

Planning Commission Staff Report

June 10, 2015

Item 5.a.

- SUBJECT:** P15-0001
- APPLICANT:** Eric Shephard
- PROPERTY OWNERS:** Mahadevan and Jaanaki Rajagopalan
- PURPOSE:** Application for Design Review approval to construct an approximately 4,292-square-foot, two-story custom home on an approximately 61,097-square-foot parcel
- LOCATION:** 1 Winding Oaks Drive (Lot 1)
- GENERAL PLAN:** Low Density Residential and Open Space-Public Health and Safety
- SPECIFIC PLAN:** Vineyard Avenue Corridor
- ZONING:** Planned Unit Development – Hillside Residential & Open Space (PUD-HR&OS) District
- EXHIBITS:**
- A. [Draft Conditions of Approval, dated June 10, 2015](#)
 - B. [Project plans, view simulations, and color and material board dated "Received April 29, 2015"](#)
 - C. [Estates on Oak Ridge Architectural Design Guidelines approved August 23, 2006](#)
 - D. [GreenPoint Rated Checklist dated "Received January 5, 2015"](#)
 - E. [Location and noticing maps](#)

BACKGROUND

The Estates on Oak Ridge Subdivision (Subdivision) is a portion of the Vineyard Avenue Corridor Specific Plan area and consists of seven residential lots for custom homes and one lot for a City water tank approved in 2006 (PUD-54). Currently, all of the custom home lots remain undeveloped. The Estates on Oak Ridge Architectural Design Guidelines (Exhibit C) specify the required development standards for each lot within the Subdivision, including, but not limited to, the designated development area (DDA) or building envelope, building size, building height, maximum square footage, maximum floor area ratio, landscaping, and architectural styles.

In addition to the specified development standards, all homes within the Subdivision are encouraged to conform stylistically to one of six architectural styles: Craftsman/Bay Area Traditional, Mediterranean, Monterey/Spanish Eclectic, French Country, Tuscan Farmhouse, and Tudor/English Country. Each of these styles has its own distinct architectural elements, intended to provide visual interest and diversity within the Subdivision, but to also ensure a cohesive neighborhood design.

The property owners request Design Review approval to construct an approximately 4,292-square-foot, two-story custom home on Lot 1 of the subdivision. PUD-54 requires the Planning Commission to review and approve all future homes within the subdivision. As such, the Design Review application is before the Planning Commission for review and action.

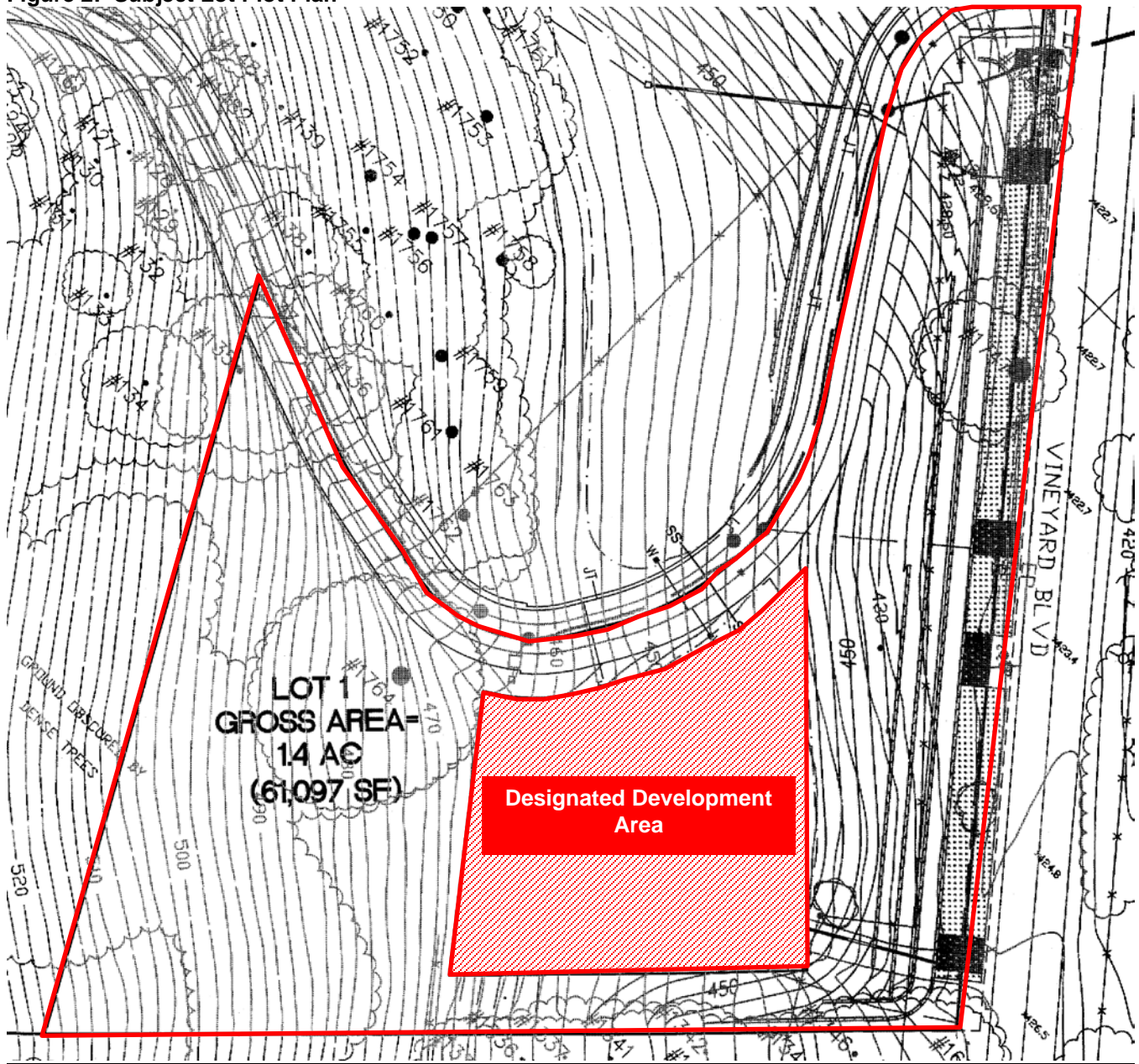
SITE DESCRIPTION

The subject site is Lot 1, or 1 Winding Oaks Drive within the Subdivision (see plot plans in Exhibit C). The subject site is located on the east side of Winding Oaks Drive and is the first or northernmost lot adjacent to the subdivision entrance at the intersection of Old Vineyard Avenue and Winding Oaks Drive. The subject lot, which is currently vacant, is approximately 1.40 acres in size, u-shaped and has a gradual upslope running from north to south. There are approximately 55 existing oak trees on the subject parcel. Eight of the oaks were preserved at the time the Subdivision was approved, and are located throughout the southern or upper end of the subject parcel, while the remaining 47 were newly planted as mitigation trees as part of the PUD-54 approval. Thirty-three of these mitigation trees were planted along the northern side of the subject parcel, adjacent to Old Vineyard Avenue, while the remaining mitigation trees were planted in two groves on the southern or upper end of the subject parcel. Residential and/or open space areas generally surround the subject lot in all directions. Figure 1 shows an aerial photograph of the subject lot, and Figure 2 shows the lot plot plan, along with the DDA.

Figure 1: Aerial Photograph of the Estates on Oak Ridge Subdivision and Lot 1



Figure 2: Subject Lot Plot Plan



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The property owners request Design Review approval to construct an approximately 4,292-square-foot, two-story custom home. Additionally, the proposed home includes an approximately 927-square-foot garage, a 274-square-foot porte cochere, and a 650-square-foot partially enclosed loggia at the rear. A summary of the prescribed development standards for new construction and a comparison of the subject proposal to those standards is provided below:

Development Standard	Required	Proposed
<i>Min. Setbacks</i>	No development outside of DDA	All development within DDA
<i>Max. Floor Area Ratio</i>	44%*	41.9%
<i>Max. House Size</i>	5,426 square feet**	5,169 square feet
<i>Max. Height Main House</i>	30 feet***	30 feet
<i>Max. Driveway Width</i>	16 feet	16 feet
<i>Min. Garage Size/On-site Parking</i>	3 car + 2 on-site guest spaces	3 car + 2 on-site guest spaces
<i>Min. Tree Planting</i>	12 new 24-inch box trees	17 new 24-inch box trees

* The Estates on Oak Ridge Subdivision FAR is calculated by dividing the total conditioned space of each home (including garage area exceeding 700 sq. ft., but excluding non-habitable accessory structures, exterior balconies, stoops and steps, decks, and porches not enclosed on three sides.) by the DDA.

** House sized determined by size of the DDA multiplied by the FAR.

***The height of a structure is measured vertically from the lowest finished grade adjacent to an exterior wall of a building to the highest elevation of the building, excluding chimneys and similar roof features as permitted by City R-1-40,000 District.

The proposed 4,292 square-foot custom home will be designed in the Tuscan Farmhouse architectural style, which features smooth stucco walls, stone veneer, cementitious stone window and door trim, pre-cast support columns, S-tile roofing, and decorative iron accent elements. The colors will primarily be in the earth tone range, with the main body color best described as a maple syrup color (a combination of brown and yellow colors), the support columns will be an off-white color, the stone veneer will be a mixture of brown and tan colors, and all gutters and downspouts will be dark brown.

A full landscape plan has been proposed. The plan includes a tree/plant palette of native and non-native species that are primarily drought tolerant, as well as some hardscape features highlighted by a concrete paver driveway and patio designed to complement the stacked stone on the proposed home. A small eight tree fruit orchard is proposed on the south side of the new home. There are approximately 55 existing trees on site, eight of which are mature oaks, and the remaining 47 are younger oaks planted as mitigation trees related to the PUD-54 approval. Eleven of the existing mitigation trees, all blue oaks, are proposed to be relocated from the proposed orchard area to the north side of the new home.

Photo simulations showing the existing condition and five- and 10-year post-construction conditions are provided in Exhibit B as required by PUD-54.

Please see the attached project plans (Exhibit B) for additional information on the subject proposal.

ANALYSIS

Design Review

The architectural design guidelines that were established by PUD-54 (Estates on Oak Ridge) address the DDA or building envelope, building size, building height, maximum square footage, maximum floor area ratio, landscaping, architectural style, et cetera. Below is an analysis of the subject proposal in comparison with those architectural design guidelines. Please see the project plans, view simulations, and color and material board in Exhibit B for additional information on the subject proposal.

Site Design

The architectural design guidelines prescribe a DDA that establishes a defined building envelope that limits development on the subject lot to that area only. As such, there are no specific setback requirements for the Subdivision. The proposed home and all accessory structures are sited completely within the DDA area as required. The DDA is fairly flat in relation to the other portions of the subject lot, which reduces the amount of grading necessary to accommodate the footprint of the home. By orienting the driveway approach on the north end of the subject site, which is also relatively flat, minimal grading will be necessary to tie the approach into Winding Oaks Drive. Moreover, this orientation allows for a substantial landscape buffer along the Old Vineyard Avenue frontage as required by the architectural design guidelines, reducing the visual impact of the home from the street level.

Architectural Design

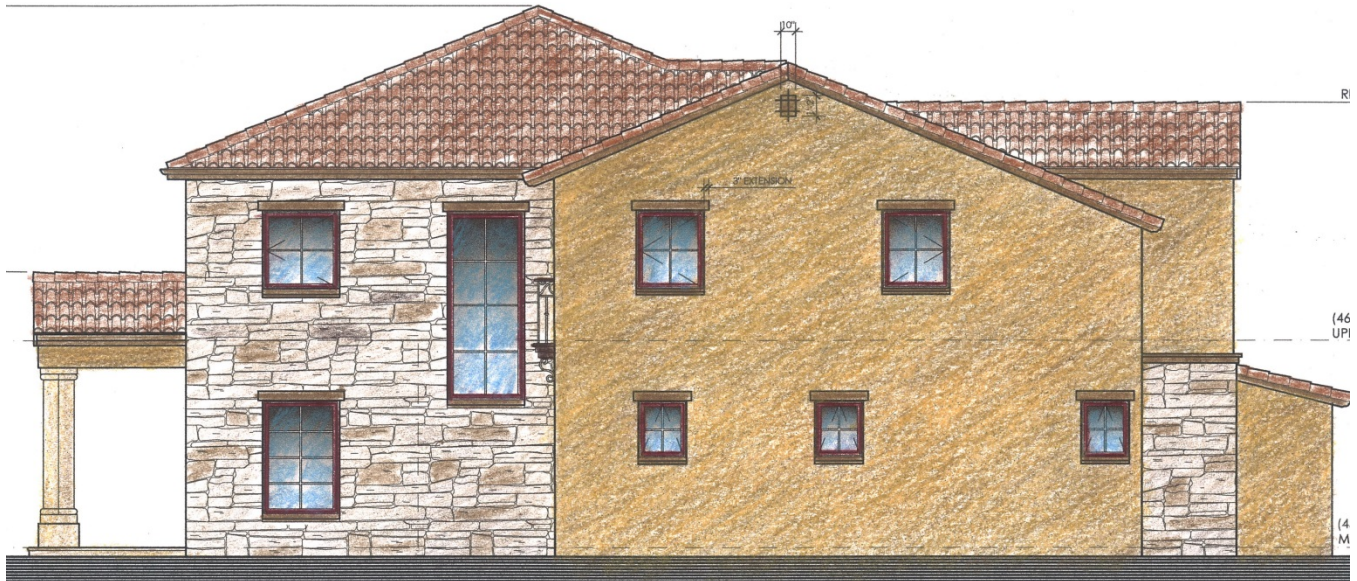
Building Form/Massing/Materials and Color

The proposed home is a two-story structure with articulated wall lines that provide a break in the massing of the home and promote visual interest. The roof lines are varied to mitigate the massing of the structure and the majority of the front façade incorporates stone veneer and smooth stucco.

As proposed, the exterior walls of the house will be articulated and, therefore, the massing of the building will be compatible with others in the neighborhood. The use of stone treatments, wall articulation and detailing will provide an attractive home for the neighborhood. The projecting front entry porch element and porte cochere add architectural interest and the home design incorporates high quality materials and elements. The front entry and garage doors are nicely detailed and are compatible with the design of the proposed home. The cementitious stone window and door trim are also compatible with the proposed design. In general, the architectural design and finish materials/colors are generally consistent in their interpretation of the required Tuscan Farmhouse architectural style. Figure 3 shows the proposed elevations.

Figure 3: Proposed Elevations





Landscaping

The proposed landscape plan includes a variety of planting materials. The plan includes a tree/plant palette of native and non-native species that are mostly drought tolerant, as well as some hardscape features, including a concrete paver driveway and patio designed to complement the stone veneer on the proposed home.

The architectural design guidelines require a minimum of 12 new 24-inch box size trees on the subject lot. The proposed landscape plan includes a total of 12 new trees throughout the plan, all 24-inch box size. No existing site trees will be removed in conjunction with this project; however, a condition of approval has been included that requires the applicant to replace any dead mitigation trees required by PUD-54 with new trees.

Staff believes the proposed Landscape Plan will provide adequate landscaping for the site as required by the architectural design guidelines. The combination of plant materials and hardscape will add interest to the site and will also provide adequate screening of the site from Old Vineyard Avenue and the surrounding area.

Staff is recommending a condition of approval requiring the applicant to revise the plant palette prior to the issuance of a building permit to include plant species that are drought tolerant.

Fencing and Walls

Wire mesh, decorative metal picket, and wood with lattice fencing are proposed in accordance with the architectural design guidelines. Additionally, a condition of approval has been recommended requiring the retaining walls to be stucco and painted to match the proposed home, as required by the architectural design guidelines.

Lighting

The architectural design guidelines specify that all exterior lighting be designed, installed and controlled to minimize lighting on the hillsides and prevent lights from pointing directly at up-hill or adjacent properties. Building up-lighting and/or wash lighting on the building is prohibited, excluding low-level lighting for pathways and entryways. In addition to the wall-mounted lighting on the proposed home, which is complementary to the architectural style and consistent with the architectural design guidelines, low voltage path and landscaping up-lighting is proposed. Staff believes the low voltage path lighting is acceptable based on the architectural design guidelines; however, staff finds the low voltage landscaping up-lighting to be inconsistent, in that it will be directed upward and used to highlight landscape features, contrary to the requirement of minimizing lighting on the hillside. Therefore, staff has provided a condition of approval requiring the removal of all the landscaping up-lighting.

Green Building Measures

The City's Green Building Ordinance requires new single-family homes that are 2,000 square-foot or more in size to achieve a "green home" rating on the GreenPoint "Single-Family Checklist". The applicant provided a preliminary GreenPoint Rated checklist of measures to be incorporated into the building plan set. The applicant is proposing to construct a home that will achieve 132 points, where 50 points is the minimum requirement (Exhibit D). Staff appreciates that the applicant has included a considerable number of green building measures in the project.

PUBLIC NOTICE AND COMMENTS

Notices of this application were sent to surrounding property owners and tenants within a 1,000-foot radius of the site. Staff has provided the location and noticing maps as Exhibit E for reference. At the time this report was published, staff had not received any public comments about the project.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

This project is categorically exempt from environmental review pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines, Section 15303, New Construction, Class 3. Therefore, no environmental document accompanies this report.

CONCLUSION

Staff has reviewed the subject proposal in accordance with the approved PUD-54 and the architectural design guidelines for the Estates on Oak Ridge Subdivision and believes the subject proposal is consistent with the regulations. Staff believes that the architectural style and design of the home are appropriate for the Vineyard Avenue Specific Plan Area.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Planning Commission approve P15-0001 subject to the draft conditions of approval listed in Exhibit A.

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