



DATE: October 14, 2015

AGENDA ITEM # 3

TO: Design Review Commission
FROM: Sierra Davis, Assistant Planner
SUBJECT: 15-SC-25 – 136 South Clark Avenue

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve design review application 15-SC-25 subject to the findings and conditions

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This is a design review application for a new two-story house. The project includes 2,276 square feet at the first-story and 1,641 square feet at the second-story. The following table summarizes the project's technical details:

GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION: Single-family, Residential
ZONING: R1-10
PARCEL SIZE: 13,074 square feet
MATERIALS: Composition tile roof, smooth cement plaster siding, aluminum clad windows, pre-cast stone trim, decorative wood shutters, wood garage doors, wrought iron balcony railing and fencing

	Existing	Proposed	Allowed/Required
LOT COVERAGE:	3,004 square feet	3,007 square feet	3,922 square feet
FLOOR AREA:			
First floor	3,004 square feet	2,276 square feet	
Second floor		1,641 square feet	
Total	3,004 square feet	3,917 square feet	4,057 square feet
SETBACKS:			
Front	40 feet	25 feet	25 feet
Rear	96 feet	87 feet	25 feet
Right side (1 st /2 nd)	11 feet	7 feet/19 feet	7 feet /14.5 feet
Left side (1 st /2 nd)	9 feet	7 feet /19 feet	7 feet /14.5 feet
HEIGHT:	15 feet	25 feet	27 feet

BACKGROUND

Neighborhood Context

The house is located in a Diverse Character Neighborhood pursuant to the Residential Design Guidelines. The house is located at the intersection of South Clark Avenue and Springer Terrace. Due to various subdivisions along South Clark Avenue over the years, the street width varies. The houses on the west side of the South Clark are primarily smaller scale, single-story houses, while the east side of the street has larger lots with larger two-story structures. The neighborhood was developed over time and has a variety of architectural styles, setbacks and scale. The street does not have a distinct street tree pattern, but the vegetation includes mature trees and shrubs.

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 and materials found in the neighborhood.

The new house uses a French Eclectic inspired design style. The massing of the house is more of a modern articulation with simple forms and a hipped roof, which is not characteristic of a French Eclectic design. The details are more formal drawing from the French Eclectic style and include arched openings for windows and doors, wood shutters, and ornate metal details at the railing and fencing.

The house is centered at the front of the lot, but includes two side porches that are set further back extend to the side yard setback on each side. However, the bulk of the house has larger than required side yard setbacks of 14 feet at the first story where seven feet is required and 19 feet at the second story where 14.5 is required. The second story is centered over the first story and set into the first story roof, which reduces the appearance of the bulk and height of the structure. The first story finished floor height is approximately the same as the existing house and it has an overall height of 25 feet where up to 27 feet is allowed.

The design incorporates more formal materials, such as a composition tile roof, smooth cement plaster, aluminum clad windows, pre-cast stone trim, decorative wood shutters, wood garage doors, and wrought iron balcony railing, which are high quality materials and integral to the architectural design. Overall, the project design has architectural integrity and the design, materials and forms relate well with the surrounding neighborhood.

Privacy

On the north (right) side of the house, there are six, second-story windows. The four windows toward the front of the house are located in a bedroom, bathroom, the laundry room and the stairwell all have views toward the neighboring property's front yard. The bathroom, laundry room and stairwell are passive use areas and would not result in an unreasonable privacy impact. The two side windows in the master bedroom located toward the rear of the house could have views toward

the adjacent property. However, due to their smaller size and four-foot sill heights, a reasonable degree of privacy is being maintained.

On the south (left) side of the house, there are four, second-story windows; a bay window in each bedroom and a medium sized window in each bathroom. Three of the windows have low sill heights of three feet and the bay window closest to the front has a sill height of four feet. These second-story windows face the front yard of the adjacent property due to the placement of the neighboring house, which sits behind the proposed house. These views toward the adjacent property would not result in an unreasonable privacy impact because the front yard is considered a more public area.

The proposed house includes two balconies; one at the front of the house and one at the rear with views to the rear and left side yard. The balcony at the front of the house would not result in any unreasonable privacy impacts because it overlooks the street. The balcony at the rear is considered an active use area because the depth exceeds four feet. The landscaping plan includes bamboo screening adjacent to the balcony on the left side yard with fruit trees extending toward the rear. The fruit trees proposed are slow growing dwarf species, which will not provide adequate privacy screening. To reduce any potential privacy impacts, the fruit trees should be replaced with fast growing evergreen trees along the left side yard (Condition No. 2). Alternatively, the balcony could be reduced to a depth of four to create a more passive use area.

Landscaping

The project includes a comprehensive landscaping plan for the front and rear yards. The plan maintains the two trees, one Silver Leaf Maple and one Magnolia tree, at the front of the property. The new landscaping area exceeds the 5,000 square-foot threshold for new or replaced landscaping, so the project is subject to the City's Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance. The applicant has begun work on a comprehensive landscape plan in order to comply with the City's landscaping regulations. This plan will include 11 new fruit trees, shrubs and raised planting beds. With the new front yard landscaping and hardscape, along with compliance of the recommended conditions, the project will meet 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 11 nearby property owners on South Clark Avenue and South El Monte Avenue.

Cc: Guanxin and Yuanyuan Li, Applicant and Property Owners
Mike Ma, Architect

Attachments:

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

FINDINGS

15-SC-25 – 136 South Clark Avenue

With regard to design review for a new two-story structure, 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 structure, 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 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 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.

CONDITIONS

15-SC-25 – 136 South Clark Avenue

1. The approval is based on the plans received on October 5, 2015 and the written application materials provided by the applicant, except as may be modified by these conditions.
2. Evergreen trees, minimum 15-gallon or 24-inch box in size, shall be incorporated into the landscaping plan along the left side property line to screen the rear facing balcony.
3. 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.
4. Only gas fireplaces, pellet fueled wood heaters or EPA certified wood-burning appliances may be installed in all new construction pursuant to Chapter 12.64 of the Municipal Code.
5. The landscape plan is subject to the City's Water Efficient Landscape Regulations pursuant to Chapter 12.36 of the Municipal Code.
6. Fire sprinklers shall be required pursuant to Section 12.10 of the Municipal Code.
7. Any new utility service drops shall be located underground from the nearest convenient existing pole pursuant to Chapter 12.68 of the Municipal Code.
8. 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.
9. **Prior to the issuance of a Demolition Permit or Building Permit**, tree protection fencing shall be installed around the dripline, or as required by the project arborist, of the following trees (No(s). 1 and 2) 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.
10. **Prior to Building Permit submittal, the plans shall contain/show:**
 - a. The conditions of approval shall be incorporated into the title page of the plans.
 - b. 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."

- c. Verification that the house will comply with the California Green Building Standards pursuant to Section 12.26 of the Municipal Code and provide a signature from the project's Qualified Green Building Professional Designer/Architect and property owner.
- d. The location of underground utilities pursuant to Section 12.68 of the Municipal Code. Underground utility trenches shall avoid the drip-lines of all protected trees unless approved by the project arborist and the Planning Division.
- e. The location of any air conditioning units on the site plan and the manufacturer's specifications showing the sound rating for each unit.
- f. 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.).

11. Prior to final inspection:

- a. All front yard landscaping, street trees and privacy screening shall be maintained and/or installed as shown on the approved plans and as required by the Planning Division.
- b. Submit verification that the house was built in compliance with the City's Green Building Ordinance (Section 12.26 of the Municipal Code).
- c. Provide a landscape installation assessment by a certified landscape professional certifying that the landscaping and irrigation system were installed per the approved landscape plan pursuant to Chapter 12.36 of the Municipal Code.



ATTACHMENT A

CITY OF LOS ALTOS GENERAL APPLICATION

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

Permit # 1105716

<input type="checkbox"/>	One-Story Design Review	<input type="checkbox"/>	Commercial/Multi-Family	<input type="checkbox"/>	Environmental Review
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Two-Story Design Review	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sign Permit	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rezoning
<input type="checkbox"/>	Variance	<input type="checkbox"/>	Use Permit	<input type="checkbox"/>	R1-S Overlay
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lot Line Adjustment	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tenant Improvement	<input type="checkbox"/>	General Plan/Code Amendment
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tentative Map/Division of Land	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sidewalk Display Permit	<input type="checkbox"/>	Appeal
<input type="checkbox"/>	Historical Review	<input type="checkbox"/>	Preliminary Project Review	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other:

Project Address/Location: 136 S. Clark

Project Proposal/Use: Single Family Residence Current Use of Property: Single Family Residence

Assessor Parcel Number(s): 189-54-025 Site Area: 13074 s.f.

New Sq. Ft.: 3918 Altered/Rebuilt Sq. Ft.: _____ Existing Sq. Ft. to Remain: _____

Total Existing Sq. Ft.: _____ Total Proposed Sq. Ft. (including basement): _____

Applicant's Name: GUANXIN LI

Telephone No.: 650-622-6009 Email Address: guanxinli@gmail.com

Mailing Address: 136 South Clark Ave.

City/State/Zip Code: Los Altos, CA 94024

Property Owner's Name: GUANXIN LI & YUANYUAN LI

Telephone No.: 650-622-6009 Email Address: guanxinli@gmail.com

Mailing Address: 136 South Clark Ave.

City/State/Zip Code: Los Altos, CA 94024

Architect/Designer's Name: Mike Ma

Telephone No.: (650) 302-1987 Email Address: mma_aia@gmail.com

Mailing Address: 20660 Stevens Creek Blvd #169, Cupertino CA 95014

City/State/Zip Code: _____

*** If your project includes complete or partial demolition of an existing residence or commercial building, a demolition permit must be issued and finalized prior to obtaining your building permit. Please contact the Building Division for a demolition package. ***

(continued on back)



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 136 S. Clark Ave
Scope of Project: Addition or Remodel _____ or New Home X
Age of existing home if this project is to be an addition or remodel? _____
Is the existing house listed on the City's Historic Resources Inventory? No

Address: 136 S. Clark
Date: 6/16/15

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: $\pm 10,000 \sim 13,500$ square feet
Lot dimensions: Length $\pm 130 \sim \pm 218$ feet
Width $\pm 60 \sim \pm 140$ feet

If your lot is significantly different than those in your neighborhood, then note its: area 13074, length 215, and width 70.

2. Setback of homes to front property line: (Pgs. 8-11 Design Guidelines)

Existing front setback if home is a remodel? $\pm 32'-6"$

What % of the front facing walls of the neighborhood homes are at the front setback 60 %

Existing front setback for house on left $\pm 45'$ ft./on right $\pm 25'$ ft.

Do the front setbacks of adjacent houses line up? Not really

3. Garage Location Pattern: (Pg. 19 Design Guidelines)

Indicate the relationship of garage locations in your neighborhood* ⁶ only on your street (count for each type)

Garage facing front projecting from front of house face 4

Garage facing front recessed from front of house face 1

Garage in back yard 1

Garage facing the side 0

Number of 1-car garages ; 2-car garages 6; 3-car garages

Address: 136 S. Clark
Date: 6/16/15

4. **Single or Two-Story Homes:**

What % of the homes in your neighborhood* are:

One-story 7

Two-story 3

5. **Roof heights and shapes:**

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

Are there mostly hip 9, gable style 2, or other style roofs*?

Do the roof forms appear simple 7 or complex 3?

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 6 stucco 1 board & batten 1 clapboard
 tile stone 2 brick combination of one or more materials
(if so, describe) _____

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

No consistency

If no consistency then explain: 6 - comp. shingle 2 - tile roof
2 - wood shake

7. **Architectural Style:** (Appendix C, Design Guidelines)

Does your neighborhood* have a consistent identifiable architectural style?

YES NO

Type? 7 Ranch Shingle Tudor 2 Mediterranean/Spanish
 Contemporary 1 Colonial Bungalow Other

Address: 136 S. Clark
Date: 6/16/15

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)

Generally flat, approx. 1% slope toward 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.)?

Generally no curb/sidewalk. Landscape varies. Some have iron fence, some have big trees, while others have shrubs or hedges.

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

The new house will be visible from street as most other houses. However, due to the deep lot, the house will not be as visible from the rear neighbor

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)?

There are 2 street trees to remain.

10. Width of Street:

What is the width of the roadway paving on your street in feet? 60'

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

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

curb & sidewalk and the other side has some unpaved.

Address: 136 S. Clark
Date: 6/16/15

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.:

Hip roof with stucco wall along with various
landscape feature.

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

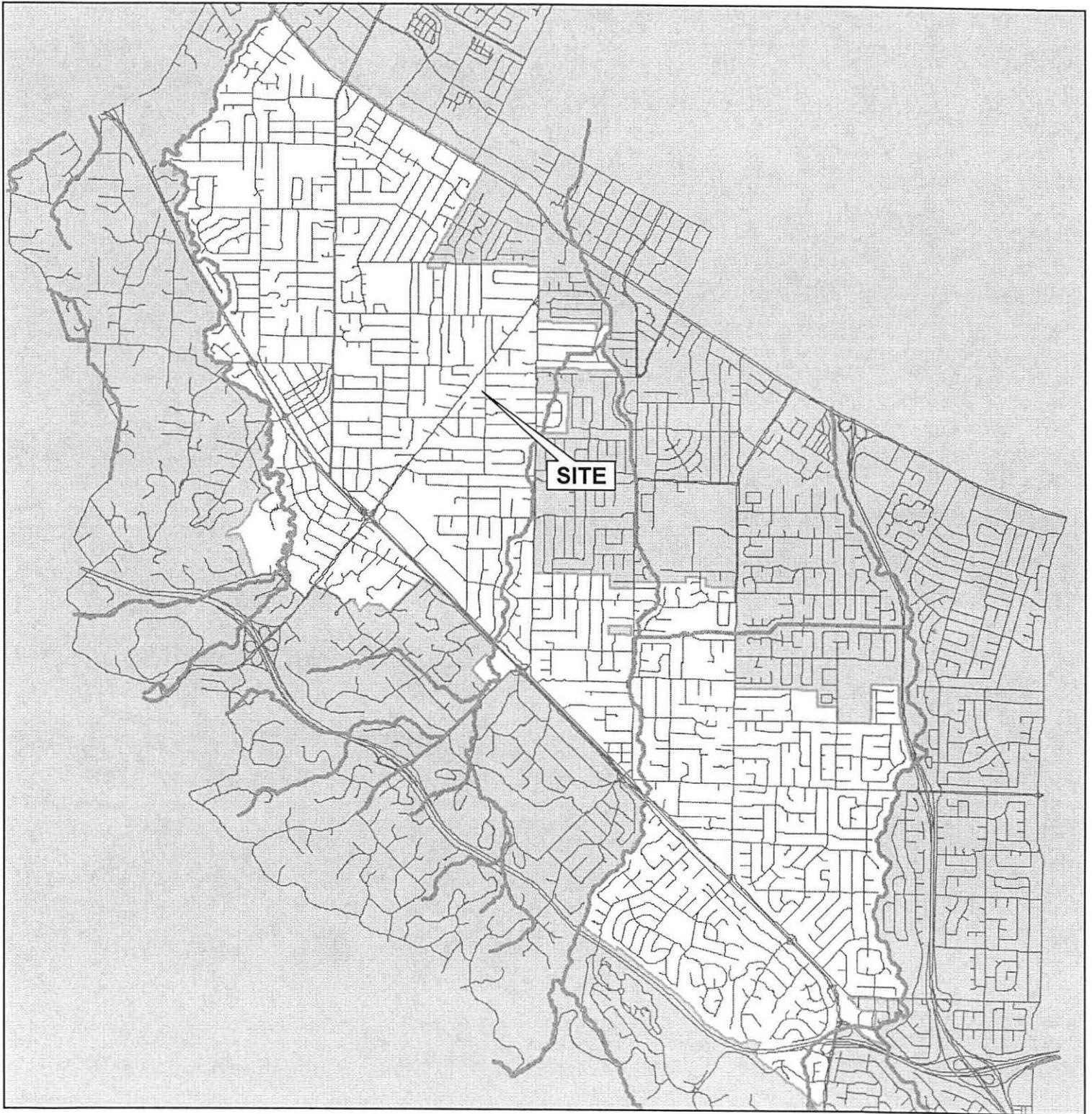
Address: 136 S. Clark
 Date: 6/16/15

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)
71 S. Clark	±30'	±15'	Front	1	±17'	Wood Shake roof Stucco wall	Simple
116 S. Clark	±28'	±30'	Front recessed	2	±28'	Comp. Shingle roof batt & board wall	Simple
126 S. Clark	±25'	±50'	Front	2	±27'	Tile roof Stucco wall	Complex
146 S. Clark	±45'	±20'	Rear	2	±28'	Wood Shake roof brick wall	Complex
555 Clark Ct.	±25'	±15'	side	1	±17'	Comp shingle roof Stucco wall.	Simple
601 Stardust	±25'	±25'	Front	1	±16'	Comp shingle roof Wood siding wall	Simple
153. S. Clark	±25'	±25'	Front	1	±18'	Flat tile roof Stucco wall	Simple
594 Springer Ter.	±25'	±30'	side	1	±23'	comp shingle roof Stucco wall	Complex
71 S. Clark	±25'	±42'	Front	1	±16'	Comp Shingle roof brick wall	Simple
111 S. El Monte	±10'	±20'	Front	1	±19'	Comp shingle roof Stucco wall & stone veneer.	Simple

AREA MAP



CITY OF LOS ALTOS

APPLICATION: 15-SC-25
APPLICANT: G. and Y. Li
SITE ADDRESS: 136 S. Clark Avenue

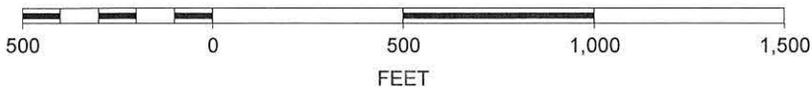


Not to Scale

VICINITY MAP



SCALE 1 : 6,000



APPLICATION: 15-SC-25
APPLICANT: G. and Y. Li
SITE ADDRESS: 136 S. Clark Avenue

136 S. Clark Avenue Notification Map



SCALE 1 : 1,500

