



REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Date: 2/6/2023
Time: 7:00 p.m.
Location: Zoom.us/join – ID# 862 5880 9056 and
City Council Chambers
751 Laurel St., Menlo Park, CA 94025

A. Call To Order

Acting Chair Cynthia Harris called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

B. Roll Call

Present: Andrew Barnes, Linh Dan Do, Cynthia Harris (Acting Chair), Henry Riggs, Jennifer Schindler, Michele Tate

Staff: Michael Biddle, City Attorney’s Office; Fahteen Khan, Associate Planner; Matt Pruter, Associate Planner; Corinna Sandmeier, Acting Principal Planner; Chris Turner, Associate Planner

C. Reports and Announcements

Acting Principal Planner Corinna Sandmeier said the Housing Element Update was adopted by the City Council on January 31, 2023.

D. Public Comment

None

E. Consent Calendar

- E1. Approval of minutes from the November 3, 2022, Planning Commission meeting. (Attachment)
- E2. Approval of minutes from the November 7, 2022, Planning Commission meeting. (Attachment)
- E2. Approval of court report transcripts for 123 Independence Drive and Parkline from the December 12, 2022, Planning Commission meeting. (Independence Drive; Parkline)

ACTION: Motion and second (Riggs/Do) to approve the consent calendar as submitted; passes 6-0.

F. Study Session

- F1. Study session for the Parkline Master Plan project to comprehensively redevelop an approximately 63.2-acre site located at 301 and 333 Ravenswood Avenue and 555 and 565 Middlefield Road. The proposed project would redevelop SRI International’s research campus by creating a new office/research and development, transit-oriented campus with no net increase in commercial square footage, up to 550 new rental housing units (with a minimum of 15% of the units available for below market rate households), new bicycle and pedestrian connections, and approximately 25 acres of



publicly accessible open space. The proposed project would demolish all existing buildings, excluding Buildings P, S, and T, which would remain on-site and operational by SRI and its tenants. The proposed project would organize land uses generally into two land use districts within the Project site, including 1) an approximately 10-acre Residential District in the southwestern portion of the Project site; and 2) an approximately 53-acre Office/R&D (research and development) District that would comprise the remainder of the Project site. In total, the Proposed Project would result in a total of approximately 1,898,931 square feet, including approximately 1,380,332 square feet of office/R&D and approximately 518,599 square feet of residential uses (including up to 450 rental residential units). In addition, the proposed project would establish a separate parcel of land that is proposed to be leased to an affordable housing developer for the future construction of a 100 percent affordable housing or special needs project which would be separately rezoned as part of the proposed project for up to 100 residential units (in addition to the residential units proposed within the Residential District), and which is not included in residential square footage calculations as the square footage has not been determined. The EIR will study two potential project variants, one that includes an approximately 2 million gallon buried concrete water reservoir and associated facilities, and one that includes an additional 50 residential units for a total of up to 600 dwelling units, inclusive of the standalone affordable housing building. The Planning Commission previously held a public hearing on the scope and content of the EIR as part of the 30-day NOP (Notice of Preparation) comment period that ended on January 9, 2023. The project site is zoned "C-1(X)" (Administrative and Professional District, Restrictive) and governed by a Conditional Development Permit (CDP) approved in 1975, and subsequently amended in 1978, 1997, and 2004. The proposed project is anticipated to include the following entitlements: General Plan Amendment (Text and Map), Zoning Ordinance Amendment, Rezoning, Conditional Development Permit, Development Agreement, Architectural Control (for potential future Design Review), Heritage Tree Removal Permits, Vesting Tentative Map, Below Market Rate (BMR) Housing Agreement and Environmental Review. ***Continued from the meeting of January 23, 2023.*** (Staff Report #22-073-PC; Correspondence)

Planner Sandmeier made a presentation on the item.

Mark Murray, Lane Partners, spoke on behalf of the proposed project.

Acting Chair Harris opened public comment.

Public Comment:

- Jenny Michel, Coleman Place Neighborhood Block, urged the creation of up to 1,850 residential units at 30% affordable through the proposed development.
- Rob Wellington, Willows, said he supported the project for its housing and open space. He said commercial was important to have near the downtown to support local retail businesses.
- Karen Grove supported the move of the affordable housing into the residential zone and willingness to do more than 100 units of deeply affordable housing and to study up to 800 housing units.
- Pam Jones noted the additional affordable housing and residential units and said to meet RHNA for affordable housing at all levels the city needed 1,662 new affordable units noting 594 were in

the pipeline. She said if more affordable units could be built physically separate that should be the goal and the Council should rezone to increase well over the 100 residential units allowed per acre in District 1.

- Ken Chan, Housing Leadership Council of San Mateo County, said he appreciated the applicant's willing response to community comments to improve the proposal and urged the Commission to support the proposal that allowed for the greatest feasible number of homes, especially affordable ones.
- Michal Bortnik supported increased housing up to 800 units due to the number of expected employees at the commercial site and urged that everything be done to mitigate traffic impacts.
- Adina Levin, Menlo Park, expressed support for the evolved proposal to have more homes including more affordable housing.
- Conor Flannery said this was a great site for commercial use that would help the city attract and retain great employers to continue to be a leader in the tech and life sciences area.
- Kartherine Dumont, Linfield Oaks, said she supported that the applicants were looking into providing more housing and a variety of and dedicated affordable and deeply affordable housing. She said this project also made it possible to make the area safer for bicyclists and pedestrians.
- Sarah Brophy, Menlo Park, supported the project and noted the housing and affordable housing component.
- Phil Bahr expressed concern with the proposal for the four story parking structures that would block the views of McCandless Business Park, and that the 1 million square feet of new office space and 650 apartments would add to traffic gridlock.
- Michael Arousa, Menlo Park, expressed strong support for the project proposal and maximizing the amount of housing built up to 800 units.

Acting Chair Harris closed public comment.

Commissioner Comments:

- Support for integrating the donated acre within residential component, the possibility of increasing size of donated land and number of affordable units, and studying 800 or more housing units
- Support for the level of affordable housing at 30% and efforts to increase that
- Consider longer term rental leases such as 10 years
- Consider two parking structures rather than three and one to two levels with affordable housing on top
- Support for an aggressive TDM plan for the project due to its proximity to downtown and transit
- Consider realignment of Ravenswood with Ringwood
- Support for keeping residential and commercial traffic separate

- Support for the office amenity center being open to the public and tenants of other office buildings along Middlefield Road
- Consider creation of two regulation-sized sports field and office space for Menlo Park School District or one regulation-sized sports field and four pickleball courts
- Appreciation for the open space and connectivity through the site and preservation of heritage trees, in particular the native oaks
- Support for Mission revival architecture
- Consider the uniqueness of the site and creating elements of welcome, protection, and human scale in a way that doesn't necessarily rely on the Mission revival style
- Support for reservoir variant

Comments were also made regarding a desire for an EIR alternative analysis of 1,000 to 1,700 housing units.

G. Public Hearing

- G1. Consider and adopt a resolution to approve a use permit to demolish an existing one-story, single-family residence, and construct a new two-story residence on a substandard lot with regard to minimum lot width in the R-1-U (Single Family Urban Residential) zoning district, at 893 Woodland Avenue; determine this action is categorically exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15303's Class 3 exemption for new construction or conversion of small structures. ***Continued to a future meeting.***
- G2. Consider and adopt a resolution to approve a use permit to demolish an existing one-story, single-family residence, and construct a new two-story, single-family residence on a substandard lot with regard to minimum lot width and area in the R-1-U (Single Family Urban Residential) zoning district, at 440 University Drive. The project includes an attached accessory dwelling unit (ADU), which is a permitted use not subject to discretionary review; determine this action is categorically exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15303's Class 3 exemption for new construction or conversion of small structures. (Staff Report #23-010-PC)

Associate Planner Chris Turner reported no updates to the published staff report.

Anna Felver, Thomas James Homes, applicant, spoke on behalf of the project.

Acting Chair Harris opened the public hearing.

Public Comment:

- Elizabeth Houck spoke against the project due to concerns about privacy impacts.

Acting Chair Harris closed the public hearing.

The Commission discussed stairwell glazing and potential shade impacts.

Commissioner Riggs moved to approve the item with the addition of obscure glazing on the stairwell. Commissioner Schindler seconded the motion.

ACTION: Motion and second (Riggs/Schlinder) to adopt a resolution to approve a use permit to demolish an existing one-story, single-family residence, and construct a new two-story, single-family residence on a substandard lot with regard to minimum lot width and area in the R-1-U (Single Family Urban Residential) zoning district, at 440 University Drive with the following modification; passes 4-0-2 with Commissioners Barnes and Tate abstaining.

Add Condition 2a: Simultaneous with the submittal of a complete building permit application, the Applicant shall revise the elevation drawings to indicate the stair well window will have obscured glass, subject to review and approval of the Planning Division.

- G3. Consider and adopt a resolution to approve a use permit to demolish an existing one-story, single-family residence and detached accessory building, and construct a new two-story, single-family residence on a substandard lot with regard to lot width, depth, and area in the R-1-U (Single Family Urban Residential) zoning district, at 167 McKendry Drive; determine this action is categorically exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15303's Class 3 exemption for new construction or conversion of small structures. (Staff Report #23-011-PC)

Commissioner Barnes recused himself from consideration of this item.

Planner Pruter said an additional piece of correspondence was received expressing privacy concerns and proposed tree planting.

Eiki Tanaka, project architect, spoke on behalf of the project.

Acting Chair Harris opened the public hearing.

Public Comment:

- Alex Lee, neighbor, expressed concerns with the stairwell window and its view into his property and backyard and said the proposed tree type offered for screening was unacceptable.

Acting Chair Harris closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Riggs moved to adopt a resolution to approve the project with the condition that the lower section of the stairwell window be obscure glass and the applicant work with staff on alternative tree selections that might be more amenable to the neighbor. Commissioner Tate seconded the motion.

ACTION: Motion and second (Riggs/Tate) to adopt a resolution to approve a use permit to demolish an existing one-story, single-family residence and detached accessory building, and construct a new two-story, single-family residence on a substandard lot with regard to lot width, depth, and area in the R-1-U (Single Family Urban Residential) zoning district, at 167 McKendry Drive; determine this action is categorically exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15303's Class 3 exemption for new construction or conversion of small structures with the following additional condition; passes 5-0-1 with Commissioner Barnes recused.

Add Condition 2a: Simultaneous with the submittal of a complete building permit application, the applicant shall submit revised plans showing obscured glass for the lower portion of the window (lower lite) at the stairs along the right-side elevation and alternative tree selections, for the purpose

of providing privacy screening between the window at the stairs and the neighboring residence, subject to review and approval of the Planning Division.

- G4. Consider and adopt a resolution to approve a use permit to demolish an existing one-story, single family residence and construct two new two-story residences on a substandard lot with regard to minimum lot width in the R-2 (Low Density Apartment) district, at 785 Partridge Avenue. The project would also include excavation in the interior side and rear setbacks for lightwells associated with basements; determine this action is categorically exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15303's Class 3 exemption for new construction or conversion of small structures. Additionally, the proposal includes administrative review of a minor subdivision to subdivide the project into two condominium units. (Staff Report #23-012-PC)

Planner Fahteen Khan noted an added condition of approval: *Simultaneous with the submittal of a complete building permit application, the applicant shall submit a revised arborist report detailing guidelines for root preservation for trees #2 and 3 (Douglas firs), located at 817 Partridge Avenue. In addition to detailed instructions on excavation methods and monitoring, the guidelines shall specify alternative driveway construction techniques and/or materials to preserve roots of trees #2 and 3 within 12 feet of their trunks and state that no roots greater than or equal to 2 inches in diameter shall be cut within 12 feet of trees' trunks. The revised arborist report shall be subject to review and approval by the City Arborist and Planning Division.*

Jose Ares, Studio Squared Architecture, spoke on behalf of the project.

Acting Chair Harris opened the public hearing.

Public Comment:

- Ken Chen expressed concern that the existing home had asbestos siding and that had also potentially permeated the soil and asked for confirmation it would be removed safely.
- A neighbor (*name not provided*) expressed concerns about the advanced age and health of the Douglas firs and protection of their property from their potential collapse, the project built up to their property line and privacy impacts, impacts to their foundation from the proposed excavation as well as asbestos hazards, and whether the transformer was sufficient with this new structure.

ACTION: Motion and second (Tate/Schindler) to continue to 11:15 p.m.; passes 6-0.

- Anna (*last name not provided*), neighbor, said she could not support the project and noted past bad experience with a similar project and requested responsive contact information for the course of the project, and full attention to safe handling of potential asbestos siding.

Acting Chair Harris closed the public hearing.

Ms. Khan explained that remediation for asbestos removal and structural requirements regarding lightwells and basements were determined during the building permit process. She said building inspectors visit the construction site to ensure compliance to regulations and standards. She was not able to address the transformer question.

ACTION: Motion and second (Riggs/Schindler) to adopt a resolution including the added condition to approve a use permit to demolish an existing one-story, single family residence and construct two new two-story residences on a substandard lot with regard to minimum lot width in the R-2 (Low Density Apartment) district at 785 Partridge Avenue; passes 5-0-1 with Commissioner Barnes abstaining.

H. Informational Items

H1. Future Planning Commission Meeting Schedule

- Regular Meeting: February 27, 2023

Planner Sandmeier said the February 27 and March 13 agendas were not finalized.

- Regular Meeting: March 13, 2023

I. Adjournment

Acting Chair Harris adjourned the meeting at 11:10 p.m.

Staff Liaison: Corinna Sandmeier, Principal Planner

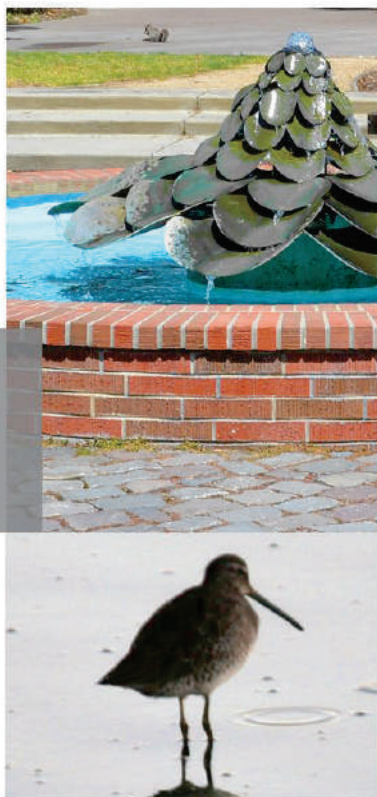
Recording Secretary: Brenda Bennett

Approved by the Planning Commission on May 1, 2023



785 PARTRIDGE AVENUE

Additional Project-Specific COA



Simultaneous with the submittal of a complete building permit application, the applicant shall submit a revised arborist report detailing guidelines for root preservation for trees #2 and 3 (Douglas firs), located at 817 Partridge Ave. In addition to detailed instructions on excavation methods and monitoring, the guidelines shall specify alternative driveway construction techniques and/or materials to preserve roots of trees #2 and 3 within 12 feet of their trunks and state that no roots greater than or equal to 2 inches in diameter shall be cut within 12 feet of trees' trunks. The revised arborist report shall be subject to review and approval by the City Arborist and Planning Division.



440 University Drive
 Planning Commission | February 6, 2023

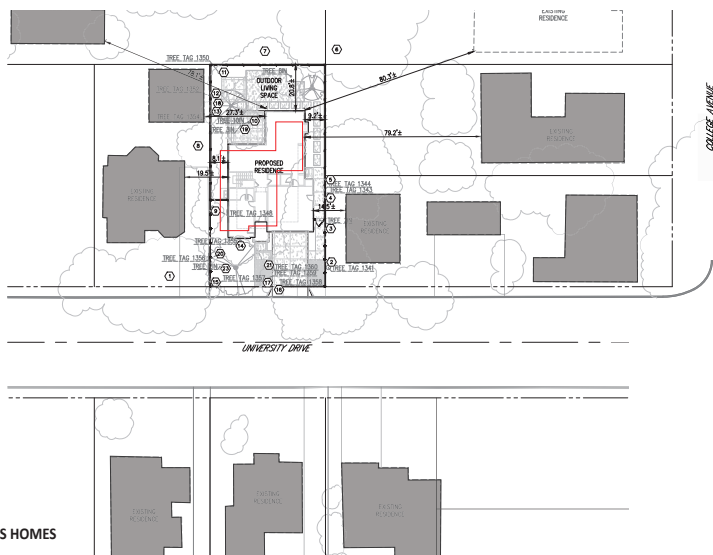


440 University Drive | Site Context



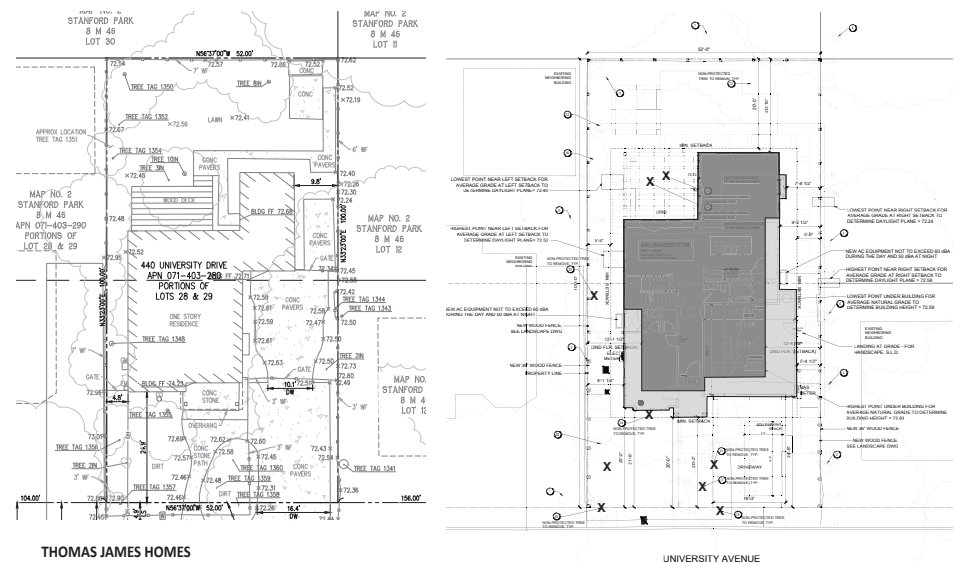
THOMAS JAMES HOMES

440 University Drive | Site Context



THOMAS JAMES HOMES

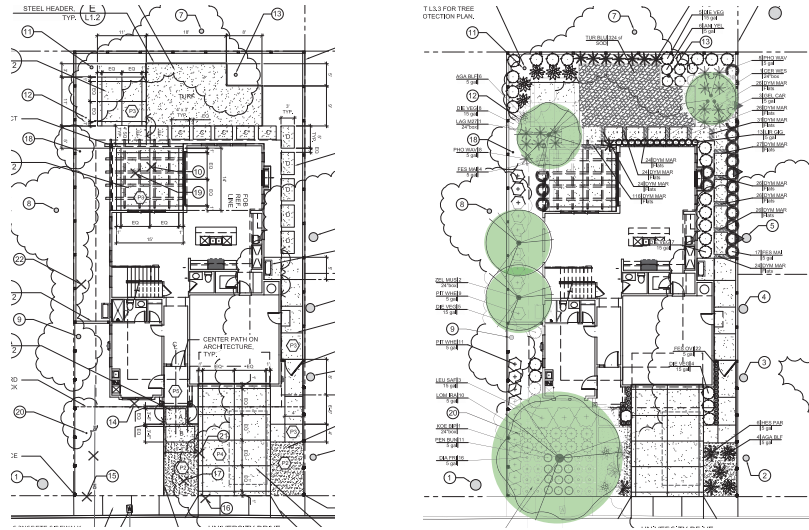
440 University Drive | Site Existing VS Proposed



THOMAS JAMES HOMES

UNIVERSITY AVENUE

440 University Drive | **Site Existing VS Proposed**



THOMAS JAMES HOMES

440 University Drive | **Site Context**



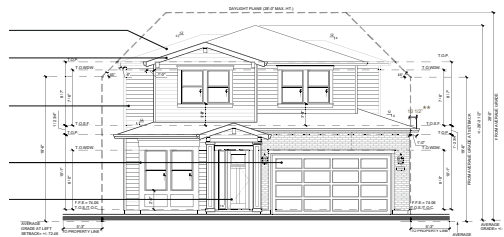
Streetscape



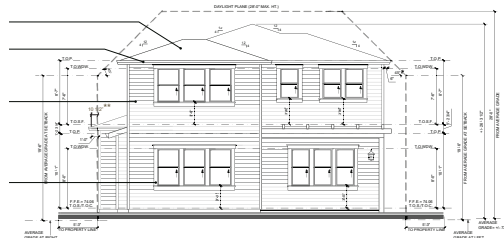
Across Streetscape

THOMAS JAMES HOMES

440 University Drive | **Proposed Two-Story Home**



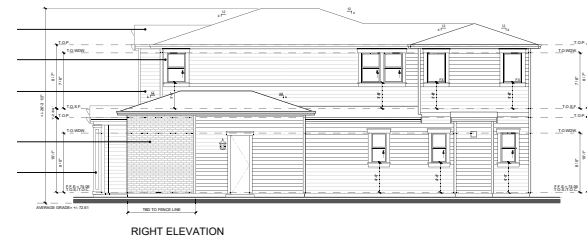
FRONT ELEVATION



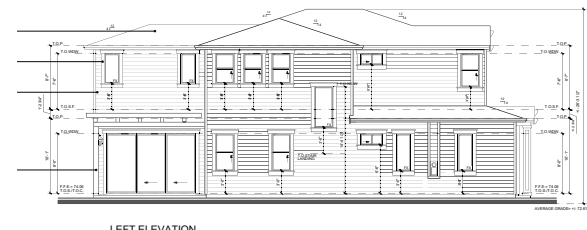
REAR ELEVATION

THOMAS JAMES HOMES

440 University Drive | **Proposed Two-Story Home**



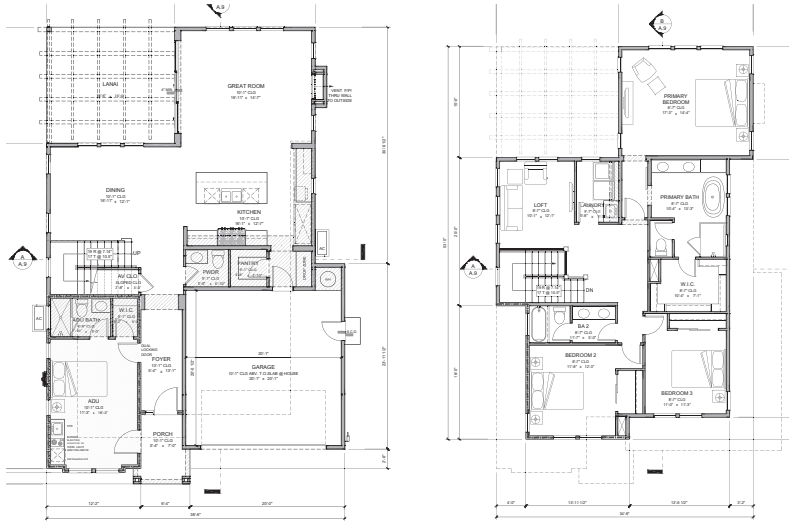
RIGHT ELEVATION



LEFT ELEVATION

THOMAS JAMES HOMES

440 University Drive | Proposed Floor Plans



THOMAS JAMES HOMES



Thank You!



Additional Comments Received after Staff Report Publication

Alex Lee

171 McKendry Drive
Menlo Park CA 94025

February 6, 2023

Menlo Park Planning Commission

701 Laurel Street
Menlo Park, CA 94025

Dear members of the Menlo Park Planning Commission,

We are writing in regards to the proposed renovation plans on 167 McKendry Drive. We currently live next door on 171 McKendry Drive.

As noted in Exhibit B of the submitted plans, we have raised privacy concerns with the 4 stairwell windows that face our property. When coming down on that stairway, or when standing on the stairwell landing area between floors, we are concerned that there is a direct line of sight to our backyard and our bedroom windows that face 167 McKendry (see *Pictures 1 and 2 attached below*). Given that there is only 3'2"-3'9" clearance between the stairwell landing area and the window, it is easy for any person to have this direct line of sight. This issue will be worse if we choose to expand our current home with a 2nd floor in the future, as the top of the stairway on 167 McKendry would have direct line of sight to our 2nd floor windows (see *Picture 3 below*). That is why we had discussed with Mr. Ryan Chang about using some form of obscure glass for the stairwell windows last August.

Last week we just learned that the latest submitted plans only address our privacy concerns with three 15-gallon Strawberry Trees to provide landscape screening. We have informed Mr. Ryan Chang that this submitted proposed solution is not adequate. A 15-gallon Strawberry Tree is only generally around 6ft tall, and we calculated that we would need a tree that is at least 13ft tall to block the direct line of sight towards our current backyard & windows (see *Picture 4 below*). We also raised our concern that Strawberry Trees can grow wide and drop significant fruits on our driveway where we park our car and where our kids play, requiring us significant ongoing maintenance.

We have reiterated to Mr. Chang our preference for an obscure glass solution, as we see it as a better longer term solution that addresses both the current and future privacy needs. We have requested that if any landscape screening solution is pursued, it would need to provide adequate coverage from the time when the construction is completed, without having to wait for the trees to grow to the

appropriate height over time. In the past, we have also proposed raising the height of the stairwell windows as an alternative.

As of this morning, we have not come to an agreement yet. My purpose with this letter is primarily to make you aware that the privacy concerns with the stairwell windows have not yet been resolved, and that we're still in discussions to arrive at a mutually agreed upon solution.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Alex Lee

Picture 1 - Simulated view from stairwell landing on 167 McKendry Dr., looking towards the **back** of our current 1-story home (based on latest submitted plans for 167 McKendry and our current home dimensions)



Picture 2 - Simulated view from stairwell landing on 167 McKendry Dr., looking at the **side** of our current 1-story home



Picture 3 - Simulated view from top of stairwell on 167 McKendry Dr., looking at the side of our home in the scenario where we expand our home with a 2nd floor



Picture 4 - Simulated view from stairwell landing on 167 McKendry Dr., looking towards the back of our current 1-story home WITH a 13ft hedge tree planted in between the properties

