



DATE: June 3, 2015

AGENDA ITEM # 3

**TO:** Design Review Commission  
**FROM:** Zachary Dahl, Senior Planner  
**SUBJECT:** 14-SC-47 – 587 Van Buren Street

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Approve design review application 14-SC-47 subject to the findings and conditions

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**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

This project is a two-story addition and remodel to an existing multi-level house with an exposed basement (lower floor). The project includes an addition of 928 square feet on the first story and 1,406 square feet on the second story. The lower floor will be maintained with no proposed alterations or additional floor area. The following table summarizes the project's technical details:

**GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION:** Single-Family, Residential  
**ZONING:** R1-10  
**PARCEL SIZE:** 35,985 square feet  
**MATERIALS:** Tar and gravel flat roof, trowel finish stucco siding, aluminum clad windows, metal clad roof eave fascia, metal trellis and cable metal deck railing

	<b>Existing</b>	<b>Proposed</b>	<b>Allowed/Required</b>
<b>COVERAGE:</b>	4,077 square feet	6,005 square feet	10,795 square feet
<b>FLOOR AREA:</b>			
First floor	3,042 square feet	3,970 square feet	
Second floor	N-A	1,406 square feet	
Lower floor	772 square feet	772 square feet	
Total	3,814 square feet	6,148 square feet	6,348 square feet
<b>SETBACKS:</b>			
Front	0 feet	22 feet	25 feet
Rear	25 feet	25 feet	25 feet
Right side (1 <sup>st</sup> /2 <sup>nd</sup> )	15 feet/N-A	15 feet/77 feet	10 feet/17.5 feet
Left side (1 <sup>st</sup> /2 <sup>nd</sup> )	107 feet/N-A	83 feet/102 feet	10 feet/17.5 feet
<b>HEIGHT:</b>	22 feet	27 feet	27 feet

## **BACKGROUND**

### **Neighborhood Context**

The subject property is located in a Diverse Character Neighborhood, as defined in the City's Residential Design Guidelines. Van Buren Street is a cul-de-sac street with a narrow street extension that serves four properties. The subject property is located at the end of this street extension, with the front yard facing the shared driveway along southern property line facing the house at 586 Van Buren Street. The left side and rear yards of the property are adjacent to Adobe Creek. There is a mixture of one- and two-story houses in this neighborhood that use different architectural styles, materials and massing. Due to the large lots on the street, many of the houses have large front yard setbacks with mature trees and vegetation that screen the structures from the street view.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Zoning Compliance**

This house was originally built in 1938. A portion of the house on the right side is located within the front yard setback and encroaches into the public right-of-way. This addition, which appears to have been built without a permit, is shown to be removed as part of the project. Due to the irregular shape of the public right-of-way, the right corner of the house encroaches into the front yard setback. However, since more than 50 percent of the existing house will be maintained and this portion of the house is part of the original structure, it is allowed to remain without requiring a variance.

The existing house is located adjacent to Adobe Creek, with portions of the rear elevation and decks located within the Water District's recommended 25-foot creek setback from top of creek bank. This creek setback is a guideline, not a zoning requirement, and all portions of the proposed addition are more than 25 feet from the top of the creek bank. While the basement (lower floor) is below grade on the front and side elevations, it is fully exposed on the rear elevation, so it counts towards the property's floor area. The lower floor also counts as a story, so in order to comply with the R1-10 District's two-story height limit, the proposed second story is not located over any portion of the existing lower floor.

### **Design Review**

According to the Design Guidelines, in Diverse Character Neighborhoods, good neighbor design has its own design integrity while incorporating some design elements and materials found in the neighborhood.

The proposed two-story addition and remodel uses a modern architectural design style. The front elevation has varied setbacks, metal clad flat roof eave overhangs, simple lines and a metal trellis element to create an integrated design that is in-keeping with the architectural style. The applicant provided color renderings of the front elevation to support the architectural drawings and provide a three dimensional view of the proposed house (Attachment D). The proposed second story is lower in scale and located on the left side of the house, preserving the one-story relationship with the neighboring property to the right. The project is using high quality materials, such as trowel finish

stucco siding, aluminum clad windows, metal clad roof eave fascia and metal trellis elements, which are integral to the architectural design of the house. Overall, the project design has architectural integrity and the design, materials and form relate well with the surrounding neighborhood.

### **Privacy and Landscaping**

On the first story, a large raised deck is proposed on the rear and left side elevations facing Adobe Creek. Due to the sloping nature of the site, this deck is proposed to provide the house with some usable outdoor open space adjacent to the family room, kitchen and dining room. At its highest point, this deck is eight feet above grade. Since it is facing the creek, there are not any privacy impacts to adjacent properties.

The proposed second story has a setback of 77 feet to the right side property line and faces Adobe Creek on the left and rear sides. A smaller deck, eight feet in depth and 13 feet in width, is located on the rear elevation facing the creek. Due to the topography of the site, the placement of the adjacent properties and the existing mature trees along the creek, there are do not appear to be any privacy issues related to this project.

The property includes many mature trees around the house site and along Adobe Creek. The project is proposing to remove two smaller Oak trees along the rear of the house where the new deck is proposed, but will be preserving all other trees on the property. There will be some minor landscaping improvements, along with new driveway pavement, in the front yard area. Otherwise, the existing trees and landscape will be maintained. With the preservation of the existing trees and new front yard landscaping and hardscape, staff finds that the project meets the City's landscaping and street tree guidelines.

### **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 dwelling in a residential zone.

### **PUBLIC NOTICING**

A public meeting notice was posted on the property and mailed to eight nearby property owners at the end of Van Buren Street and on the opposite side of Adobe Creek in Palo Alto.

Cc: Chapman Design Associates, Applicant  
Nick Huang, Owner

#### Attachments

- A. Application
- B. Neighborhood Compatibility Worksheet
- C. Area, Vicinity and Public Notification Maps
- D. Color Renderings

## FINDINGS

14-SC-47 – 587 Van Buren Street

With regard to the two-story addition, the Design Review Commission finds the following in accordance with Section 14.76.050 of the Municipal Code:

- a. The proposed addition complies with all provision 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 addition 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 addition has been designed to follow the natural contours of the site with minimal grading, minimum impervious cover, and maximum erosion protection.

## CONDITIONS

14-SC-47 – 587 Van Buren Street

1. The approval is based on the plans received on May 21, 2015 and the written application materials provided by the applicant, except as may be modified by these conditions.
2. Obtain an encroach permit issued from the Engineering Division prior to doing any work within the public street right-of-way.
3. Only gas fireplaces, pellet fueled wood heaters or EPA certified wood-burning appliances may be installed in all new construction pursuant to Chapter 12.64 of the Municipal Code.
4. The applicant/owner agrees to indemnify, defend, protect, and hold City harmless from all costs and expenses, including attorney's fees, incurred by the City or held to be the liability of City in connection with City's defense of its actions in any proceeding brought in any State or Federal Court, challenging any of the City's action with respect to the applicant's project.
5. **Prior to the issuance of a demolition permit**, install tree protection fencing around the dripline of the all trees adjacent to the building site (nos. 1-12) as shown on the site plan. Tree protection fencing shall be chain link and a minimum of five feet in height with posts driven into the ground.
6. **Prior to building permit submittal, the plans shall contain/show:**
  - a. The conditions of approval shall be incorporated into the title page of the plans;
  - b. 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";
  - c. Verification that all new additions and altered square footage will comply with the California Green Building Standards pursuant to Section 12.26 of the Municipal Code and provide a signature from a Qualified Green Building Professional;
  - d. Fire sprinklers to be installed pursuant to Section 12.10 of the Municipal Code;
  - 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. The location of any air conditioning units on the site plan and the manufacturer's sound rating for each unit; and
  - g. The measures to comply 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.).

7. **Prior to final inspection:**

- a. All front yard landscaping and trees shall be maintained and/or installed as required by the Planning Division; and
- b. Submit verification that the house was built in compliance with the City's Green Building Ordinance (Section 12.26 of the Municipal Code).



# ATTACHMENT A

## CITY OF LOS ALTOS GENERAL APPLICATION

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

Permit # 1106450

<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"/>	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 type="checkbox"/>	Appeal
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subdivision Map Review	<input type="checkbox"/>	Commercial Design Review	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other:

Project Address/Location: 587 VAN BUREN STREET

Project Proposal/Use: RESIDENTIAL

Current Use of Property: RESIDENTIAL

Assessor Parcel Number(s) 167-20-056 Site Area: 36,542.44

New Sq. Ft.: 3813.125 Remodeled Sq. Ft.: 76.5 Existing Sq. Ft. to Remain: 2,581.9375

Total Existing Sq. Ft.: 3,814.6875 Total Proposed Sq. Ft. (including basement): 6395.0

LOWER-772.25 MAIN-4216.375 UPPER-1406.4375

Applicant's Name: CHAPMAN DESIGN ASSOCIATES

Home Telephone #: \_\_\_\_\_ Business Telephone #: 650.941.6890

Mailing Address: 620 S. EL MONTE

City/State/Zip Code: LOS ALTOS, 94022

Property Owner's Name: NICK HUANG

Home Telephone #: 650.968.2279 Business Telephone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: 587 VAN BUREN STREET

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

Architect/Designer's Name: WALTER CHAPMAN Telephone #: 650.941.6890

**\*\*\* 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)*







City of Los Altos

Planning Division

(650) 947-2750

[Planning@losaltosca.gov](mailto: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 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 587 Van Buren Street  
Scope of Project: Addition or Remodel  or New Home   
Age of existing home if this project is to be an addition or remodel? ± 30 years  
Is the existing house listed on the City's Historic Resources Inventory? No

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

Address: 587 Van Buren Street  
Date: 11.25.14

### 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: 20,000 - 30,000 square feet  
Lot dimensions: Length N/A feet } Irregular Shapes  
Width N/A feet }

If your lot is significantly different than those in your neighborhood, then note its: area 35,000 s.f., length —, and width —.

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

Existing front setback if home is a remodel? ± 15'-0"  
What % of the front facing walls of the neighborhood homes are at the front setback ± 15-20 %  
Existing front setback for house on left N/A (No house on left) ft./on right ± 25'-0" 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 5  
Garage facing front recessed from front of house face 0  
Garage in back yard 1  
Garage facing the side 1  
Number of 1-car garages 0; 2-car garages 7; 3-car garages 0

Address: 587 Van Buren Street  
Date: 11.25.14

4. **Single or Two-Story Homes:**

What % of the homes in your neighborhood\* are:

One-story 62%

Two-story 38%

5. **Roof heights and shapes:**

Is the overall height of house ridgelines generally the same in your neighborhood\*? For the most part, yes

Are there mostly hip , gable style , or other style  roofs\*? - A mix of both on all houses except one

Do the roof forms appear simple  or complex ? - Mostly; some do not

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) 1/2 are stucco where the other 1/2 are some form of siding

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

Composition 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

Address: 587 Van Buren Street

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

Does your property have a noticeable slope? Yes

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

The property slopes toward the rear and left side (there is a creek abutting the property on those sides)

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.)?

The typical landscape features on the street are big trees, front lawns and landscaping to the gravel park strip (with fences = 50% of the homes)

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

20% - 30% from the street; not at all from the back neighbor's property (separated by creek)

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)?

A 60"  $\phi$  redwood tree in the front yard; currently, there is an ingress/egress easement in that area. That portion is paved to allow access to the lot.

10. **Width of Street:**

What is the width of the roadway paving on your street in feet? 15'-0"

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

Is the shoulder area (unimproved public right-of-way) paved, unpaved, gravel, landscaped, and/or defined with a curb/gutter? Paved because it is an ingress/egress easement to access the property.

Address: 587 Van Buren Street

Date: 11.25.14

**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.:

Landscape approach, roof material, house placement  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**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  
↳ to an extent
  
- 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

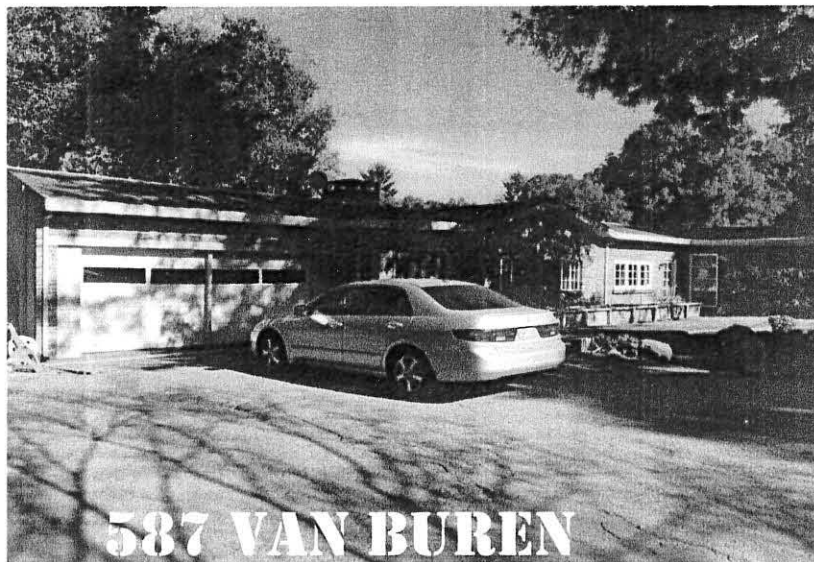
Address: 587 Van Buren Street

Date: 11.25.14

### 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)
586 Van Buren Street	± 25'-0"	± 35'-0"	Front	One	± 19'-0"	Stucco, Comp. Shingles Wood Trim (Windows)	Simple
581 Van Buren Street	↓	± 25'-0"	Side	↓	± 14'-6"	Stucco, Wood Shale, Mfg. Trim	Complex
580 Van Buren Street	↓	± 27'-6"	Front	↓	± 17'-6"	Wood Siding, Comp. Shingles, Wood Trim (Windows)	Simple
577 Van Buren Street	± 35'-0"	± 35'-0"	↓	↓	± 14'-6"	↓	↓
576 Van Buren Street	± 55'-0"	± 75'-0"	Rear	Two	± 23'-6"	Stucco, Comp. Shingles, Wood Trim (Windows)	Complex
567 Van Buren Street	± 30'-0"	± 68'-0"	Front	↓	↓	Siding (Wood Shingles) Comp. Shingles Wood Trim (Windows)	↓
566 Van Buren Street	± 30'-0"	± 110'-0"	↓	↓	± 22'-0"	Stucco / Stone Veneer Comp. Shingles Mfg. / Wood Trim	↓
790 Dixon Way	± 25'-0"	± 110'-0"	↓	One	Can't Determine	Can't Determine	Can't Determine
↳ Could not access parcel (info based on Google Earth)							



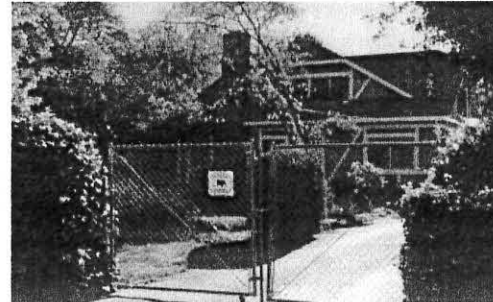
**587 VAN BUREN**



**586 VAN BUREN ST.**  
ACROSS 587 VAN BUREN ST.



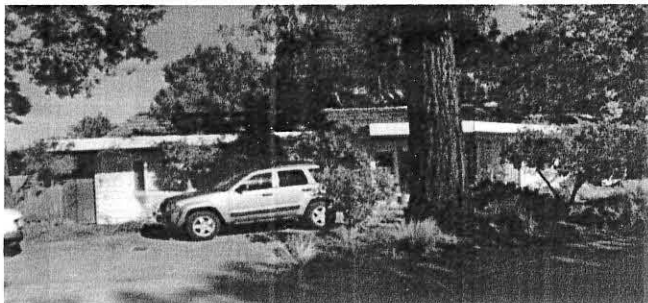
**580 VAN BUREN ST.**  
ACROSS & TO THE LEFT OF 586



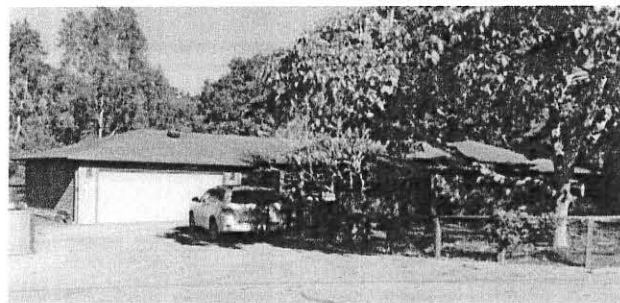
**576 VAN BUREN ST.**  
TO THE LEFT OF 580



**566 VAN BUREN ST.**  
TO THE LEFT OF 576



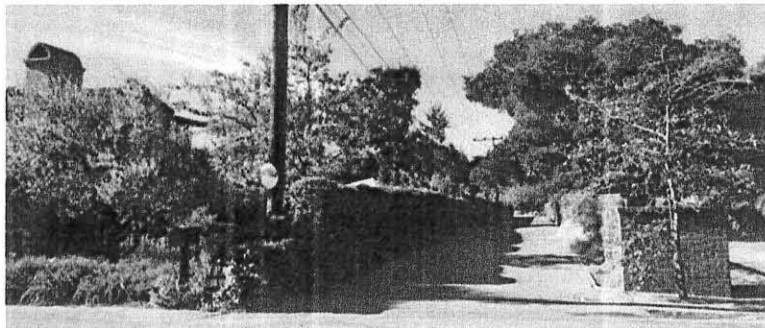
**581 VAN BUREN ST.**  
NEXT DOOR TO THE RIGHT OF 587



**577 VAN BUREN ST.**  
TO THE RIGHT OF 580



**567 VAN BUREN ST.**  
TO THE RIGHT OF 577

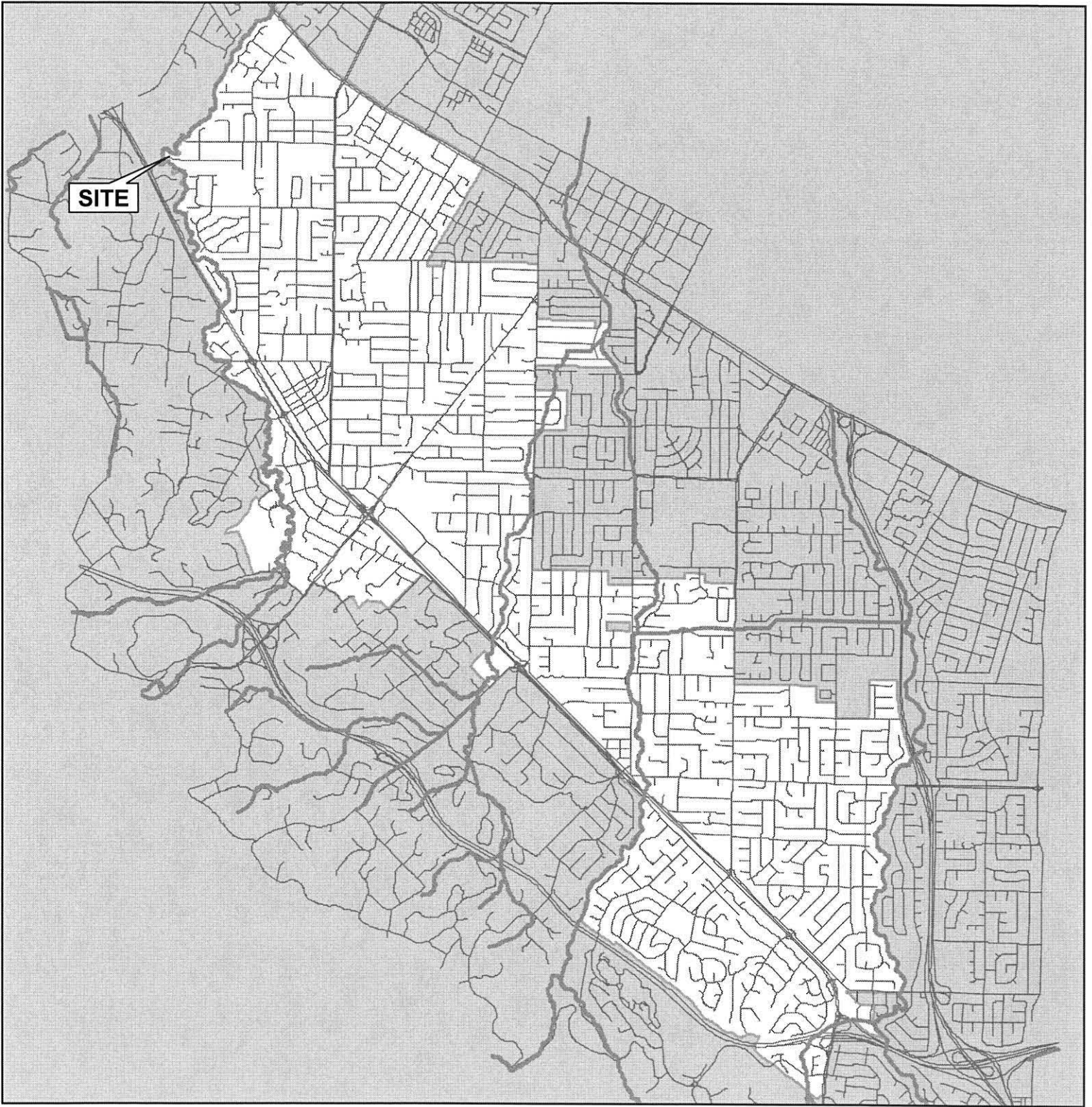


**790 DIXON WAY**  
**DIRECTLY BEHIND 587 VAN BUREN ST.**

**PLEASE NOTE, THERE ARE NO OTHER HOMES BEHIND, OR TO THE LEFT OF 587 VAN BUREN ST. A CEMETARY IS IN THAT LOCATION.**



# AREA MAP



## CITY OF LOS ALTOS

**APPLICATION:** 14-SC-47  
**APPLICANT:** Chapman Design Associates / N. Huang  
**SITE ADDRESS:** 587 Van Buren Street

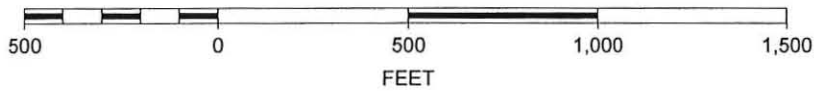


Not to Scale

# VICINITY MAP



SCALE 1 : 6,000



CITY OF LOS ALTOS

**APPLICATION:** 14-SC-47  
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**SITE ADDRESS:** 587 Van Buren Street

# 587 Van Buren Street Notification Map



SCALE 1 : 1,500

