



DATE: May 1, 2013  
AGENDA ITEM # 3

**TO:** Design Review Commission  
**FROM:** Zachary Dahl, Senior Planner  
**SUBJECT:** 12-SC-35 – 449 Casita Court

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Approve Design Review application 12-SC-35 subject to the listed findings and conditions

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**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

This is a design review application for a new two-story, single-family house. The proposed project will demolish an existing one-story house and swimming pool and construct a new house with 2,817 square feet on the first story and 1,362 square feet on the second story. The following table summarizes the project's technical details:

**GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION:** Single-family, Residential  
**ZONING:** R1-10  
**PARCEL SIZE:** 14,296 square feet  
**MATERIALS:** Composition shingle roof, stucco siding, aluminum clad windows and painted wood trim details

	<b>Existing</b>	<b>Proposed</b>	<b>Allowed/Required</b>
<b>COVERAGE:</b>	2,513 square feet	3,465 square feet	4,288 square feet
<b>FLOOR AREA:</b>			
First Story	2,413 square feet	2,817 square feet	
Second Story		1,362 square feet	
Total	2,413 square feet	4,179 square feet	4,179 square feet
<b>SETBACKS:</b>			
Front	40 feet	25 feet	25 feet
Rear	38 feet	29 feet	25 feet
Right side (1 <sup>st</sup> /2 <sup>nd</sup> )	10 feet/N-A	10 feet/23 feet	10 feet/17.5 feet
Left side (1 <sup>st</sup> /2 <sup>nd</sup> )	10 feet/ N-A	10 feet/28 feet	10 feet/17.5 feet
<b>HEIGHT:</b>	15 feet	26 feet	27 feet

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Neighborhood Context**

The subject property is located at the end of Casita Court, a cul-de-sac street off of Casita Way. The street is considered a Consistent Character Neighborhood as defined in the City's Residential Design Guidelines. The neighborhood is comprised primarily of one-story Ranch style houses that have been designed using simple forms and rustic materials. There is not a distinctive street tree and landscape pattern along Casita Court.

### **Design Review**

According to the Design Guidelines, in Consistent Character Neighborhoods, good neighbor design has design elements, materials and scale found within the neighborhood and sizes that are not significantly larger than other homes in the neighborhood. Proposed projects should fit in and lessen abrupt changes.

The proposed project uses more contemporary forms and materials than those found in the surrounding neighborhood, but is designed in a way to be compatible with the area. The project incorporates elements, such as a formal front entry, boxed eave overhangs and asymmetrical massing, which are integral to the proposed architectural style but more formal than most of the houses in the neighborhood. However, the project uses materials, such as composition shingle roofing, stucco siding, wood trim details and a wood garage door, which are found throughout the neighborhood and compatible with the character of the area.

The proposed design includes a uniform roof line at the first story level and simple forms on the second story, which relate well to the adjacent properties. While the relatively simple forms of the design are in-keeping with the neighborhood, the size and scale of the house are substantially larger than the adjacent houses. This lot is located at the end of the cul-de-sac and is very visible on the street. The applicant has worked with staff to simplify the design and substantially reduce the bulk, mass and scale of the project from the original submittal. However, in order to provide a scale that is more compatible with the neighborhood and to reduce the bulk and mass as viewed from the street, staff recommends that the first floor plate height be reduced from nine feet, six inches to nine feet (Condition No. 2). This would reduce the overall height and bulk of the structure and also lower the eave line to better relate with the surrounding, lower profile structures.

### **Privacy**

The Residential Design Guidelines recommend that the finished floor be no more than 22 inches above grade. The lot is relatively flat and the house has been designed with a foundation that results in a finished floor height of 12 to 18 inches above grade. With this finish floor height, the proposed first floor side elevations do not create any privacy issues.

Since the house is located on a pie-shaped cul-de-sac lot, the sides of the house do not run perpendicular to the property lines. On the right side, the house has a second story side yard setback that ranges from 23 feet to 38 feet and on the left side, the second story side yard setback ranges

from 28 feet to 41 feet. The second story elevation on the right side has five smaller windows, but all are passive in use due to their locations above the stairs, in a closet or in a bathroom. The second story elevation on the left side also has five small windows; all with sill heights of five feet above the finished floor. Due to their smaller size, large setbacks and general passive use, the second story window placement does not create any unreasonable privacy issues.

The project also includes a balcony on the rear elevation off of the master bedroom. This balcony, which is 15 feet wide and six feet deep, primarily faces the rear yard but has some exposure to the side property lines. To provide additional privacy screening, the applicant has proposed new Potocarpus and Tristania trees along the side and rear property lines. However, since the size and placement of the balcony is not integral to architectural design of the house, and large balconies have the potential to create noise and privacy impacts, staff recommends that the depth of the balcony be reduced to four feet (Condition No. 3). As outlined in the Residential Design Guidelines, limiting the depth of a balcony to four feet will create a more passive use area that is less likely to create a privacy impact.

### **Landscaping**

The property contains two Oak trees, located along the rear property line, and a mixture of mature landscaping species. The applicant is proposing to maintain the two Oak trees but remove all other landscaping. Multiple new Potocarpus and Tristania trees are proposed along the side and rear property lines. The front yard is proposed to include new hardscape and lawn. In order to satisfy the City's landscaping requirements and Street Tree Guidelines, staff has added a condition that at least one new street tree be planted in the front yard area. Since there are overhead utilities along the front property line, a Category III Street Tree is the appropriate type to plant in this area.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

This project is categorically exempt from environmental review under Section 15303 of the Environmental Quality Act because it involves the construction of a single-family house.

Cc: Daryl Fazakas, Applicant and Architect  
Nick Shahiar, Owner

Attachments:

- A. Application and Neighborhood Compatibility Worksheet
- B. Area Map and Vicinity Map

## FINDINGS

12-SC-35—449 Casita Court

With regard to design review for the new two-story structure, the Design Review Commission finds the following in accordance with Section 14.76.050 of the Municipal Code:

- A. The proposed structure complies with all provision of this chapter;
- B. The height, elevations, and placement on the site of the proposed structure, when considered with reference to the nature and location of residential structures on adjacent lots, will avoid unreasonable interference with views and privacy and will consider the topographic and geologic constraints imposed by particular building site conditions;
- 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;
- D. The orientation of the proposed structure in relation to the immediate neighborhood will minimize the perception of excessive bulk and mass;
- 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; and
- F. The proposed structure has been designed to follow the natural contours of the site with minimal grading, minimum impervious cover, and maximum erosion protection.

## CONDITIONS

12-SC-36—485 Arboleda Drive

1. The approval is based on the plans received on April 16, 2013 and the written application materials provided by the applicant, except as may be modified by these conditions.
2. Revise the plans to show a first floor wall plate height of nine (9) feet.
3. Revise the plans of the second story balcony to have a depth of four feet.
4. Revise the landscape plan to include at least one new Category III Street Tree in the front yard. The tree shall be a minimum 15-gallon or 24-inch box size.
5. The applicant shall obtain an encroach permit issued from the Engineering Division prior to doing any work within the Arboleda Drive public right-of-way.
6. The project has more than 2,500 square feet of new landscape area and is subject to the City's Water Efficient Landscape Regulations (LAMC Chapter 12.36).
7. **Prior to the issuance of a demolition permit**, install tree protection fencing around the dripline of all trees to be maintained (per the site plan) and at the dripline of all offsite trees adjacent to the property. Tree protection fencing shall be chain link and a minimum of five feet in height with posts driven into the ground.
8. **Prior to building permit submittal, the plans shall contain or show:**
  - a. The conditions of approval incorporated into the title page of the plans.
  - b. A landscape plan prepared by a licensed landscape professional showing how the plans comply with the City's Water Efficient Landscape Regulations.
  - c. On the grading plan and/or the site plan, show all tree 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. **The tree protection fencing shall be installed prior to issuance of the demolition permit and shall not be removed until all building construction has been completed.**"
  - d. Verification that the house will comply with the City's Green Building Standards (Section 12.26 of the Municipal Code) from a Qualified Green Building Professional.
  - e. The location of underground utilities pursuant to Section 12.68 of the Municipal Code. Underground utility trenches should avoid the drip-lines of all protected trees.
  - f. Fire sprinklers to be installed pursuant to Section 12.10 of the Municipal Code;
  - g. The location of any air conditioning equipment on the site plan and the sound rating for such equipment; and

- h. 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.).

9. **Prior to final inspection:**

- a. Install and/or maintain all front yard landscaping, street trees and privacy screening as required by the Planning Division.
- b. Submit verification that the house was built in compliance with the California Green Building Standards pursuant to Section 12.26 of the Municipal Code.
- c. Provide a landscape installation assessment by a certified landscape professional certifying that the landscaping and irrigation system were installed per the approved landscape plan and are compliant with the City's Water Efficient Landscape Regulations.

# ATTACHMENT A



## CITY OF LOS ALTOS GENERAL APPLICATION

Type of Review Requested: (Check all boxes that apply)

Permit # 1105416

<input type="checkbox"/> One-Story Design Review	<input type="checkbox"/> Sign Review	<input type="checkbox"/> Multiple-Family Review
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Two-Story Design Review	<input type="checkbox"/> Sidewalk Display Permit	<input type="checkbox"/> Rezoning
<input type="checkbox"/> Variance(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> Use Permit	<input type="checkbox"/> RI-S Overlay
<input type="checkbox"/> Lot Line Adjustment	<input type="checkbox"/> Tenant Improvement	<input type="checkbox"/> General Plan/Code Amendment
<input type="checkbox"/> Tentative Map/Division of Land	<input type="checkbox"/> Preliminary Project Review	<input type="checkbox"/> Appeal
<input type="checkbox"/> Subdivision Map Review	<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial Design Review	<input type="checkbox"/> Other:

Project Address/Location: 449 Casita Ct. Los Altos  
 Project Proposal/Use: SFR  
 Current Use of Property: SFR  
 Assessor Parcel Number(s) 170-10-018 Site Area: 14295 SF  
 New Sq. Ft.: 4197 Remodeled Sq. Ft.: 0 Existing Sq. Ft. to Remain: 0  
 Total Existing Sq. Ft.: 2284 Total Proposed Sq. Ft. (including basement): 4179

Applicant's Name: Daryl Fazekas  
 Home Telephone #: (408) 395-9400 Business Telephone #: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mailing Address: 15621 Loma Vista Ave.  
 City/State/Zip Code: Los Gatos, CA 95032

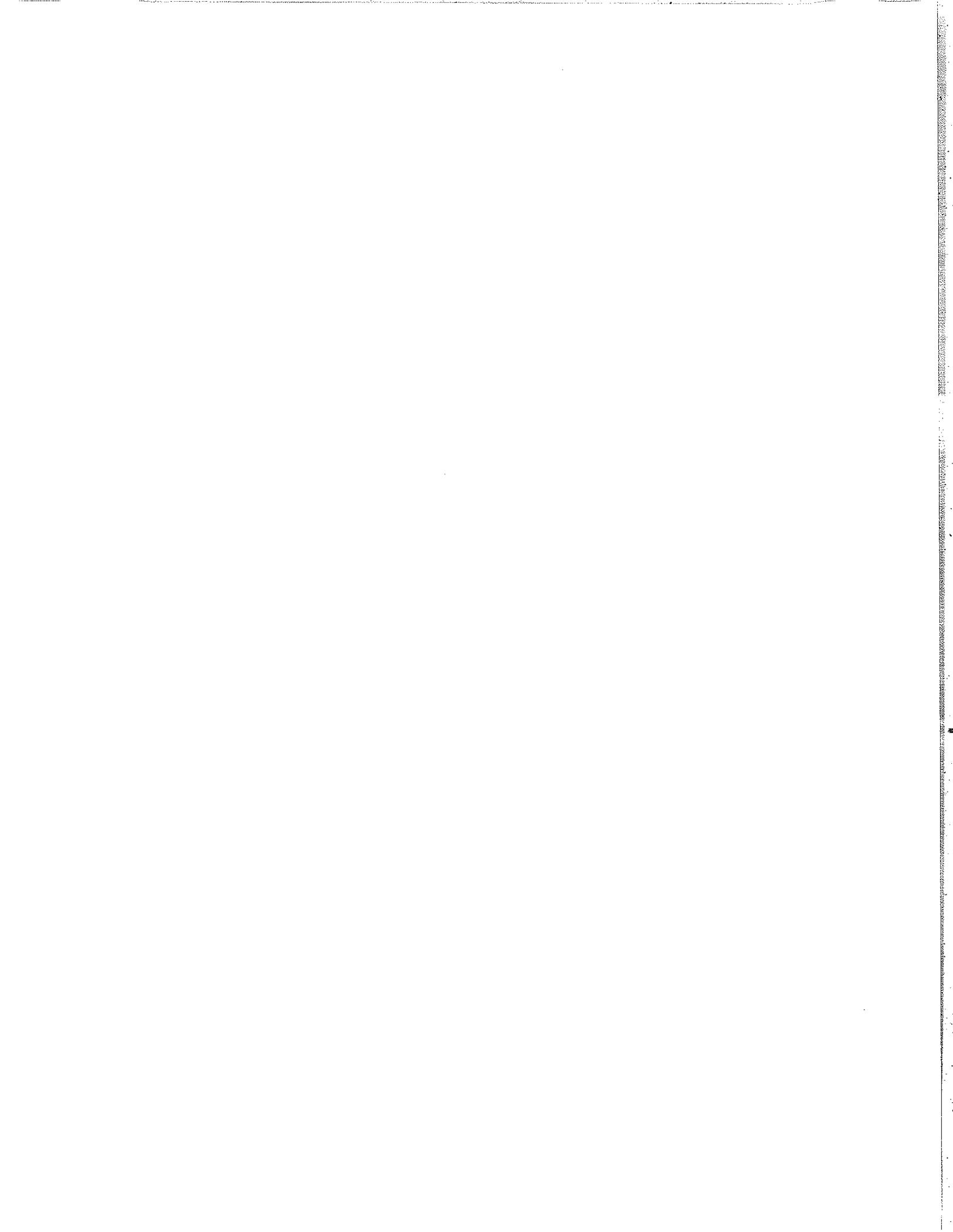
Property Owner's Name: Nick Shahiar  
 Home Telephone #: (408) 206-8792 Business Telephone #: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mailing Address: 650-B Fremont Ave #102  
 City/State/Zip Code: Los Altos, CA 94024

Architect/Designer's Name: Daryl Fazekas Telephone #: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\* If your project includes complete or partial demolition of an existing residence or commercial building, a demolition permit must be issued and finalized prior to obtaining your building permit. Please contact the Building Division for a demolition package. \*\*\*

(continued on back)

12-SC-35





## NEIGHBORHOOD COMPATIBILITY WORKSHEET

In order for your design review application for single-family residential remodel/addition or new construction to be successful, it is important that you consider your property, the neighborhood's special characteristics that surround that property and the compatibility of your proposal with that neighborhood. **The purpose is to help you understand your neighborhood before you begin the design process with your architect/designer/builder or begin any formal process with the City of Los Altos.** *Please note that this worksheet must be submitted with your 1<sup>st</sup> application.*

The Residential Design Guidelines encourage neighborhood compatibility without necessarily forsaking individual taste. Various factors contribute to a design that is considered compatible with a surrounding neighborhood. The factors that City officials will be considering in your design could include, but are not limited to: design theme, scale, bulk, size, roof line, lot coverage, slope of lot, setbacks, daylight plane, one or two-story, exterior materials, landscaping et cetera.

It will be helpful to have a site plan to use in conjunction with this worksheet. Your site plan should accurately depict your property boundaries. The best source for this is the legal description in your deed.

Photographs of your property and its relationship to your neighborhood (see below) will be a necessary part of your first submittal. Taking photographs before you start your project will allow you to see and appreciate that your property could be within an area that has a strong neighborhood pattern. The photographs should be taken from across the street with a standard 35mm camera and organized by address, one row for each side of the street. Photographs should also be taken of the properties on either side and behind your property from on your property.

This worksheet/check list is meant to help *you* as well as to help the City planners and Planning Commission understand your proposal. Reasonable guesses to your answers are acceptable. The City is not looking for precise measurements on this worksheet.

Project Address 449 Casita Ct. Los Altos Ca 94024  
Scope of Project: Addition or Remodel \_\_\_\_\_ or New Home X  
Age of existing home if this project is to be an addition or remodel? N/A  
Is the existing house listed on the City's Historic Resources Inventory? NO

Address: 449 Casita Ct.  
Date: 12-17-2012

### What constitutes your neighborhood?

There is no clear answer to this question. For the purpose of this worksheet, consider first your street, the two contiguous homes on either side of, and directly behind, your property and the five to six homes directly across the street (eight to nine homes). At the minimum, these are the houses that you should photograph. If there is any question in your mind about your neighborhood boundaries, consider a radius of approximately 200 to 300 feet around your property and consider that your neighborhood.

### Streetscape

#### 1. Typical neighborhood lot size\*:

Lot area: 11K to 15K square feet

Lot dimensions: Length 110 feet

Width 120 feet

If your lot is significantly different than those in your neighborhood, then note its: area \_\_\_\_\_, length \_\_\_\_\_, and Pie Shape width \_\_\_\_\_.

#### 2. Setback of homes to front property line: (Pgs. 8-11 Design Guidelines)

Existing front setback if home is a remodel? New Construction

What % of the front facing walls of the neighborhood homes are at the front setback 100 %

Existing front setback for house on left 25 apx. ft./on right \_\_\_\_\_ ft.

Do the front setbacks of adjacent houses line up? No

#### 3. Garage Location Pattern: (Pg. 19 Design Guidelines)

Indicate the relationship of garage locations in your neighborhood\* only on your street (count for each type)

Garage facing front projecting from front of house face 3

Garage facing front recessed from front of house face 2

Garage in back yard 0

Garage facing the side 2

Number of 1-car garages 4; 2-car garages 7; 3-car garages 0

Address: 449 Cositor Ct.  
Date: 12-17-2012

4. Single or Two-Story Homes:

What % of the homes in your neighborhood\* are:  
One-story 85%  
Two-story 15%

5. Roof heights and shapes:

Is the overall height of house ridgelines generally the same in your neighborhood\*? NO  
Are there mostly hip X, gable style X, or other style Combination roofs\*?  
Do the roof forms appear simple X or complex \_\_\_\_\_?  
Do the houses share generally the same eave height NO?

6. Exterior Materials: (Pg. 22 Design Guidelines)

What siding materials are frequently used in your neighborhood\*?  
NO  
 wood shingle  stucco  board & batten  clapboard  
 tile  stone  brick  combination of one or more materials  
(if so, describe) \_\_\_\_\_

What roofing materials (wood shake/shingle, asphalt shingle, flat tile, rounded tile, cement tile, slate) are consistently (about 80%) used?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
If no consistency then explain: a combination of shingle and wood shake roof

7. Architectural Style: (Appendix C, Design Guidelines)

Does your neighborhood\* have a consistent identifiable architectural style?  
 YES  NO  
Type?  Ranch  Shingle  Tudor  Mediterranean/Spanish  
 Contemporary  Colonial  Bungalow  Other

Address: 449 Casity Ct.  
Date: 12-17-2012

8. Lot Slope: (Pg. 25 Design Guidelines)

Does your property have a noticeable slope? NO

What is the direction of your slope? (relative to the street)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Is your slope higher \_\_\_\_\_ lower \_\_\_\_\_ same \_\_\_\_\_ in relationship to the neighboring properties? Is there a noticeable difference in grade between your property/house and the one across the street or directly behind?

9. Landscaping:

Are there any frequently used or typical landscaping features on your street (i.e. big trees, front lawns, sidewalks, curbs, landscape to street edge, etc.)?

Front lawn

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How visible are your house and other houses from the street or back neighbor's property?

very visible

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Are there any major existing landscaping features on your property and how is the unimproved public right-of-way developed in front of your property (gravel, dirt, asphalt, landscape)?

No major landscape features. Front of property is mostly asphalt

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

10. Width of Street:

What is the width of the roadway paving on your street in feet? 5 to 10 ft

Is there a parking area on the street or in the shoulder area? yes

Is the shoulder area (unimproved public right-of-way) paved, unpaved, gravel, landscaped, and/or defined with a curb/gutter? paved

\_\_\_\_\_

Address: 449 Casita Ct  
Date: 12-17-2012

11. What characteristics make this neighborhood\* cohesive?

Such as roof material and type (hip, gable, flat), siding (board and batten, cement plaster, horizontal wood, brick), deep front yard setbacks, horizontal feel, landscape approach etc.:

Homes in this neighborhood have various designs, colors and styles

General Study

- A. Have major visible streetscape changes occurred in your neighborhood?  
 YES  NO
  
- B. Do you think that most (~ 80%) of the homes were originally built at the same time?  
 YES  NO  
some rebuilt at different times
- C. Do the lots in your neighborhood appear to be the same size?  
 YES  NO
  
- D. Do the lot widths appear to be consistent in the neighborhood?  
 YES  NO
  
- E. Are the front setbacks of homes on your street consistent (~80% within 5 feet)?  
 YES  NO
  
- F. Do you have active CCR's in your neighborhood? (p.36 Building Guide)  
 YES  NO
  
- G. Do the houses appear to be of similar size as viewed from the street?  
 YES  NO
  
- H. Does the new exterior remodel or new construction design you are planning relate in most ways to the prevailing style(s) in your existing neighborhood?  
 YES  NO

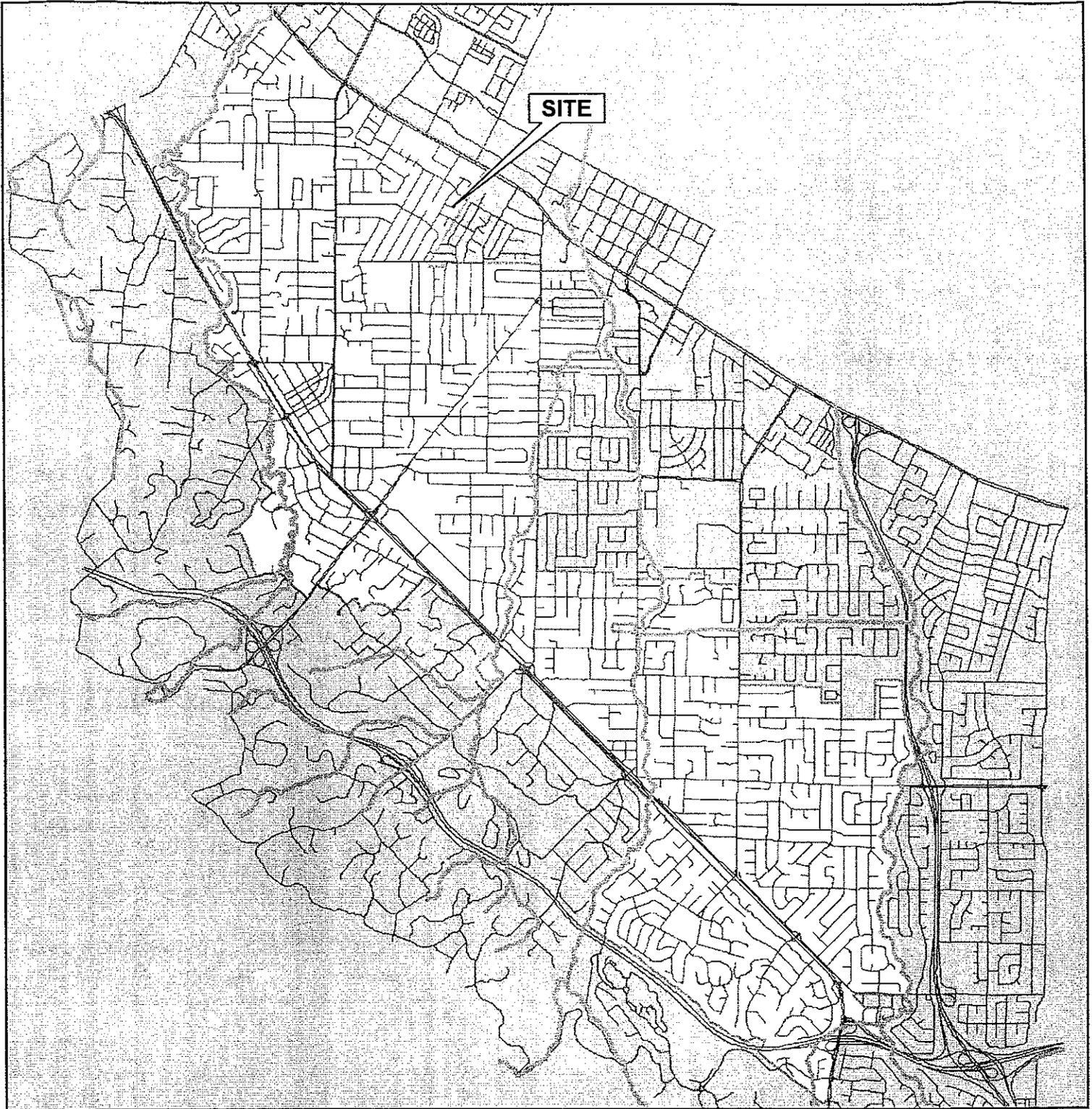
Address: 449 Casita Ct.  
 Date: 12-17-2012

**Summary Table**

Please use this table to summarize the characteristics of the houses in your immediate neighborhood (two homes on either side, directly behind and the five to six homes directly across the street).

Address	Front setback	Rear setback	Garage location	One or two stories	Height	Materials	Architecture (simple or complex)
615 Casita way	25	30-50	Left	2 story	26-27	wood siding wood shake	Simple
641 Casita way	25	30-50	Right	1 story	16-19	stucco shake roof	Simple
426 Casita Ct	25	40-50	Right	1 story	16-19	stucco composition	Simple
431 Casita Ct	25	40-50	Left	1 story	15-18	stucco shake	Simple
445 Casita Ct	25	45-60	Left	1 story	16-20	stucco composition	Complex
446 Casita Ct	25	40-55	Right	1 story	16-18	stucco shake	Simple
434 Casita Ct	25	50-60	Left	1 story	15-17	wood siding shake	Simple
1048 Karen way	20	50-60	Right	2 story	27	stucco composition	Simple
1026 Karen way	20	50	Left	1 story	15-17	wood siding composition	Simple

# AREA MAP



CITY OF LOS ALTOS

**APPLICATION:** 12-SC-35  
**APPLICANT:** D. Fazekas/N. Shahiar  
**SITE ADDRESS:** 449 Casita Court

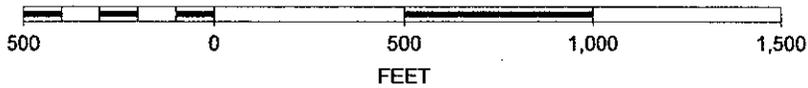


Not to Scale

# VICINITY MAP



SCALE 1 : 6,000



CITY OF LOS ALTOS

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