DATE: November 15, 2017

AGENDA ITEM # 2

**TO**: Design Review Commission

**FROM**: Steve Golden, Senior Planner

**SUBJECT**: 17-SC-23 – Covington Rd

## RECOMMENDATION:

Continue design review application 17-SC-23 subject to the recommended direction

---

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This is a design review application for a new two-story house. The project includes 2,759 square feet on the first-story and 1,372 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:** | 14,199 square feet |
| **MATERIALS:** | Mission style tile roof, stucco siding, vinyl windows, ironwork balconies, stone window trim |

| | **Existing** | **Proposed** | **Allowed/Required** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **LOT COVERAGE:** | 1,662 square feet | 3,350* square feet | 4,259 square feet |
| **FLOOR AREA:** | | | |
| First floor | 1,567 square feet | 2,759 square feet | |
| Second floor | - | 1,372 square feet | |
| Total | 1,567square feet | 4,131 square feet | 4,169 square feet |
| **SETBACKS:** | | | |
| Front | 36 feet | 25 feet | 25 feet |
| Rear | 75 feet | 30.5 feet | 25 feet |
| Right side (1st/2nd) | 16 feet | 10.25 feet/20.5 feet | 10 feet/17.5 feet |
| Left side (1st/2nd) | 30 feet | 22.2 feet/26.8 feet | 16.6 feet/16.6 feet |
| **HEIGHT:** | 16 feet | 26.5 feet | 27 feet |

*There is a discrepancy in the plans regarding the reported lot coverage. The project summary table above and staff report reflect the correct calculations.

## BACKGROUND

### Neighborhood Context

The subject property is located on the southeast corner of the intersection of Covington Road and Parma Way. The neighborhood context when considering Parma Way south of Covington Road the properties at the street intersection is considered a Transitional Character Neighborhood as defined in the City's Residential Design Guidelines. The neighborhood context is comprised of a variety house types including one-story Ranch style houses that have been designed using simple forms and rustic materials, a Spanish style two-story house with more complex roof forms, and one and two-story houses with formal style and complex roof forms. The three properties directly across the street on Parma Way have two-story houses, but their second story appearances have significantly smaller massing and are centered over the first story at the front elevation. The setback patterns in the neighborhood is generally consistent. There is not a distinctive street tree pattern along Covington Road or Parma Way; however, there are mature trees and landscaping. The rear of the property is bounded by Hale Creek.

## DISCUSSION

### Design Review

According to the Design Guidelines, in Transitional Character Neighborhoods, good neighbor design reduces the abrupt changes that result from juxtaposing radically different designs or sizes of structures; proposed projects should not set the extreme and should be designed to soften the transition.

The subject property is a corner lot having street frontages on Covington Road and Parma Way. The house is setback 25 feet from Parma Way and while technically this is considered the front yard, it is functionally the exterior side of the house with the garage and driveway accessing Parma Way. The front (north) elevation of the house is designed and oriented facing Covington Road. Since the property is less than 90 feet in width, it is considered a narrow corner lot and the minimum required exterior side yard setback is reduced from 20 feet to 16 feet, six inches. However, the proposed exterior side yard setback of 22 feet, 2 inches as measured to the front covered porch exceeds the minimum.

The house design is a Mediterranean inspired style, using design elements and high-quality materials such as: arched entryway, Mission Style tile roof, stucco siding, ironwork at balconies, covered patios, arched windows and stone window trim. The house uses a variety of roof forms including low pitched gables, hips, and shed roofs which has a more complex presentation than other houses in the neighborhood.

The front façade facing Covington Road is the most dominant elevation of the house. The majority of the wall plate heights on the first story are 10 feet, 1 inch with an 11-foot wall plate proposed on the family room at the left, rear side of the structure, and a 12-foot wall plate for the front arched entry and covered porch, which is more centered on the structure. The

finished floor is approximately 20 inches above grade at the right side and increases to approximately 28 inches in height as the grade slopes down from Parma Way to the rear of the property. The raised floor contributes to the overall vertical height of the walls and the appearance of excessive mass; therefore, the wall plate height on the family room portion may feel even higher. Wall plates on the second story at the front elevation are 8 feet, 1 inch in height.

To the rear of the family room is a raised patio, 23 inches in height with an open trellis roof that is nine feet, four inches in height (11 feet, 3 inches from grade) that uses wood materials. There is another raised patio, 22 inches in height, on the rear portion of the house with 10-foot wall plates. The roof form and materials of this covered patio are consistent with the house. This covered patio also has a second story balcony that is accessed from the 2nd-floor master bedroom and is wrapped with a 42-inch solid rail. Both covered patio areas are entirely within the building envelope

While there are two-story houses in proximity to the proposed house, their second-story massing is substantially reduced compared to the first story and primarily centered over the first story. The proposed house front façade is dominated by the second story massing and there are certain architectural elements that contribute to the bulkiness and vertical emphasis of the structure which does not fit in with the surrounding neighborhood. These include:

1. The second story is not substantially smaller than the first story and not centered over the first story;
2. The shed roof form along most of the first story breaks up the first and second stories, but because of the low pitch and little relief between the first story and second story, the shed roof element is overpowered by the vertical massing and flat plane between the first and second stories;
3. The tower/turret element at the outer corner of the structure is a two-story height element with a strong vertical emphasis;
4. While the gables on the second story break up the façade into smaller elements, they also contribute to the vertical appearance of the project; and
5. The window style, dimensions, and orientation further contribute to the vertical presentation of the project.

In addition, the open, clearstory entry and circular stairwell with a domed ceiling increases the size of the second story and contributes to the appearance of excessive bulkiness. This is inconsistent with the Residential Design Guideline to design the house from the "outside-in" which is more sensitive to surroundings, resulting in a design from the "inside-out" which is bulkier as compared to the surrounding properties.

Staff provided comments to the applicant during the review process regarding compliance with the daylight plane requirements in the Zoning Code, wall plate heights, the vertical characteristics of the structure and excessive bulkiness that appear to be out of scale with the existing neighborhood and inconsistent with the design guidelines. In response to staff's comments, the applicant revised the plans to change some of the roof forms and wall plates to reduce the scale of the house and comply with the Zoning Code. Although the applicant

revised the plans to reduce scale of the house, the overall massing and architectural forms remain substantially the same.

The architectural elements and dominant second-story massing emphasize the bulky design and large scale of the house and would result in an abrupt change to the neighborhood context. Based on the proposed design within the Transitional Character Neighborhood, staff is unable to make the following required design review findings (Section 14.76.050) of the Zoning Code:

1. The orientation of the proposed new house in relation to the immediate neighborhood will NOT minimize the perception of excessive bulk and mass.

2. 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.

Staff recommends the Design Review Commission continue this application and direct the applicant to revise the elevations accordingly to reduce the structure's scale, size, and appearance of excessive bulk to better comply with the Residential Design Guidelines, be more compatible with the surrounding neighborhood and meet all of the required design review findings.

**Privacy**

The design is sensitive to the privacy of neighboring properties. The larger second story windows are placed on the street side elevations. Four small, second-story windows are on the left side (east) elevation located in a bathroom and master bedroom with sill heights of five feet, two inches. The second story elevation facing the interior side property line (south elevation) has six narrow windows with sill heights ranging from 20 inches to three feet, eight inches above the finish floor. The second story balcony has a wide glass door, however, it is screened with closed railings that are 42-inches in height. The 27-foot second story setback to the interior side property line also exceeds the minimum setback which allows for more privacy. Existing and proposed landscaping and trees provides for privacy screening along this side property line (see Landscaping section below).

To ensure that the project maintains a reasonable level of privacy, staff recommends raising the sill heights to a minimum of 42 inches for the two windows in Bedroom #3 on the interior side elevation.

**Landscaping**

The existing landscaping includes 16 mature trees and a variety of shrubs in the front and rear yard (see Sheet A-1.2 for type, location, and conditions). There is a mature oak and redwood tree on the adjacent property, close to the property line with driplines encroaching into the side yard area. The site and landscaping plans proposes to preserve all trees but one Japanese maple (Tree #7). The proposed landscaping plan provides for new landscaping in all the yard

areas which includes mostly shrubs, ground cover, and a few ornamental trees to supplement the larger and more established trees on the property.

The existing oak tree on the neighboring property provides for some privacy screening. Additional privacy landscaping in the interior side yard including Carolina Laurel Cherry and a Chinese Pistache are proposed.

It should be noted that the Hale Creek alignment is along the rear property line. There is a Santa Clara Valley Water District drainage easement covering approximately 25 feet of the rear property. The property owner is restricted from grading or making improvements the easement area unless they obtain prior approval from the Water District. A portion of property is located within a Special Flood Hazard Area (i.e. 100-year flood zone) as shown on the Flood Insurance Rate Map published by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Therefore, the property is subject to meeting the standards in Chapter 12.60 Flood Hazard Area Regulations, which staff will ensure as part of the building permit process.

The project is subject to the Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance because it is a new house that will add or replace more than 500 square feet of landscaping. With the new front yard landscaping, additional planting areas and hardscape, the project meets the City's landscaping regulations and street tree guidelines.

**Miscellaneous**

The lot coverage calculations in the plans provided do not include the covered porch areas. Staff has estimated the combined coverage area of covered porches (front, side and rear) are 592 square feet and have updated the project summary table. The added area is well within the allowed lot coverage. The applicant will be required to revise the lot coverage calculation and include in the building permit plans.

## ALTERNATIVES

Overall, as discussed above and outlined in the required design review findings, staff is unable to recommend positive findings and cannot recommend approval of this project. However, should the Commission vote to approve the project, the action should include positive design review findings and standard conditions of approval related to tree protection, grading and drainage, green building, fire sprinklers, undergrounding utilities, and Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance compliance.

## ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

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

**PUBLIC CONTACT**

A public meeting notice was posted on the property and mailed to 15 nearby property owners on Parma Way, Riverside Drive, Echo Drive, and Covington Road.

Cc: Richard Hartman, Hometec Architecture, Applicant and Architect
Ying-Min Li, Goldsilverisland, LLC, Property Owner

Attachments:
A. Application
B. Neighborhood Compatibility Worksheet
C. Area Map, Vicinity Maps, and Notification
D. Materials Board

## FINDINGS

17-SC-23 – 622 Covington Road

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

a. The proposed structure complies with all provisions of this chapter;

b. The height, elevations, and placement on the site of the proposed addition, 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 *NOT* minimize the perception of excessive bulk;

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 *NOT* 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.

## RECOMMENDED DIRECTION

17-SC-23 – 622 Covington Road

1. Reduce the massing and excessive bulkiness of the second story elements on the front (north) elevation;

2. Reduce the tall exposed walls as viewed from the front and sides of the property. This may be achieved by reducing the finished floor height, reducing the wall plate heights, and/or providing an alternative construction method for the plate and floors;

3. Raise sill heights of the two windows in Bedroom #3 windows on the south elevation to a minimum of 42 inches to provide additional privacy; and

4. Revise the floor area diagram to show the correct lot coverage and update the property summary table to include all structures over six feet in height.

# ATTACHMENT A

CITY OF LOS ALTOS

GENERAL APPLICATION

Type of Review Requested: *(Check all boxes that apply)* Permit # 1107913

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | One-Story Design Review | | Commercial/Multi-Family | | Environmental Review |
| ✓ | Two-Story Design Review | | Sign Permit | | Rezoning |
| | Variance | | Use Permit | | R1-S Overlay |
| | Lot Line Adjustment | | Tenant Improvement | | General Plan/Code Amendment |
| | Tentative Map/Division of Land | | Sidewalk Display Permit | | Appeal |
| | Historical Review | | Preliminary Project Review | | Other: |

Project Address/Location: 622 Covington Road

Project Proposal/Use: SFR Current Use of Property: SFR

Assessor Parcel Number(s): 189-45-035 Site Area: 14,199sf

New Sq. Ft.: 3,692 Altered/Rebuilt Sq. Ft.: 0 Existing Sq. Ft. to Remain: 0

Total Existing Sq. Ft.: 1,201 Total Proposed Sq. Ft. (including basement): 3,692

Applicant's Name: Holly Hartman - HOMETEC Architecture

Telephone No.: (408) 995-0496 Email Address: hometecarch@gmail.com

Mailing Address: 619 N 1st Street

City/State/Zip Code: San Jose, CA 95112

Property Owner's Name: Ying-Min Li - Goldsilverisland, LLC

Telephone No.: (408) 896-3369 Email Address: yingminli@hotmail.com

Mailing Address: 1525 McCarthy Blvd, Suite 1000

City/State/Zip Code: Milpitas, CA 95035

Architect/Designer's Name: Richard A Hartman, AIA - HOMETEC Architecture

Telephone No.: (408) 995-0496 Email Address: hometecarch@gmail.com

Mailing Address: 619 N 1st Street

City/State/Zip Code: San Jose, CA 95112

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

*(continued on back)*

# ATTACHMENT B

City of Los Altos
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** 622 Covington Road
**Scope of Project: Addition or Remodel** [ ] **or New Home** [✓]
**Age of existing home if this project is to be an addition or remodel?** 67
**Is the existing house listed on the City's Historic Resources Inventory?** No


* See "What constitutes your neighborhood" on page 2.

Address: 622 Covington Road
Date: 6/19/2017

## 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: 13,600 square feet
Lot dimensions: Length 160 feet
Width 85 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?_____
What % of the front facing walls of the neighborhood homes are at the front setback ? %
Existing front setback for house on left (no house) ft./on right (no house) 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 7
Garage facing front recessed from front of house face 0
Garage in back yard 0
Garage facing the side 2
Number of 1-car garages 0; 2-car garages 9; 3-car garages 0


* See "What constitutes your neighborhood", (page 2).

Address: 622 Covington Rd
Date: 6/19/2017

## 4. Single or Two-Story Homes:

What % of the homes in your neighborhood* are:
One-story 66%
Two-story 33%

## 5. Roof heights and shapes:

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

## 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) most have brick veneer at front, stucco, or shingle/hardiboard

What roofing materials (wood shake/shingle, asphalt shingle, flat tile, rounded tile, cement tile, slate) are consistently (about 80%) used?
Ashphalt 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


* See "What constitutes your neighborhood", (page 2).

Address: 622 Covington Road
Date: 6/19/2017

## 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)

n/a

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.)?

very typical landcape in the neighborhhood. lawn, hedges, roses, ect.

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

Typical visibility

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)?

existing landscape: improved driveway, hedges, a few maples, no lawn.

## 10. Width of Street:

What is the width of the roadway paving on your street in feet? ~40 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, no curb/gutter.

Address: 622 Covington Road
Date: 6/19/2017

**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.:

Varying types of finishes (stucco, board/batten, etc)

1 and 2 story homes

## 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


* See "What constitutes your neighborhood", (page 2).

Address: 622 Covington Road
Date: 6/19/2017

## 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) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 975 Parma Way | ~30 ft | ~96 ft | front | 1 | ? | stucco | complex |
| 995 Parma Way | ~35 ft | ~120 ft | side | 1 | ? | stucoo | Spanish |
| 627 Covington Road | ~30 ft | ~58 ft | front | 1 | ? | stucoo | complex |
| 933 Parma Way | ~35 sf | ~60 ft | front | 1 | ? | stucoo | complex |
| 922 Parma Way | ~35 sf | ~60 ft | front | 1 | ? | wood siding | complex |
| 932 Parma Way | ~35 ft | ~50 ft | front | 1 | ? | stucco | Spanish |
| 607 Covington Road | ~25 ft | ~65 ft | side | 1 | ? | stucco | Mediterranean |
| 960 Parma Way | ~25 ft | ~66 ft | no garage | 2 | ? | wood siidng | Craftman |
| 970 Parma Way | ~35 ft | ~68 ft | front | 2 | ? | stucco | Spanish |
| 980 Parma Way | ~28 sf | ~53 ft | front | 2 | ? | stucco | Spanish |


* See "What constitutes your neighborhood", (page 2).

ATTACHMENT C

# AREA MAP


**CITY OF LOS ALTOS**

**APPLICATION:** 17-SC-23
**APPLICANT:** Hometec Architecture/ Goldsilverisland, LLC
**SITE ADDRESS:** 622 Covington Road

N

Not to Scale

# VICINITY MAP


SCALE 1 : 6,000

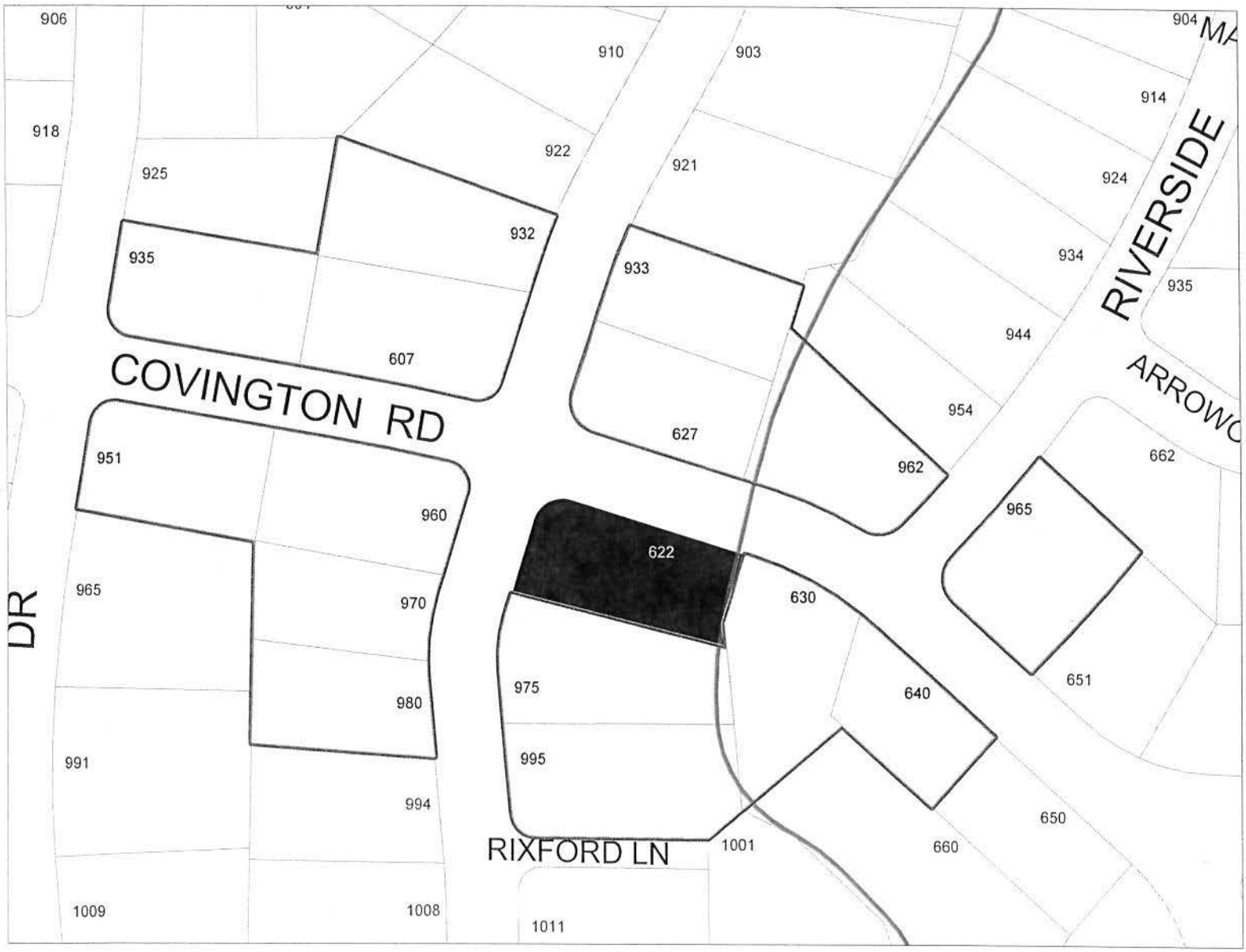
500 0 500 1,000 1,500

FEET

**CITY OF LOS ALTOS**

**APPLICATION:** 17-SC-23
**APPLICANT:** Hometec Architecture/ Goldsilverisland, LLC
**SITE ADDRESS:** 622 Covington Road

# 622 Covington Road Notification Map



ATTACHMENT D





ROOF = EAGLELITE MALIBU
#745 SUNRISE BLEND

STUCCO = KELLY-MOORE KM5263
GINGER ALE FIZZ

KM5263-1
Ginger Ale Fizz

FASCIA = KELLY-MOORE AC252
ROCKY MOUNTAIN

WINDOWS = ANDERSEN VINYL
DARK BRONZE

ENTRY & WINDOW TRIM = CARSONS COATING, STONE FINISH TO MATCH STUCCO

NOTE: ALL COLORS AND MATERIALS ARE 'OR SIMILAR'

Hometec Architecture, Inc.
408/995-0496

GOLDSILVERISLAND, LLC
622 COVINGTON ROAD