



DATE: May 14, 2014

AGENDA ITEM # 6

**TO:** Design Review Commission  
**FROM:** Sierra Davis, Assistant Planner  
David Kornfield, Planning Services Manager  
**SUBJECT:** 14-SC-16 – 1064 Laureles Drive

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Uphold the denial of design review application 14-SC-16 subject to the listed findings

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**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

This is an appeal of an administrative denial of a design review application for a new, one-story house with 3,872 square feet in floor area. The following table summarizes the project:

**GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION:** Single-family, Residential  
**ZONING:** R1-10  
**PARCEL SIZE:** 17,723 square feet  
**MATERIALS:** Cement plaster, concrete tile roof, pre-cast sills and wall trim, stone veneer

	<b>Existing</b>	<b>Proposed</b>	<b>Allowed/Required</b>
<b>LOT COVERAGE:</b>	2,702 square feet	3,907 square feet	6,203 square feet
<b>FLOOR AREA:</b>	2,644 square feet	3,872 square feet	4,522 square feet
<b>SETBACKS:</b>			
Front	47 feet	30 feet	25 feet
Rear	45 feet	39 feet	25 feet
Right side	10 feet	10 feet	10 feet
Left side	9 feet	10 feet	10 feet
<b>HEIGHT:</b>	14 feet	20 feet	20 feet

**BACKGROUND**

The subject property is located in a Consistent Character Neighborhood as defined in the City's Residential Design Guidelines (see Section 4.1). The homes in the neighborhood are predominantly one-story structures with low horizontal eave lines, consistent setbacks, simple forms and rustic

materials. There is one two-story project in the immediate vicinity to the south side of the subject property, which is under construction (see attached plans for 1060 Laureles Drive). The street has improved shoulders with gutters and does not have a consistent street tree pattern.

The goal with new construction in Consistent Character neighborhoods is to have design elements, materials and scale found within the neighborhood and sizes that are not significantly larger than other homes. The Guidelines emphasize projects that fit-in and lessen abrupt changes.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Design Review**

While the proposed design has design integrity and high quality materials, staff could not make the findings to approve the project based on the project's bulk, scale and architectural relationship to the surroundings structures.

In our initial review we found that the entry element and the scale of the walls at the left side significantly departed from the character of the surrounding structures. In subsequent meetings with the applicant we determined that the overall scale of the 10-foot tall wall plate was of primary concern considering the orientation and shape of the cul-de-sac lot. The taller wall plates combined with the articulated widening of the structure, the relative complexity of the massing and roof forms and the overall 20-foot height, in staff's view, will create a design that will appear significantly larger and out of scale with the low-profile, smaller-scale structures within the neighborhood context. We were not as concerned with the higher, 13-foot tall wall plates on the left side and rear as they are set back and relate to the adjacent two-story construction. Sections 5.1 and 5.4 of the Guidelines address the City's architectural and bulk considerations.

We also note that the project uses certain design elements that may draw attention to the project's bulk and scale such as the vertical orientation of the arched windows and doors, the faux balcony above the entry and dormer above the garage; and the use of many different elements such as differing window shapes and trims and more ornate elements mixed with less formal elements that accentuate the project's differences with the character of the immediately surrounding structures. Section 5.7 of the Guidelines outline the considerations with regard to the use of materials and design elements.

We met several times with the applicant to discuss the concerns; however, we did not reach an accord on the compatibility concerns. The applicant subsequently appealed the administrative denial on the basis that "the design is fair and reasonable within the neighborhood."

### **Creekside Considerations**

In our review we determined that 10-foot setback of the northern wing of the proposed structure from the creek bank was appropriate, as with the removal of the pine tree near the northwestern corner of the structure, given the location of the existing structure and the lot's narrower frontage. In collaboration with the Santa Clara Valley Water District we consider a 25-foot setback guideline from the top of the creek bank for main structures on properties adjacent to the creek channel and

the relative slope stability. The purpose of the setback guideline is to maintain the natural appearance and habitat of the creekside area and to reduce erosion of the creek bank from structures.

Part of the proposed structure is within the slope stability setback area, which is a 2:1 slope up from the toe of the creek bank. The slope stability setback area is shown with a dashed line across the back of the lot. The slope stability setback area in this case also roughly defines the 25-foot setback guideline from the top of the creek bank (labeled Grade Break on the site plan). Staff is comfortable with the encroachment into the slope stability area given the profile of the creek channel and the ability to engineer a deeper foundation that will maintain the slope stability. It is also worth noting that the floodplain appears to be contained within the creek channel according to the project's civil engineer.

### **Alternatives**

Should the Commission support staff's analysis, and the applicant was willing to make changes, the Commission could continue its review of the application and direct the applicant to address the concerns such as by:

1. Reducing the height of the wall plates;
2. Simplifying the wall and roof forms; and
3. Simplifying the amount of design elements.

Should the Commission support the appeal with positive design review findings, then staff would recommend the following conditions:

- a. Provide appropriate replacement trees at or near the top of the creek bank to restore the riparian environment in the vicinity of the northwest corner of the rear yard;
- b. Provide an engineered slope stability plan showing how the structure will maintain slope stability; and
- c. Provide a grading and drainage plan that avoids runoff over the creek bank.

### **Miscellaneous**

The reference plans for 1060 Laureles Drive represent those approved by the Commission for the setback variance and design. This project was subsequently redesigned to meet code; however, the attached plans represent the relative design of the project. As constructed, this project is approximately two feet narrower than shown on the plans to meet the setback requirement; however, the basic design concept is accurate including the nine-foot tall wall plate and the low finished floor height.

The plans for the subject application have a typographical error with regard to the finished floor height shown on the elevations (Pages A3 and A4). The topographic finished floor height (i.e., 101.5 feet) is an outdated reference to a prior survey, which was subsequently converted to a different bench mark to coincide with the flood plain maps; the finished floor height is intended to be approximately six inches higher than the existing structure as shown on the Drainage and

Grading Plan (Page C1). The finished floor is shown relatively correct with regard to the existing and finished grades shown.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

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

cc: A. and S. Rajendran, Owners  
Daniel Warren, Stotler Design Group, Applicant and Designer

### Attachments:

- A. Application and Letter
- B. Area Map and Vicinity Map
- C. Plan Excerpts from 1060 Laureles Drive

## FINDINGS

14-SC-16, 1064 Laureles Drive

With regard to design review, the Design Review Commission finds in accord with Section 14.76.050 of the Municipal Code that:

- A. The orientation of the proposed structure in relation to the immediate neighborhood *will not* minimize the perception of excessive bulk and mass;
- B. General architectural considerations, including the character, size and scale of the design, the architectural relationship with the site and other buildings, building materials, and similar elements *are not* incorporated in order to insure the compatibility of the development with the character of adjacent buildings.





# ATTACHMENT A

## CITY OF LOS ALTOS GENERAL APPLICATION

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

Permit # 1106100

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> One-Story Design Review	<input type="checkbox"/> Sign Review	<input type="checkbox"/> Multiple-Family Review
<input 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"/> R1-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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Appeal
<input type="checkbox"/> Subdivision Map Review	<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial Design Review	<input type="checkbox"/> Other:

Project Address/Location: 1064 LAURELES DRIVE, LOS ALTOS

Project Proposal/Use: ONE-STORY RESIDENCE

Current Use of Property: ONE-STORY RESIDENCE

Assessor Parcel Number(s) 167-10-048 Site Area: 17,723 sq. ft.

New Sq. Ft.: 3386 Remodeled Sq. Ft.: — Existing Sq. Ft. to Remain: —

Total Existing Sq. Ft.: 2214 Total Proposed Sq. Ft. (including basement): 3386

Applicant's Name: A + S. RAJENDRAN

Home Telephone #: ~~650-9650-218-3551~~ Business Telephone #: 650-941-7547

Mailing Address: 1064 LAURELES DR

City/State/Zip Code: LOS ALTOS, CA, 94022

Property Owner's Name: A+S. RAJENDRAN

Home Telephone #: 650-218-3551 Business Telephone #: 650-941-7547

Mailing Address: 1064 LAURELES DR

City/State/Zip Code: LOS ALTOS, CA, 94022

Architect/Designer's Name: SCOTT STOTLER Telephone #: 408-309-2163

\*\*\* 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)

The City of Los Altos

April 29, 2014

Mr. David Kornfield

Ms. Sierra Davis

Subject: 1064 Laureles Drive (Permit No. 1105858)

Dear Mr. Kornfield and Ms. Davis,

We have received today by email your denial letter dated April 28, 2014.

You had informed us in person on February 25, 2014 that you will be denying our request. We corresponded the next day, on February 26, 2014, and agreed that we will appeal to the Design Review Commission as early as possible.

I hereby appeal your action, and since we have lost critical time, I would request that we be placed on the May 14<sup>th</sup> 2014 Design Review Commission agenda.

I strongly feel that my proposed design is fair and reasonable. I am requesting that I be treated equitably.

I have enclosed a check for \$550 towards the appeal fee.

Sincerely

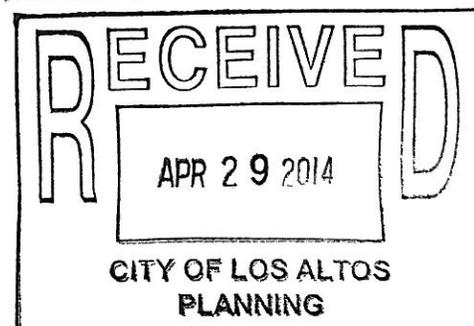


A Rajendran

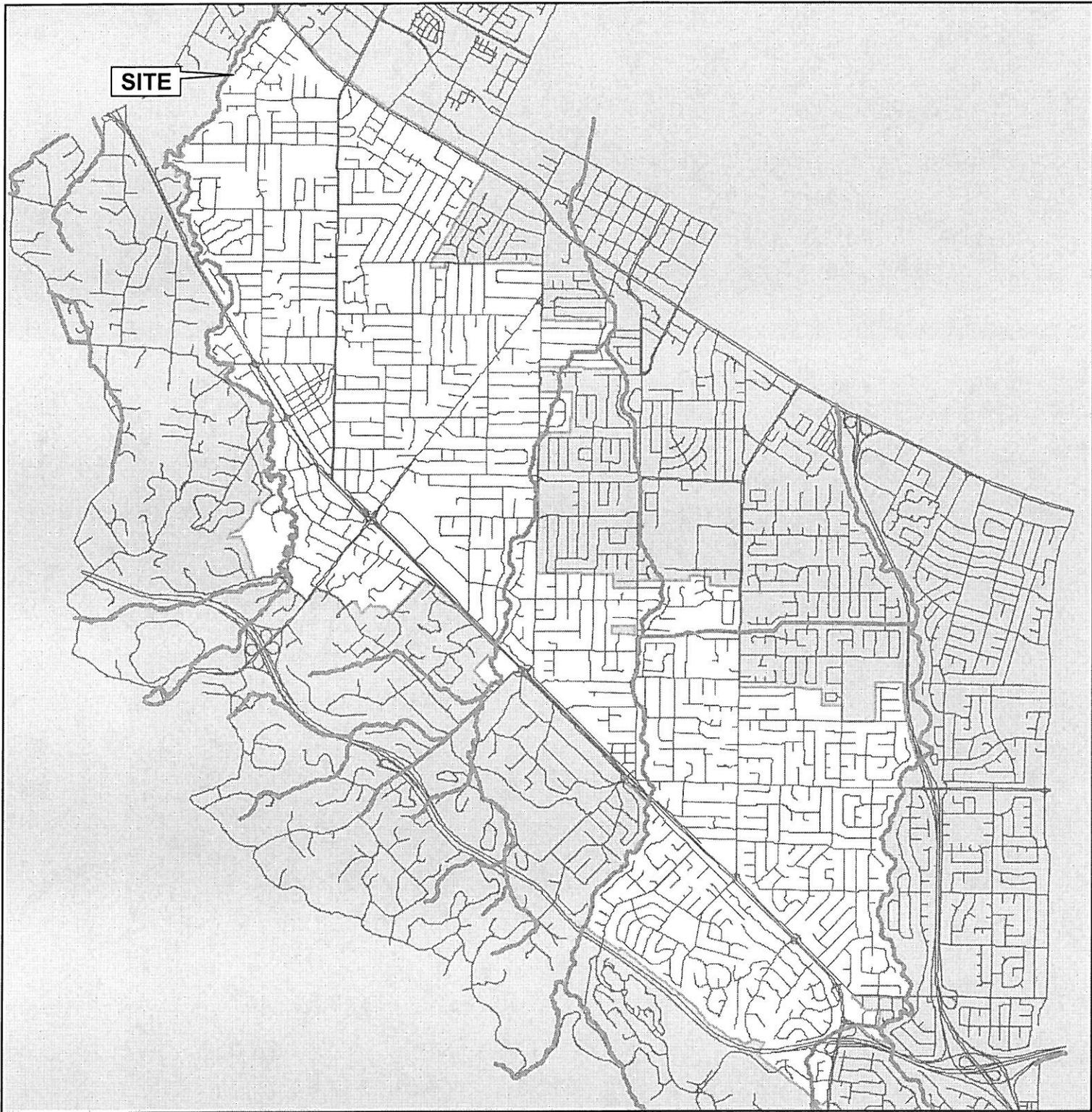
S Rajendran

1064 Laureles Drive

Los Altos, CA 94022



# AREA MAP



CITY OF LOS ALTOS

**APPLICATION:** 14-SC-16  
**APPLICANT:** A. and S. Rajendran  
**SITE ADDRESS:** 1064 Laureles Drive

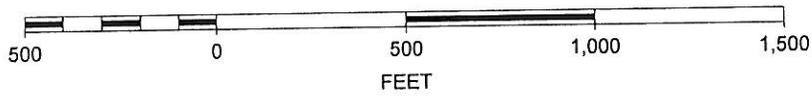


Not to Scale

# VICINITY MAP



SCALE 1 : 6,000



CITY OF LOS ALTOS

**APPLICATION:** 14-SC-16  
**APPLICANT:** A. and S. Rajendran  
**SITE ADDRESS:** 1064 Laureles Drive

### DRAINAGE NOTES

- 1- ALL DOWNSPOUTS AND FOUNDATION PERIMETER DRAINS TO BE CONNECTED TO SPLASH BLOCKS AWAY FROM BUILDING
- 2- SURFACE DRAINAGE TO FLOW THROUGH GRASS SWALES
- 3- NOT USED
- 4- NO TREES TO BE REMOVED
- 5- SLOPE GRADE AWAY FROM BUILDING 5% FOR A DISTANCE OF 5' AWAY FROM BUILDING PROVIDE 2% SLOPE ON IMPERVIOUS SURFACES
- 6- NOT USED
- 7- ENSURE PROPER LOT DRAINAGE PER CHAPTER 11 CPC 2007 FOR LOCATION OF CATCH BASINS TO THE PROPERTY LINES
- 8- THE RUNOFF SHOULD REMAIN ON THE PROPERTY NOT BE TAKEN TO A PUBLIC WAY

### DIMENSIONS NOTES

- 1- CONTRACTOR TO VERIFY ALL DIMENSIONS IN FIELD AND NOTIFY ARCHITECT OF ANY DISCREPANCY BEFORE ANY CONSTRUCTION
- 2- CONTRACTOR TO STAKE PROPERTY LINES WITH SURVEYOR AND USE SETBACKS FOR ADDITION LAY-OUT

### NOTE: NO TREES TO BE REMOVED

#### TREE PROTECTION MEASURES 11.08.120 - Tree protection during construction.

Protected trees designated for preservation shall be protected during development of a property by compliance with the following, which may be modified by the planning director.

- A. Protective fencing shall be installed no closer to the trunk than the dripline, and far enough from the trunk to protect the integrity of the tree. The fence shall be a minimum of four feet in height and shall be set securely in place. The fence shall be of a sturdy but open material (i.e., chainlink) to allow visibility to the trunk for inspections and safety. There shall be no storage of any kind within the protective fencing.
- B. The existing grade level around a tree shall normally be maintained out to the dripline of the tree. Alternate grade levels may be approved by the planning director.
- C. Drain wells shall be installed whenever impervious surfaces will be placed over the root system of a tree (the root system generally extends to the outermost edges of the branches).
- D. Trees that have been damaged by construction shall be repaired in accordance with accepted arboriculture methods.
- E. No signs, wires, or any other object shall be attached to the tree.

#### SITE PLAN NOTES

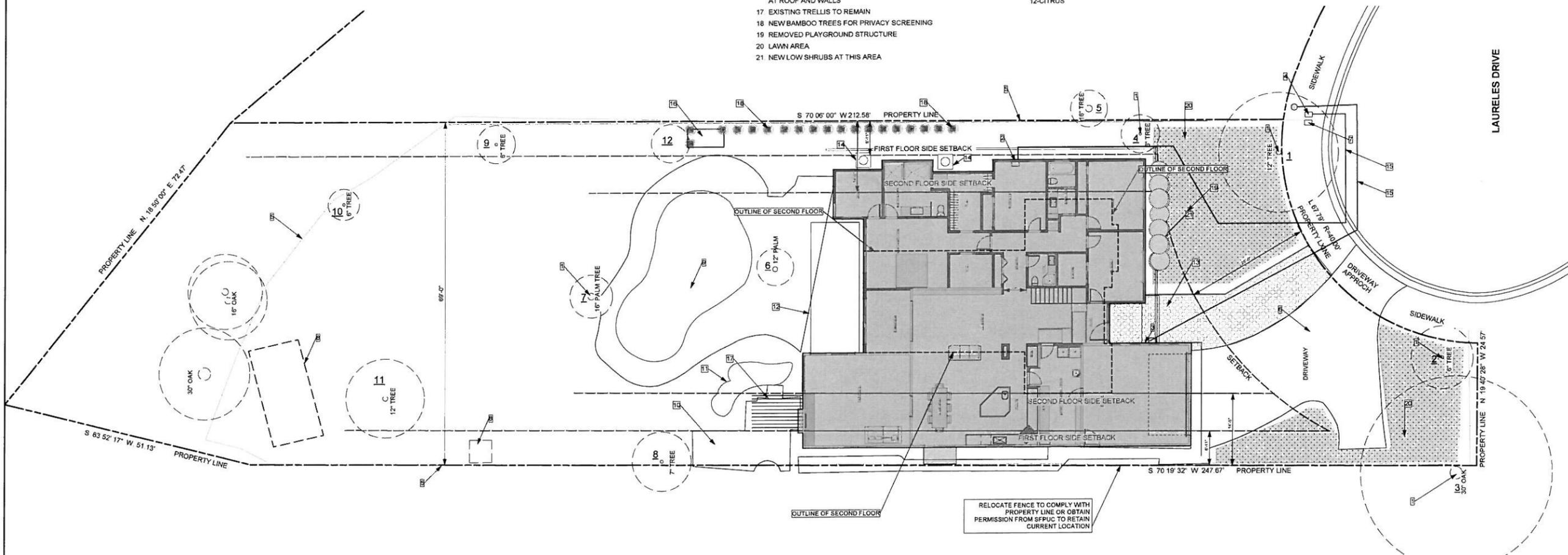
- 1 EXISTING TREE, PROTECT DURING CONSTRUCTION PER CITY GUIDELINES
- 2 RELOCATED GAS METER
- 3 NEW ELECTRICAL METER
- 4 EXISTING JP
- 5 EXISTING WOOD FENCE
- 6 EXISTING DRIVEWAY
- 7 EXISTING WATER MAIN
- 8 EXISTING SHED TO BE REMOVED
- 9 EXISTING SWIMMING POOL, NO CHANGES
- 10 EXISTING BRICK PAVED SURFACE
- 11 EXISTING POND
- 12 PROPOSED WOOD DECK WITH OPEN SKY TRELLIS ABOVE
- 13 NEW PERCOLATING PAVERS OVER SAND
- 14 AC UNIT
- 15 UNDERGROUND UTILITIES LINES TO AVOID (E) TREE DRIPLINE
- 16 (E) POOL EQUIPMENT SHED TO RECEIVE SOUND INSULATION AT ROOF AND WALLS
- 17 EXISTING TRELLIS TO REMAIN
- 18 NEW BAMBOO TREES FOR PRIVACY SCREENING
- 19 REMOVED PLAYGROUND STRUCTURE
- 20 LAWN AREA
- 21 NEW LOW SHRUBS AT THIS AREA

#### TREE INVENTORY

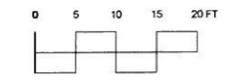
- 1-SOUTHERN MAGNOLIA
- 2-SOUTHERN MAGNOLIA
- 4-APRICOT
- 5-SABAL PALMETTO
- 6-CHUSAN PALM
- 7-SABAL PALMETTO
- 8-LOQUAT
- 9-DWARF BARLETT PEAR
- 10-LOQUAT
- 11-PLUM
- 12-CITRUS

#### HARDSCAPE / SOFTSCAPE CALCULATION

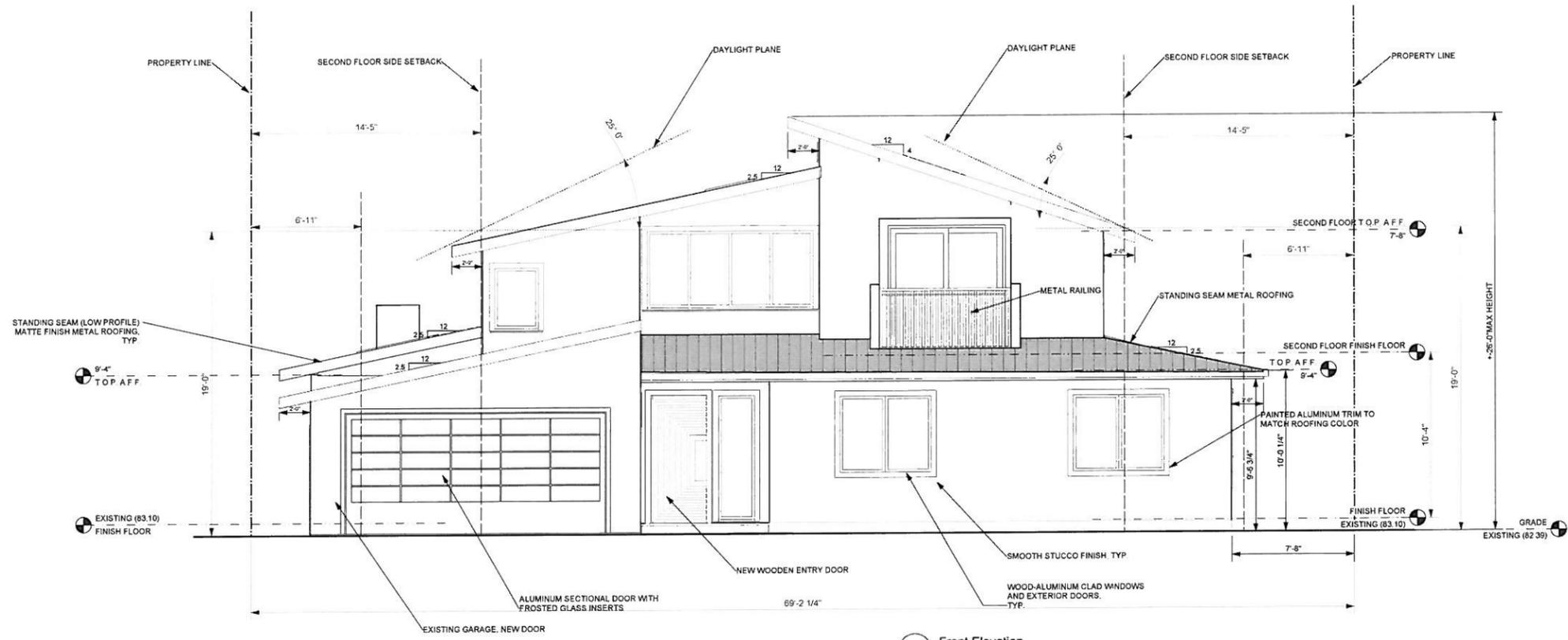
- (E)-POOL PAVED DECK AREA 1,512 SQ FT
- (E)-REAR PAVED BRICK AREA BY FAMILY ROOM 224 SQ FT
- (E)-DRIVEWAY AND SIDE CONCRETE WALK 1,056 SQ FT
- (N)-PAVED AREA FRONT WALK-LANDING 439 SQ FT
- (N)-HOUSE FOOTPRINT 3,688 SQ FT
- TOTAL HARDSCAPE 6,919 SQ FT
- LOT AREA 17,516 SQ FT
- RATIO 6,919 SQ FT / 17,516 = 39% (INCLUDING RESIDENCE)



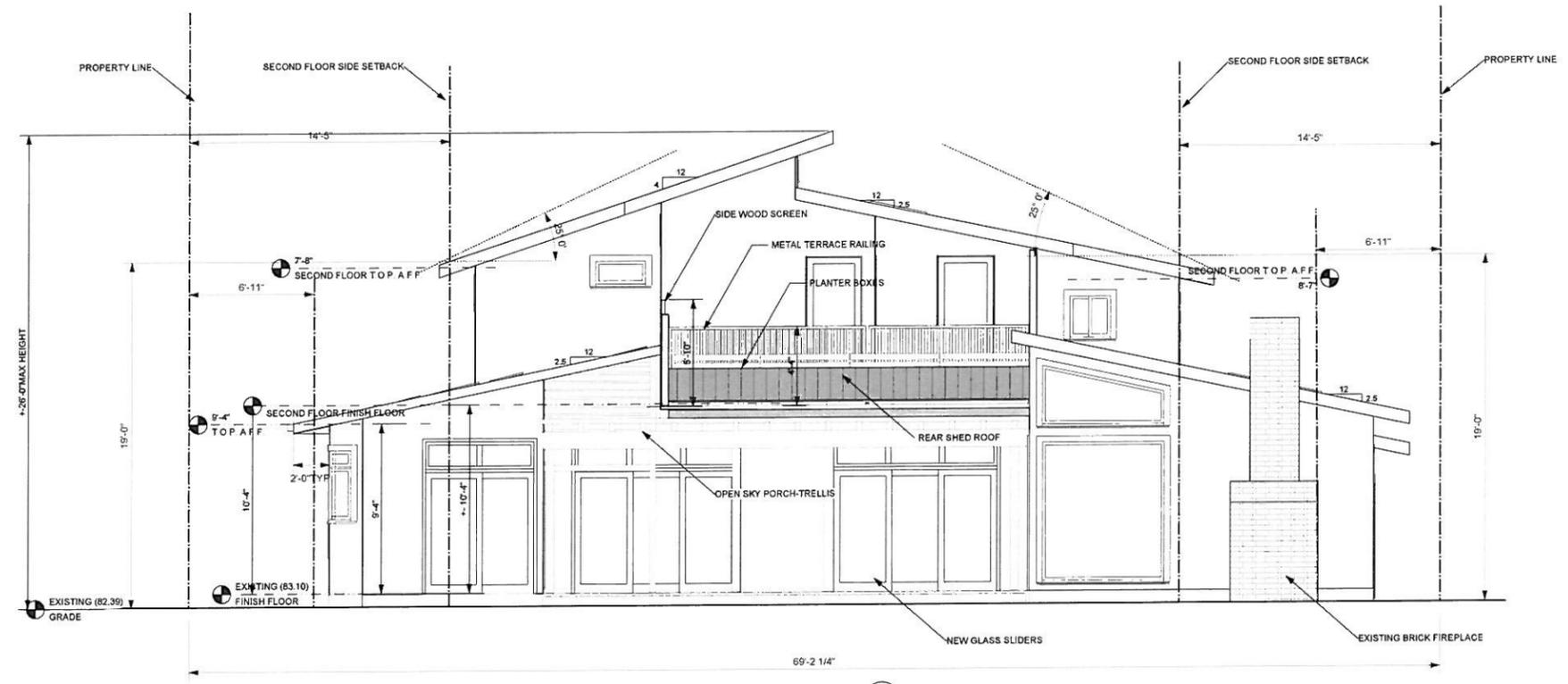
1 SITE PLAN  
Scale 1" = 10 ft



Revision	Revision	Revision	<b>GAURI RESIDENCE</b> 1060 Laureles Dr. Los Altos CA	SITE PLAN 052113
Sheet Scale: AS NOTED	Drawn By DG	Reviewed By DG		
Davide Giannella A.I.A.				
 <b>acadia</b> architecture				
644 N. Santa Cruz Ave. Suite 6 Los Gatos, California 95030 T 408-219-0601 dg@acadia-architecture.com				
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12-31-13				
<b>A 1.1</b>				

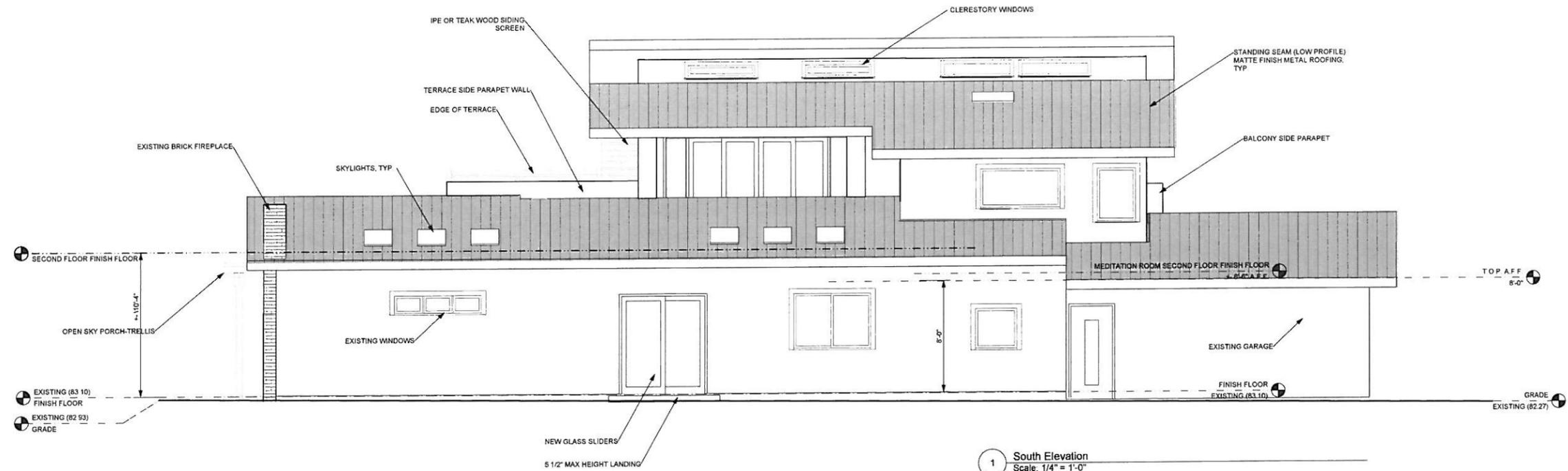


1 Front Elevation  
Scale: 1/4" = 1'-0"

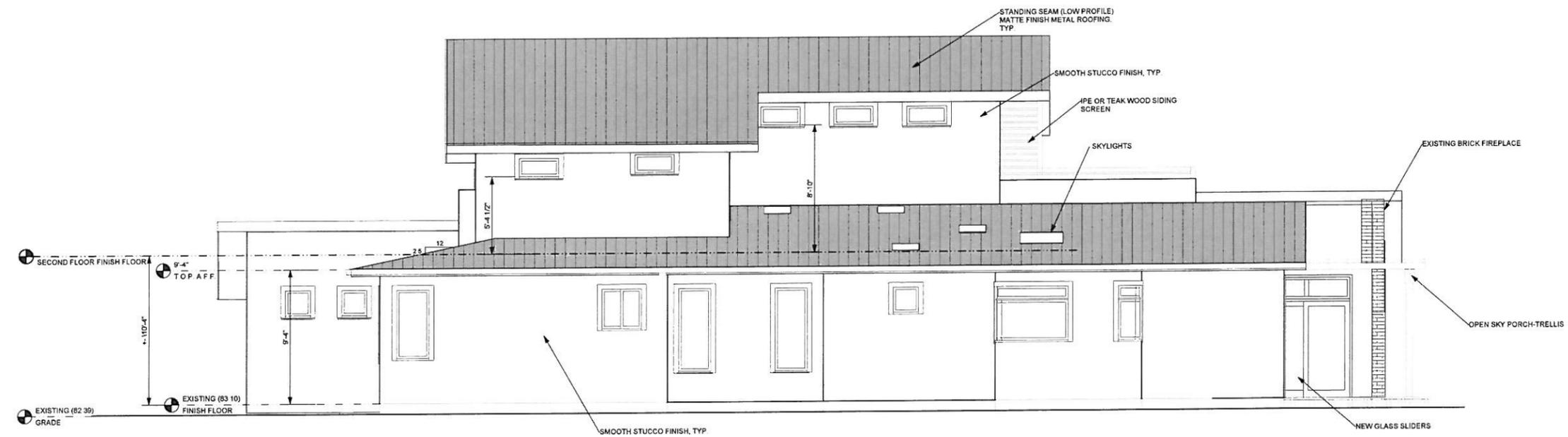


2 Rear Elevation  
Scale: 1/4" = 1'-0"

Revision	Revision	Revision
<b>GAURI RESIDENCE</b>		
1060 Laureles Dr. Los Altos CA		
EXTERIOR ELEVATIONS		
052113		
Sheet Scale: AS NOTED	Drawn By: DG	Reviewed By: DG
21/05/2013		
Davide Giannella A.I.A.		
 <b>acadia</b> architecture		
644 N. Santa Cruz Ave. Suite 6 Los Gatos, California 95030 T: 408-219-0601 dg@acadia-architecture.com		
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12-31-13		
<b>A 3.0</b>		



1 South Elevation  
Scale: 1/4" = 1'-0"



2 North Elevation  
Scale: 1/4" = 1'-0"

Revision	Revision	Revision
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**GAURI RESIDENCE**  
1060 Laureles Dr. Los Altos CA  
EXTERIOR ELEVATIONS  
092113

Sheet Scale: AS NOTED	Drawn By: DG	Reviewed By: DG	21/05/2013
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Davide Giannella A.I.A.



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12-31-13

**A 3.1**