

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION
OF THE CITY OF LOS ALTOS, HELD ON WEDNESDAY, MAY 14, 2014, BEGINNING
AT 7:00 P.M. AT LOS ALTOS CITY HALL, ONE NORTH SAN ANTONIO ROAD, LOS
ALTOS, CALIFORNIA**

ESTABLISH QUORUM

PRESENT: Chair BLOCKHUS, Vice-Chair KIRIK, Commissioners WHEELER, and
MEADOWS
ABSENT: Commissioner MOISON
STAFF: Planning Services Manager KORNFIELD, Senior Planner DAHL and Assistant
Planners DAVIS and GALLEGOS

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

None.

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION/ACTION

CONSENT CALENDAR

1. Design Review Commission Minutes

Approve minutes of the regular meeting of April 30, 2014.

MOTION by Commissioner MEADOWS, seconded by Commissioner WHEELER, to approve the minutes of the April 30, 2014 regular meeting as revised by Planning Services Manager KORNFIELD.

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

2. 14-SC-14 – Duxbury Architects – 980 Stanley Avenue

Design review for a first and second story addition. The project includes a 388-square-foot addition on the first floor and a new, 282-square-foot second story. *Project Planner: Davis*

MOTION by Commissioner MEADOWS, seconded by Commissioner WHEELER, to approve design review application 14-SC-14 per the staff report findings and conditions.

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

DISCUSSION

3. 14-SC-07 – Chapman Design Associates – 827 Campbell Avenue

Design review for a new, two-story house. The project includes 2,394 square feet on the first floor and 1,245 square feet on the second floor. *Project Planner: Gallegos*

Assistant Planner GALLEGOS presented the staff report recommending approval of revised design review application 14-SC-07 subject to the listed findings and conditions and summarized the changes.

Project designer Walter Chapman made himself available to answer questions. The property owner, Mr. Gupta, spoke about the intent of the project and context of the neighborhood, noting taller-scale elements in the immediate area and surrounding neighbors' support. He said he preferred the stone veneer, but was okay with omitting it because it reduced bulk. He further appealed to the DRC to allow the original design concept with a 12-foot living room plate and 10-foot master bedroom plate. There was no other public comment.

The Commission discussed the project and gave the following comments:

Vice-Chair KIRIK stated that it was an attractive design and used good materials, but wished that the stone was kept for interest and supports the project as proposed in the packet.

Commissioner WHEELER stated that this was a Transitional Character neighborhood, he supported the revised design, the stone was okay, and lower walls were appropriate.

Commissioner MEADOWS said she supported the revisions, could consider the changes per the owner, but should continue the project if that is the case.

Chair BLOCKHUS agreed with the DRC direction and stated his support for the project.

MOTION by Vice-Chair KIRIK, seconded by Chair BLOCKHUS, to approve design review application 14-SC-07 per the staff report findings and conditions.
THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

4. 14-SC-11 – Alfonso & Harmon Architects – 453 Cypress Drive

Design review for a first and second story addition. The project includes a 1,408 square foot addition on the first floor and a new, 766-square-foot second story. *Project Planner: Davis*

Chair BLOCKHUS noted that his brother owns a property in the vicinity, but that there is no financial interest in that property and no conflict of interest.

Assistant Planner DAVIS presented the staff report recommending approval of design review application 14-SC-11 subject to the listed findings and conditions.

Commissioner MEADOWS questioned the Consistent Character of the neighborhood since there are at least three two-stories in the area. Assistant Planner DAVIS noted the consistent elements of low eaves and rustic materials. Chair BLOCKHUS suggested a condition, given the nonconformities, of limiting construction to 50 percent.

Property owner Stacey Nierman stated that her objective was to expand the house to meet the needs of her family (to house each child) and chose the least intrusive design to meet their objectives.

Attorney Ted Sorensen, representing the east neighbor, stated that most of the concerns were met, but there should be a wall on the side of the balcony as the neighbors had agreed to and they should have provided a landscape plan. Commissioner MEADOWS asked the owner if they had agreed to a balcony wall and she confirmed they had said yes; that they intend to do a landscape plan; and avoided windows facing east. Chair BLOCKHUS asked about the height of the wall and the property owner was not sure, but Sorensen stated "to the roof" and she agreed.

The Commission discussed the project and gave their general support. Commissioner WHEELER stated his support for the project, said the design fits in, and would suggest a condition for the balcony wall and landscape plan. Vice-Chair KIRIK said the house was so well designed that it looks original; the balcony wall was not necessary, but supports the condition; and noted that the subject lot was lower than the lot to the east. Chair BLOCKHUS agreed with Vice-Chair KIRIK's comments. Commissioner MEADOWS stated that the project did not need a balcony wall to the roof to keep privacy.

MOTION by Commissioner MEADOWS to approve design review application 14-SC-11 per the staff report findings and conditions, with the following additional condition:

- Add a privacy wall to the east side.

Vice-Chair KIRIK suggested an amendment to the motion to condition a full height wall under the eave, then four-foot six-inches beyond that. Commissioner MEADOWS accepted the change to the motion and Commissioner WHEELER seconded
THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

5. 14-SC-13 – Avalon Enterprises Inc. – 15 San Juan Court

Design review for a two-story addition to an existing one-story house. The project includes 572 square feet on the second story and 1,243 square feet on the first story. *Project Planner: Dahl*

Senior Planner DAHL presented the staff report recommending approval of design review application 14-SC-13 subject to the findings and conditions and noted that the applicant and neighbor were requesting the removal of the required rear yard evergreen screening (condition No. 2), which staff supported.

The applicant and designer, Kacey Fitzpatrick, presented the project, noting that the design blended Craftsman and Ranch style elements to match the addition with the existing house. There were no other public comments.

The Commission discussed the project and expressed their general support, noted that it met the intent of the Design Review Guidelines and supported the removal of condition No. 2.

MOTION by Commissioner WHEELER, seconded by Commissioner MEADOWS, to approve design review application 14-SC-13 per the staff report findings and conditions, with the following change:

- Remove condition No. 2.

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

6. 14-SC-16 – A. and S. Rajendran – 1064 Laureles Drive

Appeal an administrative denial of a design review application for a new, one-story house. The proposal is for a 20-foot tall house with 3,872 square feet in floor area. *Project Planner: Davis*

Assistant Planner DAVIS presented the staff report recommending that the DRC uphold staff's administrative denial of design review application 14-SC-16 subject to the listed findings; and summarized staff's concerns about the 10-foot wall plates, articulated massing widening and profile that are out of scale.

Vice-Chair KIRIK asked about the timeframe of the application and Assistant Planner DAVIS stated that the initial submittal was in October of 2013 and staff had several meetings with the applicant.

Project architect, Scott Stotler, stated that the property at the rear adjacent to the creek was stable, he set the house back to preserve more openness at the cul-de-sac, the design is under developed in regards to Floor Area Ratio (FAR) and Lot Coverage, and the hip roofs and courtyard wall helps to minimize mass.

The property owner, Mr. Rajendran, stated that he was doing this house for his wife to help keep their marriage for another 38 years; cited examples of similar designs in the greater neighborhood; said the tall elements recede in design rather than project; that the cul-de-sac is wide, and part of the house has 10-foot eaves which relate to homes in the neighborhood.

Neighbor Bill Bares stated that the homes in the area were built in 1956; that it seems the neighborhood is in transition; that 10-foot walls are more common; he sees concern to limit change in balance; and gave his support for the project. Ramesh Nakra of Estrellita Way and friend to the applicant spoke in admiration of the new homes in the area and said they should blend in with the neighborhood. Neighbor Kevin Schick stated that he knows the applicant, agrees with the transitional character neighborhood, and supports the project. Neighbor Alice Chen gave her support for the project, but wants landscaping along on the north property line to address privacy concerns. The next door neighbor, Vishal Gauri, stated his support for the proposed design. There was no other public comment.

The Commission discussed the project and gave their comments. Vice-Chair KIRIK said he agreed with staff, that it was a somewhat complex design, looked like it belonged on a wider lot, and should lower the scale of the garage to reduce impact of the project on the street, and more formal design too. Commissioner WHEELER agreed with Vice-Chair KIRIK'S comments and said the entry seemed out-of-scale too. Commissioner MEADOWS stated that the wall plate, complex roof lines, and formality of style were concerns for her. Chair BLOCKHUS said that it was conflicting that the neighbors support the project, but also recognizes that there are design issues as it is a massive house and felt the Commission should continue or deny the project.

Architect Scott Stotler said the design has its walls stepped back with increased setbacks, and if owner agrees he could support lowering the entry and garage.

MOTION by Commissioner WHEELER, seconded by Commissioner MEADOWS, to continue design review application 14-SC-16 to consider the changes per staff to reduce bulk and mass and to consider landscape buffering.

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS AND COMMENTS

Vice-Chair KIRIK asked if story poles and visual representations are discussed by the Design Review Commission. Planning Services Manager KORNFIELD explained the history and context of story poles to the Design Review Commission.

POTENTIAL FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

There was a consensus to discuss story poles and visual representations as a future agenda item.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair BLOCKHUS adjourned the meeting at 8:50 PM.

David Kornfield, AICP
Planning Services Manager