

## Planning Commission Staff Report

November 12, 2014

Item 6.a.

**SUBJECT:** P14-0829

**APPLICANT:** Greg Munn

**PROPERTY OWNER:** George Schmitt

**PURPOSE:** Application for Administrative Design Review approval to construct the following to the existing dwelling located at 554 Hamilton Way: (1) an approximately 781-square-foot single-story addition to the rear of the house; (2) an 88-square-foot, 13-foot, 6-inch tall covered front porch; and (3) an approximately 663-square-foot second-story addition with an approximately 217-square-foot second-floor deck to the west of the house.

**LOCATION:** 554 Hamilton Way

**ZONING:** R-1-6,500 (One-Family Residential) District

**EXHIBITS:**

- A. [Recommended Conditions of Approval](#)
- B. [Revised Proposed Plans](#)
- C. [Letters received after August 13, 2014](#)
- D. [Letters received prior to August 13, 2014 Planning Commission hearing](#)
- E. [August 13, 2014 Planning Commission Staff Report](#)
- F. [August 13, 2014 Planning Commission Minutes Excerpt](#)
- G. [Location and Noticing Maps](#)

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### I. BACKGROUND

On May 9, 2014, the applicant submitted an Administrative Design Review (ADR) application to construct single- and second-story additions to the existing single-family home located at 554 Hamilton Way. After the ADR public notice was sent, two neighbors contacted staff and indicated that they were opposed to the proposed addition: Dolores Bengtson at 568 Hamilton Way and John Toms at 575 Hamilton Way.

Mrs. Bengtson, a neighbor directly adjacent to the subject property to the east, had concerns regarding the potential loss of views of the Pleasanton Ridge from both her front yard and backyard. Mr. Toms was concerned that the second-story addition would be out of character with the Rosepointe neighborhood. After staff discussed the concerns about the design of the project with the applicant and the neighbors, the applicant offered to install story poles to illustrate the impact of the proposed addition. Once the story poles were installed, two additional neighbors contacted staff: Christine Steiner at 596 Hamilton Way and Michael and Janis O'Rourke at 6536 Hanover Court. In general, these neighbors also indicated that the second-story addition would be out of character with the Rosepointe neighborhood. After further discussion of the design concerns with the applicant, homeowner, and the neighbors, staff determined that the differences could not be resolved at the Zoning Administrator level and thus referred the application directly to the Planning Commission for review. All original letters of opposition submitted prior to the August 13, 2014 Planning Commission hearing are included within Exhibit D.

On August, 13, 2014 the Planning Commission held a public hearing on the proposed project. At the hearing, testimony was provided by the applicant, Dolores Bengtson, as well as three neighbors in opposition to the project and one neighbor in favor of the project. Concerns echoed those articulated prior to the hearing, relating directly to the adjacent neighbor (Dolores Bengtson), the loss of views created by the second-story addition, and the second-story addition being out of character with the Rosepointe neighborhood. The Commission continued the item and directed the applicant to make modifications to the proposed plan to mitigate the view impacts on the adjacent neighbor at 568 Hamilton Way.

## **II. SITE DESCRIPTION**

The subject site is an irregularly-shaped lot on the north side of Hamilton Way in the Rosepointe neighborhood. The approximately 14,619-square-foot lot has an approximately 2,303-square-foot single-story residence and a 529-square-foot attached, two-car garage. The aesthetics of the ranch-style home are characterized by exterior features including vertical board-and-batten siding and brick veneer along the front of the home, and a composition shingled roof.

Additional single-family residences in the Rosepointe neighborhood are located to the west, east, and south of the subject site. Single-family residences along Diamond Court and Sycamore Road, zoned Planned Unit Development – Medium Density Residential (PUD-MDR), are located immediately north of the lot. There are no two-story homes on Hamilton Way. The closest two-story homes in the Rosepointe neighborhood are located towards the entry of the neighborhood on Arlington Drive and Arlington Court, as well as directly behind the subject home on Diamond Court.

## **III. PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The applicant has submitted revised plans to construct a 781-square-foot single-story addition to the rear of the house, an 88-square-foot, 13-foot, 6-inch tall front entry porch, and a 663-square-foot second-story addition with an approximately 217-square-foot second-floor deck facing to the west of the home. Table 1, below, compares the originally proposed project and revised project. In summary, the revised plans have shifted the second-story addition towards the front of the home, relocated the deck from the rear to the west side, and lowered the single-story roof line to be consistent with the current single-story roof line.

**Table 1 - Originally Proposed Project and Revised Proposed Project**

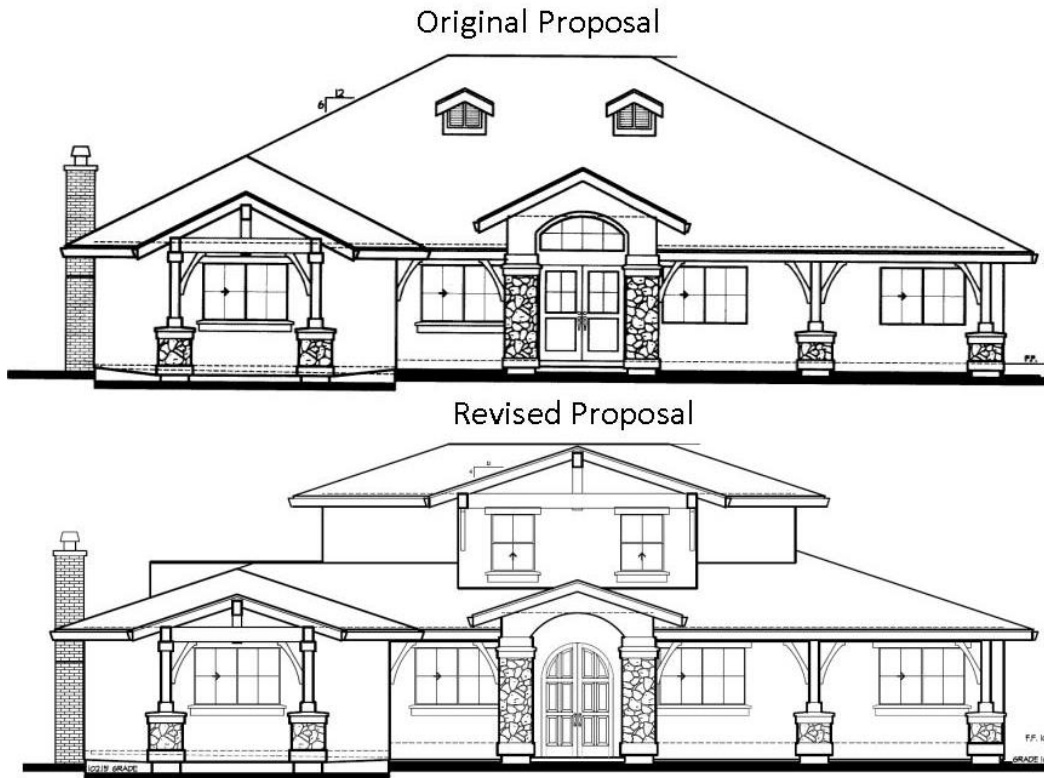
<u>Structure Modifications</u>	<u>Original Proposal</u>	<u>Revised Proposal</u>
Single-story Addition	781-square-feet	781-square-feet
Second-story Addition	614-square-feet	663-square-feet
Second-story Deck	177-square-feet	217-square-feet
Peak Ridge Height	23 feet 4 inches	22 feet 4 inches

The first floor will be remodeled to expand the existing master bedroom and bathroom, expand the existing living room, change the layout of the kitchen and family room, and add a new dining room. The second-story addition would consist of a new loft/multi-purpose room and bathroom with an outdoor deck facing the west of the property. Figure 1a shows the current front elevation of the home and Figure 1b shows the original and revised front elevations.

**Figure 1a – Current Front Elevation**



**Figure 1b – Originally Proposed and Revised Front Elevations**



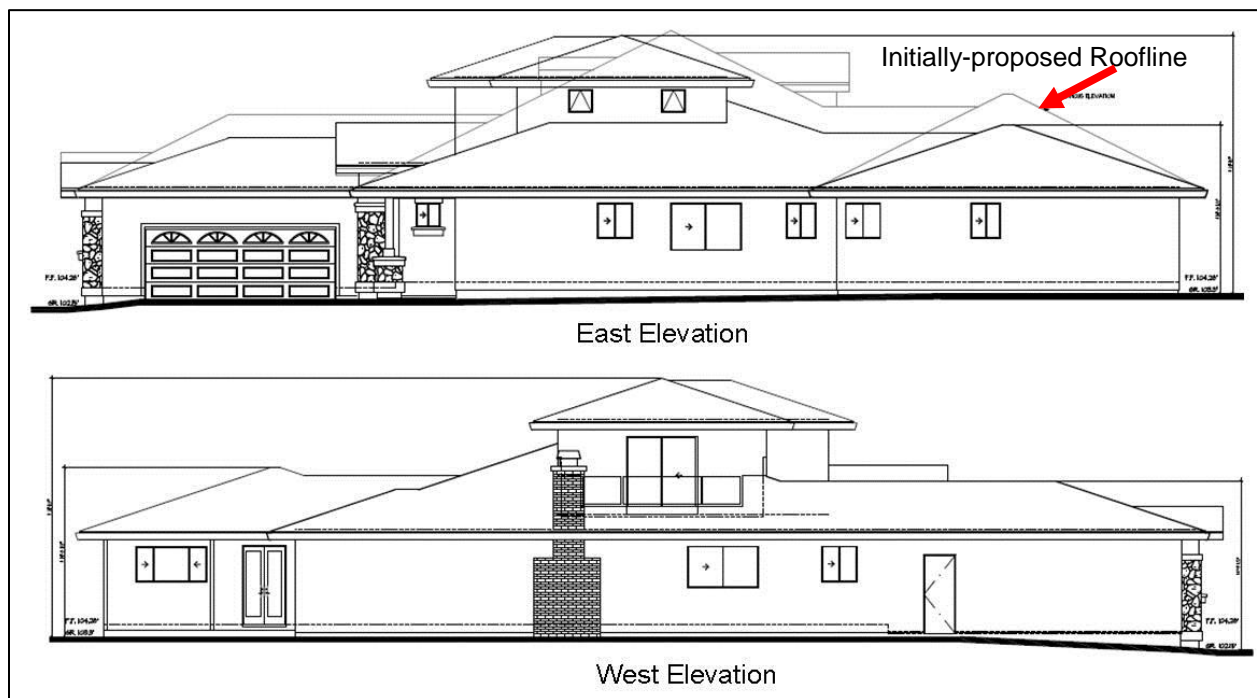
The proposed deck has been moved from the rear of the home to the west. The proposed deck will overlook the front yard of the adjacent home to the west at 540 Hamilton Way due to the large front setback of the adjacent home as shown in Figure 2.

**Figure 2 – Deck Location**



The second-story addition includes two second-story windows on the front and two casement bathroom windows on the east side. The revised east elevation also includes the depiction of the initially-proposed roof line. On the west elevation, there would be one sliding glass door that provides access to the outdoor deck that is semi-enclosed by the first floor roof as shown below in Figure 3. Figure 3 also includes a shaded outline of the initially-proposed roofline. As proposed, the existing ranch style home will be renovated to include a new 88-square-foot gabled front entry with stone veneer columns with a decorative cap and base. The existing support posts of the front porch would be replaced with new posts with matching stone veneer bases and decorative knee braces. These materials/features would also be added to the south (front) elevation of the garage.

**Figure 3 – West and East Elevations**



#### IV. ANALYSIS

The ADR process is intended to preserve and enhance the City’s aesthetic values and to ensure the preservation of the public health, safety, and general welfare. The ADR process applies to projects that include additions to single-family residences over ten feet in height. ADR applications are typically reviewed at the Zoning Administrator level. Projects which are judged by the Zoning Administrator to have complex design issues or to be sensitive or controversial in nature, may be referred directly to the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission is empowered to approve, conditionally approve, or deny applications for ADR.

## Land Use

The subject site has a General Plan designation of Medium Density Residential and is zoned One-Family Residential (R-1-6,500) District. The current zoning allows for second story additions up to 30 feet in height. The proposed addition is subject to ADR approval.

## Site Development Standards

Table 2 compares the originally proposed project and revised project with the applicable site development standards of the R-1-6,500 Zoning District.

**Table 2 - Site Development Standards of the R-1-6,500 Zoning District**

<b><u>Development Standard</u></b>	<b><u>Requirement</u></b>	<b><u>Original Proposal</u></b>	<b><u>Revised Proposed</u></b>
<b>Front Yard Setback</b>	Minimum 23 feet	25 feet	25 feet
<b>Side Yard Setbacks</b>	Minimum 5 feet on one side and a minimum combined total of 12 feet	5 feet on one side and combined total of 13 feet	5 feet on one side and combined total of 12 feet
<b>Rear Yard Setback</b>	Minimum 20 feet	28 feet	28 feet
<b>Height</b>	Maximum 30 feet	15 feet 6 inches	20 feet 6 inches
<b>Floor Area Ratio (FAR)</b>	Maximum 40%	25.3% based on a total floor area of 3,698 square feet	25.6% based on a total floor area of 3,747 square feet

As shown above, the proposed addition would meet all of the development standards of the R-1-6,500 zoning district. The 20 feet 6 inch height is based on the Municipal Code definition and is measured from grade to the mean height between the main roof ridge and the eaves. The height as measured from the lowest grade at the front of the home to the main roof ridge would be approximately 22 feet, 4 inches. The finished grade at the rear of the home is approximately one foot above the front of the home. The 25.6% FAR is also based on the Municipal Code definition and includes the floor area of the existing house, the proposed addition, and the enclosed accessory structures.

## Scope of Design Review – Criteria

Pleasanton Municipal Code Section 18.20.030 indicates that the Planning Commission or Zoning Administrator shall review site plans, landscape plans, building architecture, and other such plans as may be required to preserve and enhance the City's aesthetic values and to ensure the preservation of the public health, safety, and general welfare. Staff notes that even though a proposed structure may comply with the development standards of the applicable zoning district, through the design review process the Municipal Code allows the reviewing body to approve conditions which may be more

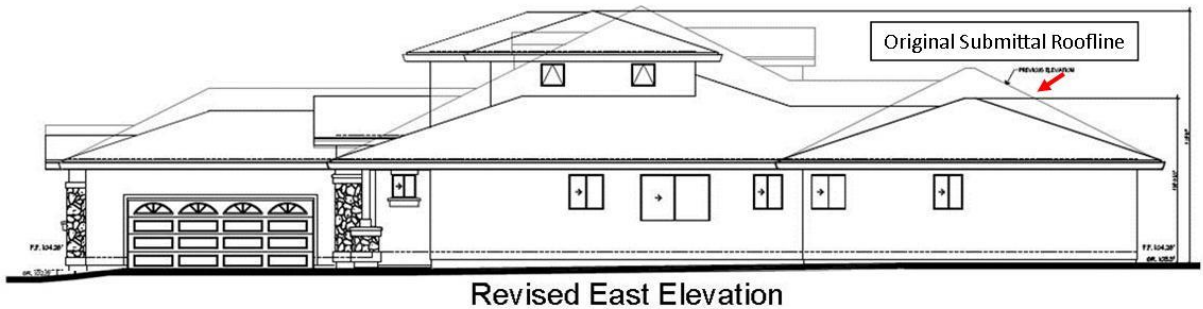
restrictive than normal Code standards to ensure that the public health, safety, or general welfare is preserved. As outlined in Section 18.20.030, the Planning Commission's or Zoning Administrator's scope of review of project plans shall include but not be limited to the following design criteria (only select criteria most applicable to the proposed project are listed):

- Appropriate relationship of the proposed building and its site to adjoining areas, including compatibility of architectural styles, harmony in adjoining buildings, attractive landscape transitions, and consistency with neighbor character.
- Preservation of views enjoyed by residents, workers within the City, and passersby through the community.
- Architectural style, as a function of its quality of design and relationship to its surroundings; the relationship of building components to one another and the building's color and materials.

The revised proposal has been designed to meet all of the R-1-6,500 site development standards and staff feels it provides appropriate architecture and materials in relationship to the existing neighborhood. Staff also feels that with the proposed modifications, which involve shifting the second-story massing towards the front of the home and reducing the single story ridgeline consistent with current heights, existing views are more effectively protected.

The view to the west of Pleasanton Ridge from the adjacent property at 568 Hamilton Way (Mrs. Bengtson's home), over the applicant's existing home, is filtered along the front and rear of the property by the existing landscaping, but remains unobstructed within the center of the property. The revised addition would continue to obstruct a portion of the existing view of the Pleasanton Ridge when standing away from the property line in Mrs. Bengtson's yard. However, the amount of obstruction varies depending on the view angle and the proximity to the property line. Nevertheless, the reduced single story ridge line would allow for Mrs. Bengtson to maintain her view of much of the ridgeline, as shown in the submitted elevation and in the photo in Figure 4 on the following page.

**Figure 4 –Revised Elevations and Original Story Poles from the East**



Views from the neighbor's patio and pool edge are currently constrained due to screening provided by the existing home at 554 Hamilton Way and existing vegetation. This view would be further constrained by the current proposal, although to a lesser extent than the previous proposal.

### **Neighbor Concerns**

Attached are the letters that staff has received from surrounding property owners concerning the revised proposal (see Exhibit C) as well as letters regarding the original proposed addition prior to the August 13, 2014 Planning Commission hearing (see Exhibit D). In general, two main concerns have been expressed. The first concern relates directly to the adjacent neighbor located at 568 Hamilton Way and the loss of views created by the second-story addition as described previously, which the revised proposal has attempted to mitigate. The other concern shared by the remaining neighbors in opposition to the project is that a second-story addition would result in a house design that is out of character with the Rosepointe neighborhood.

Typically, when neighbors express opposition to a proposed addition, staff tries to work with all of the concerned parties in an effort to reach a mutually acceptable consensus on the issues, which typically involves modifying some design elements while retaining



the essential project proposed by the applicant. However, after talking with the concerned neighbors in this particular case, staff understands that the revised proposal, short of eliminating it, would not completely address their concerns.

In an attempt to be sensitive to neighborhood concerns, the property owner indicated that he originally tried to design a second-story addition with a single roof line and no windows on the front elevation of the home in an attempt to integrate the second-story addition within the new roof line. In order to mitigate the potential view impacts on the adjacent neighbor, the applicant redesigned the addition and created a more apparent second story addition with two second story windows facing the front of the home. Moving the addition forward and decreasing the roof pitch allowed for a reduction in the massing at the back of the house that would create less of an impact on the views of Pleasanton Ridge from the adjacent property at 568 Hamilton Way.

Staff believes that the revised addition is typical of many of the two-story ADR applications that have been submitted to the City in the past. The second floor is located within the center of the home which creates a stepped back or “wedding cake” type transition from the first to the second floor that is normally desired to reduce massing. The proposed deck has been moved from the rear of the home to the west side of the structure. Because the adjacent home to the west is setback further from the street, the proposed deck will overlook the front corner of the home, and not the adjacent neighbors’ back yard, potentially minimizing privacy concerns.

### **Notification of Surrounding Property Owners**

Staff noticed all property owners within 1,000 feet of the subject site prior to the Planning Commission hearing. At the direction of the Planning Commission to provide additional community outreach, and in an attempt to provide additional public comment time, staff provided an additional two weeks (21 days total) to allow for residents to review the revised plans and provide comments. Seven neighbors visited City Hall to review the revised plans (including Mrs. Bengtson). The public notice was also published in *The Valley Times*. At the time this report was prepared, Staff received additional comments from Dolores Bengtson at 568 Hamilton Way, as well as three additional neighbors included within Exhibit C. The location and noticing maps are included as Exhibit G and encompassed the entire Rosepointe neighborhood.

## **V. CONCLUSION**

Rosepointe is a neighborhood predominantly consisting of single-story residences; however, the current zoning designation allows for second-story additions and there are five homes in the original Rosepointe subdivision that have second stories. The proposed addition meets all of the site development standards of the R-1-6,500 zoning district, including height. The architecture and materials of the addition and remodeled home are compatible with the surrounding neighborhood, and a reasonable amount of effort has been made by the applicant to minimize the view impacts on adjacent neighbors and the loss of privacy. Weighing the competing interests of the applicant’s

right to construct an addition and protection of the neighbors' existing views can be very difficult. In this case, staff believes that the revised proposal is reasonably sensitive in protecting views from 568 Hamilton Way, and that there are no design options, short of removing the second-story addition, which would satisfactorily address all of the neighbors' concerns. Given that the addition meets all of the Code requirements, including height, is typical to second-story additions approved in other areas of the City, and has been re-designed to address concerns about view obstruction, staff does not believe that it is appropriate to deny the revised application just because it is a second story addition.

The Planning Commission has the option of approving the application, denying it, or approving it with modifications. Staff believes that the resubmitted proposal has met the applicable design criteria in that it will continue to preserve a portion of the views enjoyed by the adjacent resident at 568 Hamilton Way. Therefore, staff is recommending approval of the addition.

## **VI. ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

Projects of this nature are categorically exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Therefore, no environmental document accompanies this report.

## **VII. STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission approve Case P14-0829 subject to the conditions listed in "Exhibit A."

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