



DATE: September 2, 2015

AGENDA ITEM # 3

TO: Design Review Commission
FROM: Sierra Davis, Assistant Planner
SUBJECT: 15-SC-23 – 1516 Richardson Avenue

RECOMMENDATION:

Continue design review application 15-SC-23 subject to the listed findings

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This is a design review application for a new two-story house. The project includes 2,402 square feet at the first-story and 1,093 square feet at the second-story.

The following table summarizes the project:

GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION: Single-family, Residential
ZONING: R1-10
PARCEL SIZE: 10,000 square feet
MATERIALS: Composition shingle roof, stucco (smooth finish), clad windows, wood columns, stone veneer

	Existing	Proposed	Allowed/Required
LOT COVERAGE:	1,638 square feet	2,990 square feet	3,000 square feet
FLOOR AREA:			
First floor	1,583 square feet	2,402 square feet	
Second floor	400 square feet	1,093 square feet	
Total	1,983 square feet	3,495 square feet	3,500 square feet
SETBACKS:			
Front	25 feet	32 feet	25 feet
Rear	64 feet	47 feet	25 feet
Right side (1 st /2 nd)	11 feet/48 feet	11 feet/21 feet	10 feet/17.5 feet
Left side (1 st /2 nd)	13 feet/13 feet	11 feet/ 18 feet	10 feet/17.5 feet
HEIGHT:	21 feet	25 feet	27 feet

BACKGROUND

The house is located in a Consistent Character Neighborhood pursuant to the Residential Design Guidelines. The homes in the area have consistent front yard setbacks, simple massing, dominate side to side gable design, low horizontal eaves, and two-car garages. The street is wide with wide unpaved public right-of-way and an inconsistent street tree pattern.

The homes in the neighborhood context have a very consistent design because the homes were part of the Fremont Avenue Homesites subdivision developed under County jurisdiction in January 1953. The subdivision was part of a larger area that was annexed in into the city in October 1954. The subdivision encompassed portion of Fremont Avenue, Richardson Avenue, Austin Avenue and Ben Roe Drive. The homes are consistent in design with a single, side to side gable over the house with a gabled roof over the two car garage. The two-story structures in the neighborhood also have a strong relation to the side to side gable design.

DISCUSSION

Design

The proposed first story relates to the existing design characteristics in the neighborhood context with a side to side gable across the front of the house at the first story, uniform eaves and accent gables.

Although the facade relates well to the existing design of structures within the neighborhood context, the rear of the house raises some design concerns. The first story facade represents a clear design concept; however, the design loses integrity at the rear of the structure with an inconsistent roof plan and two-story massing set behind the main ridge. The roof plan is inconsistent because it includes three distinct variations of hip and gable roofs at the first and second story and does not result in an integral design.

The bulk of the house is located behind the low scaled, prominent gable at the front. Although larger scaled, bulkier design elements are generally more acceptable at the rear of the structure, the entire mass of the proposed second story is located behind the existing houses on either side of the subject lot, which is not consistent with the character and creates bulk impacts.

The lot is unique in that it is the middle lot on the block with two rear yards on either side and rear yards of the houses on the court. In most cases the rear yards would have a larger setbacks and be less impacted by the new structure; however, the structures are original to the 1953 subdivision and have varying setbacks. The two properties on the either side of the subject lot are developed with a side to side orientation even though by definition the rear yards abut the subject property. The orientations of the houses on the adjacent lots appear to be closer than the required 25-foot setback which is not consistent with current setback requirements. Although the houses are non-conforming, new construction should respect the current orientation of the house on the lots, which would be more impacted by the new construction.

Although the project attempts to relate to the consistent architectural forms found within the Consistent Character Neighborhood context, staff recommends continuing the project because the following findings as discussed in this report cannot be made based on the orientation of the house and architectural compatibility with the neighborhood context.

- a. The orientation of the proposed structure in relation to the immediate neighborhood will not minimize the perception of excessive bulk.
- b. 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 not been incorporated in order to insure the compatibility of the development with its design concept and the character of adjacent buildings.

The applicant worked with staff addressed initial bulk and scale concerns in a previous submittal that included 11.5-foot eave heights as measured from grade. The applicant revised the design and reduced the slope of the roof and the overall height of the structure. The slope of the roof was reduced from 5:12 to 4:12 which reduced the overall height one foot. The eave height at the rear of structure was also reduced from 11.5 feet to 10 feet from grade. The revised eave heights at the rear of the structure are of a more appropriate scale for new structures within the neighborhood context.

The materials relate to the architectural details of the Craftsman inspired Ranch style house and include composition shingle roof, smooth stucco, clad windows, wood columns, and stone veneer.

Landscaping and Privacy

The project includes a comprehensive landscaping plan for the front yard and will maintain a majority of the trees in the rear yard around the perimeter of the property. Staff noted that a number of the trees in the rear yard that were labeled as existing were in plastic pots. If approved, a condition of approval should be added requiring the trees to be planted in the ground as shown on the landscape plan.

The second-story, side facing windows on either side of the house have a sill heights of greater than four-feet, six-inches which would make viewing out and down into the neighboring properties difficult and maintain a reasonable degree of privacy.

The balcony at the rear of the structure has a depth of three and one-half feet and would be considered passive in use because it is less than four feet. The Residential Design Guidelines suggest that a deck generally four feet in depth or less would limit the use of decks to more passive uses that would not result in the substantial privacy impact. Although the deck is considered a passive use, additional landscaping should extend from the proposed landscaping adjacent to the structure on the right side to the existing trees to further preserve privacy to adjacent rear yards.

PUBLIC CONTACT

This project was noticed to 11 nearby property owners in addition to an on-site posting for the Design Review Commission hearing.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

This project is categorically exempt from environmental review under Section 15303 of the Environmental Quality Act because the project is construction of a new house.

Cc: Roger Kohler, Applicant and Architect
Meng-Hung Lin and Tzulan Yen, Property Owners

Attachments:

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

FINDINGS

15-SC-23 – 1516 Richardson Avenue

1. With regard to design review for a new two-story structure, the Design Review Commission finds the following in accordance 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
 - b. 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 not been incorporated in order to insure the compatibility of the development with its design concept and the character of adjacent buildings.



ATTACHMENT A

CITY OF LOS ALTOS GENERAL APPLICATION

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

Permit # _____

<input type="checkbox"/>	One-Story Design Review	<input type="checkbox"/>	Commercial/Multi-Family	<input type="checkbox"/>	Environmental Review
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Two-Story Design Review	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sign Permit	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rezoning
<input type="checkbox"/>	Variance	<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"/>	Sidewalk Display Permit	<input type="checkbox"/>	Appeal
<input type="checkbox"/>	Historical Review	<input type="checkbox"/>	Preliminary Project Review	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other:

Project Address/Location: 1516 Richardson Ave, Los Altos CA 94024

Project Proposal/Use: New Single Family Current Use of Property: Single Family Home

Assessor Parcel Number(s): 318.09.042 Site Area: 10,600.00 SQ. FT.

New Sq. Ft.: 3,495.03 Altered/Rebuilt Sq. Ft.: _____ Existing Sq. Ft. to Remain: _____

Total Existing Sq. Ft.: 1580.49 Total Proposed Sq. Ft. (including basement): 3,495.03

Applicant's Name: Roger Kohler

Telephone No.: 650.328.1086 Email Address: roger@kohler-architects.com

Mailing Address: 721 Colorado Ave, Suite 102

City/State/Zip Code: Palo Alto, CA 94303

Property Owner's Name: Meng-Hung Lin & Tzulan Yen

Telephone No.: 650.968.1868 Email Address: _____

Mailing Address: 1516 Richardson Ave, Los Altos CA 94024

City/State/Zip Code: Los Altos CA 94024

Architect/Designer's Name: Kohler Associates Architects

Telephone No.: 650.328.1086 Email Address: roger@kohler-architects.com

Mailing Address: 721 Colorado Ave, Suite 102

City/State/Zip Code: Palo Alto, CA 94303

*** 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)



ATTACHMENT B

Planning Division

(650) 947-2750

Planning@losaltosca.gov

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 1st 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 1516 Richardson, Los Altos CA 94024
Scope of Project: Addition or Remodel or New Home
Age of existing home if this project is to be an addition or remodel? _____
Is the existing house listed on the City's Historic Resources Inventory? NO

Address: 1516 Richardson Ave

Date: Jun 12, 15

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: 8,750 square feet

Lot dimensions: Length 125 feet

Width 70 feet

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

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

Existing front setback if home is a remodel? NO

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

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

Do the front setbacks of adjacent houses line up? Yes

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 ✓

Garage facing front recessed from front of house face NO

Garage in back yard NO

Garage facing the side NO

Number of 1-car garages ; 2-car garages ✓; 3-car garages

Address: 1516 Richardson Ave

Date: Jun 12, 2015

4. Single or Two-Story Homes:

What % of the homes in your neighborhood* are:

One-story 70

Two-story 30

5. Roof heights and shapes:

Is the overall height of house ridgelines generally the same in your neighborhood*? _____

Are there mostly hip , gable style , or other style roofs*?

Do the roof forms appear simple or complex ?

Do the houses share generally the same eave height _____?

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

What siding materials are frequently used in your neighborhood*?

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?

Asphalt Shingle

If no consistency then explain: _____

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

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)
NO

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.)?

Big trees, Front lawns,

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

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)?

Asphalt

10. Width of Street:

What is the width of the roadway paving on your street in feet? 6 Feet

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: 1516 Richardson Ave, Los Altos

Date: Jun 12, 2015

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.:

Gable Roof, horizontal siding, average 25'
front yard setback, big trees, front lawns,
shrubs.

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
- 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: 1516 Richardson Ave

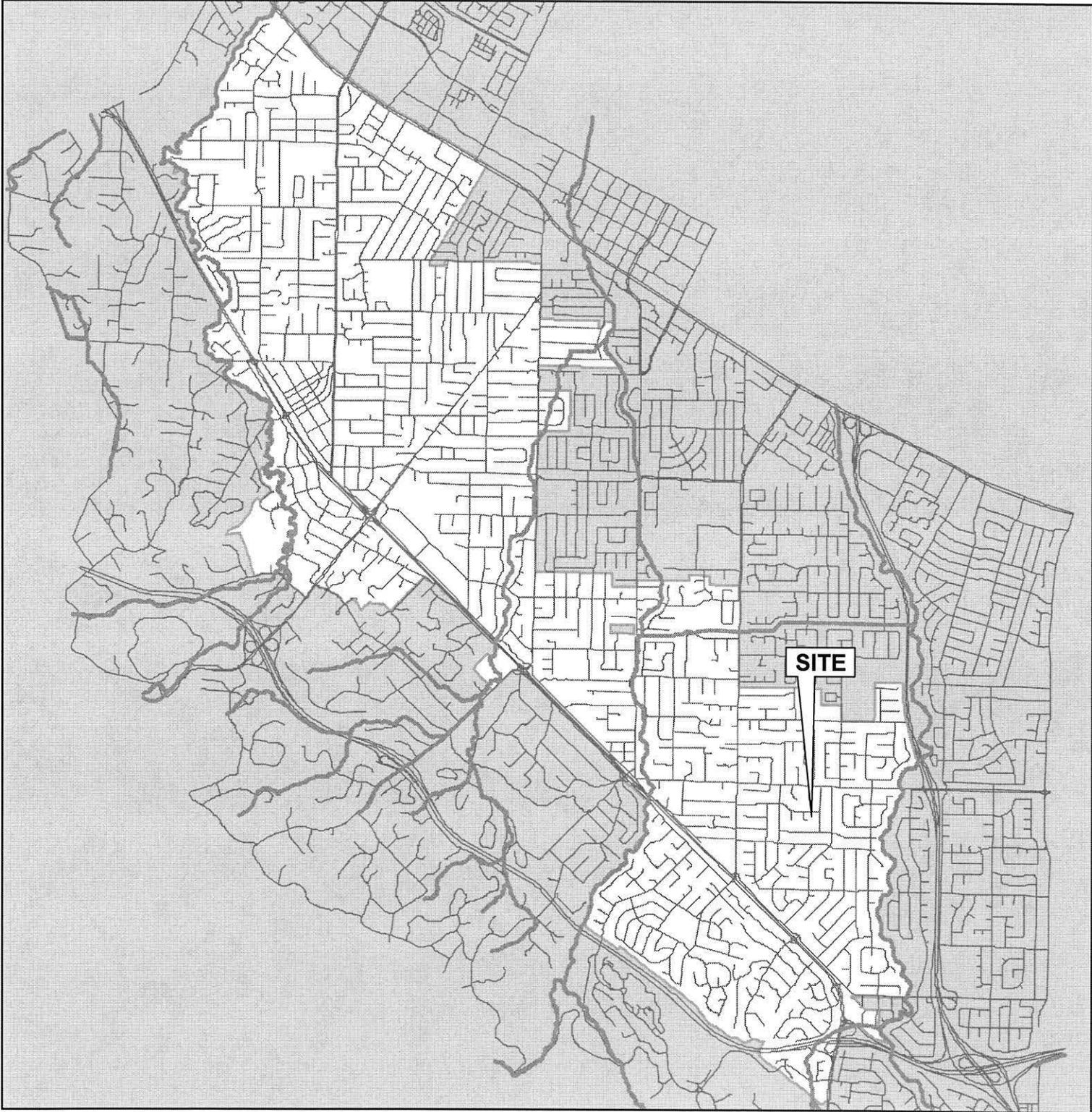
Date: Jun 12, 2015

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)
1697 Orr Ct.	30'	50'	2 - Left	One	18'	Siding	Ranch
1500 Richardson Ave	30'	50'	2 - left	one	18'	Siding	Ranch
1516 Richardson Ave	25'-2"	63'-6"	2 - left	two	22'	Siding Brick	Ranch
1530 Richardson Ave	25'	25' "	2 - Right	one	18'	Siding Brick	Ranch
1690 Parkhill Ave	25'	30'	2 - Left	one	20'	Siding Brick	Ranch
1499 Richardson Ave	30'	40'	2 - Right	one Loft	19'	Comp. Shingle	Ranch
1507 Richardson Ave	20'	46'	2 - Left	one	18'	Stucco Comp. Shingle	Ranch
1515 Richardson Ave	30'	40'	2 - Right	one	18'	Siding Brick	Ranch
1525 Richardson Ave	20'	30'	2 - Left	one	18'	Siding Brick	Ranch
1705 Orr Ct.	20'	20'	2 - Right	one	18'	Siding	Ranch

AREA MAP



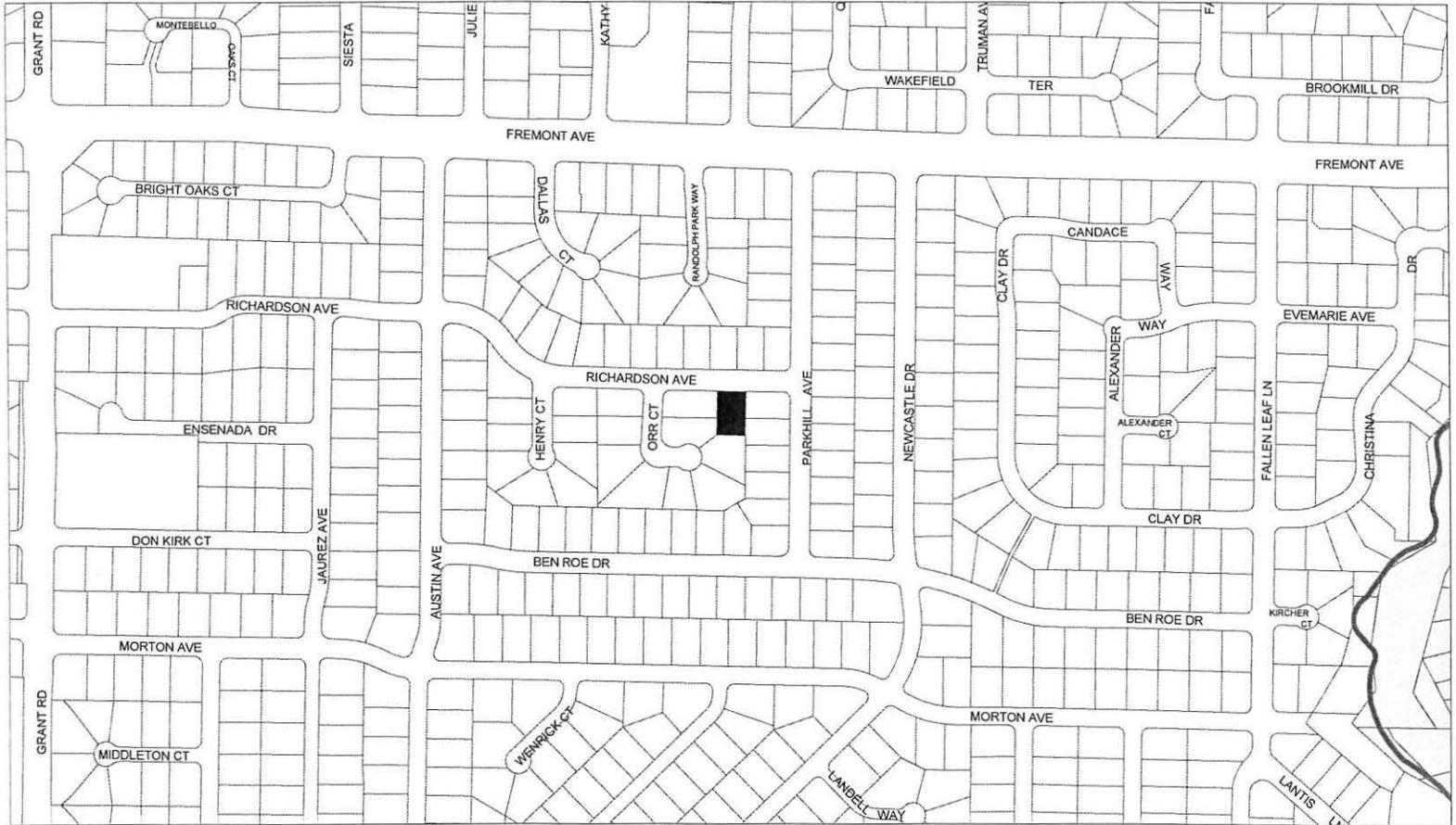
CITY OF LOS ALTOS

APPLICATION: 15-SC-23
APPLICANT: R. Kohler/M. Lin and T. Yen
SITE ADDRESS: 1516 Richardson Avenue

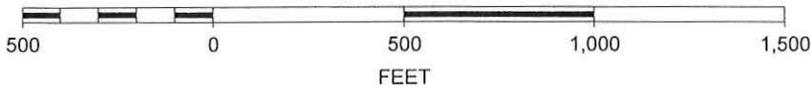


Not to Scale

VICINITY MAP



SCALE 1 : 6,000



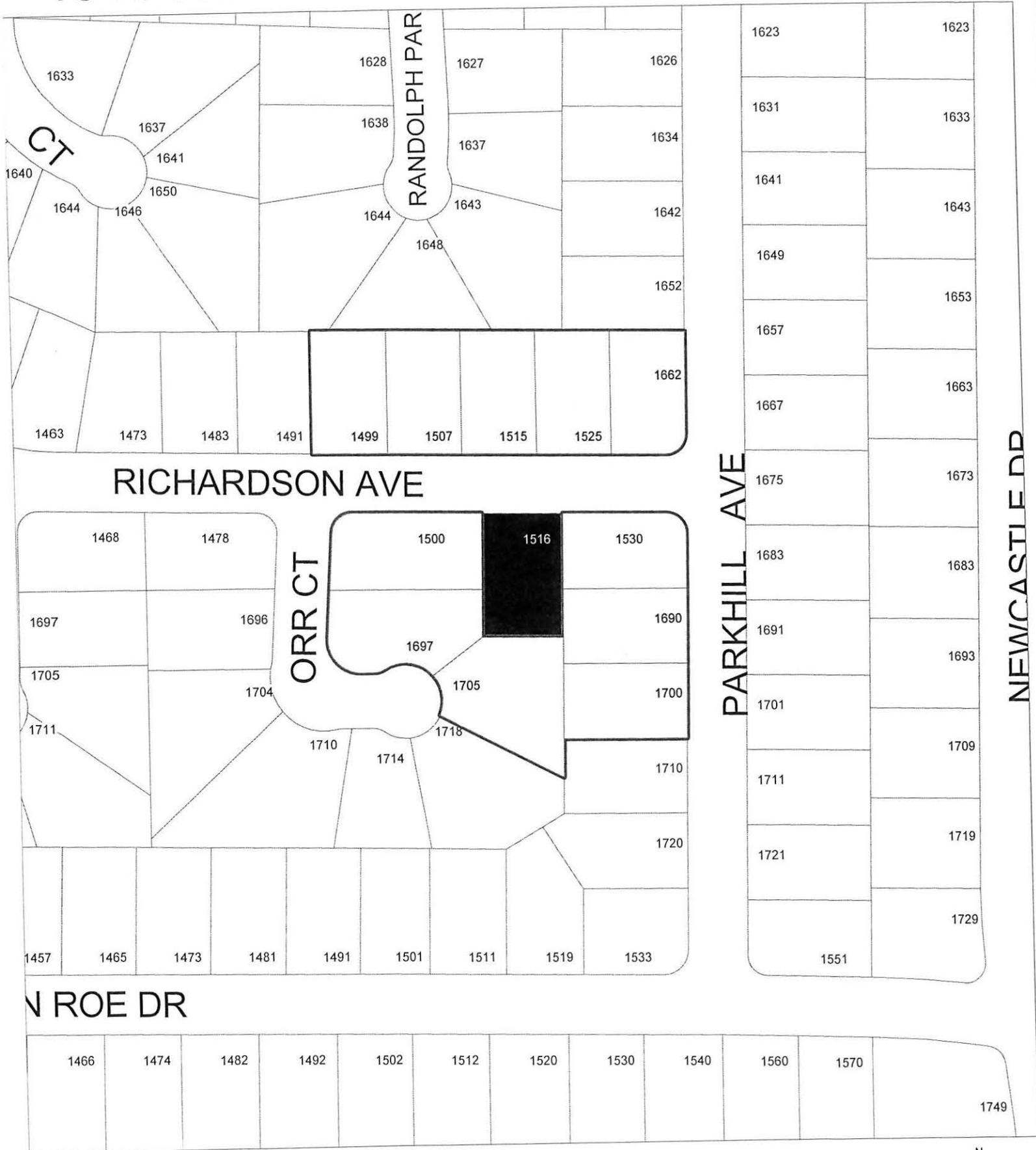
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CITY OF LOS ALTOS

APPLICATION: 15-SC-23
APPLICANT: R. Kohler/M. Lin and T. Yen
SITE ADDRESS: 1516 Richardson Avenue

1516 Richardson Avenue Notification Map



SCALE 1 : 1,500

