



DATE: June 17, 2015

AGENDA ITEM # 2

TO: Design Review Commission
FROM: Sierra Davis, Assistant Planner
SUBJECT: 15-V-04 and 15-SC-21 – 305 Quinnhill Avenue

RECOMMENDATION:

Continue variance and design review application 15-V-04 and 15-SC-21

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This is a variance and design review application for a deck encroachment into the rear yard setback at 305 Quinnhill Road.

BACKGROUND

The general character of the neighborhood is diverse because of the varying setbacks, house orientation on the lot, materials and structures that have been developed over time as larger lots have been subdivided. The properties in the immediate neighborhood context are heavily vegetated in the front yards and are not readily visible from the street. The subject project is located between two flag lot access driveways, with two houses at the rear of the property.

The existing house is non-conforming as it does not meet the rear yard setback. The scope of the project is an interior remodel, removal of a sunroom at the front, and expansion of the deck. Since the project will not eliminate or replace more than 50 percent of the floor area, the non-conforming setbacks can be maintained.

DISCUSSION

The variance is for a deck encroachment into the rear yard setback. The deck would encroach into the rear yard setback 12 feet resulting in a 38-foot rear yard setback, where a setback of 44 feet is required for above grade decks. The deck would be extended to the side property line four-feet, eight inches and would meet the side yard setback of 25 feet (see chapter 14.08 of the Municipal Code)

The orientation of the house is between two flag lots access driveways with a wide front property line and varying rear property line. Overall, the lot meets the 100-foot depth requirement; however, the R1-H zoning requirements results in a 20-foot deep building envelope, with a 30-foot front yard setback and a 50-foot rear yard setback required (see chapter 14.08 of the Municipal Code). Uncovered decks may extend into the required rear

yard up to six feet and shall meet the required side yard setback (see section 14.66.210 of the Municipal Code). Hardscape surfaces and decks can extend to any property line if less than six inches from the grade. The variance would allow the raised deck to encroach an additional six feet, for a 12 foot encroachment.

Variances may be granted because of special circumstances applicable to the property, including size, shape, topography, location, or surroundings, the strict application of the provisions of this chapter deprives such property of privileges enjoyed by other properties in the vicinity and under identical zoning classifications. The shallow depth of the building envelope is unique to this property as the surrounding lots have a more normalized lot configuration with a greater depth than width. Staff is in support of this variance because of the shape of the lot and required setbacks, where the surrounding patterns of the lots have a greater depth allowing more development privileges at the rear.

The house will maintain the existing exterior materials as the scope of the project is for an interior remodel and new deck only. New materials will be use on the deck extension and include stainless steel vertical bars and top bar with stainless stain cable rails.

Landscaping and Privacy

While staff supports the variance for the deck to encroach into the rear yard setback, there are privacy concerns that staff discussed with the applicant regarding views from the raised deck. The Single-Family Residential Design Guidelines indicate that raised decks should be sensitive to the surrounding properties privacy impacts. The deck is located on the downhill side of the lot and has views to the northeast property, 309 Quinnhill Avenue, as reference in the line of sight diagrams. The deck also has views toward the front of the house on the flag lot to the rear at 307 Quinnhill Avenue. Although the views to these two properties exist, they should be addressed with the variance as the existing non-conforming deck will be expanded to a larger deck area.

The applicant submitted a letter addressing the privacy impact and does not propose addition landscaping or structural barriers to reduce the privacy impacts from the deck extension because the view is unaltered. Staff is unable to make the design review findings that the deck avoids unreasonable interference with privacy. The proposed deck exacerbates the existing privacy impacts because of a larger more active deck.

Therefore, staff recommends continuance of the project to address privacy concerns that result from the expanded deck and asks that the Design Review Commission provide direction to the applicant to address privacy concerns. Staff included the required design findings for the Commission's reference.

PUBLIC CONTACT

This project was noticed to 64 nearby property owners (500-foot radius) 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 15301 of the Environmental Quality Act because it involves the construction of a single-family dwelling.

Cc: Mark English Architects, Applicant
James and Heidi Burke, Property Owners

Attachments:

- A. Application
- B. Area Map and Vicinity Map
- C. Line of Sight Diagrams

REQUIRED FINDINGS

15-V-04 and 15-SC-21 – 305 Quinnhill Avenue

1. With regard to the variance to allow a raised deck extension into the rear yard setback, the Design Review Commission finds the following in accordance with Section 14.76.060 of the Municipal Code that:
 - a. That the granting of the variance will be consistent with the objectives of the zoning plan set forth in Article 1 of Chapter 14.02;
 - b. That the granting of the variance will not be detrimental to the health, safety, or welfare of persons living or working in the vicinity or injurious to property or improvements in the vicinity; and
 - c. That variances from the provisions of this chapter shall be granted only when, because of special circumstances applicable to the property, including size, shape, topography, location, or surroundings, the strict application of the provisions of this chapter deprives such property of privileges enjoyed by other property in the vicinity and under identical zoning classifications.

2. With regard to design review for a raised deck on a single-family structure, 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 provision of this chapter;
 - b. The height, elevations, and placement on the site of the proposed structure, 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 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 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.



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 checked="" 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: 305 QUINN HILL AVENUE, LOS ALTOS, CA 94024

Project Proposal/Use: SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENCE Current Use of Property: SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENCE

Assessor Parcel Number(s): 336-44-044 Site Area: 20,460.9

New Sq. Ft.: 0 Altered/Rebuilt Sq. Ft.: 1,160.2 Existing Sq. Ft. to Remain: 6,106.3

Total Existing Sq. Ft.: 6,152.7 Total Proposed Sq. Ft. (including basement): 6,106.3 (INC. GARAGE AND BASEMENT)

Applicant's Name: MARK ENGLISH ARCHITECTS

Telephone No.: 415-391-0186 Email Address: mark@markenglisharchitects.com

Mailing Address: 523 FRANCISCO STREET

City/State/Zip Code: SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94133

Property Owner's Name: JAMES AND HEIDI BURKE

Telephone No.: 650-518-9002 Email Address: heidi.burke@me.com

Mailing Address: 305 QUINN HILL AVENUE

City/State/Zip Code: LOS ALTOS, CA 94024

Architect/Designer's Name: MARK ENGLISH ARCHITECTS

Telephone No.: 415-391-0186 Email Address: mark@markenglisharchitects.com

Mailing Address: 523 FRANCISCO STREET

City/State/Zip Code: SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94133

*** 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)

15-V-04 and 15-SC-21

523 Francisco Street
San Francisco, CA 94133

June 8, 2015

Sierra Davis
Associate City Planner
Los Altos Community Development Department
Los Altos City Hall
1 North San Antonio Road
Los Altos, CA 94022



This letter is written to request a variance for 305 Quinnhill Avenue, Los Altos, CA 94024, the property and home of Heidi and James Burke. The variance would be applied to the proposed, cantilevered, raised deck addition that would extend into the rear yard setback. It's clear that none of the five properties within this development were designed to meet current planning requirements. We are asking to be allowed to continue the building edge that already exists.

The renovation of the Burke home at 305 Quinnhill Avenue intends to extend its raised deck approximately 4'-8" towards its east sideyard. A portion of the house and raised deck is already located in the rear yard. The deck extension to the east does not extend beyond the 25' sideyard setback, thus the proposed deck maintains the distance required from its eastern property line. Trees, shrubs, and hedges also maintain a visual barrier between the 309 Quinnhill Avenue even though the distance between the deck and neighbor has decreased. The impact on privacy is negligible.

The other property with potential privacy impact is 307. 307, a flag-lot, shares its driveway with 305 which runs along the 305's east property line. This subsequently, orients 307 to have its front yard face 305's rear yard. 307 is also sited higher on the hill, thus looks down onto the 305 property. The deck extension is approximately parallel to the front entry of 307, so the shift is lateral to the east. It does not reduce the existing distance between the two houses nor does the view change from the additional 4'-8" with the existing site conditions. The deck extension does not impact 307's privacy nor should it require additional screening since the view is unaltered.

With these circumstances in mind, we request a variance to allow Heidi and James Burke extend their raised deck into the rear yard setback.

Sincerely,

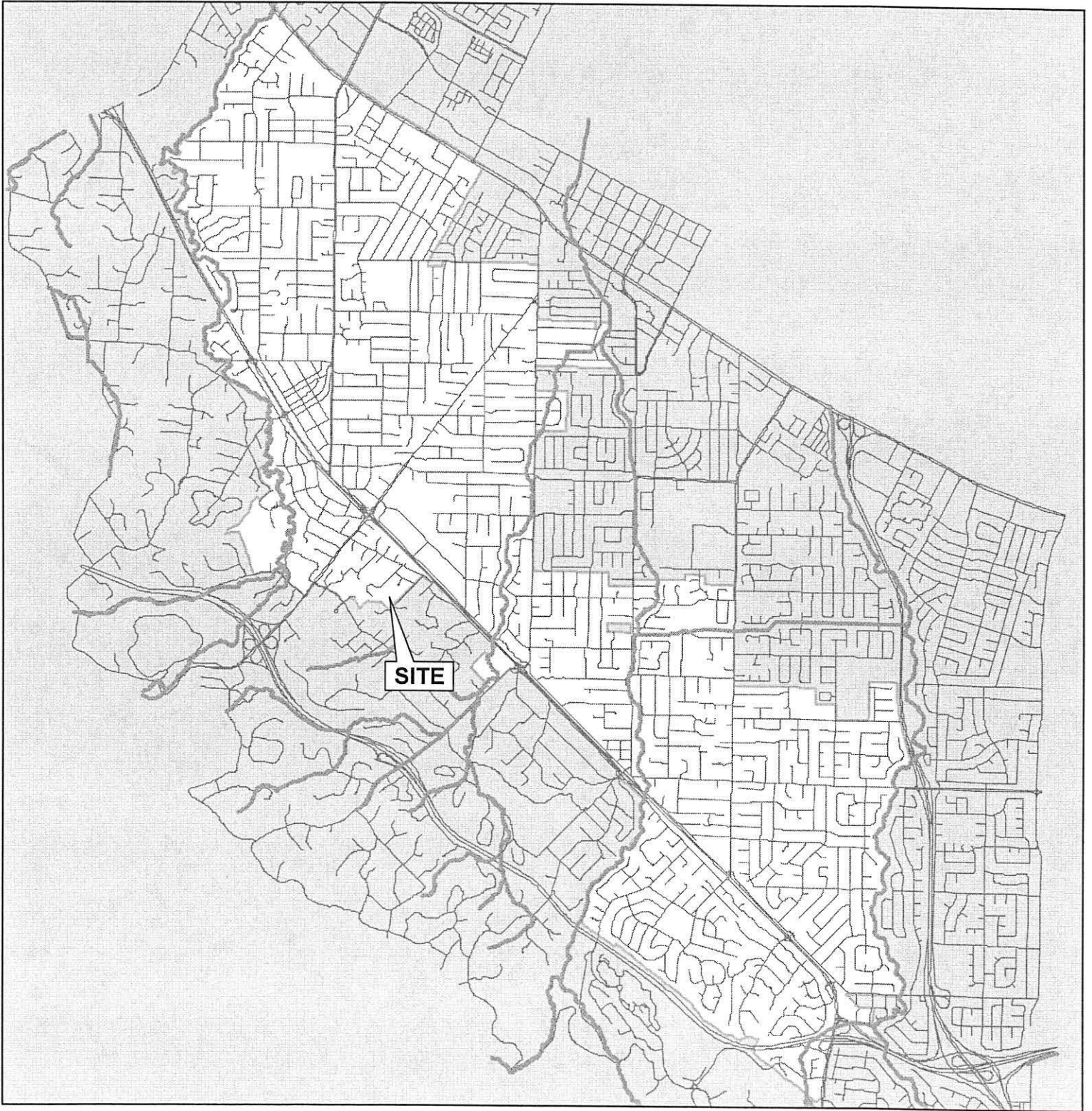
A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mark English".

Mark English

Principal Architect
Mark English Architects

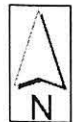


AREA MAP



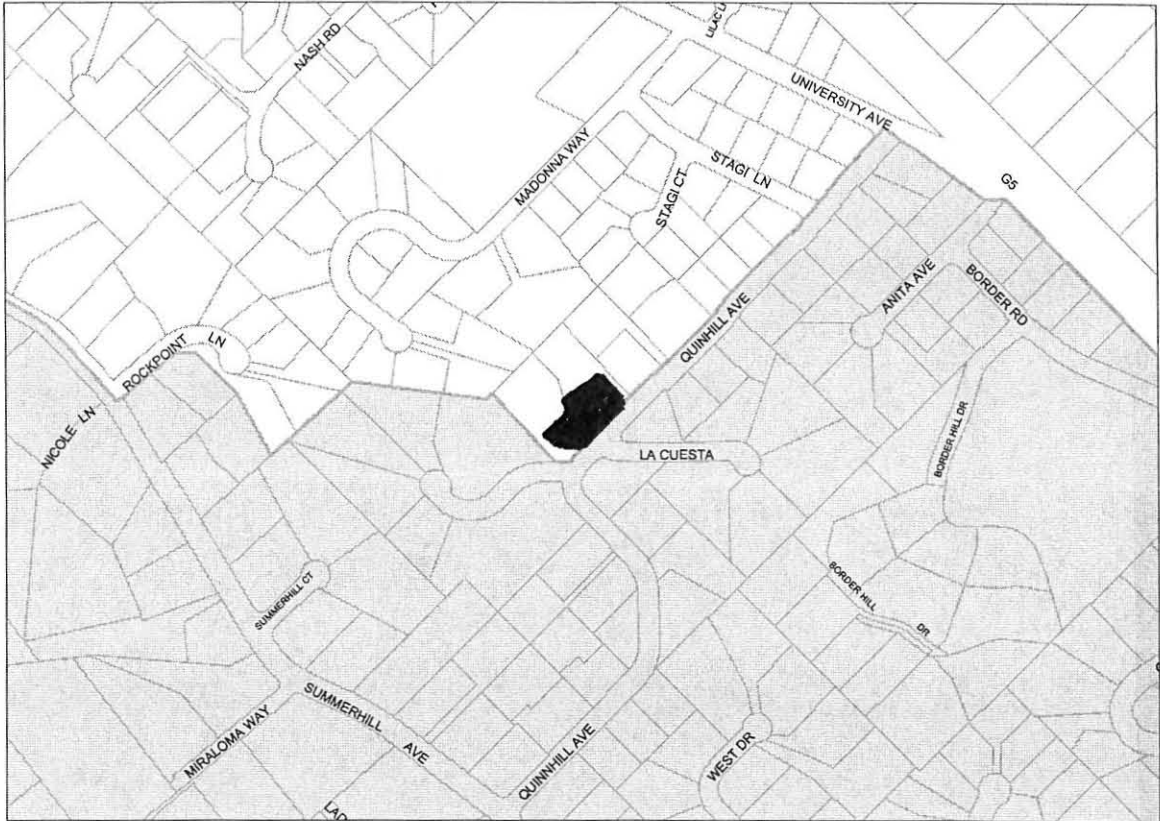
CITY OF LOS ALTOS

APPLICATION: 15-V-04 and 15-SC-21
APPLICANT: M. English Architects/J. and H. Burke
SITE ADDRESS: 305 Quinnhill Avenue

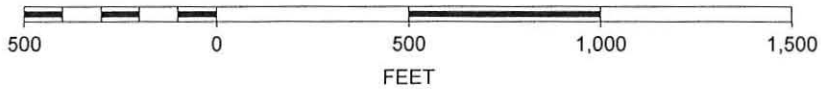


Not to Scale

VICINITY MAP



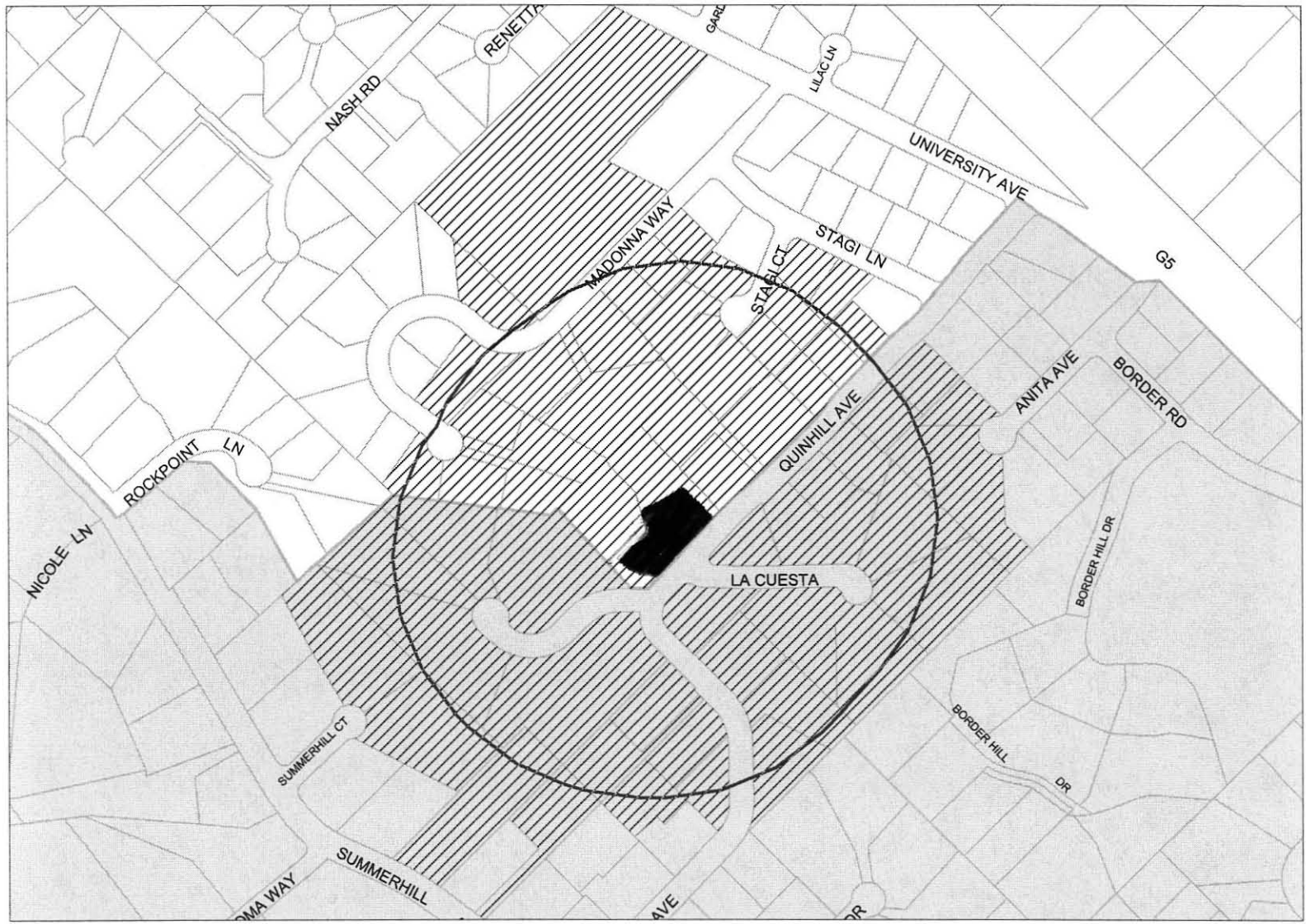
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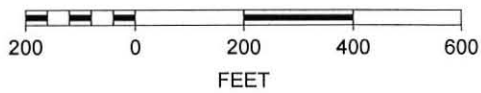
CITY OF LOS ALTOS

APPLICATION: 15-V-04 and 15-SC-21
APPLICANT: M. English Architects/J. and H. Burke
SITE ADDRESS: 305 Quinnhill Avenue

305 Quinnhill Avenue 500-foot Notification Map



SCALE 1 : 4,224





ADJACENT PROPERTY MAP



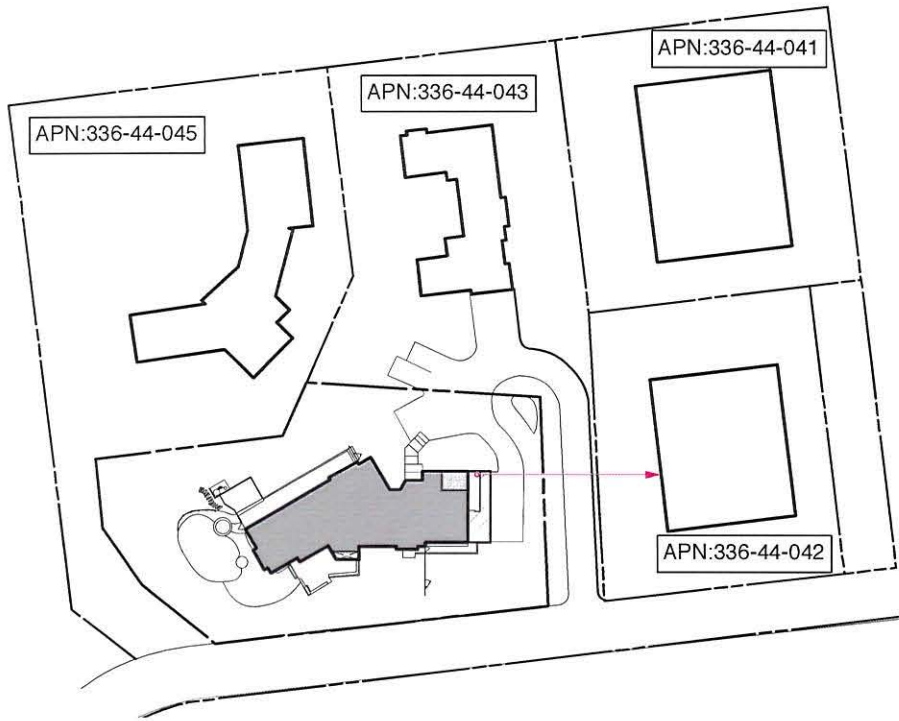
THE DECK WILL BE EXTENDED TO THE END OF THE MEASURING TAPE AS SHOWN IN THE PHOTO ABOVE.

LINE OF SIGHT DIAGRAMS FOR DECK EXTENSION

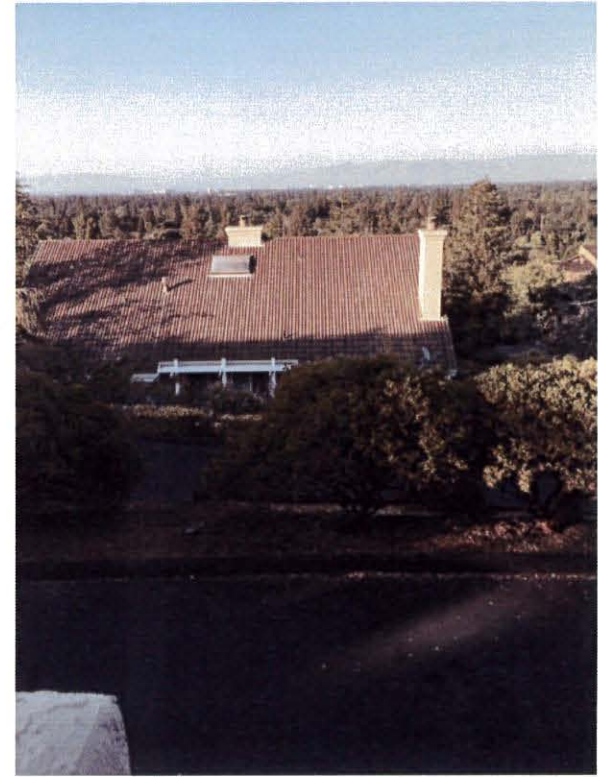
RESIDENCE OF HEIDI AND JAMES BURKE

305 QUINN HILL AVENUE
LOS ALTOS, CA 94024

A.P.N. 336-44-044

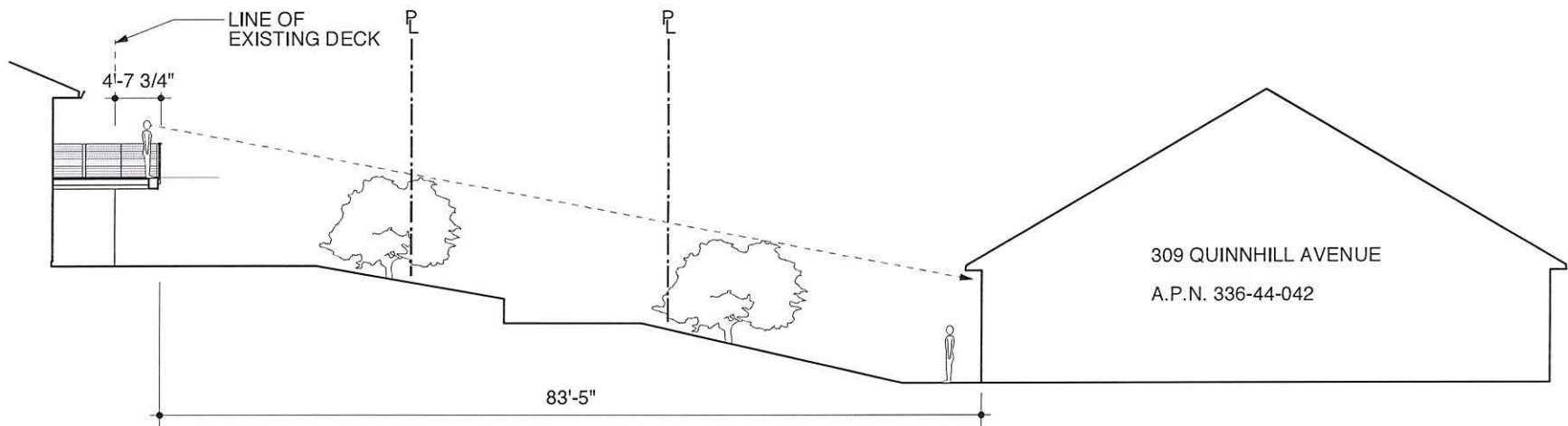


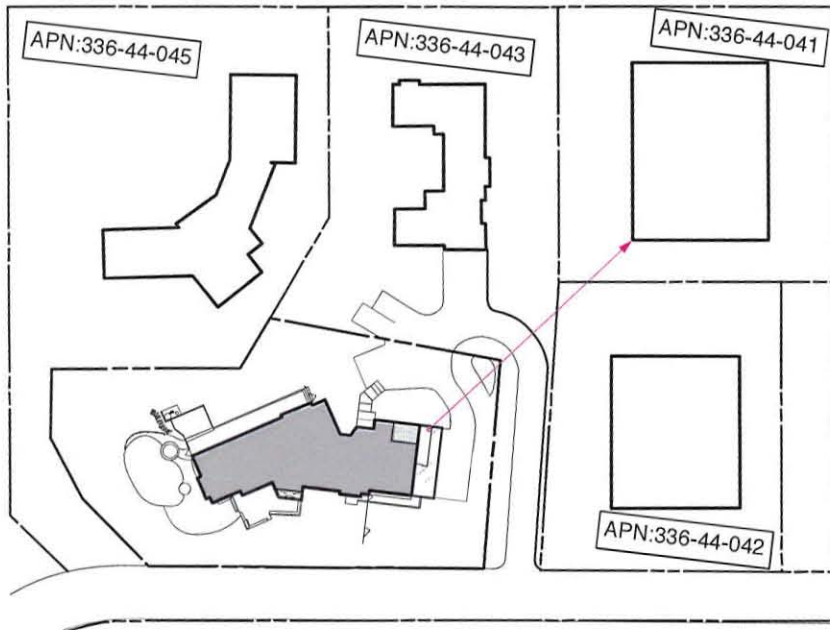
ADJACENT PROPERTY MAP



VIEW FROM EXISTING DECK: SIDE YARD OF 307 QUINN HILL AVENUE

307 QUINN HILL AVENUE
LOS ALTOS, CA 94024



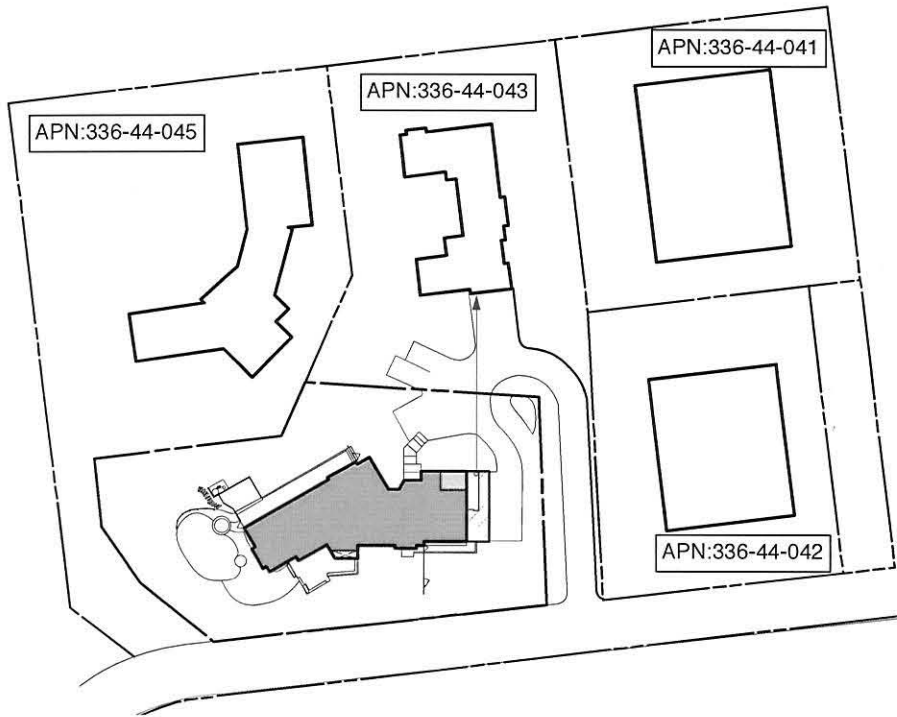


ADJACENT PROPERTY MAP

311 QUINN HILL AVENUE
LOS ALTOS, CA 94024

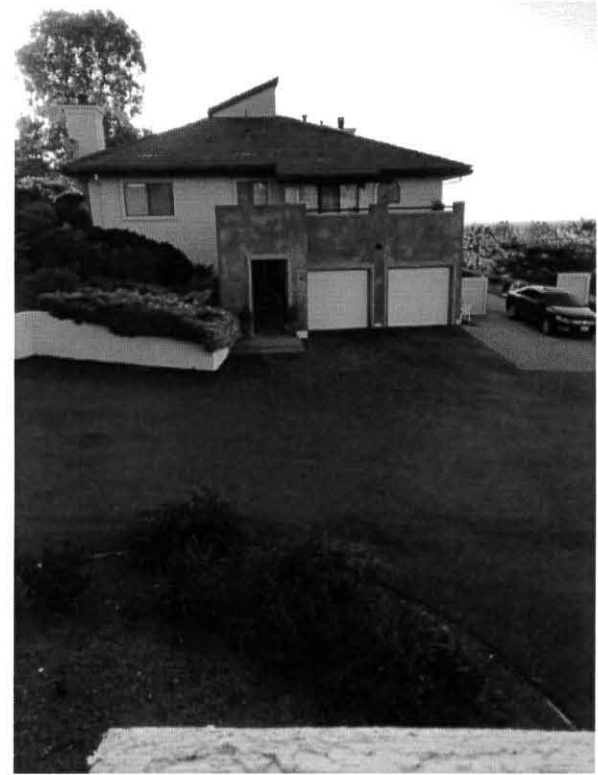


VIEW FROM EXISTING DECK: FRONT/SIDE YARD OF
311 QUINN HILL AVENUE

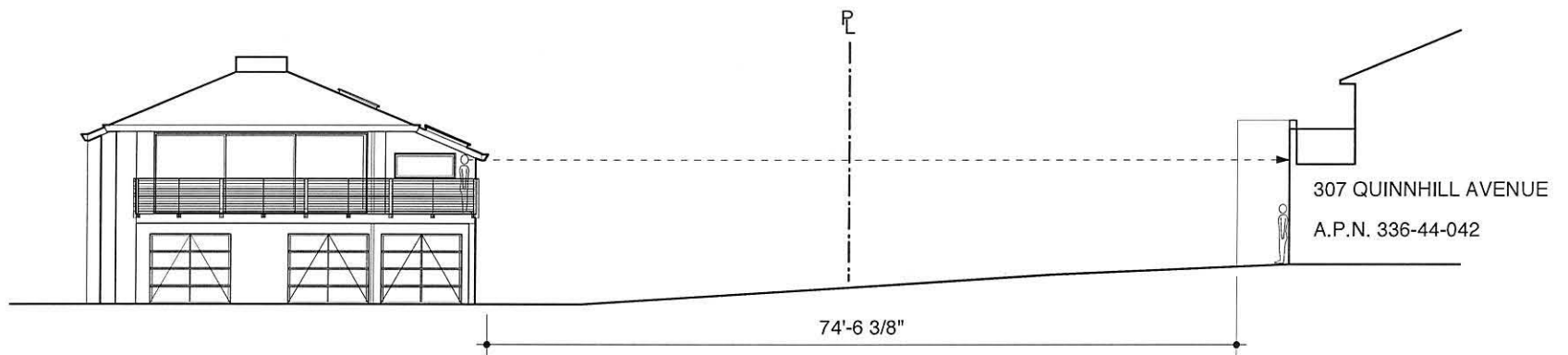


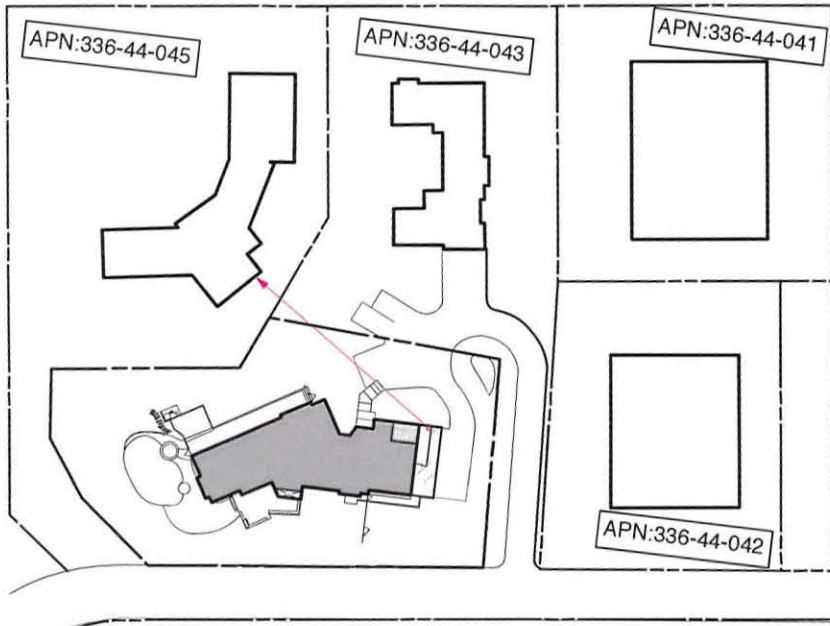
ADJACENT PROPERTY MAP

307 QUINN HILL AVENUE
LOS ALTOS, CA 94024



VIEW FROM EXISTING DECK: FRONT YARD OF 307 QUINN HILL AVENUE





ADJACENT PROPERTY MAP

303 QUINN HILL AVENUE
LOS ALTOS, CA 94024



VIEW FROM EXISTING DECK: FRONT YARD OF 303
QUINN HILL AVENUE