



**TOWN OF LOS GATOS
PLANNING COMMISSION
REPORT**

MEETING DATE: 12/14/2022

ITEM NO: 4

DATE: December 9, 2022
TO: Planning Commission
FROM: Joel Paulson, Community Development Director
SUBJECT: Requesting Approval for Construction of a Second Story Addition to an Existing Single-Family Residence on Property Zoned R-1:12. **Located at 14876 Clara Street.** APN 409-25-027. Architecture and Site Application S-22-033. PROPERTY OWNER: Jacob John. APPLICANT: Louie Leu. PROJECT PLANNER: Jocelyn Shoopman.

RECOMMENDATION:

Denial.

PROJECT DATA:

General Plan Designation: Low Density Residential
Zoning Designation: R-1:12 (Single-Family Residential – 12,000-square foot minimum lot size)
Applicable Plans & Standards: General Plan, Residential Design Guidelines
Parcel Size: 20,234 square feet
Surrounding Area:

	Existing Land Use	General Plan	Zoning
North	Residential	Low Density Residential	R-1:12
South	Residential	Low Density Residential and City of Monte Sereno	R-1:12
East	Residential	Low Density Residential	R-1:12
West	Residential	Low Density Residential	R-1:12

PREPARED BY: JOCELYN SHOOPMAN
Associate Planner

Reviewed by: Planning Manager and Community Development Director

CEQA:

The project is Categorically Exempt pursuant to the adopted Guidelines for the Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act, Section 15301: Existing Facilities.

FINDINGS:

- The project is Categorically Exempt pursuant to the adopted Guidelines for the Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act, Section 15301: Existing Facilities.
- The project meets the objective standards of Chapter 29 of the Town Code (Zoning Regulations).
- As required for compliance with the Residential Design Guidelines.

CONSIDERATIONS:

- As required by Section 29.20.150 of the Town Code for granting approval of an Architecture and Site application.

ACTION:

The decision of the Planning Commission is final unless appealed within ten days.

BACKGROUND:

The subject property is located on the east side of Clara Street (Exhibit 1). The property is approximately 20,234 square feet and is developed with an existing 1,980-square foot single-story residence with a 565-square foot attached garage. The immediate neighborhood as defined by the Residential Design Guidelines is made up of one-story residences.

The project meets all technical requirements of Town Code including height, floor area, building coverage, parking, and setbacks.

The project is being considered by the Planning Commission due to the proposed residence resulting in the first two-story residence in the immediate neighborhood as defined by the Residential Design Guidelines.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

A. Location and Surrounding Neighborhood

The subject property is located on the east side of Clara Street, approximately 350 feet north of La Rinconada Drive (Exhibit 1). The property is developed with a single-family residence and attached garage. Single-family residential development abuts the property to the north, east, west, and to the south; however, the homes located to the south are located within the City of Monte Sereno.

B. Project Summary

The applicant is proposing construction of a new 1,234-square foot second-story addition to an existing one-story single-family residence. The project also includes an addition of 161 square feet to the first floor. The total resulting two-story residence, including a 65-square foot detached accessory structure would be 3,449 square feet with an existing 565-square foot attached garage (Exhibit 10).

C. Zoning Compliance

A single-family residence is permitted in the R-1:12 zone. The proposed residence is in compliance with the allowable floor area, building coverage, setbacks, parking, and height requirements for the property. No exceptions are being requested.

DISCUSSION:

A. Architecture and Site Analysis

The applicant is proposing a 3,449-square foot two-story residence with an existing 565-square foot attached garage.

The height of the proposed residence would be approximately 24 feet where a maximum of 30 feet is allowed. The existing one-story residence is approximately 13 feet, five inches tall. A schematic streetscape of the adjacent one-story residences within the immediate neighborhood has been provided by the applicant on Sheet A-1.2 of Exhibit 10.

The applicant has provided a Letter of Justification summarizing the project (Exhibit 4). The proposed Development Plans are included in Exhibit 10.

A summary of the floor area for the existing and proposed residence is included in the table on the following page.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION (continued):

Floor Area Summary				
	Existing SF	Addition SF	Proposed SF	Max Allowed SF
First Floor	1,980	161	2,141	4,616
Second Floor	--	1,243	1,243	
Detached Accessory Structure	65	--	65	
Total	2,045	1,404	3,449	
Garage	565	--	565	1,160

The proposed project materials include hardie board horizontal lap siding; a hardie board vertical siding feature above the front entry; brick veneer; a dark gray standing seam metal roof; and metal clad windows. A Color and Materials sheet is included as Exhibit 6.

The project is being considered by the Planning Commission due to the proposal resulting in the first two-story residence in the immediate neighborhood as defined by the Residential Design Guidelines. The proposed residence would be approximately four feet, five inches taller than the tallest residence in the neighborhood at 14832 Clara Street with an approximate height of 19 feet, five inches (Sheet A-1.2, Exhibit 10).

Should the Planning Commission choose to consider a greater view of the immediate neighborhood, there are existing two-story residences when traveling north of the subject property along Golf Links Drive towards Clearview Drive, southeast of the subject property along La Rinconada Drive and Zena Avenue, and southwest of the subject property along La Rinconada Drive and Natalye Drive. The residences located south of the subject property along La Rinconada Drive are located within the City of Monte Sereno.

B. Building Design

The proposed project materials include hardie board horizontal lap siding; a hardie board vertical siding feature above the front entry; brick veneer; a dark gray standing seam metal roof; and metal clad windows (Exhibit 6). In their Letter of Justification (Exhibit 4), the applicant states that the proposed residence would be in keeping with the ranch or tract style of homes with a combination of hip and gable roof forms. The applicant's letter details their efforts to discuss the project with their neighbors. Lastly, the letter describes the consideration given to the surrounding neighborhood in designing a project that is architecturally compatible.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION (continued):

The proposed residence would include eight-foot plate heights on the first floor and for the bedrooms on the second floor (Exhibit 10, Sheet A-3.1). The second-story addition would have the following approximate step-backs from the first floor:

- Between two feet, eleven and a half inches, and four feet, five and a half inches along the front elevation;
- Approximately 11 feet, six inches along the left-side elevation; and
- Approximately 17 feet, four and a half inches along the right-side elevation.

Additionally, the proposed residence sits approximately two feet below Clara Street and is partially screened by five existing cedar trees which are proposed to remain. The residence proposes a 4/12 roof pitch helping to reduce the overall height of the residence by utilizing a low roof pitch and gabled roofs, both commonly used in the immediate neighborhood.

The Town's Consulting Architect reviewed the proposed residence on August 4, 2022 (Exhibit 5). The Consulting Architect identified several issues with the project that were inconsistent with the Residential Design Guidelines. In response, the applicant made modifications to the design of the residence and provided written responses to the remaining issues and recommendations of the Consulting Architect (Exhibit 4). The recommendations identified by the Consulting Architect are provided below, followed by the applicant's response in *italics*.

1. Reduce the visual bulk of the second-floor addition by utilizing hip roof forms in lieu of gable roofs.

The second story portion of the residence has a plate height of eight feet and its visual mass is broken up by a lower roof line. The upper roof is proposed as a hip roof with gable dormers, which is a consistent roof line utilized by other homes within the immediate neighborhood.

2. Select and maintain a single roof slope for all roofs.

The proposed design incorporates a mix of hip and gable roof forms. The proposal stays within the neighborhood pattern in terms of its use of simple roof forms and exterior materials.

3. Retain the hip roof form on the garage to provide more design unity.

The design proposes to modify the existing hip roof over the garage to a gable roof for consistency with the other gable elements proposed elsewhere on the residence.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION (continued):

4. Simplify the first-floor eaves and provide an under-the-eave entry consistent with the surrounding homes.

Gable roof forms above a lower roof line at the entry is seen on other homes just outside of the immediate neighborhood at 14871 Golf Links Drive and 17261 La Rinconada. The home incorporates similar architectural elements, dormers, low pitches, and gabled roofs common in the surrounding homes.

5. Eliminate the brick facing on the front elevation.

The proposed exterior materials will retain the existing horizontal wood siding and add a brick accent to the front mid-section of the home. The brick will run the full height from the ground to the roof line at the lower level and return to the inside corners of the building. The brick is proposed to be painted to match the wood siding in color, so it will be more of a subtle accent. This technique can be seen on a nearby house at 14737 Eastview. There are several homes in the immediate neighborhood which combine the use of stone or brick as an accent material and can be seen at 14854 Clara Street, 14891 Clara Street, and 14821 Golf Links Drive.

6. Center the second-floor front facade windows in the projecting bay facade.

Modification incorporated into the revised design.

7. Chose a roof material more sympathetic to the surrounding homes. It could perhaps be a composition roof similar to nearby homes or a metal roofing with the look, color, and texture of composition roofing.

While a metal roof is not as commonly seen in the immediate neighborhood, a standing seam metal roof is proposed for a pending Architecture and Site application for a new single-family residence located within the immediate neighborhood at 14810 Clara Street.

As detailed above, the applicant has made one of the recommended modifications to the design in response to the recommendations made by the Consulting Architect and has provided justification for not making the additional recommended modifications.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION (continued):C. Neighborhood Compatibility

The immediate neighborhood is made up of all one-story residences. Based on Town and County records, the residences in the immediate area range in size from 2,301 square feet to 3,603 square feet. The floor area ratios (FAR) range from 0.09 to 0.20. The proposed residence would be 3,449 square feet with a FAR of 0.17. Pursuant to Town Code, the maximum allowable square footage for the 20,234-square foot lot is 4,616 square feet with a maximum FAR of 0.23. The table below reflects the current conditions of the immediate neighborhood.

Address	Zoning	House SF	Garage SF	Total SF	Site SF	Building FAR	Stories
14854 Clara	R-1:12	3,603	420	4,023	20,453	0.18	1
14832 Clara	R-1:12	3,610	440	4,050	18,247	0.20	1
14898 Clara	R-1:12	2,410	928	3,338	17,022	0.14	1
14901 Clara	R-1:12	2,301	483	2,784	15,090	0.15	1
14891 Clara	R-1:12	2,347	525	2,872	25,976	0.09	1
14841 Clara	R-1:12	2,336	504	2,840	26,845	0.09	1
14876 Clara (E)	R-1:12	1,980	565	2,545	20,234	0.10	1
14876 Clara (N)	R-1:12	3,449	565	4,014	20,234	0.17	2

The proposed residence would comply with the maximum allowed floor area and height for the property and would not be the largest home in the immediate neighborhood in terms of square footage or FAR; however, it would create the first two-story home in the immediate neighborhood.

D. Tree Impacts

Pursuant to Town Code, trees adjacent to tree protection fencing shall be erected before demolition or construction permits are issued and shall remain in place until the work is completed. No trees on the site are proposed for removal. The recommended conditions of approval include that the requirements of the Tree Protection Ordinance are implemented by the applicant prior to issuance of a Building Permit (Exhibit 3).

E. Neighbor Outreach and Public Comments

Exhibit 7 includes letters in support of the project. Public comments received by 11:00 a.m., Friday, December 9, 2022, are included as Exhibit 8. Exhibit 9 includes the applicant's response to public comments.

F. Environmental Review

The project is Categorically Exempt pursuant to the adopted Guidelines for the Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act, Section 15301: Existing Facilities.

CONCLUSION:

A. Summary

The applicant is proposing construction of a 1,234-square foot second-story addition to an existing one-story single-family residence. The project also includes an addition of 161 square feet to the first floor. The two-story residence, including a 65-square foot detached accessory structure would be 3,449 square feet with an existing 565-square foot attached garage (Exhibit 10). The project is in compliance with the objective standards of the Town Code related to allowable floor area, height, setbacks, lot coverage, and on-site parking requirements. The project was reviewed by the Town's Consulting Architect who provided recommendations for the project to integrate the proposal within the immediate neighborhood and address the design's consistency with the Town's Residential Design Guidelines (Exhibit 5). In response to the recommendations of the Consulting Architect, the applicant responded to the issues identified in the report through revision of the residence and provided justification for not making the additional recommended modifications (Exhibit 4). The applicant also utilized eight-foot plate heights on both floors in an effort to mitigate the impact of second-floor height and bulk relative to other homes in the immediate neighborhood.

B. Recommendation

Based on the analysis above, staff recommends denial of the Architecture and Site application based on concerns related to the project's compatibility with the immediate neighborhood and consistency with the Residential Design Guidelines.

C. Alternatives

Alternatively, the Commission can:

1. Approve the application by taking the following actions:
 - a. Make the finding that the proposed project is categorically exempt pursuant to the adopted Guidelines for the Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act, Section 15301: Existing Facilities (Exhibit 2);
 - b. Make the finding that the project complies with the objective standards of Chapter 29 of the Town Code (Zoning Regulations) (Exhibit 2);

CONCLUSION (continued):

- c. Make the finding that the project complies with the Town's Residential Design Guidelines (Exhibit 2);
 - d. Make the considerations as required by Section 29.20.150 of the Town Code for granting approval of an Architecture and Site application (Exhibit 2); and
 - e. Approve Architecture and Site application S-22-033 with the conditions contained in Exhibit 3 and the development plans in Exhibit 10.
2. Approve the application with additional and/or modified conditions; or
 3. Continue the matter to a date certain with specific direction.

EXHIBITS:

1. Location Map
2. Required Findings and Considerations
3. Recommended Conditions of Approval
4. Letter of Justification and Response to the Consulting Architect Report
5. Consulting Architect Report
6. Color and Materials Sheet
7. Neighborhood Letters of Support
8. Public Comments received prior to 11:00 a.m., Friday, September 23, 2022
9. Applicant's Response to Public Comments
10. Development Plans

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