DATE: August 2, 2017

AGENDA ITEM # 3

TO: Design Review Commission

FROM: Sierra Davis, Associate Planner

SUBJECT: 17-SC-10 – 107 E. Portola Avenue

RECOMMENDATION:

Continue design review application 17-SC-10 subject to the recommended direction

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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This is a design review application for a two-story addition to an existing one-story house. The project includes 1,929 square feet on the first-story and 1,157 square feet on the second-story with a basement. The following table summarizes the project's technical details.

GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION:	Single-family, Residential
ZONING:	R1-10
PARCEL SIZE:	8,413.5 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	2,062 square feet	2,524 square feet
FLOOR AREA:			
First floor	1,826 square feet	1,929 square feet	
Second floor	-	1,157 square feet	
Total	1,826 square feet	3,086 square feet*	2,945 square feet
SETBACKS:			
Front	25 feet	25 feet	25 feet
Rear	47 feet	54 feet	25 feet
Right side (1st/2nd)	6 feet	8 feet/19.3 feet	6.7 feet/14.7 feet
Left side (1st/2nd)	5.75 feet	10.6 feet/17.6 feet	6.7 feet/14.7 feet
HEIGHT:	13.5 feet	24 feet	27 feet

*There is a discrepancy in the plans regarding the total lot size, allowable floor area and lot coverage and total proposed floor area. The project summary table and staff report reflect the correct calculations.

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 more contemporary design style, using rectangular forms inspired by Spanish Eclectic design elements such as: low-pitched roof with shallow overhangs, red tile roof, arched entry and stucco siding. The columns that are used at the front entry, covered porch and second-story balcony element over the garage, are common in the Spanish Eclectic design style. The Spanish Eclectic design style is characterized as having simple rectangular massing with single gables or cross gable roof forms. The contemporary form of the house uses more complex elements resulting in a more varied roof plan with multiple ridges and valleys.

The house has a dominate garage element, located at the 25-foot front setback, which is consistent with the design and location of other garages in the neighborhood context. The facade massing is broken down into smaller elements, with arched elements over the entryway, covered porch and balcony. The eave line at the first- and second-story is varied which contributes to the vertical nature of the design with a two-story height wall over the entry that extends from the first-story to the second-story with an unresolved roof form. The massing of the facade should be resolved to create an entry element that is integral to the design of the house. Although there is a modest progression of forms the taller entry element and covered bay window over the garage could be simplified to deemphasize the somewhat competitive location at the face of the garage. The element is also off center with the garage and emphasizes the bulk of the element. Staff recommends to:

- Simplify the massing of the facade and resolve the complex entry element, two-story height wall and covered projecting bay window.

The house is in substantially the same location as the existing house and is in line with the houses on either side with compatible front and rear yard setbacks. The massing of the house as viewed from the front and rear is narrow with a first story width of 48 feet and a second-story width of 30 feet. The rear of the house has two-story height massing; however, larger

scaled elements at the rear of the house are generally more acceptable as these elements are not viewed from the street and can be screened from adjacent properties. The second-story massing at the side of the house is setback from the first-story massing with greater than required interior side yard setbacks of 19 feet on the right side and 17.5 feet on the left side, where 14.7 feet is required.

In general, the proposed design includes wall plate heights that are consistent with the houses in the context with approximately nine-feet at the first-story and eight-feet at the second-story. However, the house appears to be larger in scale at the first story because of the construction method of stacking the second-story floor on top of the wall plate. The design also includes flat, shallow overhangs that do not visually reduce the height of the first-story wall. The construction method results in 11-foot tall exposed wall visible from the street and adjacent properties to the sides, which is approximately three feet higher than the surrounding structures. Staff recommends to:

- 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 plate heights, providing an alternative construction method for the plate and floors.

The streetscape provided in the plans show a wall height of 10 feet, eight inches, where the elevations show a wall height of over 11 feet. There also appears to be a discrepancy in the height of the eave height of the adjacent houses with houses shown with approximately 10-foot eave heights. These discrepancies should be revised to be consistent with the elevations and existing houses.

The project design includes high quality materials, such as a concrete tile roof, stucco siding, vinyl windows, wood columns and doors, and stained concrete walkways. Overall, the project design has architectural integrity and the design and materials are compatible within the consistent character neighborhood. The project is consistent with the Residential Design Guidelines, required design findings and neighborhood context; therefore, staff is generally in support of the proposed house design except as noted above.

Privacy

The design is sensitive to the privacy of neighboring properties with five small, second-story windows on the right-side elevation and one window on the left side elevation with sill heights of five-feet. Small windows with sills greater than four-feet, six-inches in height limit viewing out and down into adjacent properties and help to preserve privacy.

The left side also has a larger window with a four-foot sill height; however, this window has obscured glass. This window is located in a bathroom and staff would recommend that the sill height be raised to a minimum of 4.5 feet, which would allow for privacy and the use of clear glazing.

Landscaping

The existing landscaping includes mature trees and shrubs in the front and rear yard. The landscaping plan proposes the removal of nine trees and shrubs. One sweetgum tree in the front yard and three California pepper trees in the rear yard will be maintained. The proposed landscaping plan provides for a new front yard landscaping and two new trees. The applicant proposes to maintain all rear yard landscaping with the exception of the existing laurel hedge along the rear property line.

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. The landscaping plan provided to staff will need to show the entire site landscaping plan and irrigation plan which will include the rear yard landscaping to remain. 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 size, floor area and lot coverage calculations are inconsistent in the plans provided. The floor area diagram provides the accurate floor area and lot coverage calculations, and the floor area exceeds the maximum allowable floor area by 141 square feet. The porches were included in the floor area diagram and calculations; however, these elements are included in lot coverage, but not floor area. The floor plan will need to be revised to meet the allowable floor area limit of 2,945 square feet, which is based on staff's calculation of the lot size of 8413.5 square feet.

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 22 nearby property owners on East Portola Avenue, Pico Lane, Jordan Avenue and Los Altos Square.

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

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

FINDINGS

17-SC-10 – 107 E. Portola Avenue

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 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 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-10 – 107 E. Portola Avenue

- Simplify the massing of the facade and resolve the complex entry element and two-story height wall and bay window over the garage.

- 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 plate heights, and/or providing an alternative construction method for the plate and floors.

- Raise sill height of the second-story bathroom window on the left side to a minimum of 4.5 feet, which would allow for privacy and the use of clear glazing.

- Revise the floor plan to meet the maximum floor area limit of 2,945 square feet.

ATTACHMENT A

CITY OF LOS ALTOS
GENERAL APPLICATION

Type of Review Requested: *(Check all boxes that apply)* Permit # 1107625

	One-Story Design Review		Commercial/Multi-Family		Environmental Review
X	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: 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 Biggs 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 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 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

* See "What constitutes your neighborhood" on page 2

Address: 107 E Portola 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 __

Address: 107 E Parker 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 X stucco __ board & batten X clapboard
__ tile __ stone __ brick X 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? X Ranch __ Shingle __Tudor __Mediterranean/Spanish
__ Contemporary __Colonial __ Bungalow X 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 vegitation

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 medium 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

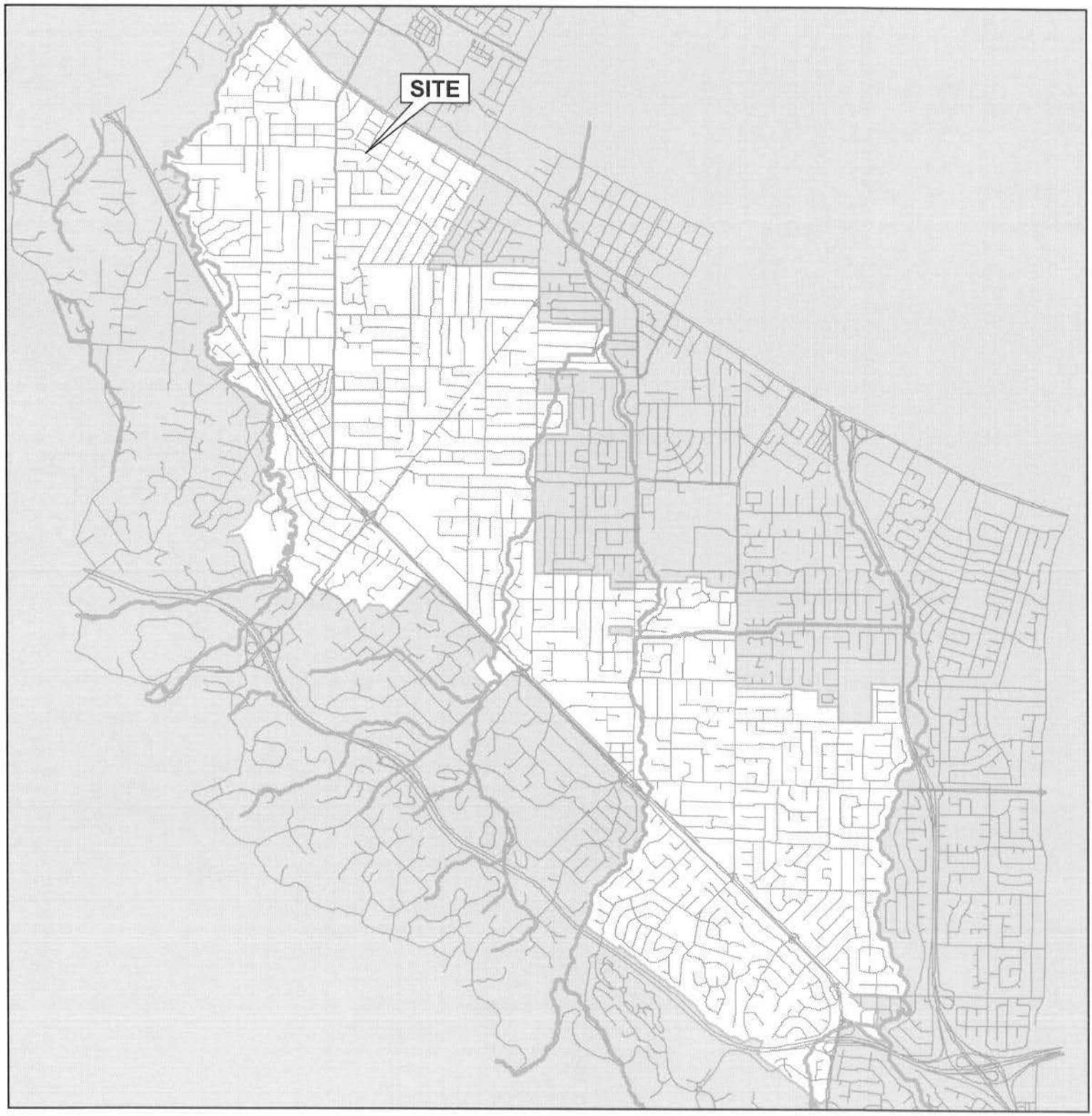
Summary Table

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 Nela 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	29'	75'	Front	One	15'	Stucco	Simple/Ranch
133 E Portola Ave	25'	38'	Front	One	17'	Stucco	Simple/hip

ATTACHMENT C

AREA MAP



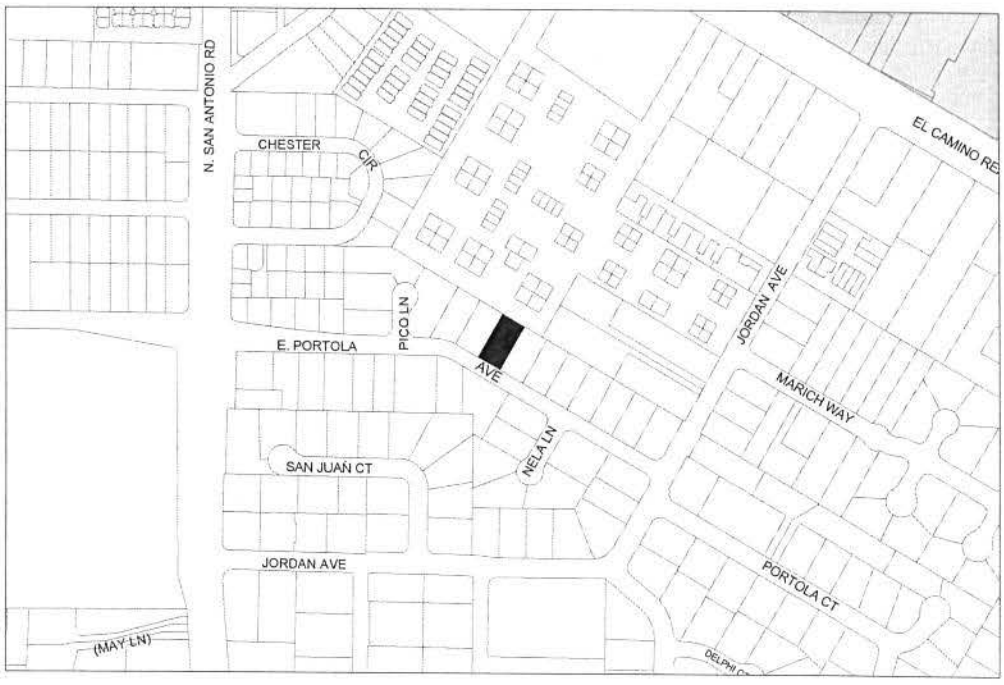
CITY OF LOS ALTOS

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

N

Not to Scale

VICINITY MAP



SCALE 1 : 6,000

500 0 500 1,000 1,500

FEET

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CITY OF LOS ALTOS

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

107 E. Portola Avenue Notification Map