DATE: January 31, 2018

AGENDA ITEM # 4

TO: Design Review Commission

FROM: Sean K. Gallegos, Associate Planner

SUBJECT: 17-SC-35 – 1261 Saint Joseph Avenue

RECOMMENDATION:

Continue design review application 17-SC-35 subject to the listed direction

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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This is a design review application for a new two-story house. The project includes 2,477 square feet on the first story, 1,785 square feet on the second story and a 1,988 square-foot basement. The following table summarizes the project's technical details:

GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION:	Single-Family, Residential
ZONING:	R1-10
PARCEL SIZE:	15,400 square feet
MATERIALS:	Concrete shake roof, smooth stucco siding, aluminum clad windows, wood doors, wood garage door, precast limestone sills and trim, and wood railing

	Existing	**Proposed**	**Allowed/Required**
COVERAGE:	3,333 square feet	2,688 square feet	4,620 square feet
FLOOR AREA:			
First floor	3,333 square feet	2,477 square feet	
Second floor	-	1,785 square feet	
Total	3,333 square feet	4,262 square feet	4,290 square feet
SETBACKS:			
Front	40.8 feet	36 feet	25 feet
Rear	36.7 feet	52 feet	25 feet
Right side (1st/2nd)	10 feet	23.25 feet/31.25 feet	10 feet/17.5 feet
Left side (1st/2nd)	16 feet	26.2 feet/26.2 feet	10 feet/17.5 feet
HEIGHT:	16 feet	26.6 feet	27 feet

BACKGROUND

Neighborhood Context

The property is in a Diverse Character Neighborhood as defined in the City's Residential Design Guidelines. The subject property is a down-slope lot with its building pad set approximately 12 feet below St. Joseph Avenue according to the grading and drainage plan. This section of St. Joseph Avenue, which is located between Stonehaven Drive and Robles Ranch Road, consists mostly of single-story, Ranch styled houses that are similar in size, footprint, design characteristics, building materials, and scale. There is a two-story house nearby at the corner of St. Joseph Avenue and Robles Road and a second two-story house at St. Joseph Avenue and Noel Drive.

The streetscape character varies for the immediate neighborhood context due to the topographical differences between the north and south side of St. Joseph Avenue. The houses on the north side of St. Joseph Avenue have similar down-slope lots as the subject property. In comparison, the properties on the south side of St. Joseph Avenue are up-sloped lot with a building pad higher than St. Joseph Avenue. The landscape along St. Joseph Avenue is varied with no distinct pattern within the neighborhood.

DISCUSSION

Design Review

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

The new two-story house uses a Prairie inspired design style with low-pitched hipped roofs, a facade emphasizing horizontal lines, and large-scale front porch supports. The design is eclectic because it also incorporates a more formal entry element, and oversized windows and stone trim that are not characteristic of a Prairie style house. The larger entry element does not relate well to the houses in the neighborhood context, which have lower scaled entries and window elements. Though the structure is architecturally different from the adjacent houses, design elements such as the horizontal orientation, hip style roof, and two-car garage are compatible with the surrounding area. The design's composition concrete shake roofing, stucco finish, cast stone trim are integral to the design concept, and reflect a high quality and appropriate relationship to the rustic qualities of the area.

The proposed first floor plate height is ten-feet, which is an increase from the eight-foot to nine-foot plate heights of existing residences in the neighborhood. Staff is concerned that the proposed 10-foot tall eave line is substantially taller than the lower eaves and walls of the adjacent houses, and the Single-Family Residential Design Guidelines recommend minimizing the use of tall or two-story high design elements. The large, vertically oriented windows, the tall columns, larger scaled entry, the two-story tall walls and overall height also emphasize the verticality and height of the structure. The accent trim band being located one and one-half stories high along the elevations creates large expanses of vertical wall planes, which increases the mass of the structure. Given the simplicity of the surrounding

structures, the proposed structure is more complex and bulkier in massing than the adjacent houses. A more horizontal appearance is recommended by lowering the wall plate heights, diminishing the verticality of window shapes, the entry, and adding a low horizontal accent detail to soften the elevation and reduce its overall bulk and scale.

Since the proposed structure includes an overly bulky and vertical mass with elements that are not compatible with the adjacent structures and surrounding neighborhood context, the project does not appear to meet the following design review findings:

- 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.
- The orientation of the proposed new house in relation to the immediate neighborhood will NOT minimize the perception of excessive bulk and mass

To meet the findings related to compatibility and bulk, staff recommends that the Design Review Commission provide the following direction:

- Reduce the overall prominence and eave height of the first story walls to lower the scale;
- Reduce the two-story tall elements along the front and side elevations to reduce the structure's vertical emphasis;
- Simplify the massing of the structure including wall and roof forms to be more compatible with the character of the immediate neighborhood; and
- Reduce the scale of the front entry.

Privacy

The left side of the house includes four, second-story windows: two small sized windows in the master bedroom with 4.5-foot sill heights, one medium sized window in bathroom No. 2 with a 4.5-foot sill height, and one large sized clerestory window above the living room with a 12-foot sill height. Due to their placement and sill heights, these windows do not create unreasonable privacy impacts.

The right side of the house includes four, second-story windows: one large sized window in bedroom No. 5 with a 2.5-foot still height, one medium sized window in the master bathroom with a 4.5-foot sill height, and two small sized windows in the master bedroom with 4.5-foot sill heights. While bedroom No. 5 window may have a 2.5-foot sill height, its views are oriented toward the front yard of the adjacent property to prevent privacy impacts. Therefore, the placement and/or sill heights of the windows do not create unreasonable privacy impacts.

The rear of the house has three windows and one sliding door entering onto a balcony. There is a large sized window in the master bedroom with a 2.5-foot sill height, one small sized window in the master bedroom closet with a 4.5-foot sill height, one large sized window in bedroom No. 2 with a 2.5-foot sill height, and a three section sliding glass door in the loft loft/study. The balcony, which is

25.5 feet wide and 5.75 feet deep, is partially recessed between the master bedroom and bedroom No. 2, but continues to have views toward the sides and rear adjacent properties.

Staff is concerned that the second story balcony may create the potential for privacy impacts. The balcony impacts occur due to the balcony's size, its accessibility off a common hallway and its location along the rear of the structure. As outlined in the Residential Design Guidelines, the balcony depth should be under four feet to create a more passive use area that is less likely to create a privacy impact. A sight-line diagram was requested to better understand privacy impacts, and it is provided on Sheets M2 and M3. To provide additional privacy screening, the applicant has proposed fast-growing evergreen screening trees along the left and rear property lines to diminish views down into properties along the side and rear property lines. However, staff continues to have privacy concerns regarding the balcony.

Since the proposed structure includes an active balcony that does not diminish unreasonable privacy impacts, the project does not appear to meet the following design review finding:

- The height, elevations, and placement on the site of the new house, when considered with reference to the nature and location of residential structures on adjacent lots, will NOT avoid unreasonable interference with views and privacy and will consider the topographic and geologic constraints imposed by particular building site conditions;

To meet this finding related to privacy, staff recommends that the Design Review Commission provide the following direction:

- Incorporate fast growing, evergreen trees into the landscaping plan along the complete right side yard to fill-in unscreened areas of the property line; and
- Reduce the overall size of the second story balcony and reduce its depth to four feet.

Landscaping

There are six trees on the property. The project removes two crape myrtle trees (Nos. 4 and 6) and an elephant heart plum tree (No. 5) located in the front yard, and retains a Monterey pine (No. 2) and bay tree (No. 3) in the front yard, and retains a laurustinus tree (No.1) in the rear yard. The project includes a new magnolia tree along the project frontage and three additional ornamental trees in the front yard area. The project will also be installing new hardscape and additional landscaping in the front yard area. 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. With the new front yard landscaping, additional planting areas and hardscape, the project meets the City's landscaping regulations 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 CONTACT

A public meeting notice was posted on the property and mailed to nine nearby property owners on Clinton Road and Altos Oak Drive.

cc: Yunbei Ben Yu and Yingfan Z Yu, Applicant/Owners
RH Associates, Architects

Attachments:
A. Application
B. Neighborhood Compatibility Worksheet
C. Area, Vicinity and Public Notification Maps
D. Material and Color Board

FINDINGS

17-SC-35 – 1261 Saint Joseph Avenue

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

a. The orientation of the proposed new house in relation to the immediate neighborhood will NOT minimize the perception of excessive bulk and mass;

b. 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

c. The height, elevations, and placement on the site of the new house, when considered with reference to the nature and location of residential structures on adjacent lots, will NOT avoid unreasonable interference with views and privacy and will consider the topographic and geologic constraints imposed by particular building site conditions;

RECOMMENDED DIRECTION

17-SC-35 – 1261 Saint Joseph Avenue

- Reduce the overall prominence and eave height of the first story walls to lower the scale;
- Reduce the two-story tall elements along the front and side elevations to reduce the structure's vertical emphasis;
- Simplify the massing of the structure including wall and roof forms to be more compatible with the character of the immediate neighborhood;
- Reduce the scale of the front entry;
- Incorporate fast growing, evergreen trees into the landscaping plan along the complete right side yard to fill-in unscreened areas of the property line; and
- Reduce the overall size of the second story balcony and reduce its depth to four feet.

ATTACHMENT A

CITY OF LOS ALTOS

GENERAL APPLICATION

Type of Review Requested: *(Check all boxes that apply)* **Permit #** 1108031

	One-Story Design Review		Commercial/Multi-Family		Environmental Review
✓	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: 1261 SAINT JOSEPH AVENUE

Project Proposal/Use: RESIDENCE **Current Use of Property:** RESIDENCE

Assessor Parcel Number(s): 342-25-043 **Site Area:** 15,400

New Sq. Ft.: 5,779 **Altered/Rebuilt Sq. Ft.:** 0 **Existing Sq. Ft. to Remain:** 0

Total Existing Sq. Ft.: 3,333 **Total Proposed Sq. Ft. (including basement):** 5,779

Is the site fully accessible for City Staff inspection? YES

Applicant's Name: YUNBEI BEN YU & YINGFAN Z YU

Telephone No.: 650 823 3736 **Email Address:** yingfanz@hotmail.com

Mailing Address: 1261 SAINT JOSEPH AVENUE

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

Property Owner's Name: YUNBEI BEN YU & YINGFAN Z YU

Telephone No.: 650 823 3736 **Email Address:** yingfanz@hotmail.com

Mailing Address: 1261 SAINT JOSEPH AVENUE

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

Architect/Designer's Name: RH ASSOCIATES

Telephone No.: (530) 268-3055 **Email Address:** rhassoc@sbcglobal.net

Mailing Address: 22867 SUNSET RIDGE DR

City/State/Zip Code: AUBURN, CA 95602

** 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)

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 1261 St. Joseph Ave.
Scope of Project: Addition or Remodel ☐ **or New Home** ☑
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: 1261 St. Joseph Ave.
Date: 10/5/2017

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: _____square feet
Lot dimensions: Length _____ feet
Width _____ feet
If your lot is significantly different than those in your neighborhood, then note its: area 15,400, length 140, and width 110.

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 90 %
Existing front setback for house on left 35 ft./on right 25 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 9
Garage facing front recessed from front of house face 1
Garage in back yard 0
Garage facing the side 1
Number of 1-car garages 0; 2-car garages 9; 3-car garages 1

* See "What constitutes your neighborhood" (page 2)

Address: 1261 St. Joseph Ave.
Date: 10/5/2017

4. Single or Two-Story Homes:

What % of the homes in your neighborhood* are:
One-story 70
Two-story 30

5. Roof heights and shapes:

Is the overall height of house ridgelines generally the same in your neighborhood*? No
Are there mostly hip ✓, gable style ___, or other style ___ roofs*?
Do the roof forms appear simple ✓ or complex ___?
Do the houses share generally the same eave height No?

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) 50% homes have combination of materials

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

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)
Property slopes front to back about 7 feet

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.)?
Mixture of mature trees and new trees, Sidewalk and rolled curb on adjacent properties
Landscaping to sidewalk

How visible are your house and other houses from the street or back neighbor's property?
House is visible from street but partially blocked by hedge running the width of property
House is partially visible to rear neighbor around tall mature trees (existing screenage)

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)?
Existing 4-5' tall hedge (and 3' tall w.i. fence) running the width of property.
Half of the width is curb and sidewalk and the other half is asphalt street.
32

10. Width of Street:

What is the width of the roadway paving on your street in feet? 32
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? paved

Address: 1261 St. Joseph Ave.
Date: 10/5/2017

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 front setbacks and the front facing garages are mostly cohesive. Everything else varies from home to home - half the homes have hip roofs and the other half has gable roofs.

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: 1261 St. Joseph Ave.
Date: 10/5/2017

Summary Table

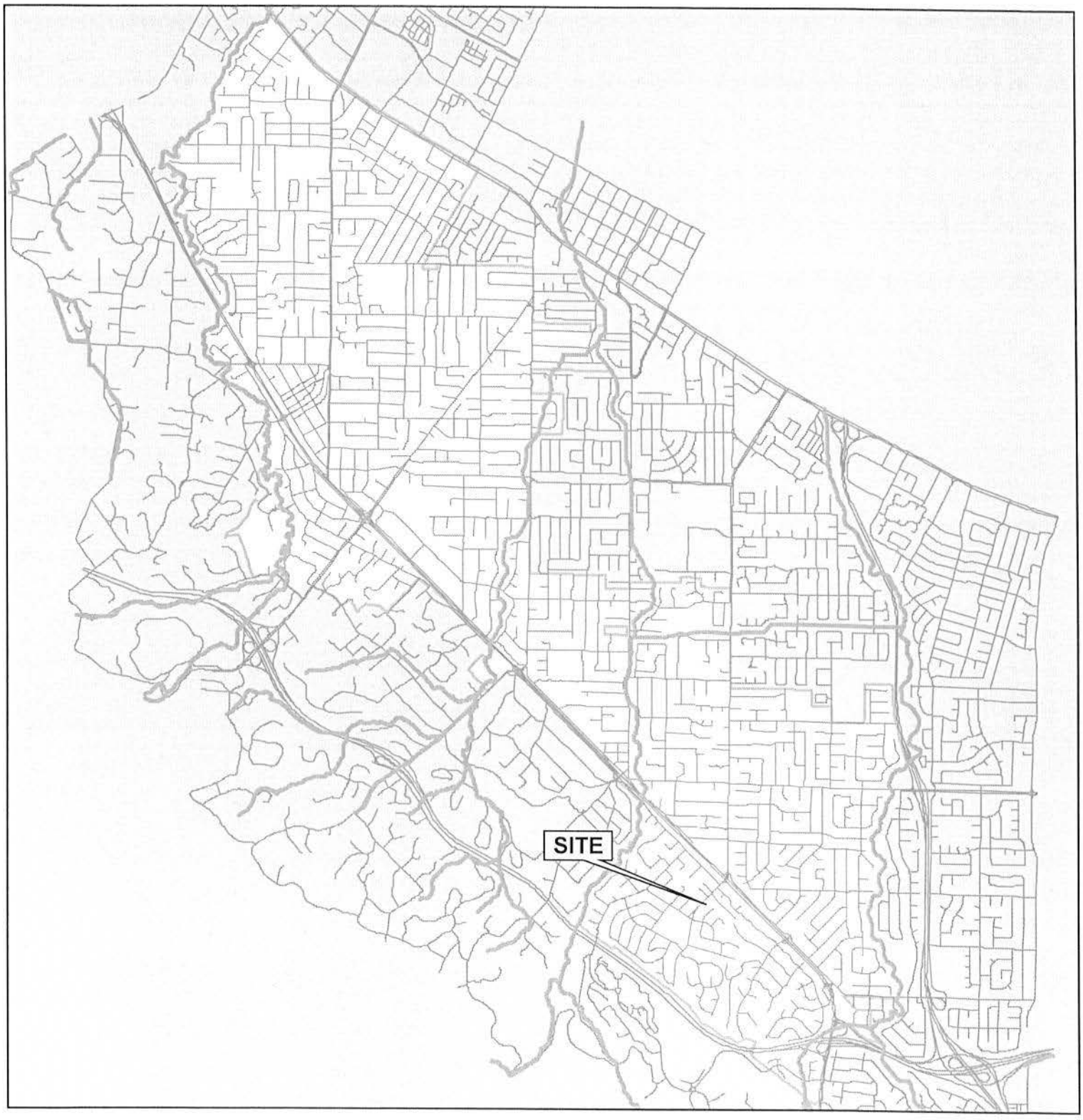
Please use this table to summarize the characteristics of the houses in your immediate neighborhood (two homes on either side, directly behind and the five to six homes directly across the street).

Address	Front setback	Rear setback	Garage location	One or two stories	Height	Materials	Architecture (simple or complex)
1900 Noel Drive	25	25	Front	Two	27	Comp Stucco	Complex
1271 St. Joseph Ave.	35	40	Side	One	16	Comp Stucco	Complex
1225 St. Joseph Ave.	25	40	Front	Two	20	Comp Stucco	Simple
1215 St. Joseph Ave.	25	35	Front	One	16	Brl Tile Stucco	Simple
1220 St. Joseph Ave.	25	35	Front	One	27	Comp Stucco	Complex
1230 St. Joseph Ave.	25	40	Front	One	16	Comp Wd Brick	Simple
1240 St. Joseph Ave.	25	30	Front	One	16	Comp Wd Brick	Simple
1898 Robles Ranch Rd.	20	25	Front	Two	18	Comp Wd Brick	Simple
1184 St. Charles Ct.	25	25	Front	One	16	Shake Stucco Brk	Simple
1180 St. Charles Ct.	25	25	Front	One	16	Comp Stucco	Simple

* See "What constitutes your neighborhood", (page 2).

ATTACHMENT C

AREA MAP



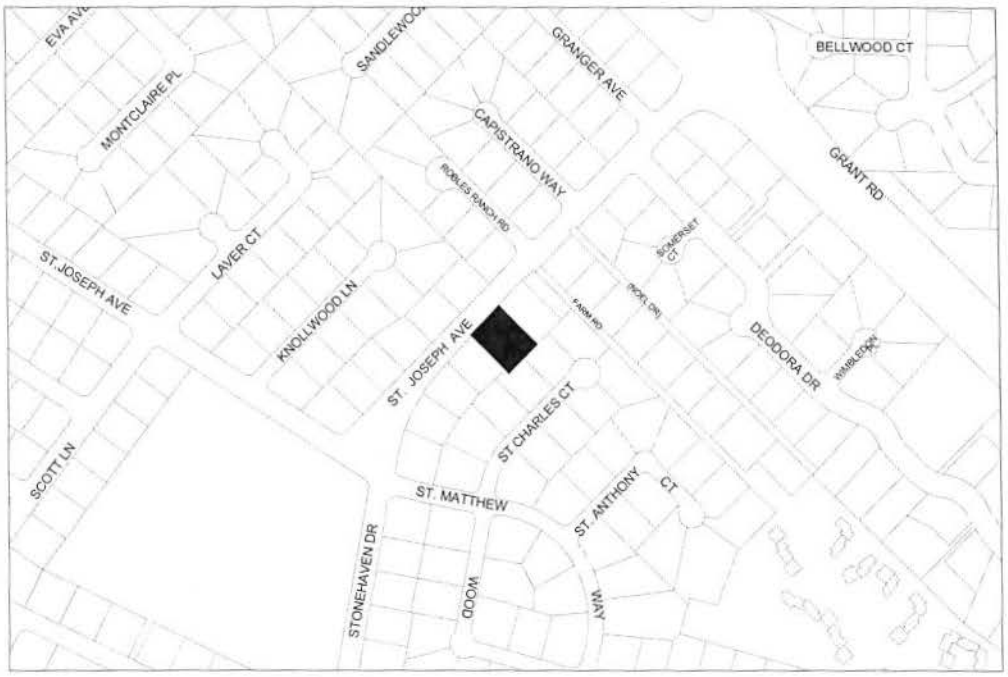
CITY OF LOS ALTOS

APPLICATION: 17-SC-35
APPLICANT: Y. Ben Yu and Y. Z Yu/ RH Associates
SITE ADDRESS: 1261 St. Joseph Avenue

N

Not to Scale

VICINITY MAP



SCALE 1 : 6,000

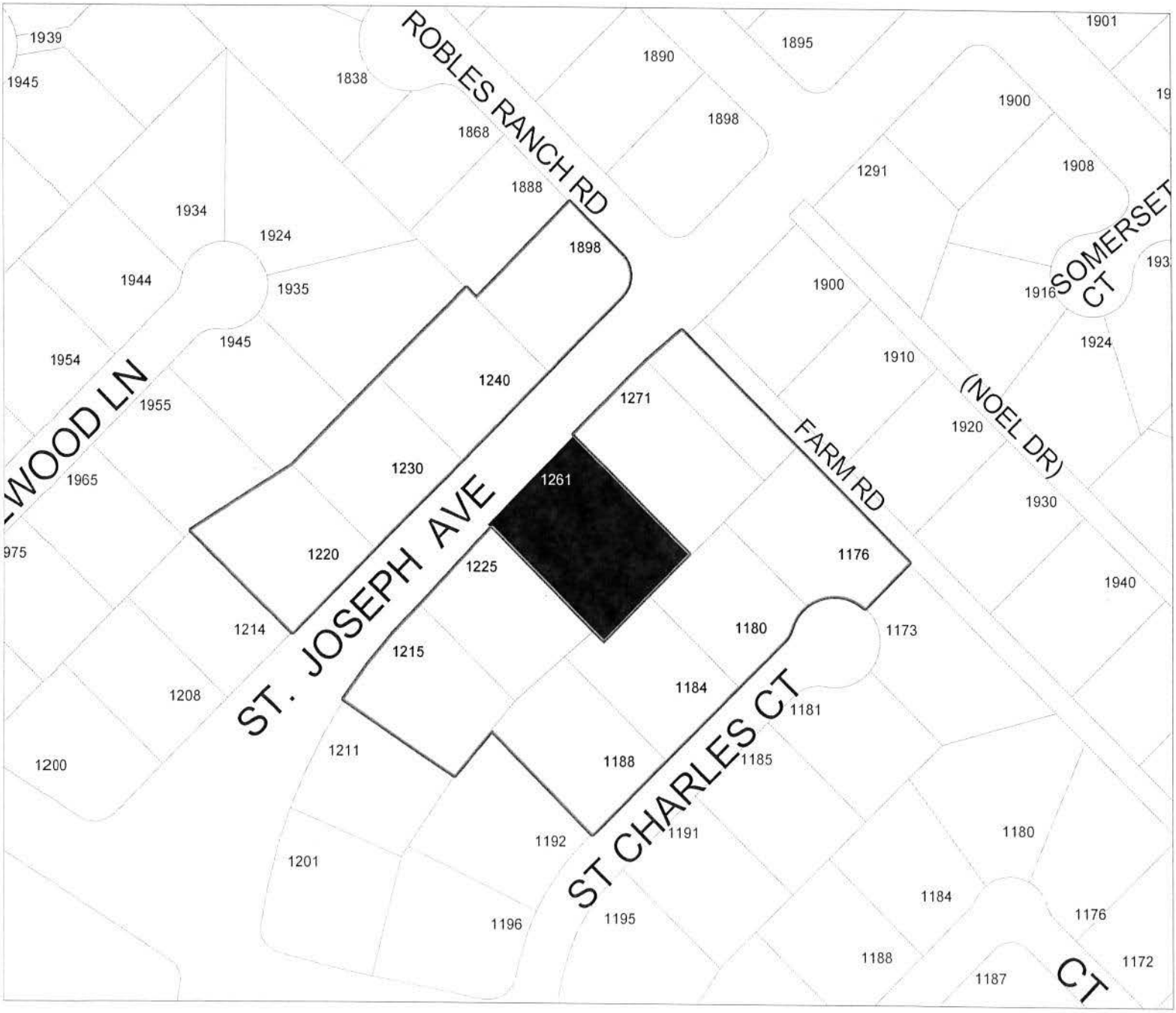
500 0 500 1,000 1,500

FEET

CITY OF LOS ALTOS

APPLICATION: 17-SC-35
APPLICANT: Y. Ben Yu and Y. Z Yu/ RH Associates
SITE ADDRESS: 1261 St. Joseph Avenue

1261 St. Joseph Avenue Notification Map



SCALE 1 : 1,500

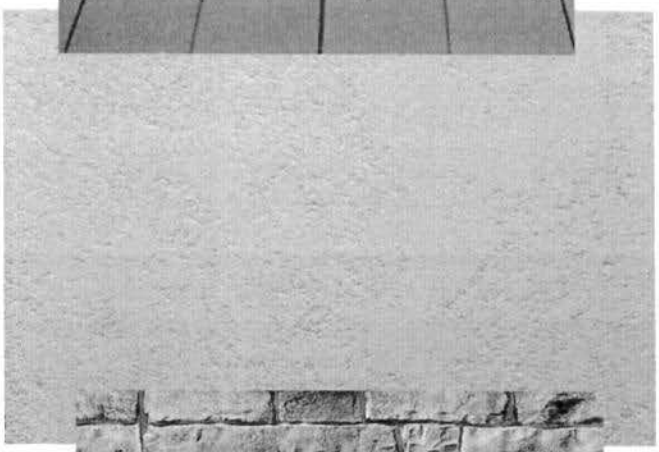
100 0 100 200 300

FEET

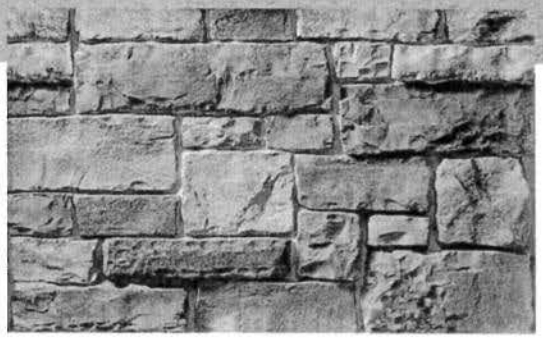
N

EXTERIOR MATERIALS BOARD

ROOF
LIGHTWEIGHT CONCRETE TILE



BODY
STUCCO



VENEER
STONE

ASSOCIATES
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PROPOSED RESIDENCE
for
YUN BEI & YINGFAN YU

1261 SAINT JOSEPH AVENUE
LOS ALTOS, CA

1261 Saint Joseph Ave, Los Altos

3D Rendering

Camellia Japonica 'Nuccio's Peal'_Camellia

Diosma 'Golden Sunset'_dwarf breathe of heaven

Gardenia jasminoides_'Mystery' Gardenia

Heteromeles arbutifolia_Toyon

Loropetalum chinensis 'Rubra'_Loropetalum 'Rubra

Prunus caroliniana 'compacta' _dwarf Carolina Laurel Cheery

Rosa Grandiflora_Roses

Rosa 'Hybrid Tea'_ Hybrid Tea Roses

Rosmarinus officinalis 'Prostrata'_Trailing Rosemary

Acer palmatum 'Emperor'_Red Japanese Maple

Acer palmatum 'Sango Kaku'_Coral Bark Japanese Maple

Arbutus 'Marina' _ Strawberry Tree

Prunus Yedoensis_Yoshina Cherry

Magnolia Grandiflora_Magnolia

Citrus _ owner's choice

Peach 'Frost' _ Peach Tree

Plum 'Santa Rosa' _ Plum Tree

Geranium x cantabrigiense 'Biokovo'_Biokovo Cranesbill

Lavandula angustifolia 'Hidcote'_Dwarf, deep Blue fls.

Lavandula intermedia 'Grosso'_Lavender 'Grosso'

Salvia greggii 'Flame' _ Autumn Sage (bright red)

Calamagrostis arundinacer 'Karl Forrester' _ Calamagrostis 'Karl Forrester'

Phormium tenax 'Maori Queen' _ Dwarf New Zealand Flax (mixed colors)

1261 Saint Joseph Ave, Los Altos

Landscape Plants and Trees