



DATE: July 7, 2021

AGENDA ITEM # 3

TO: Design Review Commission
FROM: Sean K. Gallegos, Associate Planner
SUBJECT: SC21-0019 – 587 Van Buren Street

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve design review application SC21-0019 subject to the findings and conditions

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This project is a second-story addition and remodel to an existing multi-level house with an exposed basement (lower floor). The project includes an addition of 253 square feet on the second story. The lower floor will be maintained with no proposed alterations or additional floor area. The following table summarizes the project's technical details:

GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION: Single-Family, Residential
ZONING: R1-10
PARCEL SIZE: 35,985 square feet
MATERIALS: Tar and gravel flat roof, sand finish stucco siding, aluminum wood clad windows, and metal clad roof eave fascia,

	Existing	Proposed	Allowed/Required
COVERAGE:	4,402 square feet	6,005 square feet	10,795 square feet
FLOOR AREA:			
First floor	3,484 square feet	3,737 square feet	
Lower floor	814 square feet	814 square feet	
Total	4,298 square feet	4,551 square feet	6,348 square feet
SETBACKS:			
Front	8.75 feet	8.75 feet	25 feet
Rear	33.25 feet	33.25 feet	25 feet
Right side (1 st /2 nd)	19 feet/-	10.5 feet/-	10 feet/17.5 feet
Left side (1 st /2 nd)	107.25 feet/-	107.25 feet/-	10 feet/17.5 feet
HEIGHT:	22 feet	22 feet	27 feet

BACKGROUND

Neighborhood Context

The subject property is located in a Diverse Character Neighborhood, as defined in the City's Residential Design Guidelines. Van Buren Street is a cul-de-sac street with a narrow street extension that serves four properties. The subject property is located at the end of this street extension, with the front yard facing the shared driveway along southern property line facing the house at 586 Van Buren Street. The left side and rear yards of the property are adjacent to Adobe Creek. There is a mixture of one- and two-story houses in this neighborhood that use different architectural styles, materials and massing. Due to the large lots on the street, many of the houses have large front yard setbacks with mature trees and vegetation that screen the structures from the street view.

DISCUSSION

Zoning Compliance

This house was originally built in 1938. A portion of the house on the right side is located within the front yard setback and encroaches into the public right-of-way. Due to the irregular shape of the public right-of-way, the right corner of the house encroaches into the front yard setback. However, since more than 50 percent of the existing house will be maintained and this portion of the house is part of the original structure, it is allowed to remain without requiring a variance.

The existing house is located adjacent to Adobe Creek, with portions of the rear elevation and decks located within the Water District's recommended 25-foot creek setback from top of creek bank. This creek setback is a guideline, not a zoning requirement, and all portions of the proposed addition are more than 25 feet from the top of the creek bank. While the basement (lower floor) is below grade on the front and side elevations, it is fully exposed on the rear elevation, so it counts towards the property's floor area. The lower floor also counts as a story, so in order to comply with the R1-10 District's two-story height limit, the proposed second story is not located over any portion of the existing lower floor.

Design Review

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

According to the Residential Design Guidelines, house modifications should be designed consistent with the original house design. The proposed minor modification to the existing two-story house includes enclosing an existing balcony along the rear elevation into habitable (conditioned) floor area. The proposed addition will incorporate six windows along the rear elevation, one glass door along the left elevation and one two panel sliding glass door along the right elevation. The proposed balcony enclosure continues the modern architectural design style. The proposed balcony enclosure is designed to be integrated with the existing house by careful attention to issues of consistent materials, proportion, scale, and composition. Due to the window maintaining a consistent size and style as the existing house design, the proposed window maintains the composition of the building's

architecture. Overall, the enclosure of the existing balcony into habitable (conditioned) floor area does not create an abrupt change and is well integrated into the existing design.

The project is using high quality materials, such as sand finish stucco siding, wood clad and aluminum clad windows, which are integral to the architectural design of the house. Overall, the project design has architectural integrity and the design, materials and form relate well with the surrounding neighborhood.

Privacy and Landscaping

The project proposes to enclose the balcony along the rear elevation. The proposed addition will incorporate six windows along the rear elevation, one glass door along the left elevation and one two panel sliding glass door along the right elevation. Due to the sloping nature of the site, this enclosed area is proposed to provide the house with additional habitable (conditioned) space for bedrooms No. 2 and No. 3. At its highest point, new floor area is eight feet above grade. Since it is facing the creek, there are not any privacy impacts to adjacent properties.

The proposed addition has a setback of 23 feet to the right-side property line and 163.25 feet to the left-side property line and faces Adobe Creek on the right and rear sides. Due to the topography of the site, the placement of the adjacent properties and the existing mature trees along the creek, there are do not appear to be any privacy issues related to this project.

The property includes many mature trees around the house site and along Adobe Creek. With the preservation of the existing trees and front yard landscaping and hardscape, staff finds that the project meets the City's landscaping 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 NOTICING

A public meeting notice was posted on the property and mailed to eleven nearby property owners at the end of Van Buren Street, Arroyo Court and on the opposite side of Adobe Creek in Palo Alto.

Cc: Chapman Design Associates, Applicant
Nick Huang, Owner

Attachments

A. Public Notification Maps

FINDINGS

SC21-0019 – 587 Van Buren Street

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

- a. The proposed addition 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 addition in relation to the immediate neighborhood will minimize the perception of excessive bulk and mass;
- e. General architectural considerations, including the character, size, scale, and quality of the design, the architectural relationship with the site and other buildings, building materials, and similar elements have been incorporated in order to insure the compatibility of the development with its design concept and the character of adjacent buildings; and
- f. The proposed addition has been designed to follow the natural contours of the site with minimal grading, minimum impervious cover, and maximum erosion protection.

CONDITIONS

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GENERAL

1. Expiration

The Design Review Approval will expire on July 7, 2021 unless prior to the date of expiration, a building permit is issued, or an extension is granted pursuant to Section 14.76.090 of the Zoning Code.

2. Approved Plans

The approval is based on the plans and materials received on June 27, 2021, except as may be modified by these conditions.

3. Protected Trees

Trees Nos. 1-14 shall be protected under this application and cannot be removed without a tree removal permit from the Community Development Director.

4. Encroachment Permit

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

5. Landscaping

The project shall be subject to the City's Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance (WELO) pursuant to Chapter 12.36 of the Municipal Code if 2,500 square feet or more of new or replaced landscape area, including irrigated planting areas, turf areas, and water features is proposed. Any project with an aggregate landscape area of 2,500 square feet or less may conform to the prescriptive measures contained in Appendix D of the City's Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance.

6. Indemnity and Hold Harmless

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

INCLUDED WITH THE BUILDING PERMIT SUBMITTAL

7. Conditions of Approval

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

8. Applicant Acknowledgement of Conditions of Approval

The applicant shall acknowledge receipt of the final conditions of approval and put in a letter format acceptance of said conditions. This letter will be submitted during the first building permit submittal.

9. Tree Protection Note

On the grading plan and/or the site plan, show all tree protection fencing and add the following note: “All tree protection fencing shall be chain link and a minimum of five feet in height with posts driven into the ground.”

10. Water Efficient Landscape Plan

Provide a landscape documentation package prepared by a licensed landscape professional showing how the project complies with the City’s Water Efficient Landscape Regulations and include signed statements from the project’s landscape professional and property owner. (*Note: only used if project is subject to the Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance.*)

11. Reach Codes

Building Permit Applications submitted on or after January 26, 2021 shall comply with specific amendments to the 2019 California Green Building Standards for Electric Vehicle Infrastructure and the 2019 California Energy Code as provided in Ordinances Nos. 2020-470A, 2020-470B, 2020-470C, and 2020-471 which amended Chapter 12.22 Energy Code and Chapter 12.26 California Green Building Standards Code of the Los Altos Municipal Code. The building design plans shall comply with the standards and the applicant shall submit supplemental application materials as required by the Building Division to demonstrate compliance.

12. Green Building Standards

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

13. Underground Utility Location

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

14. Air Conditioner Sound Rating

Show the location of any air conditioning unit(s) on the site plan including the model number of the unit(s) and nominal size of the unit. Provide the manufacturer’s specifications showing the sound rating for each unit. The air conditioning units must be located to comply with the City’s Noise Control Ordinance (Chapter 6.16) and in compliance with the Planning Division setback provisions. The units shall be screened from view of the street.

15. Storm Water Management

Show how the project is in compliance with the New Development and Construction Best Management Practices and Urban Runoff Pollution Prevention program, as adopted by the City for the purposes of preventing storm water pollution (i.e. downspouts directed to landscaped areas, minimize directly connected impervious areas, etc.).

PRIOR TO ISSUANCE OF BUILDING OR DEMOLITION PERMIT

16. Tree Protection

Tree protection fencing shall be installed around the dripline(s), or as required by the project arborist, of trees Nos. 3 and 12 as shown on the site plan. Tree protection fencing shall be chain link and a minimum of five feet in height with posts driven into the ground and shall not be removed until all building construction has been completed unless approved by the Planning Division.

PRIOR TO FINAL INSPECTION

17. Landscaping Installation

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

18. Landscape Privacy Screening

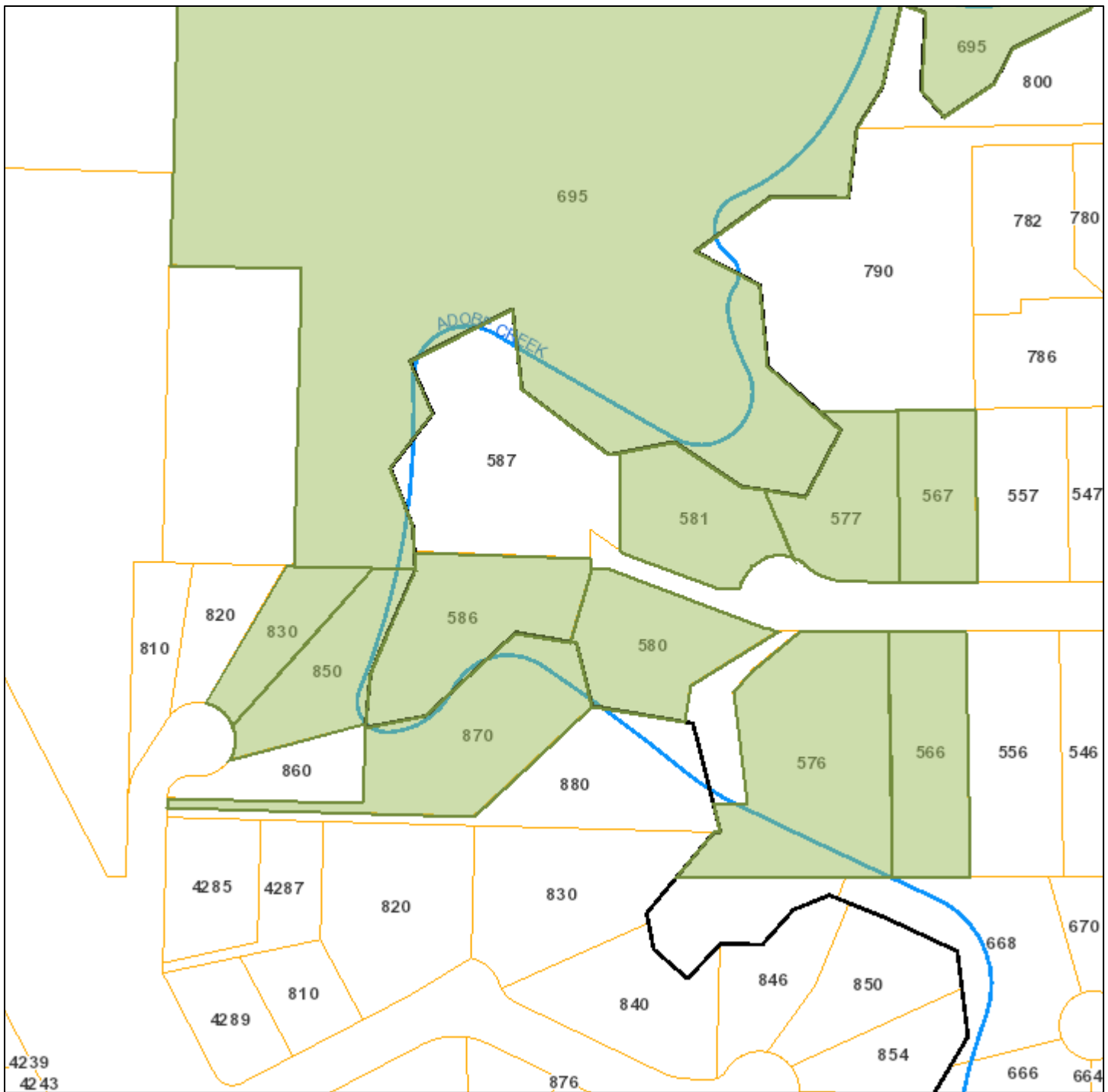
The landscape intended to provide privacy screening shall be inspected by the Planning Division and shall be supplemented by additional screening material as required to adequately mitigate potential privacy impacts to surrounding properties.

19. Green Building Verification

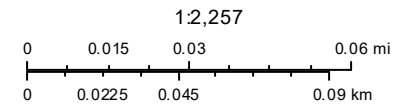
Submit verification that the house was built in compliance with the City's Green Building Ordinance (Chapter 12.26 of the Municipal Code).






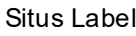

Notification Map

ATTACHMENT A



Print Date: May 13, 2021



-  Schools
-  Park and Recreation Areas
-  City Limit
-  Road Names
-  Waterways
-  Situs Label
-  TaxParcel

The information on this map was derived from the City of Los Altos' GIS. The City of Los Altos does not guarantee data provided is free of errors, omissions, or the positional accuracy, and it should be verified.

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