet 10 feet/17.5 feet
HEIGHT:	19.8 feet	23.8 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 the second story, proposing a lower height than the maximum, and incorporating greater setbacks than required. The design includes one balcony facing the rear yard and one balcony facing the north side yard. Consistent with the Single-Family Residential Design Guidelines, the balconies incorporate solid side walls, depths of four feet maximum, and landscape screening with evergreen trees to minimize potential privacy impacts.

Three existing screen trees along the rear property line will remain and new evergreen screen trees are also proposed along the rear and both side property lines. Four new trees are currently proposed in the front yard, however Condition No. 5 requires one new tree in the south side yard along with two trees in the front yard pursuant to the approved tree removal permits TREE23-0006 and TREE23-0014 and one new tree in the rear yard to replace the existing protected date palm tree. The new trees shall be spaced to accommodate their mature canopies.

The landscaping plan is required to comply with the Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance, which requires water-efficient landscaping for new residences with landscaping over 500 square feet. In addition, Condition No. 6 requires revisions for consistency with the other drawings in the plan set, requires additional information on the proposed future shed, and requires the planting areas currently indicated as non-irrigated native seed mix areas to be replaced with irrigated plantings, landscape materials such as mulch, gravel, or synthetic turf, additional hardscape, or a combination thereof. The proposed non-irrigated plantings are considered weeds as defined by Chapter 11.10 of the Municipal Code which constitute a fire hazard.

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 property owners also contacted ten neighbors in the immediate area to discuss the proposed project beginning in June and provided the attached statement and summary of their communications (see Attachment B – Neighbor Outreach). Staff received three public comment letters (one opposed and two in favor of the project) as of the writing of this report (see Attachment C – Public Correspondence).

Attachment:

- A. Project Plans
- B. Neighbor Outreach
- C. Public Correspondence

Cc: Chris Kummerer, Applicant
Sagar Mehta and Namitha Kumar, Property Owners

FINDINGS

SC23-0013 – 241 Sunkist Lane

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 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 home complies with the allowable floor area, lot coverage, and height maximums as well as the setback 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; grade changes shall be minimized because the existing site is relatively level and does not require substantial grading except for the pool. One protected date palm tree is proposed for removal due to its condition and location. Four new trees will be planted throughout the site, evergreen screen trees will be planted along the side and rear property lines, and three existing screen trees along the rear property line 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 the second story, proposes a lower height than the maximum, 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 insure the compatibility of the development with its design concept and the character of adjacent buildings on the same project site. The proposed home complies with the allowable floor area, lot coverage, and height maximums as well as the setback and daylight plane requirements pursuant to LAMC Chapter 14.06 and the design of the home incorporates consistent and compatible features including stucco, standing seam metal, and stained wood exterior finishes, painted metal window surrounds and trellis, and a stained wood garage door.
- 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 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

SC23-0013 – 241 Sunkist Lane

GENERAL

1. Expiration

The Design Review Approval will expire on November 15, 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 October 6, 2023, except as may be modified by these conditions.

3. 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 by the applicant.

4. Protected Trees

Existing Tree Nos. 13, 15, 16, and 18 (located on the adjacent property) and the new trees shall be protected under this application and require permits from the Development Services Department to remove. The new screen trees shall be maintained and replaced if they are declining or removed.

5. New Trees

The following minimum 24” box size trees shall be incorporated into the landscape/irrigation plans and spaced to accommodate their mature tree canopies:

- a. (1) Category I tree located in the south side yard pursuant to TREE23-0006.
- b. (2) Category II trees located in the front yard pursuant to TREE23-0014.
- c. (1) Category II tree located in the rear yard.

6. Plan Revisions

The following plan revisions shall be incorporated into the building permit plan submittal:

- a. Revise the Site Plan, civil plans, and/or landscape/irrigation plans for consistency between the drawings including tree locations, accessory structures, and landscape features.
- b. Revise the plans to demonstrate the future side yard shed complies with Chapter 14.06 and 14.15 of the Municipal Code.
- c. Revise the plans to replace the proposed non-irrigated planting areas, indicated as native seed mix areas, with irrigated plantings, landscape materials such as mulch, gravel or synthetic turf, additional hardscape, or a combination thereof.

7. 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.

8. 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.

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

10. Underground Utility and Fire Sprinkler Requirements

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.

11. Swimming Pool, Water Feature, and Outdoor Kitchen

The proposed pool and associated equipment, water feature, and outdoor kitchen require a separate building permit and are subject to the City's standards pursuant to Section 14.06.120 and Chapter 14.15.

12. 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

13. 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.

14. Tree Protection Note

On the grading plan and the site plan, show all tree protection fencing consistent with City standards and/or the arborist report 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."

15. 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.

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. 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.

18. 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.

19. 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.

20. Off-Haul Excavated Soil

The grading plan shall show specific grading cut and/or fill quantities. Cross section details showing the existing and proposed grading through at least two perpendicular portions of the site or more shall be provided to fully characterize the site. A note on the grading plans should state that all excess dirt shall be off-hauled from the site and shall not be used as fill material unless approved by the Building and Planning Divisions.

21. 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

22. Tree Protection

Tree protection fencing shall be installed around the driplines, or as required by the project arborist, of existing Tree Nos. 13, 15, 16, and 18. 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.

23. 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

24. 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.

25. 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).