



DATE: August 16, 2017

AGENDA ITEM # 2

TO: Design Review Commission
FROM: David Kornfield, Planning Services Manager—Advance Planning
SUBJECT: 17-SC-10 – 107 E. Portola Avenue

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve design review application 17-SC-10 subject to the recommended findings and conditions

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This is a design review application for a two-story house. The project includes 1,763 square feet on the first-story and 1,085 square feet on the second-story plus a basement. The following table summarizes the project's technical details.

GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION: Single-family, Residential
ZONING: R1-10
PARCEL SIZE: 8,420 square feet
MATERIALS: Concrete tile roof, stucco siding, vinyl windows, wood columns and doors, and stained concrete walkways

	Existing	Proposed	Allowed/Required
LOT COVERAGE:	1,826 square feet	1,869 square feet	2,526 square feet
FLOOR AREA:			
First floor	1,826 square feet	1,763 square feet	
Second floor	-	1,085 square feet	
Total	1,826 square feet	2,821 square feet	2,947 square feet
SETBACKS:			
Front	25 feet	25 feet	25 feet
Rear	47 feet	54 feet	25 feet
Right side (1 st /2 nd)	6 feet	8 feet/19.3 feet	6.7 feet/14.7 feet
Left side (1 st /2 nd)	5.75 feet	13.6 feet/17.6 feet	6.7 feet/14.7 feet
HEIGHT:	13.5 feet	25.3 feet	27 feet

DISCUSSION

Neighborhood Context

The subject property is located on East Portola Avenue, between North San Antonio Road and Jordan Avenue. The neighborhood context is considered a Consistent Character Neighborhood as defined in the City's Residential Design Guidelines. The neighborhood context is primarily one-story Ranch style houses that have been designed using simple forms and rustic materials. There are two, two-story houses located in the immediate neighborhood context on Nela Lane. There is not a distinctive street tree pattern along East Portola Avenue; however, there are mature trees and landscaping.

Design Review

According to the Design Guidelines, in Consistent Character Neighborhoods, good neighbor design has design elements, materials and scale found within the neighborhood and sizes that are not significantly larger than other homes. Proposed projects should be designed to fit in and lessen abrupt changes.

The house is a contemporary Spanish Eclectic design style. The proposed design has elements, materials and scale found in the immediate vicinity. For example, the design has a projecting two-car garage set at the front setback consistent with the surrounding properties. The project has a four-foot deep covered porch in front of the living room facing the street, which is a design element found on several houses across the street. The roof design is simple with a side gable that is compatible with the form of the nearby roof elements. The second story roof is a bit more complex with two dominant hip forms and a gabled balcony over the garage that relates to the nearby gable roofs facing the street.

The project uses rustic materials that are compatible with the area. The front door, garage door and porch columns are wood. A wooden trellis with braces is also shown over the garage. The cement plaster siding is prevalent in the area. The earth toned concrete tile roof is a new material, however it has a finer-grain pattern that is compatible with the asphalt composite and wood shingle roofs in the vicinity.

The proposed design has a compatible scale with the neighborhood context. The nine-foot tall wall plate heights at the first story are not an abrupt change compared to the prevailing eight-foot wall plates in the immediate vicinity. The second story uses eight-foot tall wall plates which helps minimize the height and bulk the project as with the hip roof plan. The front entry element is taller than surrounding entries; however, it is in proportion to the design and helps progress the scale from the first to the second stories. The entry arch has an appropriately low height and relates well to the arch in the front porch and the balcony over the garage. The project's overall height is approximately two feet lower than the 27-foot height limit.

Privacy

The design maintains a reasonable degree of privacy with the adjacent properties. The right side has four or five small, second-story windows that are set five feet off the floor avoiding views down. The floor plan shows one clearstory window in the stairway facing the right; however, the right elevation shows one window in this location. Either way, staff supports the design as the clearstory windows do not allow views down. On the left side, there are two second story windows, one set toward the front for Bedroom No. 2 with a high, five-foot tall sill height and one in the Master Bathroom shown with obscure glazing. Two second story windows, one in the Master Walk-in Closet and one in the Master Bedroom, face the rear yard. The pepper trees to remain will help buffer the privacy impacts toward the rear.

Landscaping

The landscape plan maintains the existing grade and large trees including the sweet gum street tree in the front yard (Tree No. 13) and the pepper trees in the rear yard (Tree Nos. 8, 9, and 11). The landscape plan includes a rich and textured front yard scheme including stone or concrete pavers, a dry-creek stormwater retention area, seating boulders and various plantings including deciduous and evergreen trees and broadleaf shrubs.

With the new front yard landscaping, additional planting areas and hardscape, the project meets the City's landscaping regulations and street tree guidelines. 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.

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 NOTICING

A public meeting notice was posted on the property and mailed to 22 nearby property owners on East Portola Avenue, Pico Lane, Jordan Avenue and Los Altos Square.

CORRESPONDENCE

Staff received three letters regarding the project. One of the letters is from a resident a couple of houses away opposed to two story development in the area. A letter from the left neighbor supports the project. A letter from the right neighbor supports the project but raises concern about the privacy impacts of the second story windows.

Also attached is a copy of an outreach card the property owner shared with his immediate neighbors.

Cc: James Nesmith, Applicant and Property Owner
Julie Benintendi, Designer

Attachments:

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

FINDINGS

17-SC-10 – 107 E. Portola Avenue

Regarding 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 provision of this chapter;
- b. The height, elevations, and placement on the site of the proposed addition, when considered regarding the nature and location of residential structures on adjacent lots, avoids unreasonable interference with views and privacy and considers the topographic and geologic constraints imposed by the 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 minimizes 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 are incorporated 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.

CONDITIONS

17-SC-10 – 107 E. Portola Avenue

GENERAL

1. Approved Plans

The approval is based on the plans and materials received on August 8, 2017, except as may be modified by these conditions.

2. Protected Trees

Trees Nos. 8, 9, 11 and 13 are protected under this application and cannot be removed without a tree removal permit from the Community Development Director.

3. Encroachment Permit

An encroachment permit shall be obtained from the Engineering Division prior to doing any work within the public right-of-way including the street shoulder. All work within the public street right-of-way shall comply with the City's Shoulder Paving Policy.

4. New Fireplaces

Only gas fireplaces, pellet fueled wood heaters or EPA certified wood-burning appliances are allowed in new construction pursuant to Chapter 12.64 of the Municipal Code.

5. Landscaping

The landscape plan is subject to the City's Water Efficient Landscape Regulations pursuant to Chapter 12.36 of the Municipal Code.

6. Fire Sprinklers

Fire sprinklers are required pursuant to Section 12.10 of the Municipal Code.

7. Underground Utilities

Any new utility service drops shall be located underground from the nearest convenient existing pole pursuant to Chapter 12.68 of the Municipal Code.

8. Indemnity and Hold Harmless

The applicant/owner agrees to indemnify, defend, protect, and hold the City harmless from all costs and expenses, including attorney's fees, incurred by the City or held to be the liability of the City in connection with the City's defense of its actions in any proceedings brought in any State or Federal Court, challenging any of the City's action with respect to the applicant's project.

PRIOR TO BUILDING PERMIT SUBMITTAL

9. Conditions of Approval

Incorporate the conditions of approval into the title page of the plans.

10. Tree Protection Note

On the grading plan and/or the site plan, show all tree protection fencing at the dripline of all trees to remain as required by the Planning Division; 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."

11. Water Efficient Landscape Plan

Provide a landscape documentation package including an irrigation plan prepared by a licensed landscape professional showing how the project complies with the City's Water Efficient Landscape Regulations and include signed statements from the project's landscape professional and property owner.

12. Green Building Standards

Provide verification that the house will comply with the California Green Building Standards pursuant to Section 12.26 of the Municipal Code and provide a signature from the project's Qualified Green Building Professional Designer/Architect and property owner.

13. Underground Utility Location

Show the location of underground utilities pursuant to Section 12.68 of the Municipal Code. Underground utility trenches shall avoid the drip-lines of all protected trees unless approved by a project arborist and the Planning Division.

14. Air Conditioner Sound Rating

Show the location of any air conditioning units on the site plan and the manufacturer's specifications showing the sound rating for each unit.

15. Storm Water Management

Show how the project complies 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.).

PRIOR TO ISSUANCE OF BUILDING OR DEMOLITION PERMIT

16. Tree Protection

Tree protection fencing shall be installed around the dripline(s), or as required by Planning Division, of trees Nos. 8, 9, 11 and 13 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 and shall not be removed until all building construction has been completed unless approved by the Planning Division.

PRIOR TO FINAL INSPECTION

17. Landscaping Installation

All landscaping, street trees and privacy screening trees shall be maintained and/or installed as shown on the approved plans or as required by the Planning Division.

18. Green Building Verification

Submit verification that the house was built in compliance with the City's Green Building Standards Code (Section 12.26 of the Municipal Code).

19. Water Efficient Landscaping Verification

Provide a landscape Certificate of Completion, signed by the project's landscape professional and property owner, verifying that the landscaping and irrigation were installed per the approved landscape documentation package.



ATTACHMENT A

CITY OF LOS ALTOS GENERAL APPLICATION

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

Permit # 1107625

<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: 107 E Portola Ave Los Altos CA 94022

Project Proposal/Use: 170-13-008 Current Use of Property: _____

Assessor Parcel Number(s): _____ Site Area: _____

New Sq. Ft.: 4276 Altered/Rebuilt Sq. Ft.: 0 Existing Sq. Ft. to Remain: 0

Total Existing Sq. Ft.: 1826 Total Proposed Sq. Ft. (including basement): 4276

Is the site fully accessible for City Staff inspection? Yes

Applicant's Name: James Nesmith

Telephone No.: 650-933-6546 Email Address: luckyformi@gmail.com

Mailing Address: 555 Bryant St #381

City/State/Zip Code: Palo Alto, CA 94301

Property Owner's Name: Same as Applicant

Telephone No.: _____ Email Address: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City/State/Zip Code: _____

Architect/Designer's Name: Julie Benintendi

Telephone No.: 208-869-4971 Email Address: Juliebenintendi@yahoo.com

Mailing Address: 1508 S Bigg St

City/State/Zip Code: Boise, ID 83709

* 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

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 107 E Portola Ave Los Altos CA 94022

Scope of Project: Addition or Remodel _____ or New Home X

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: 107 E Portals Ave
Date: 3/14/17

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: 8600 square feet
Lot dimensions: Length 128 feet
Width 67 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 31 ft./on right 28 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 17
Garage facing front recessed from front of house face 1
Garage in back yard 0
Garage facing the side 0
Number of 1-car garages 1; 2-car garages 17; 3-car garages 0

Address: 107 E Portola Ave

Date: 3/14/17

4. Single or Two-Story Homes:

What % of the homes in your neighborhood* are:

One-story 90%

Two-story 10%

5. Roof heights and shapes:

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

Are there mostly hip 3, gable style 15, or other style 2 roofs*?

Do the roof forms appear simple X 14 or complex 4?

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) _____

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

asphalt

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: 107 E Portola
Date: 3/14/17

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.)?

There are bushes, smaller trees, lawns and low water vegetation

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

Fairly visible from the street not visible from the back

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)?

The right of way is grass. One meter sized Sweet gum is the major feature

10. Width of Street:

What is the width of the roadway paving on your street in feet? 24'

Is there a parking area on the street or in the shoulder area? no

Is the shoulder area (unimproved public right-of-way) paved, unpaved, gravel, landscaped, and/or defined with a curb/gutter? landscaped

Address: 107 E Portola Ave
Date: 3/14/17

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.:

The siding seems the most similar - along with the asphalt gable roofs. All the houses have shallow front yards.

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: 107 E Portola Ave
 Date: 3/14/17

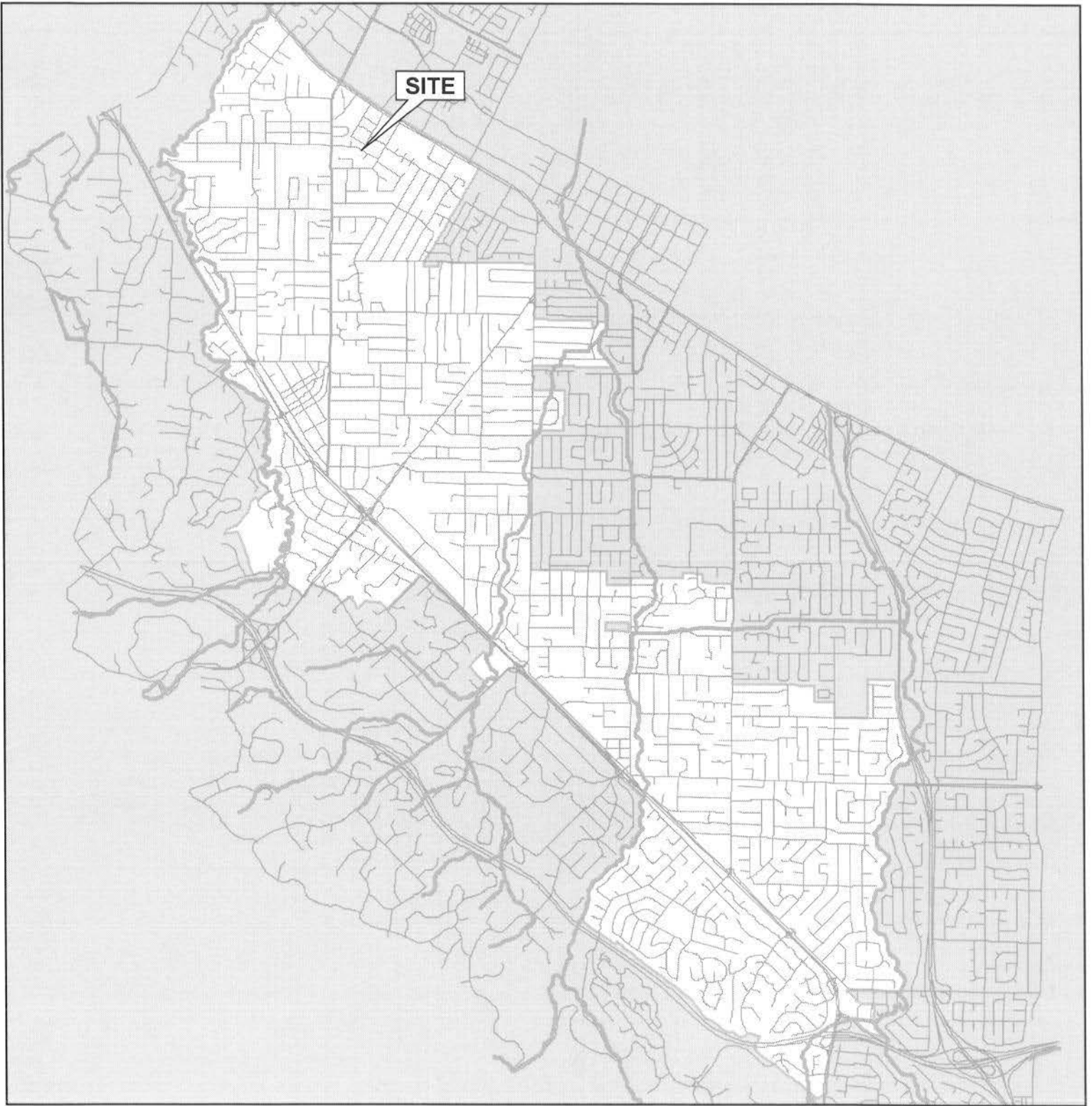
Summary Table

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)
99 E Portola Ave	31'	55'	Front	One	17'	Stucco	Simple/Ranch
115 E Portola Ave	27'	57'	Front	One	15'	Stucco	Simple/Ranch
106 E Portola Ave	27'	66'/40'	Front	One	14'	Stucco/Board	Simple/hip
122 E Portola Ave	14'	6.8'	Front	One	14'	Stucco	Simple/Ranch
768 Nels Lane	22'	40'	Front	One	14'	Board	Simple/Ranch
89 E Portola Ave	27'	33'	Front	One	15'	Stucco	Simple/Ranch
809 Pico Lane	22'	6.8'	Front	One	15'	Stucco	Simple/Ranch
90 E Portola Ave	25'	28'	Front	One	16'	Stucco	Simple/Ranch
80 E Portola Ave	25'	75'	Front	One	15'	Stucco	Simple/Ranch
133 E Portola Ave	25'	38'	Front	One	17'	Stucco	Simple/hip

ATTACHMENT C

AREA MAP



CITY OF LOS ALTOS

APPLICATION: 17-SC-10
APPLICANT: J. Nesmith
SITE ADDRESS: 107 E. Portola Avenue

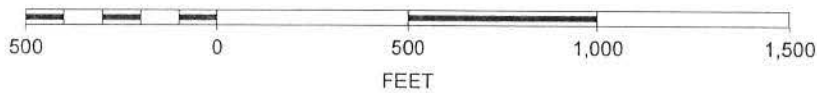


Not to Scale

VICINITY MAP



SCALE 1 : 6,000



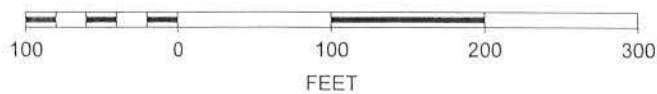
CITY OF LOS ALTOS

APPLICATION: 17-SC-10
APPLICANT: J. Nesmith
SITE ADDRESS: 107 E. Portola Avenue

107 E. Portola Avenue Notification Map



SCALE 1 : 1,500



ATTACHMENT D

July 30, 2017

Re: Design Review for 107 E. Portola Avenue

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Ingeburg Griswold, and I live immediately adjacent to the proposed remodeling project at 107 E. Portola Avenue. I am 90 yrs old, and have lived at my home since the late 1970s. Generally speaking, I don't go out after 7 pm as I tire easily at this time of day. However, I want to make sure I weigh in on this agenda item.

I have had the pleasure of meeting the new property owner and his family. My adult children and I have reviewed all of the current design plans for the home they are proposing to build, and are in agreement with each and every aspect of the design at this time.

We understand there are some concerns the design review commission has such as reducing plate heights, a small balcony in front, and the entry as currently designed. However, we feel the new owner has put significant thought into minimizing the effects remodeling an aging home into a new and larger home with regard to the surrounding neighbors and property lines. They have addressed landscaping to benefit all parties and have kindly allowed us to ask questions and provide suggestions/feedback on the plans.

There are already plenty of two-story homes on this street and adjacent streets, so we don't feel this home will be out of character with the neighborhood. I, personally, also look forward to seeing older homes in this neighborhood improved and updated.

If you have any questions or would like to speak to me via phone, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Ingeburg Griswold
99 E. Portola Ave.
Los Altos, CA 94022
650-947-9353

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Ingeburg Griswold". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the right of the typed name and address.

From: Francisco Bertran <xiscomaria@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 02, 2017 6:13 PM
To: Planning Service
Subject: Comment on 17-SC, 10-107 E. Portola Ave

Hello,

I am the owner of the property on 115 E. Portola Avenue. The proposed construction next door seems sound, but I'd like to request that the top story windows facing my property be fixed and glazed or opaque in order to provide us with privacy, to prevent people from looking into our garden.

Your response is much appreciated.

Thank you,
Francisco Bertran

Dear Design Review Commission,

I am writing about the new house plans for 107 E Portola Ave., on your agenda for the August 2 meeting. The design would absolutely not fit in the neighborhood. Many of the neighbors were under the impression that the street was in a one story overlay. All of the newly built houses on E Portola and close by streets are one story:

809 Pico Ln

802 Pico Ln

70 E Portola

60 E Portola

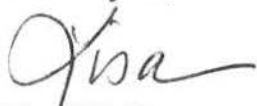
765 Jordan

The Neighborhood Compatibility Worksheet states that 10% of the neighborhood homes are two story. This is simply not true. Looking at the Summary Table on the same worksheet, it has all of the near by houses listed as one story, which is accurate.

According to the current plans, of the two story house plus a basement, the 4276 sq footage greatly exceeds any other house in the neighborhood.

I completely understand wanting to rebuild the house, but I encourage you to not approve this specific plan because it does not fit into the character of the neighborhood.

Thank you,



Lisa Walker

89 E Portola Ave



Dear Neighbor

We cordially invite you to our home at 107 E Portola Ave for food and drinks. We would also like to share our plans for our new home. Please join us Saturday June 10th from 5-7pm.

Sincerely
The Nesmith Family

James

Sofia

Livian

Kaylyn