

March 10, 2023

City of Palo Alto
Department of Planning
250 Hamilton Avenue
Palo Alto, CA 94301

575 Los Trancos Road - New Residence

Dear Emily, Amy, Jonathan, Planning Commission & Council,

Thank you so much for kindly giving us the opportunity to resubmit our updated design based on the Council's feedback to us from the 1/23 City Council meeting. Enclosed please find our revised and updated plans, where we've worked hard to completely redesign the home per the Council's input and to keep much farther away from the top of bank along the west side of the site.

Bank Setback & Project/Site Areas

Following the specific recommendations from the Council, we've extensively redesigned the northern half of the home to have a much smaller footprint now, and the home has now been pulled in significantly to achieve the approx. 50' setback from top of bank (grade break) as requested by the Council.

When considering that the actual creek edge is an additional +/- 20' away from the top of bank, the closest point of the home is now approx. 65-70' away from the creek itself, which seems to be seasonal during periods of heavy rains and a dry creek for most of the year.

In addition, all paving proposed along the driveway, entry court and entry walkway are permeable, and both the overall size of the home and amount of impervious has been reduced significantly from the original design (per Council's recommendation of better utilizing the 2nd floor of the home).

For the swimming pool, we've followed Council's recommendation to remove any fencing around this area and have added a safety cover over the entire pool which will help protect animals in the area. We've further eliminated and minimized non-permeable areas around the pool, and the pool edge sits approx. 35' on average away from the top of bank (grade break), and approx. 50-60' away from the creek itself, which approximately coincides with the property/city boundary line (separating Palo Alto from Portola Valley).

Nighttime Lighting

Beyond pulling the west side of the home much farther inward, we've also worked to carefully design the home to utilize almost entirely blank walls along the west elevation facing the creek (with just 2 much needed smaller openings to let in light and allow egress for the interiors).

Additionally, at the entry auto court where there will likely be incidental light and glare from cars and headlights, along with safety lighting for home entry and egress, we've designed an open-slat light shield & vertical screen along the west edge of the entry auto court, which will help tremendously to shield, deflect and minimize light spill towards the creek.

Bird Safety

The vertical-slat light screen at the entry court is also part of our larger strategy for overall improved bird-safe design of the home, where we've extensively integrated open wood slat screens in front of many windows and glazed areas to help with general bird safety-- well beyond what all the similar adjacent homes are currently providing. This, coupled with more subtle strategies of roof overhangs, trellises, and use of articulated building geometry, should go a long way in providing an added layer of bird-safety and protection for the project.

Deferential to the overall surroundings, our redesigned home aims to preserve the natural and beautiful context all around and is carefully situated in a natural clearing to minimize impact and disturbance, both to the mature trees on site to the east and to the seasonal creek to the west.

Expressed as a series of smaller volumes and low, flat terraced roofs to minimize height and bulk, the home is designed to be minimally visible from the public ways, feathered in with the existing trees and topography. We continue to envision a soft-spoken but carefully crafted home nestled into the landscape and greenery, in keeping with the beautiful and natural setting along Los Trancos.

Sincerely,



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