



DATE: August 21, 2019

AGENDA ITEM # 2

TO: Design Review Commission
FROM: Eliana Hassan, Assistant Planner
SUBJECT: APPL19-0004 – 626 Torwood Lane

RECOMMENDATION:

Deny design review application APPL19-0004 subject to the listed findings

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This is an appeal of an administrative design review denial for a new one-story house. The project includes the demolition of an existing house, and construction of a new 3,251 square-foot one-story house. The following table summarizes the project's technical details:

GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION: Single-Family Medium Lot (SF-4)
ZONING: R1-10
PARCEL SIZE: 9,405 square feet
MATERIALS: Standing seam metal roof, charred wood siding, field painted fiber cement board and batten siding, aluminum windows, wood framed chimneys with precast stone

	Existing	Proposed	Allowed/Required
COVERAGE:	2,518 square feet	3,270 square feet	3,292 square feet
FLOOR AREA:	2,479 square feet	3,251 square feet	3,292 square feet
SETBACKS			
Front	23.8 feet	25.1 feet	25 feet
Rear	24.9 feet	25.3 feet	25 feet
Right side	10 feet	10.3 feet	10 feet
Left side	7.7 feet	10.3 feet	10 feet
HEIGHT:	14.3 feet	16.6 feet	20 feet

BACKGROUND

Application History

The City requires design review for all new construction, additions and exterior alterations on single-family residential properties. For projects that are one-story and under 20 feet in height, design review is processed administratively by Planning staff. In the event that an administrative design review application is denied, the decision may be appealed to the Design Review Commission.

The design review application was submitted on April 11, 2019. During the initial review of the application, staff identified the bulk, mass and scale of the proposed house as being out of character with the surrounding neighborhood. There were also concerns over the forward-facing entryway feature, which had a height and position that was out of character with the surrounding neighborhood. Over a three-month period, staff worked with the architect and owner representatives to revise the design in order to comply with the City's Single-Family Residential Design Guidelines and meet the design review findings. However, the design revisions, which included reducing the roof height by nine inches, reducing the front entry height by two inches, moving the entryway back by 12 inches, and reducing the entryway overhang by three feet and wing walls by four feet, were not significant enough to address staff's concerns about the bulk, mass and scale of the structure, and the height of the front entryway. Thus, staff was unable to make positive design review findings and on June 24, 2019, the design review application was denied. Following the action taken by the staff to deny the project, an appeal was filed by the applicant.

Neighborhood Context

The subject property is located on the west wide of Torwood Lane between Pine Lane and Heather Court. This section of Torwood Lane is considered a Consistent Character Neighborhood, as defined in the City's Residential Design Guidelines. The neighborhood consists of predominantly one-story Ranch style homes with consistent setback patterns, materials, ridge heights and horizontal eave lines. A two-story house was relatively recently constructed at the corner of Torwood Lane and Pine Lane (619 Torwood Lane), however, it is still reasonably compatible with the consistent character of this neighborhood context. This section of Torwood Lane includes rolled curbs with landscaped shoulders and a mixture of street tree types. The Neighborhood Compatibility Worksheet prepared by the applicant is included in Attachment B.

For projects in a Consistent Character Neighborhood, the design should have design elements, materials, and scale found within the neighborhood and sizes that are not significantly larger than other homes in the neighborhood. Proposed projects should fit in and lessen abrupt changes.

DISCUSSION

Denial Findings

The administrative design review denial of the proposed one-story house was based on the following design review findings per Section 14.76.050 of the Zoning Ordinance:

- The orientation of the proposed main structure in relation to the immediate neighborhood will NOT minimize the perception of excessive bulk; and

- 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.

According to the Residential Design Guidelines, a new house should be designed to fit in with the surrounding neighborhood and lessen abrupt changes. The proposed house is a contemporary/modern farmhouse style one-story house with a very prominent 16.5-foot tall front entry element that creates excessive bulk relative to its position on the site. The entry element, which has been moved back from the original submittal, has a setback of 30 feet from the front property line. The height of the front entry element and its prominence on the front elevation is a design feature that is not compatible with the surrounding neighborhood, which includes low profile porch and entry elements. The wall plate heights for the house are generally nine feet with some 10-foot wall plate heights in the north (left side) and east (rear) elevations. The 10-foot wall plate heights are taller than most of the surrounding homes, which appear to predominately have eight-foot tall walls. In general, the structure is out of scale with the surrounding neighborhood due to its taller wall plate heights and prominent front entry element. The general architecture of the new house, including the entryway height and proportions, results in a bulky and dominant vertical emphasis that is inconsistent with the low scale of surrounding residences, which appears to be uncharacteristic and sets an extreme for the neighborhood which is inconsistent with the Design Guidelines.

Additionally, the sloping topography upwards from the street adds to the perception of bulk and mass of the overall structure. As shown in the Site Survey (Sheet C.0), the elevation at the street is between 99-100.5 feet, whereas the area at the front elevation is approximately 102 feet, with a finished floor height at 103.5 feet. This difference in topography creates the perception of additional mass and scale when viewed from the street. The appearance of the tall entry element, combined with its proximity to the 25-foot front yard setback, does not minimize the perception of excessive bulk and scale. Staff recommended that the front entry be further set into the building with a larger front yard setback to soften the vertical emphasis. Overall, the design of the house, particularly the front elevation, is inconsistent with the character of the neighborhood and does not mitigate for site specific characteristics to soften the design to be more compatible with the surrounding neighborhood.

Appeal

On July 8, 2019, the applicant filed an appeal of the administrative design review denial. The applicant's appeal letter outlines the basis for why they feel that the design of the proposed one-story house complies with the Single-Family Residential Design Guidelines and meets the required design review findings (Attachment A). The applicant asserts that the denial should be overturned for the following reasons: 1) the revised design has adequately addressed the recommendations made by staff; 2) the design's bulk, mass, and scale is not uncharacteristic of the neighborhood; 3) the entryway is similar to the neighboring entryway in terms of height and bulk; 4) a major project redesign would be necessary to fully address changes to the entryway; and 5) the design incorporates defining architectural elements of the neighborhood and represents its character.

Alternatives

This appeal application is *de novo*, which means that the Design Review Commission may consider all aspects of the project and is not limited to the appeal concerns. If the Commission disagrees with the

administrative denial, the Commission could: 1) make positive design review findings and approve the project; or 2) modify the project and/or conditions in order to make positive design review findings. If the Commission votes to approve this project, standard conditions of approval pertaining to development of the property including but not limited to tree protection, grading and drainage, green building, fire sprinklers, water efficient landscaping, and undergrounding utilities should be incorporated.

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 Notification

A public meeting notice was posted on the property and mailed to 11 nearby property owners on Torwood Lane and Pine Lane. The Notification Map is included in Attachment C.

Cc: Isabeau Guglielmo, Applicant and Architect
Michelle Liu and Raphael Hoffmann, Property Owners

Attachments:

- A. Appeal Letter
- B. Neighborhood Compatibility Worksheet
- C. Area, Vicinity and Public Notification Maps
- D. Material Board
- E. Arborist Report

FINDINGS

APPL19-0004 – 626 Torwood Lane

With regard to the new one-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 main structure in relation to the immediate neighborhood will NOT minimize the perception of excessive bulk; and
- 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.

Raphael Hoffmann and Jing Liu
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Los Altos Design Review Committee
%
City of Los Altos - Planning Department
Community Development Department Planning Division
One North San Antonio Road
Los Altos, CA 94022

June 29, 2019

To: Los Altos Design Review Committee

Re: 626 Torwood Lane Design Review

We bought our house at 626 Torwood Ln in July 2018 and decided to remodel the old structure in order to create a lasting home for us and our children. An important factor in our decision to move to Los Altos was to have our son (7 at the time) grow up and go through school in a family oriented neighborhood, with Santa Rita Elementary School only an 8 minute walk from the home. We were also planning on having a second child when the new home would be ready.

After many months, during which the remodel plan evolved into a new construction plan due to difficulties in saving and integrating portions of the existing structure, we and our architect, Studio S Squared Architecture, were able to finally submit a Design Review package to the Planning Department on April 11, 2019. We were optimistic that the proposal would be approved as we chose to build a 1-story traditional home, not unlike others in the neighborhood. Unfortunately, three months have passed and we still find ourselves unable to move forward despite many efforts made to interpret and address the feedback received from Planning Department Staff .

Original design as submitted on April 11 2019



On May 2, 2019 we received a NOI letter which also included three recommendations. We then worked with Staff through several design iterations where we addressed the recommendations. During these iterations we made a series of sacrifices, as summarized in the architects' letter accompanying the Planning Resubmittal from June 4, 2019:

1. *Detached Trellis*

The detached trellis has been revised so that the distance between the trellis and the exterior wall of the building is 3', instead of 1'-2", as per our phone call on 5/15.

2. *Plate Heights*

The roof slopes at the front have decreased from 4.5:12 to 3.5:12 causing an overall 9" drop in height of the roof ridges at the front sides of the house.

3. *Height front entryway*

We have reduced the roof overhang of the entryway by 3' and we have eliminated the 3' wing walls of the entryway so that they are flush with the wall and match the style of 640 Torwood's entryway. This greatly decreases any "appearance of bulk" at the entryway. The entire entry feature has also been setback 1'.

Original Design in Comparison with Updated Design

Original Design:



Change in Design (roof overhang reduced by 3', wing walls reduced by 3' to be in plane with wall and match style of 640 Torwood entryway, entryway wall reduced and overhang reduced an additional 1' (4' net reduction in roof overhang and wing walls), reduced roof slopes lower roof height 9"):



Latest Proposed Design:



Original Design:



Change in Design:



Latest Proposed Design:



Original Design:



Change in Design:



Latest Proposed Design:



Original Design:



Change in Design:



Latest Proposed Design:



Original Design:



Change in Design:



Latest Proposed Design:



We made these sacrifices and provided rapid feedback to Staff with the goal that the revised design would be acceptable while aiming to minimize impact on schedule.

Despite all this work in the last 3 months, on June 24, 2019 we received a notice of denial of our plans. We kindly ask for your review of our proposal and help us find a way forward.

Below we summarize why we think that the key concerns raised are addressed in our most recent design:

Perception of excessive bulk

Preserving the character of the neighborhood, which we love, has been a key principle in the design of the home, right from the beginning.

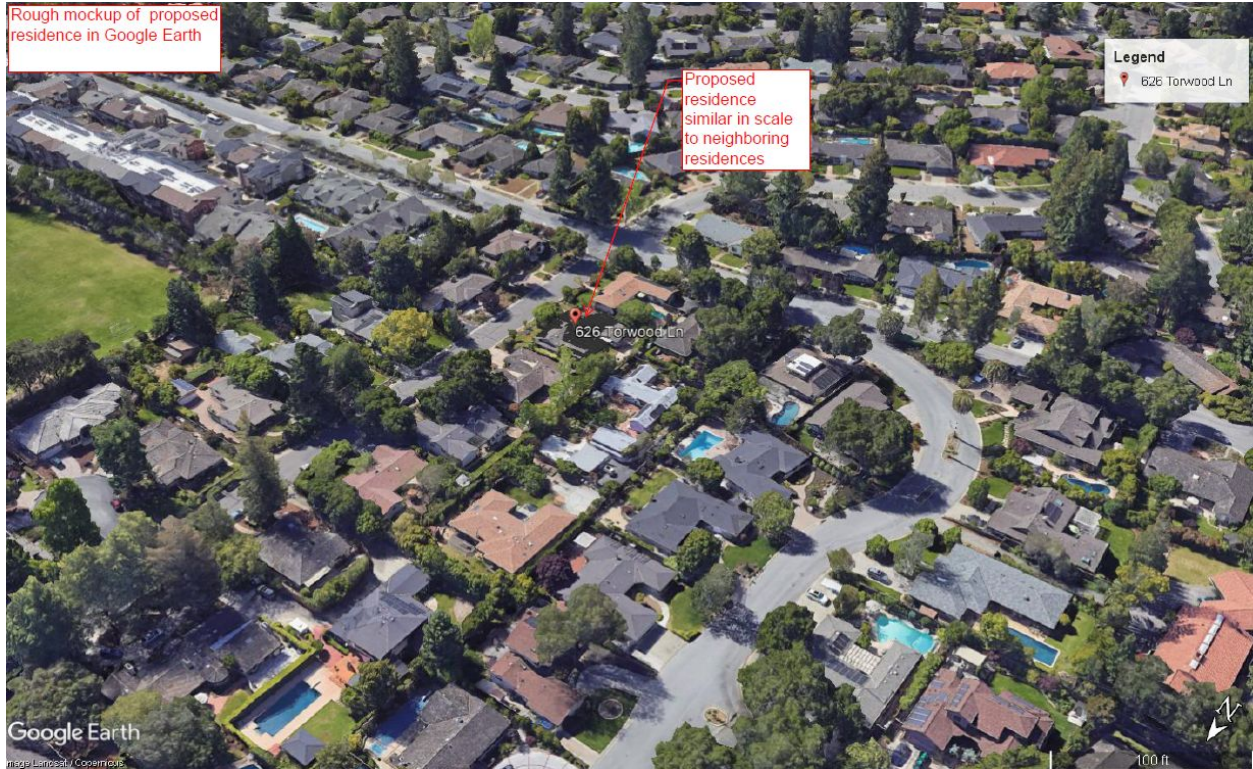
- While there are several 2-story homes on Torwood Ln---including two of the three homes directly opposite ours (619 and 645)---we opted for a more discreet 1-story style.
- We chose a modern farmhouse style that combined the architectural elements that are dominant in the neighborhood (including the two adjacent homes): a board and batten exterior, a horizontal eave line, multiple gabled roofs towards the street, split gable windows, wood as primary material, setback patterns, and lush landscaping on setback.
- We agree with the city's assessment that there are predominantly one-story Ranch style homes in the neighborhood and that the neighborhood has also gone through some transition (we counted at least four 2-story homes on the street in close vicinity to our site, and also homes of various architectural styles, including contemporary and traditional ones). In contrast, we believe that our design incorporates the defining architectural elements of the neighborhood and represents its character.

We have included some images of the latest proposed design inserted into Google Earth to show its relation to the neighborhood. These images help to show the proposed residence's compatibility with the neighboring structures. They also show that the overall size of the proposed residence is not that different from the existing residence. The existing residence appears even taller in certain areas.









A specific cause of concern for Staff has been a perception of bulk of the entryway.

- The entryway is very similar to our next door neighbor's (640) and isn't much taller. 640, too, is located on a slight slope upwards from the street.
- We have made a series of changes to our original design to address the committee's concerns. In particular, we have reduced the roof overhang by 3' and have eliminated the 3' wing walls to match the style of 640. We have further set back the entire entry feature by 1'. We believe that the changes have significantly reduced the "appearance of bulk", especially when compared to 619 and 640, as shown in the images below.

640 (adjacent)



640 (adjacent)



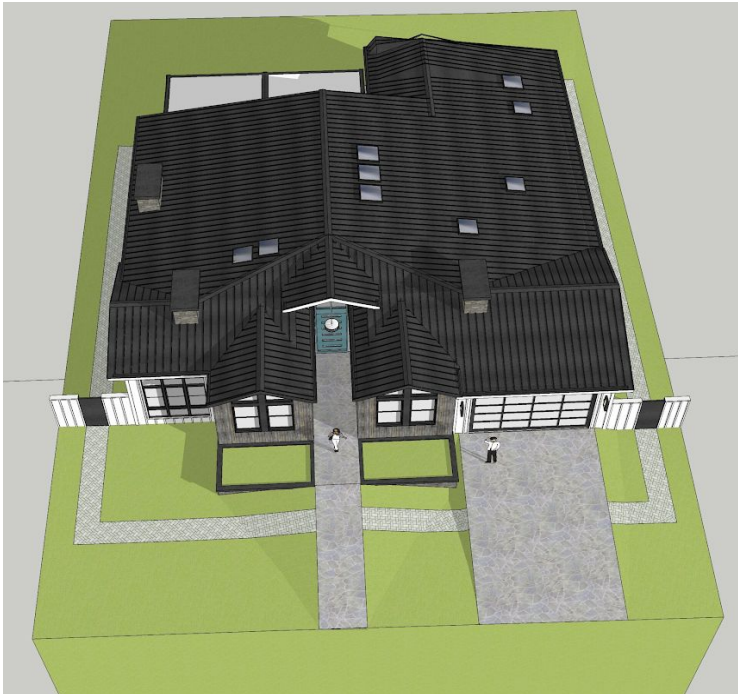
619 (opposite)



Our understanding is that Staff is still not willing to approve the design unless we make more “drastic changes” such as moving the front entry wall back 10’ creating a “tunnel” entryway (which would require a major redesign of our floor plan so that one can enter the den as well as bedroom 4) or lowering the ridge of the entry feature so that it is in line with the other front elements (which in our opinion destroys the aesthetics of the exterior and interior design as it eliminates a continuous ridge that flows from the front door to the rear of the house).

The following images show our design if the front entry wall were set back by 10':

626 (after moving the front entry wall back by 10'--note difficulties entering BR4 and Den)



We feel that these requests are both detrimental to our design and not beneficial to the neighborhood, especially when comparing our proposal to existing homes in the neighborhood. Even more worrisome, however, was feedback that even these changes may still not be enough to approve the design.

Architectural relationship with other buildings

Staff also raised a concern about plate heights. We have proposed 9 ft tall plate heights around the home. On the north and east sides, there are places where the plate height is slightly higher (not more than +1 ft) due to the uneven topography in that area. We have addressed this concern by decreasing the roof slopes at the front from 4.5:12 to 3.5:12 causing an overall 9" drop in height of the roof ridges at the front sides of the house.

Our understanding is that Staff is requesting a more drastic change such as reducing the overall plate height to 8 ft to preserve the 9 ft limit at the north side. We again feel that this request is overly conservative.

- Homes that are built today generally have a plate height of 9 feet. In contrast, older homes often have a plate height of 8 feet and can sometimes feel oppressively low given today's more open floor plans.
- Out of the three homes across the street, one is a 2-story home and another one has a 2-story addition. Also please note that one of these residences across from us (619) seems pretty tall as well even at the single story elements as shown in the image below.

619 (opposite)



- On the north side, 626 and 640 are separated by a fence and shrubs blocking the view from one side to the other. Furthermore, for 640 there is a garage on this side of the home.

640 (adjacent)



Due to Planning's comment about the architecture not being compatible with the neighboring homes, we wanted to reach out to our neighbors in order to get their feedback on the design. We were able to reach out to several of our neighbors and we plan to continue to reach out to

the neighbors we have not yet been able to get a hold of. All of the neighbor responses we have received have been positive, and we have included them below for your reference.

631 Torwood Lane (Murtaza and Afroza): Welcome to the neighborhood! We went through your proposed construction plan, and the city's concerns. We don't have any issues or concerns and are happy to approve your proposed design. Good luck with the process and let us know if you need anything else from us.

645 Torwood Lane (Bill Gaylord): Was great to meet you and Michelle today. Look forward to having you in the neighborhood. Appreciate you taking the time to share your plans with us. We like what you're planning to do with the house and are supportive of your remodel.

515 Pine Lane (Lakshmi and Satish): Based on the plans, since it's the back of your house that's sharing a fence with us, we have no comments or concerns regarding the bulk in the front of your house. It seems like the back side will not intrude on our privacy. As long as the trees and landscaping are appropriately considerate, we are fine with your plan.

614 Torwood Lane (Nitin and Ruchira): We have no objections to your new proposal. Good luck with the city.

640 Torwood Lane (Marilyn and Everett): The drawings for the home structure layout and landscaping are very impressive. We are a bit surprised that a basement is not included in the design but do understand that is a very expensive undertaking. You made us feel that our home front area remodeling design was OK since your design has some similar features. To sum up for what you are likely the most interest in, let us state that, upon review of your plans, Marilyn and I have no issues with your building design.

Given this, and the significant changes made to the plans, we felt that we have properly addressed the concerns raised by Staff.

We would like to thank you for taking the time to review our application, and we look forward to your help to clarify the best way forward.

Thank you,

Raphael Hoffmann and Jing Liu



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 626 Torwood Ln, Los Altos
 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

Address: 626 Torwood Ln
Date: 3/27/2019

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: 5,890 - 16,653 square feet
Lot dimensions: Length 148 feet
Width 83 feet

If your lot is significantly different than those in your neighborhood, then note its: area _____, length _____, and width (our lot is comparable)

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 87.5% (7/8 houses except one)
Existing front setback for house on left 30+- ft./on right 30+- 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 2
Garage facing front recessed from front of house face 1
Garage in back yard 3
Garage facing the side 0
Number of 1-car garages 1; 2-car garages 5; 3-car garages 0
One house does not have a garage on the street.

Address: 626 Torwood Ln

Date: 3/27/2019

4. Single or Two-Story Homes:

What % of the homes in your neighborhood* are:

One-story 62.5% (5 out of 8)

Two-story 37.5% (3 out of 8)

5. Roof heights and shapes:

Is the overall height of house ridgelines generally the same in your neighborhood*? No

Are there mostly hip 3, gable style 5, or other style ___ roofs*?

Do the roof forms appear simple ___ or complex ✓?

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) horizontal wood & stone, board & batten & stone

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

If no consistency then explain: wood shingle or asphalt shingle is used.

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: 626 Torwood Ln
Date: 3/27/2019

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)

Slight slope towards street.

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.)?

Most homes have shrubs, lawn and trees.

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

Well screened / average visibility.

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)?

No major existing landscaping features. The unimproved public right-of-way is concrete curb / asphalt road.

10. Width of Street:

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

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

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

Address: 626 Torwood Ln
Date: 3/27/2019

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.:

Most homes have moderate front yard setbacks and
landscape approach of shrubs, lawn and trees.

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: 626 Torwood Ln
 Date: 3/27/2019

Summary Table

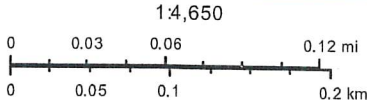
Please use this table to summarize the characteristics of the houses in your immediate neighborhood (two homes on either side, directly behind and the five to six homes directly across the street).

Address	Front setback	Rear setback	Garage location	One or two stories	Height	Materials	Architecture (simple or complex)
640 Torwood Ln	30'	15'	Front projecting	one	18'	wood/stone	Simple
614 Torwood Ln	30'	15'	In backyard	one	18'	wood	Simple
619 Torwood Ln	30'	30'	Front projecting	Two	27'	wood/stone	Complex
631 Torwood Ln	25'	30'	Front recessed	one	18'	wood/stone	Simple
645 Torwood Ln	40'	70'	In backyard	Two	27'	wood	Complex
655 1/2 Torwood Ln	30'	40'	In backyard	Two	27'	wood	Complex
669 Torwood Ln	30'	30'	In backyard	One	18'	stucco	Simple
515 Torwood Pine Torwood Ln	10'	4'	NONE	one	18'	Board & batten	Simple

VICINITY MAP



Print Date: July 30, 2019



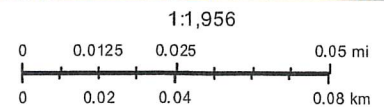
CITY OF LOS ALTOS

APPLICATION: APPL19-0004
APPLICANT: Isabeau Guglielmo
SITE ADDRESS: 626 Torwood Lane

NOTIFICATION MAP

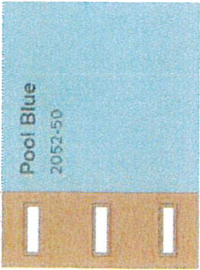


Print Date: July 30, 2019



CITY OF LOS ALTOS

APPLICATION: APPL19-0004
APPLICANT: Isabeau Guglielmo
SITE ADDRESS: 626 Torwood Lane



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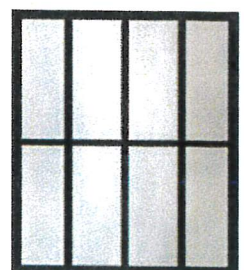
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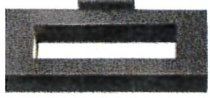
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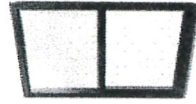
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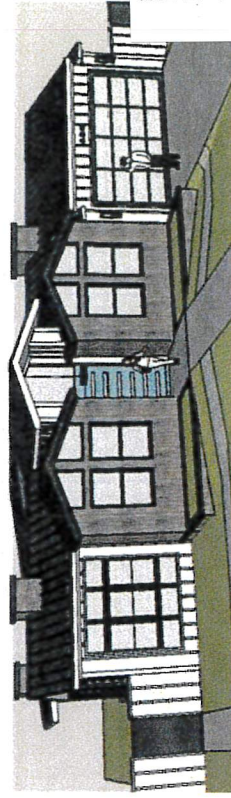


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San Mateo, CA 94403

650-515-9783

March 6, 2019

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To: City of Los Altos, Planning Department
1 N San Antonio Road
Los Altos, CA 94022

Site: 626 Torwood Lane, Los Altos CA

Dear Raphael Hoffmann & Michelle Liu,

As requested on Friday, January 18, 2019, I visited the above site for the purpose of inspecting and commenting on the trees. A new home is proposed on this site, and your concern as to the future health and safety of existing trees has prompted this visit. The most recent preliminary site plans have been reviewed for writing this report.

Method:

All of the trees on site were surveyed and inspected. All of the following information can be found in the tree survey on page 2 of this report. All inspections were made from the ground; the trees were not climbed for this inspection. The trees in question were located on an existing topography map provided by you. The trees were then measured for diameter at 48 inches above ground level (DBH or diameter at breast height). The trees were given a condition rating for form and vitality. Each tree was put into a health class using the following rating system:

- F- Very Poor
- D- Poor
- C- Fair
- B- Good
- A- Excellent

The height of the trees was measured using a Nikon Forestry 550 Hypsometer. The spread was paced off. Comments and recommendations for future maintenance are provided. An indication as to trees to be retained or removed has been given. Trees of "Heritage" size have been called out as a heritage tree on the provided survey. Impacts for each tree were given on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being minor impacts and 5 being major impacts. Hazardous trees have been called out as hazardous. A tree protection zone radius has been given for each tree. It is recommended to protect all trees to be retained, however only trees that are designated as heritage trees are required to be protected by tree protection fencing during construction.

Tree Survey

Kevin R. Kiely
 Certified Arborist
 650-515-9783

626 Torwood, Los Altos, CA											
Tree #	Species	DBH (inches)	Height/S pread	Remove or Preserve	Heritage	Hazard	condition rating	Impacts	Fencing required	TPZ	Comments
1	Tristania (Tristaniaopsis laurina)	2	10/6	P	yes	no	B	0	yes	3'	Good vigor, good form, recently planted street tree.
2	Chinese pistache (Pistachia chinensis)	9.4	15/20	R	No	no	B	N/A	n/a	n/a	Good vigor, good form, well maintained. To be removed.
3	Crape myrtle (Lagerstromia spp.)	10.8	10/6	R	No	no	C	n/a	n/a	n/a	Fair vigor, poor form, topped in past, not well maintained, to be removed.
4*	Weeping birch (Betula pendula)	5est	10/10	P	No	no	C	0	no	5'	Fair vigor, fair form, planted too low.
5*	Pitosporum (Pitosporum tobira)	5est	6/15	P	No	no	B	0	no	5'	Good vigor, good form, maintained as hedge, fair screen.
6	Weeping cherry (Prunus spp.)	4.5	7/6	R	no	no	C	n/a	n/a	n/a	Fair vigor, poor form, topped in past, to be removed.
7*	Chinese elm (Ulmus parvifolia)	12est	25/25	P	No	no	B	0	no	15'	Fair vigor, good form, 3 feet from property line fence, heavy into property.
8	Tristania (Tristaniaopsis laurina)	2	10/6	P	No	no	B	0	no	3'	Good vigor, good form, young tree.
9	Tristania (Tristaniaopsis laurina)	2	10/6	P	no	no	B	0	no	3'	Good vigor, good form, young tree.
10	English laurel hedge (Prunus laurocerasus)	6.0avg	12/30	P	no	no	B	0	no	5'	Good vigor, fair form, maintained as hedge, needs continued maintenance.
11*	Saucer magnolia (Magnolia x soulangeana)	6est	12/8	P	No	no	B	0	no	4'	Good vigor, good form, young tree.
12*	Crape myrtle (Lagerstroemia spp.)	6	12/8	P	No	no	C	0	no	4'	Fair vigor, poor form, topped.

*Indicates neighbor tree

Definitions:	Condition Ratings	Impacts
	1=Excellent 2=Good 3=Fair 4=Poor 5=Very Poor	1=Minimal 2=Minor 3=Major

**Site observations:**

The landscape at 626 Torwood Lane has been well maintained in the past. 12 trees were surveyed on the property or adjacent neighboring properties. No native trees were observed. The property is fairly well screened by screening trees at the property line and trees located on the neighboring properties. The only protected tree on site is Tristania tree #1, that is located within the public right of way.

Showing recently planted Tristania tree #1 located within the public right of way

Trees proposed for removal:(No heritage size trees are to be removed)

Chinese pistache tree #2 is proposed for removal to facilitate a walkway to the front door. This tree is in good condition. The tree's diameter measurement is 9.4 inches making it a non-heritage size tree.

Crape myrtle tree #3 is proposed for removal, as the tree is on top of the sewer line to the home. The tree is also in the foot print of the proposed driveway. The removal of this tree will prevent future utility line damage. The tree's diameter measurement is 10.8 inches below the tree's union, making it a non-heritage size tree.

Weeping cherry tree #6 is proposed for removal to facilitate the construction of a concrete pad off of the side of the garage. The tree's diameter measurement is 4.5 inches, making the tree a non-heritage size tree.

**Summary:**

All of the trees on site are in fair to good condition. No poor trees were observed on site. The trees to be retained are all a good distance away from the proposed construction. Tree protection fencing is recommended(not required) for neighboring Chinese elm tree #7. Fencing is recommended to be placed at the dripline of this tree. Fencing will need to extend off of the existing property line fence and out to a distance equal to the tree's canopy spread(15'). This will prevent construction equipment/storage within the tree's root zone. All of the smaller neighboring trees will be protected by construction site fencing placed at the property line. No impacts are expected to the retained trees and neighboring trees. The following tree protection plan will help to reduce impacts to the retained trees on site.

Showing neighbor's Chinese elm tree #7

Tree Protection Plan:*Tree Protection Zones*

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. Tree protection zones should be installed and maintained throughout the entire length of the project. Fencing for tree protection zones should be 6' tall, metal chain link material supported by metal 2" diameter poles, pounded into the ground to a depth of no less than 2'. The recommended tree protection zones as seen in the survey portion of this report are located at 6 times the tree diameters, or at the tree canopy spread (whichever is greater). Fencing is required to be placed at 6 times the tree diameters or canopy spread (whichever is greater) by the city of Los Altos. The location of the tree protection fencing may be modified by the planning director. When it is not possible to place tree protection fencing at the recommended tree protection zones because of the proposed work or existing hardscapes, the tree protection fencing shall be placed at the edge of the proposed work or existing hardscapes. No equipment or materials shall be stored or cleaned inside the protection zones. Areas where tree protection fencing needs to be reduced for access(if needed), should be mulched with 6" of coarse wood chips with ½ inch plywood laid on top. The plywood boards should be attached together in order to minimize movement. The spreading of chips will help to reduce compaction and improve soil structure. All tree protection measures must be installed prior to any demolition or construction activity at the site. No signs, wires, or any other object shall be attached to the trees. The only tree required to be protected on this site is Tristania tree #1. Neighbor's Chinese elm tree #7 is recommended to be protected.

Landscape Buffer

Where tree protection does not cover the entire root zone of the trees, or when a smaller tree protection zone is needed for access, a landscape buffer consisting of wood chips spread to a depth of six inches with plywood or steel plates placed on top will be placed where foot traffic is expected to be heavy. The landscape buffer will help to reduce compaction to the unprotected root zone.

Root Cutting

Any roots to be cut shall be monitored and documented. Large roots (over 2" diameter) or large masses of roots to be cut must be inspected by the site arborist. The site arborist, at this time, may recommend irrigation or fertilization of the root zone. All roots needing to be cut should be cut clean with a saw or lopper. Roots to be left exposed for a period of time should be covered with layers of burlap and kept moist. The Project Arborist must be on site during any excavation below a tree dripline.

Grading

The existing grade level around the trees shall be maintained out to the dripline of the trees when possible. Anytime existing grades are to be changed underneath the dripline of a protected tree more than 3" special mitigation measures will need to be put into action to reduce impacts to the trees. Aeration will need to be provided to root zones of trees that are to experience fill soil being placed within the tree root zones. Grades shall not be lowered when within 3 times the diameter of a protected tree on site. Lowering grades will result in roots needing to be cut and is highly discouraged.

Trenching and Excavation

Trenching for irrigation, drainage, electrical or any other reason shall be done by hand when inside the dripline of a protected tree. Hand digging and the careful placement of pipes below or besides protected roots will significantly reduce root loss, thus reducing trauma to the tree. All trenches shall be backfilled with native materials and compacted to near its original level, as soon as possible. Trenches to be left open for a period of time, will require the covering of all exposed roots with burlap and be kept moist. The trenches will also need to be covered with plywood to help protect the exposed roots.

Irrigation

Imported trees- On a construction site, I recommend irrigation during winter months, 1 time per month. Seasonal rainfall may reduce the need for additional irrigation. During the warm season, April – November, my recommendation is to use heavy irrigation, 2 times per month. This type of irrigation should be started prior to any excavation. The irrigation will improve the vigor and water content of the trees. The on-site arborist may make adjustments to the irrigation recommendations as needed. The foliage of the trees may need cleaning if dust levels are extreme. Removing dust from the foliage will help to reduce mite and insect infestation.

626 Torwood 3/6/19

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Inspections

It is the contractor's responsibility to contact the Project Arborist when work is to take place underneath the canopy or dripline of a protected tree on site. Kielty Arborist Services can be reached by email at kkarbor0476@yahoo.com (preferred) or by phone at (650) 515-9783 (Kevin).

The information included in this report is believed to be true and based on sound arboricultural principles and practices.

Sincerely,
Kevin Kielty Certified Arborist WE#0476A

