



Community Development Department

AGENDA

REGULAR MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION

7:30 p.m.
Wednesday, November 18, 2015
El Cerrito City Hall
Council Chambers
10890 San Pablo Avenue, El Cerrito

This Meeting Place Is Wheelchair Accessible

Roll Call - Chair: Carla Hansen; Commissioners: Kevin Colin, Michael Iswalt, Bill Kuhlman, Andrea Lucas, Lisa Motoyama and Tim Pine.

1. Comments from the Public

(Each speaker is limited to a maximum of 3 minutes.)

2. Approval of Minutes

Approval of the August 19, 2015, September 16, 2015 and October 21, 2015 meeting minutes.

3. Commissioner Communication/Conflict of Interest Disclosure

This time on the agenda is reserved for Commissioners to disclose communications from individuals regarding specific agenda items or to state a potential conflict of interest in relation to a specific agenda item.

4. Public Hearing - 5918 Fern Street

Application: PL15-0106

Applicant: Diane and Asa Drew

Location: 5918 Fern Street

Zoning: RS-5 (Single Family Residential)

General Plan: Low Density Residential

Request: Planning Commission consideration of a Conditional Use Permit to allow a fourth bedroom in a house with non-conforming parking (one-car garage), Section 19.27.505, ECMC

CEQA: This project is categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA pursuant to Section 15301 of the CEQA Guidelines, Class 1: Existing Facilities.

COMMUNICATION ACCESS INFORMATION

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10890 San Pablo Avenue, El Cerrito, CA 94530 Tel: (510) 215-4330
E-mail: smoss@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us

5. Public Hearing - Urban Greening Plan

Applicant: City of El Cerrito
Location: Citywide
Zoning: Varies
General Plan: Varies
Request: Consideration by the Planning Commission of the Draft Urban Greening Plan and related Mitigated Negative Declaration. The proposed action is the recommendation of the Plan and CEQA document to the City Council.
CEQA: Mitigated Negative Declaration

6. Staff Communications

7. Adjournment

Appeals:

A decision of the Planning Commission may be appealed to the City Council, by the applicant or any El Cerrito resident or property owner, through the filing of a written statement and the payment of an appeal fee of \$339 with the City Clerk within ten calendar days after the decision date. (The applicant may file an appeal for the cost of half the original permit fee.)

Any writings or documents provided to a majority of the Planning Commission regarding any item on this agenda will be made available for public inspection in the Planning Division office located at 10890 San Pablo Avenue during normal business hours.



Community Development Department

MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION

7:30 p.m.
Wednesday, August 19, 2015
El Cerrito City Hall
Council Chambers
10890 San Pablo Avenue, El Cerrito

This Meeting Place Is Wheelchair Accessible

Roll Call - Chair: Carla Hansen; Commissioners: Kevin Colin, Bill Kuhlman, and Lisa Motoyama. Commissioners Tim Pine, Michael Iswalt and Andrea Lucas had excused absences.

1. Comments from the Public

Tom Panas, 7345 Fairmount Ave addressed the Planning Commission regarding the banners highlighting the de Anza National Historic Trail of the first European settlers of California.

Nicholas Arzio, 10026 San Pablo Ave addresses the Planning Commission regarding the limitation on the number of unrelated adults that can live together in a single family home.

2. Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the July 15, 2015 meeting minutes: Kuhlman; 2nd: Colin.

Vote:

Ayes: Hansen, Colin, Kuhlman, and Motoyama

Noes: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Pine, Iswalt, Lucas

Approval of the May 20, 2015 meeting minutes was continued to the September meeting due to a lack of a quorum.

3. Commissioner Communication/Conflict of Interest Disclosure

Nothing was reported.

4. Public Hearing – Active Transportation Plan

Applicant: City of El Cerrito

Location: Citywide

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City of El Cerrito
Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

Request: Planning Commission consideration of a recommendation to the City Council regarding the Active Transportation Plan and Mitigated Negative Declaration
CEQA: Mitigated Negative declaration

Community Development Analyst Emily Alter and Public Works Director Yvetteh Ortiz presented the staff report and answered questions from the Commission.

The public hearing was opened.

The following members of the public addressed the Commission:

Tom Panas, 7345 Fairmount Ave
Hansa Jacob-Martin, 6953 Fairview Dr, of Bike East Bay
Nicholas Arzio, 10026 San Pablo Ave

The public hearing was closed.

Motion to recommend adoption of the Active Transportation Plan to the City Council with the additional changes:

- Drop the language regarding bike parking because it is already required.
- Require development projects to build adjacent bike facilities when the nexus exists, when it is feasible from an engineering standpoint, and when it is proportional to the impact of the project.

Motion: Kuhlman, 2nd: Colin.

Vote:

Ayes: Kuhlman, Colin, Hansen, Motoyama

Noes: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Iswalt, Lucas, Pine

5. Staff Communications

Staff updated the Commission regarding the Ohlone Gardens project, upcoming projects and El Cerrito Restaurant Week.

6. Adjournment

8:38 p.m.



Community Development Department

MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION

7:30 p.m.
Wednesday, September 16, 2015
El Cerrito City Hall
Council Chambers
10890 San Pablo Avenue, El Cerrito

This Meeting Place Is Wheelchair Accessible

Roll Call - Chair: Carla Hansen; Commissioners: Kevin Colin, Andrea Lucas, Michael Iswalt, Bill Kuhlman, and Tim Pine. Commissioner Lisa Motoyama had an excused absence.

1. Comments from the Public

No comments were received.

2. Approval of Minutes

Approval of the May 20, 2015 and August 19, 2015 meeting minutes were continued to the October meeting due to a lack of a quorum.

3. Commissioner Communication/Conflict of Interest Disclosure

Commissioner Kuhlman noted that he visited the site of 1621 Julian Drive.

4. Public Hearing - 1621 Julian Dr – Sunroom

Application: PL15-0066

Applicant: Donna Schumacher

Location: 1621 Julian Drive

Zoning: RS-10 (Single Family Residential)

General Plan: Very Low Density Residential

APN: 505-421-019

Request: Planning Commission consideration of a Conditional Use Permit to allow an addition to a structure with a non-conforming height (19.27.050, ECMC).

CEQA: The project is categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA pursuant to Section 15301 of the CEQA Guidelines, Class 1 Existing Facilities.

Senior Planner Sean Moss presented the staff report and answered questions from the Commission.

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City of El Cerrito
Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

The property owner, Bonu Ghosh, presented the project.

The public hearing was opened.

The public hearing was closed.

Motion to approve a Conditional Use Permit to allow an addition to a structure with a non-conforming height at 1621 Julian Drive: Lucas, 2nd: Pine.

Vote:

Ayes: Colin, Hansen, Iswalt, Kuhlman, Lucas, Pine

Noes: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Motoyama

5. Staff Communications

Staff updated the Commission about upcoming agenda items and the California APA Conference.

6. Adjournment

7:51p.m.



Community Development Department

MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION

7:30 p.m.
Wednesday, October 21, 2015
El Cerrito City Hall
Council Chambers
10890 San Pablo Avenue, El Cerrito

This Meeting Place Is Wheelchair Accessible

Roll Call - Vice Chair: Andrea Lucas; Commissioners: Bill Kuhlman, Lisa Motoyama and Tim Pine. Commissioners Carla Hansen, Kevin Colin and Michael Iswalt had excused absences.

1. Council/Staff Liaison Announcements and Reports

Nothing was reported.

2. Comments from the Public

No comments were received.

3. Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the May 20, 2015: Kuhlman, 2nd: Motoyama.

Vote:

Ayes: Kuhlman, Lucas, Motoyama, Pine

Noes: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Colin, Hansen, Iswalt

Approval of the August 19, 2015 and September 16, 2015 meeting minutes were continued to the November meeting due to a lack of a quorum.

4. Commissioner Communication/Conflict of Interest Disclosure

Nothing was reported.

5. Public Hearing - 7249 View Ave Accessory Living Unit

Application: PL15-0091

Applicant: Dylan Sang, Home Healing Renovations

Location: 7249 View Avenue

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City of El Cerrito
Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

APN: 505-021-008
Zoning: RS-5 (Single Family Residential)
General Plan: Low Density Residential
Request: Planning Commission consideration of a Conditional Use Permit to allow a second unit larger than 750 square feet and larger than 40% of the square footage of the primary dwelling unit (19.20.190.H, ECMC).
CEQA: This project is categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA pursuant to Section 15301 of the CEQA Guidelines, Class 1: Existing Facilities.

Senior Planner, Sean Moss, presented the staff report and answered questions from the Commission.

The applicant, Dylan Sang, addressed the Commission and answered questions.

The property owner, Paul Behrend, addressed the Commission and answered questions.

The public hearing was opened.

The public hearing was closed.

Motion to approve a conditional use permit to allow a second unit larger than 750 square feet and larger than 40% of the square footage of the primary dwelling unit: Motoyama, 2nd: Kuhlman.

Vote:
Ayes: Kuhlman, Lucas, Motoyama, Pine
Noes: None
Abstain: None
Absent: Colin, Hansen, Iswalt

6. Staff Communications

Staff updated the Commission about upcoming agenda items.

7. Adjournment

7:54 p.m.



Community Development Department - Planning and Building Division
10890 San Pablo Avenue, El Cerrito, CA 94530
(510) 215-4330 - FAX: (510) 233-5401
planning@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us

PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT
Meeting Date: November 18, 2015

I. SUBJECT

Application: PL15-0106
Applicant: Diane and Asa Drew
Location: 5918 Fern St.
APN: 501-181-010
Zoning: RS-5 (Single Family Residential)
General Plan: Low Density Residential
Request: Planning Commission consideration of a Conditional Use Permit to add a fourth bedroom to a dwelling with a one-car garage (El Cerrito Municipal Code Section 19.27.050).
CEQA: This project is categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA pursuant to Section 15301 of the CEQA Guidelines, Class 1: Existing Facilities.

II. BACKGROUND

The lot is located in the northern quadrant, lower hills, of the city. It is surrounded by single-family residential development and Canyon Trail Park to the south. It is a down-sloping lot from the front to the rear and also has a cross slope, with the high side along the eastern property line. Records show that the lot is 4,152 square feet in area and developed with a single-family residence. A building permit was issued in 1959 for a five-room, 1,652-square-foot dwelling with a one stall garage. The house has two stories, with the main living area on the top floor. The main floor includes three bedrooms, a living room, a kitchen, and a garage, while the ground floor includes a family room and storage area.



III. DISCUSSION

The applicant would like to convert a storage room located on the ground floor, into a fourth bedroom and add a second bathroom. The space to be converted is approximately 310 square feet. In order to convert the room into habitable space, the following improvements are proposed:

- Add a sliding door along the rear wall,
- Install insulation and dry wall,
- Install floor finishes,

- Install electrical,
- Install heating, and
- Install a full bath.

Pursuant to 19.27.050.C.2.a of the El Cerrito Municipal Code (ECMC), a single-family residential property is legally nonconforming if it contained one covered parking space prior to two covered parking spaces being required. The residence on the property may be altered or expanded without increasing the number of covered parking spaces, subject to all of the following limitations:

- A. After alteration or expansion, the residence may not contain more than three bedrooms or more than 2,000 square feet of habitable floor area.
- B. The alteration or expansion must comply with all other applicable requirements of this Code.

Expansion of the property beyond these limitations, including the construction of a fourth bedroom requires a Conditional Use Permit pursuant to 19.27.050 of the ECMC. Staff notes that the storage room is within the existing building footprint, so no additional square footage will be added to the building. With the exception of adding a sliding door and a deck along the rear wall of the dwelling, no other changes will be made to the exterior.

While the property does not meet the minimum parking requirement of two covered on-site parking spaces for houses in the RS-5 zoning district, there are sufficient on-street parking spaces in the neighborhood to accommodate additional cars. For each lot frontage, there are approximately two undesignated on-street parking spaces. Upon inspection (5 p.m., Tuesday, 11/3/15) staff noted that there was at least one vacant on-street space per lot frontage.

Staff believes that the Planning Commission can make the necessary findings to approve the Conditional Use Permit and offers proposed findings below.



Consistency with the General Plan

The proposed project is consistent with the El Cerrito General Plan and will implement the following General Plan Policies:

LU1.5: Suitable Housing – The additional bedroom enhances the livability of the home and provides suitable housing in the city;

CD1.1: Neighborhood Character – The additional bedroom maintains and preserves the residential character of the house and neighborhood;

Environmental Review

The project is Categorically Exempt under the Section 15301 – Class 1, Existing Facilities, of the California Environmental Quality Act.

IV. FINDINGS

The Planning Commission must make the following findings, as outlined 19.34.040 of the El Cerrito Zoning Ordinance:

1. *The location, size, design, and operating characteristics of the proposed development will be harmonious and compatible with and will not adversely affect the livability or appropriate development of abutting properties and the surrounding neighborhood.*

The project is located in a single-family zoning district (RS-5) that allows bedroom additions. The proposed project conforms with all requirements for additions contained in the El Cerrito Zoning Ordinance. The proposed project is consistent with the single-family residential nature of the surrounding neighborhood and is not expected to negatively affect surrounding properties as there is a sufficient amount of on-street parking available for an additional vehicle.

2. *The location and design of the proposal will provide a convenient and functional living, working, shopping, or civic environment that will be an attractive amenity for the City.*

The proposed project will create an additional habitable and a functional living environment that compiles with all zoning standards.

3. *The proposal is consistent with the purpose of the district where it is located and conforms in all significant respects with the El Cerrito General Plan and with any other applicable plan adopted by the City Council.*

The project complies with all requirements of the RS-5 zoning district and Section 19.06.030 . The project is consistent with the following policies of the El Cerrito General plan:; LU1.5: Suitable Housing; CD1.1: Neighborhood Character.

V. RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of Planning Application No. PL15-0106, as conditioned by the draft resolution in Attachment 1, approving a Conditional Use Permit to allow for the conversion of a storage room into a fourth bedroom to a dwelling with a one-car garage (Section 19.27.050).

Proposed Motion: Move adoption of Planning Commission Resolution PC15-10 approving a Conditional Use Permit to add a fourth bedroom to a dwelling with a one-car garage (Section 19.27.050).

Appeal Period: Within ten (10) working days after the date of the decision, the Planning Commission action may be appealed to the City Council.

Attachments:

- 1) Draft Resolution
- 2) Plans dated October 5, 2015

Planning Commission Resolution PC15-11

APPLICATION NO. PL15-0106

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF EL CERRITO PLANNING COMMISSION APPROVING A USE PERMIT TO ADD A FOURTH BEDROOM TO A DWELLING WITH A ONE-CAR GARAGE (EL CERRITO MUNICIPAL CODE SECTION 19.27.050)

WHEREAS, on October 5, 2015 the applicant submitted an application requesting a Conditional Use Permit to add a fourth bedroom to a dwelling with a one-car garage;

WHEREAS, the subject property is located at 5918 Fern Street;

WHEREAS, the Assessor's Parcel Number of the subject property is 501-181-010;

WHEREAS, the General Plan land use classification of the site is Low Density Residential;

WHEREAS, the zoning district of the site is RS-5 (Single Family Residential);

WHEREAS, this project is Categorically Exempt from the provisions of CEQA – Section 15301 Class 1 – Existing Facilities; and

WHEREAS, on November 18, 2015, the Planning Commission of El Cerrito, after due consideration of all evidence and reports offered for review, does find and determine the following:

1. The project is located in a single-family zoning district (RS-5) that allows bedroom additions. The proposed project conforms with all requirements for additions contained in the El Cerrito Zoning Ordinance. The proposed project is consistent with the single-family residential nature of the surrounding neighborhood and is not expected to negatively affect surrounding properties as there is a sufficient amount of on-street parking available for an additional vehicle.
2. The proposed project will create an additional habitable and a functional living environment that compiles with all zoning standards.
3. The project complies with all requirements of the RS-5 zoning district and Section 19.06.030. The project is consistent with the following policies of the El Cerrito General plan: LU1.5: Suitable Housing and CD1.1: Neighborhood Character.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that after careful consideration of maps, facts, exhibits, correspondence, and testimony, and other evidence submitted in this matter, and, in consideration of the findings, the El Cerrito Planning Commission hereby approves Application No. PL15-0106, subject to the following conditions:

Planning Division:

1. The project will be constructed substantially in conformance with the plans dated October 5, 2015. Minor changes may be approved by the Zoning Administrator. All improvements shall

be installed in accordance with these approvals. Once constructed or installed, all improvements shall be maintained as approved.

2. If Applicant constructs buildings or makes improvements in accordance with these approvals, but fails to comply with any of the Conditions of Approval or limitations set forth in these Conditions of Approval and does not cure any such failure within a reasonable time after notice from the City of El Cerrito, then such failure shall be cause for nonissuance of a certificate of occupancy, revocation or modification of these approvals or any other remedies available to the City.

CERTIFICATION

I CERTIFY that this resolution was adopted by the El Cerrito Planning Commission at a regular meeting held on November 18, 2015 upon motion of Commissioner _____, second by Commissioner _____:

AYES:

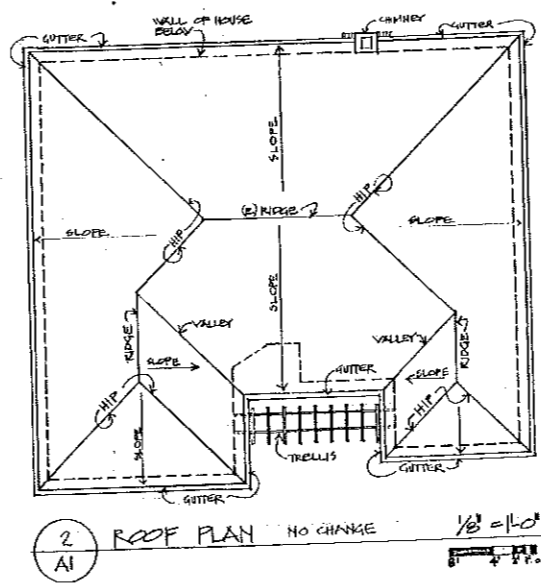
NOES:

ABSTAIN:

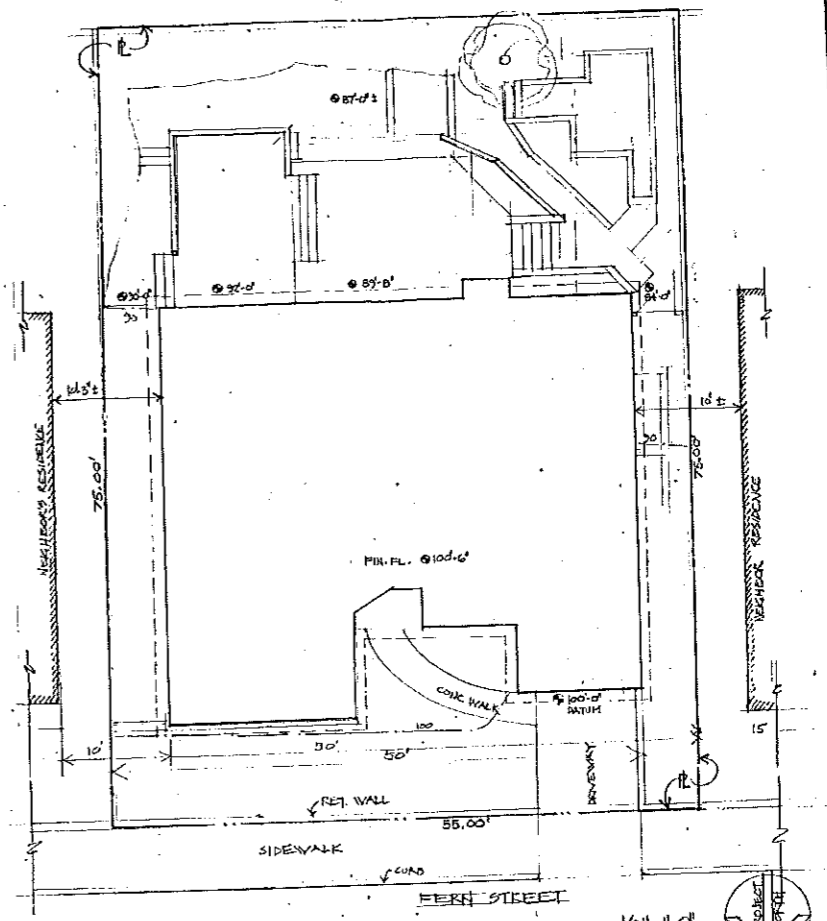
ABSENT:

Noel M. Ibalio
Senior Planner

NOTE:
PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS ARE PREPARED
AS INSTRUMENTS OF SERVICE FOR THE
CLIENT'S USE AND ARE THE
PROPERTY OF THE ARCHITECT AND SHALL
NOT BE USED FOR OTHER WORK WITHOUT THE
WRITTEN CONSENT OF THE ARCHITECT.

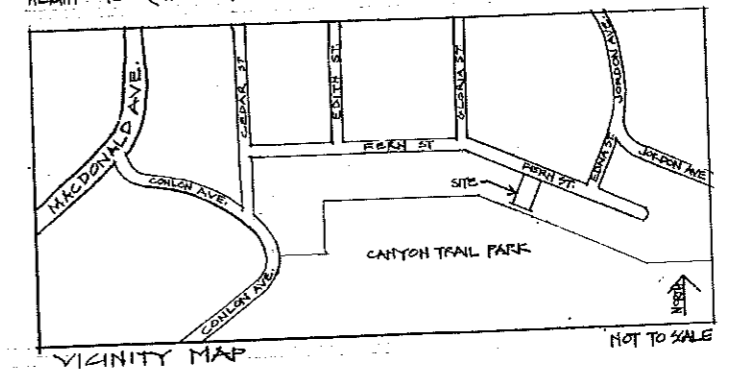


2
A1 ROOF PLAN NO CHANGE 1/8" = 1'-0"



1
A1 SITE PLAN NO CHANGE TO FOOTPRINT 1/8" = 1'-0"

LOT SIZE 4,125 SQ. FT.
FOOTPRINT 1,526 SQ. FT. (37% COVERAGE) NO CHANGE
HEIGHT 16'-0" (AT FRONT)



- SHEET SCHEDULE**
- A1 SITE PLAN, ROOF PLAN, PROJECT DATA, VICINITY MAP
 - A2 FLOOR PLANS, BUILDING AREAS (TABLE)
 - A3 ELEVATIONS
 - A4 SECTIONS

PROJECT
VOLUNTARY SEISMIC
UPGRADE
CONVERT STORAGE TO
HABITABLE SPACE

3018 FERN ST
EL CERRITO CA
FOR
DIANE & ASA DREW

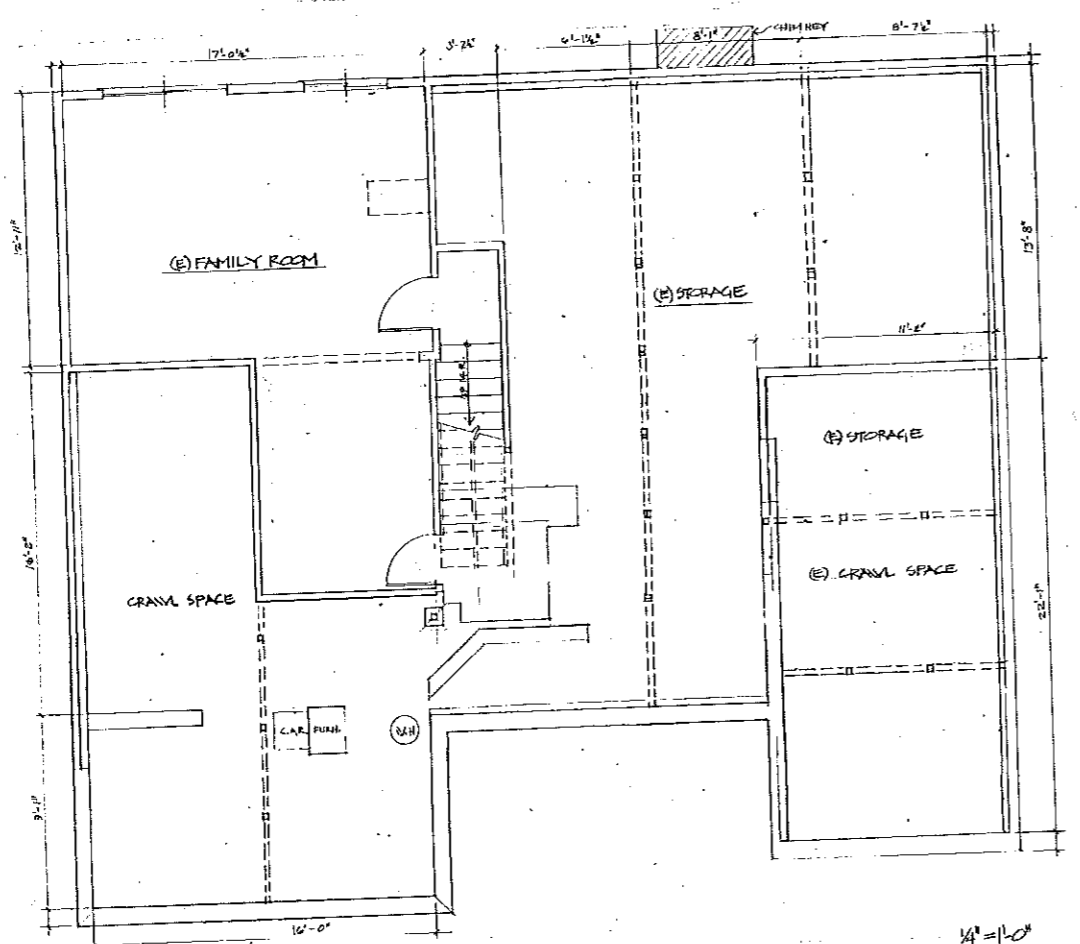
REVISIONS:

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SITE PLAN
ROOF PLAN
PROJECT DATA
VICINITY MAP

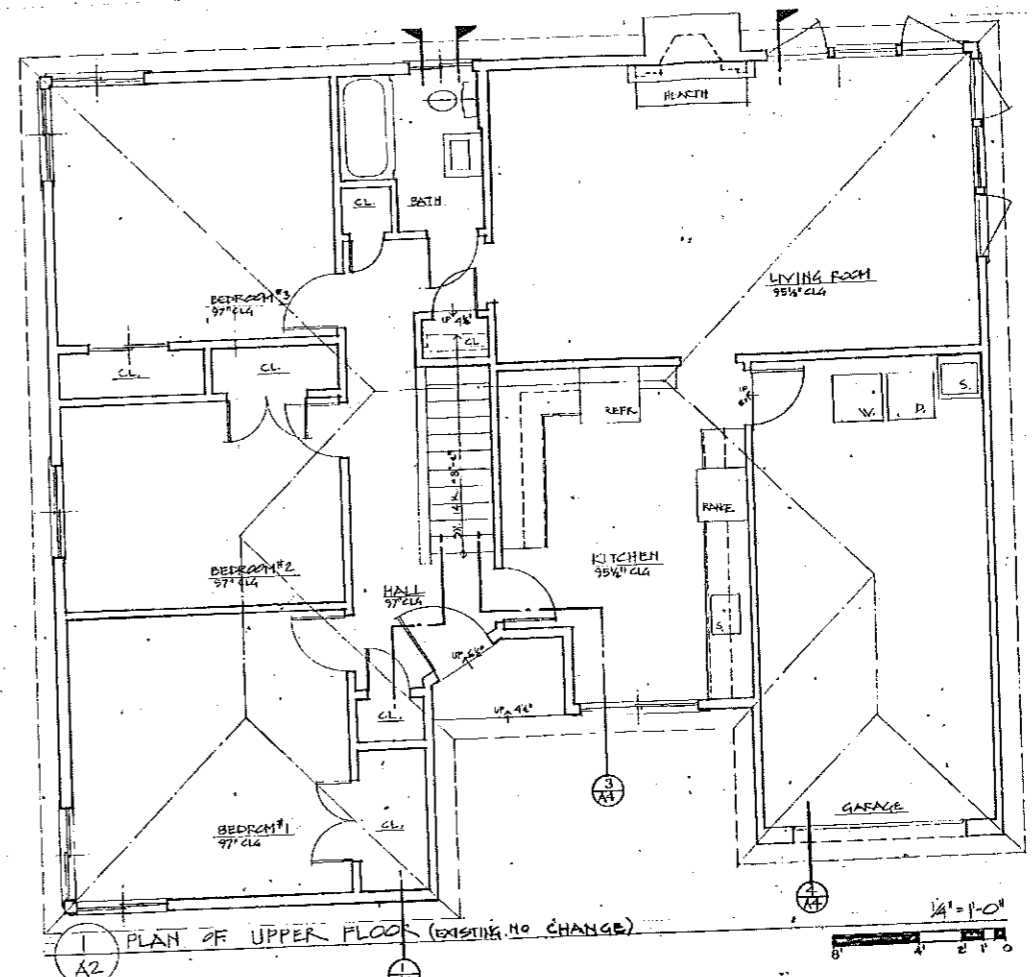
DATE 9-28-15
DRAWN BY V.L.C.
CHECKED BY
PROJECT NO. 201508

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of 4

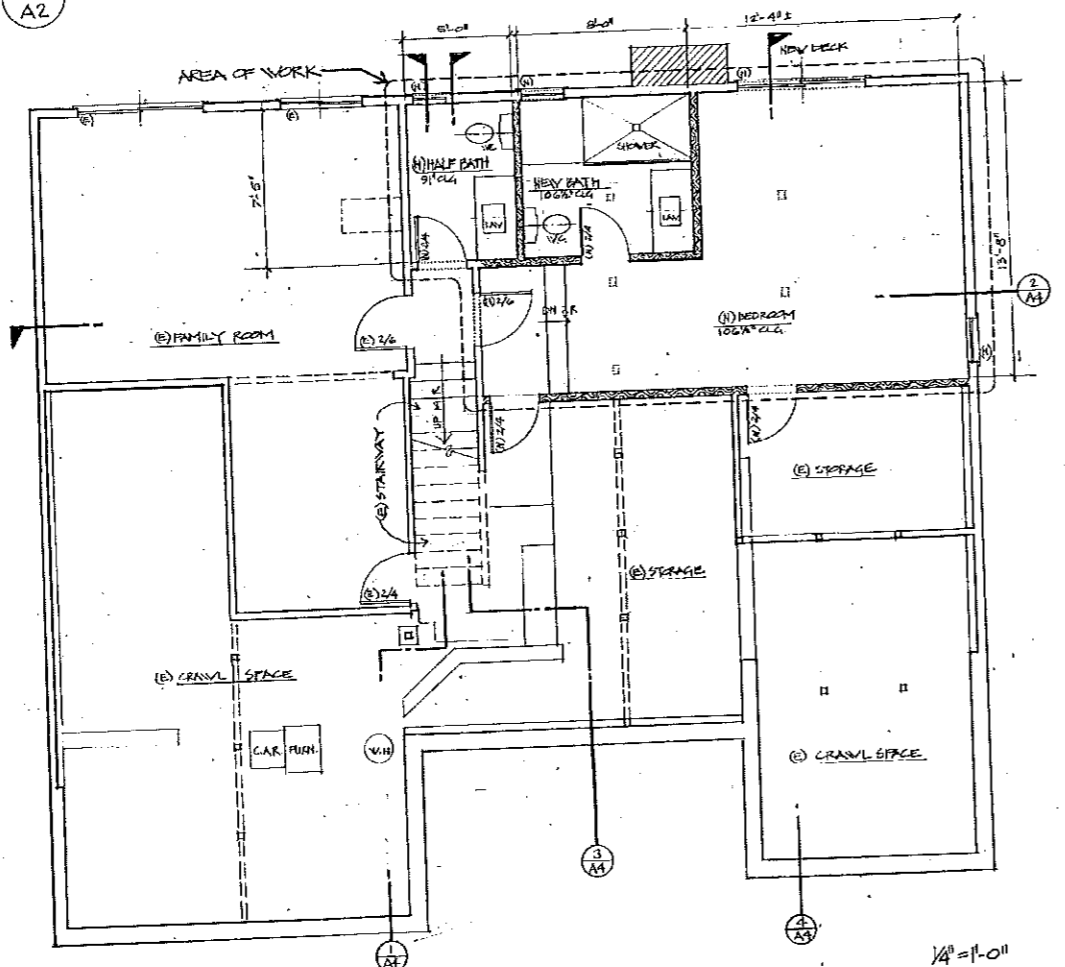
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2 PLAN OF EXISTING LOWER FLOOR
 A2



1 PLAN OF UPPER FLOOR (EXISTING, NO CHANGE)
 A2

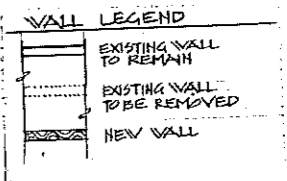


3 PROPOSED PLAN OF LOWER FLOOR
 A2

BUILDING AREAS (SQ. FT)

	HABITABLE	MECHANICAL STORAGE SPACE	GARAGE	TOTAL
EXISTING				
UPPER FLOOR	1,262	0	264	1,526
LOWER FLOOR	355	1,113	0	1,468
TOTAL	1,617	1,113	264	2,994
PROPOSED				
UPPER FLOOR	1,262*	0*	264*	1,526*
LOWER FLOOR	710	758	0*	1,468*
TOTAL	1,972	758	264*	2,994*

* NO CHANGE
 NOTE: NO INCREASE TO FOOTPRINT
 CONVERT 355 SQ STORAGE LOWER FLOOR TO HABITABLE AREA



PROJECT
 VOLUNTARY SEISMIC
 UPGRADE
 CONVERT STORAGE TO
 HABITABLE SPACE
 518 FERN ST.
 EL CERRITO CA

FOR
 DIANE & AIA DREW

REVISIONS

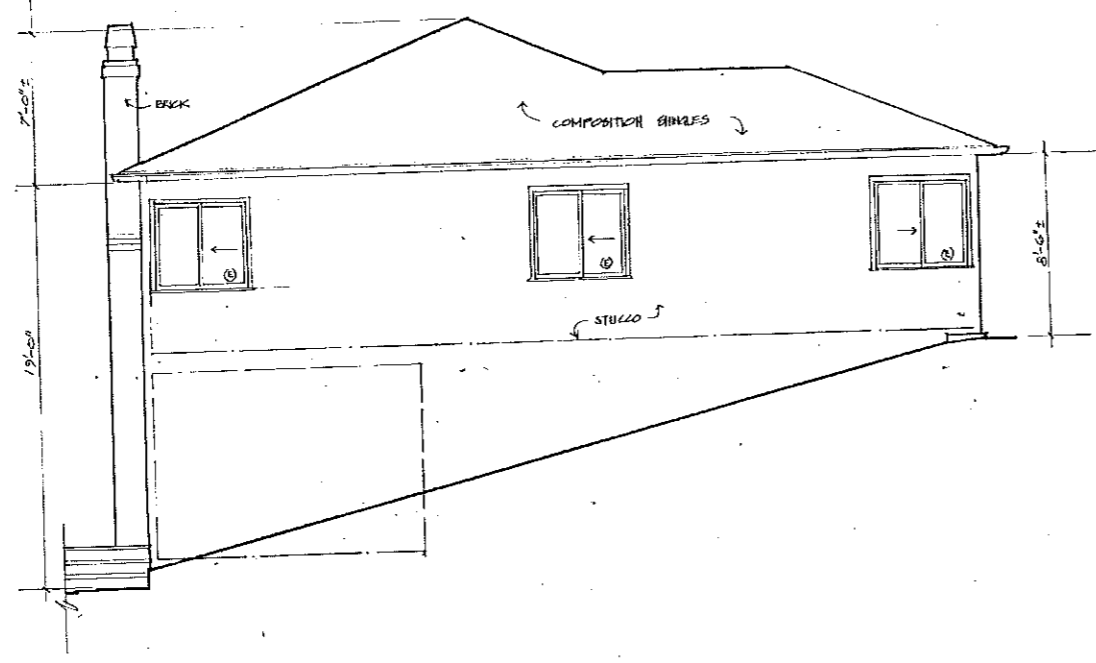
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 FLOOR PLANS

DATE: 9-25-10
 DRAWN BY: V.T.C.
 CHECKED BY:
 SCALE:
 PROJECT NO: 201508

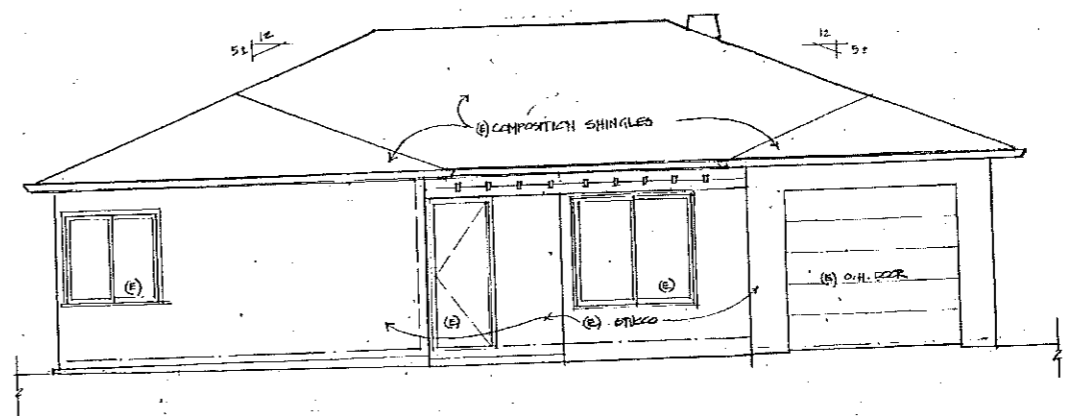
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A2
 of 2/4

ITALO CALPESTRI III, AIA
 ARCHITECT & ASSOCIATES
 220 COLUMBIA AVENUE
 KENSINGTON, CA 94708
 CELL: (510) 851-2387
 FAX: (510) 525-3140

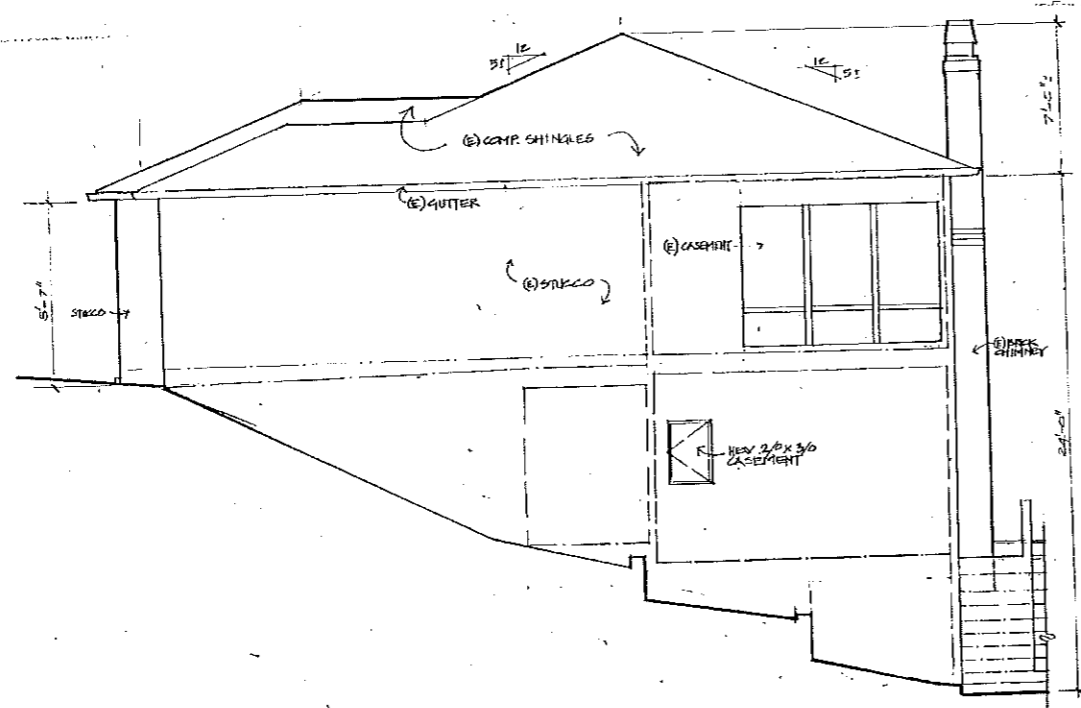
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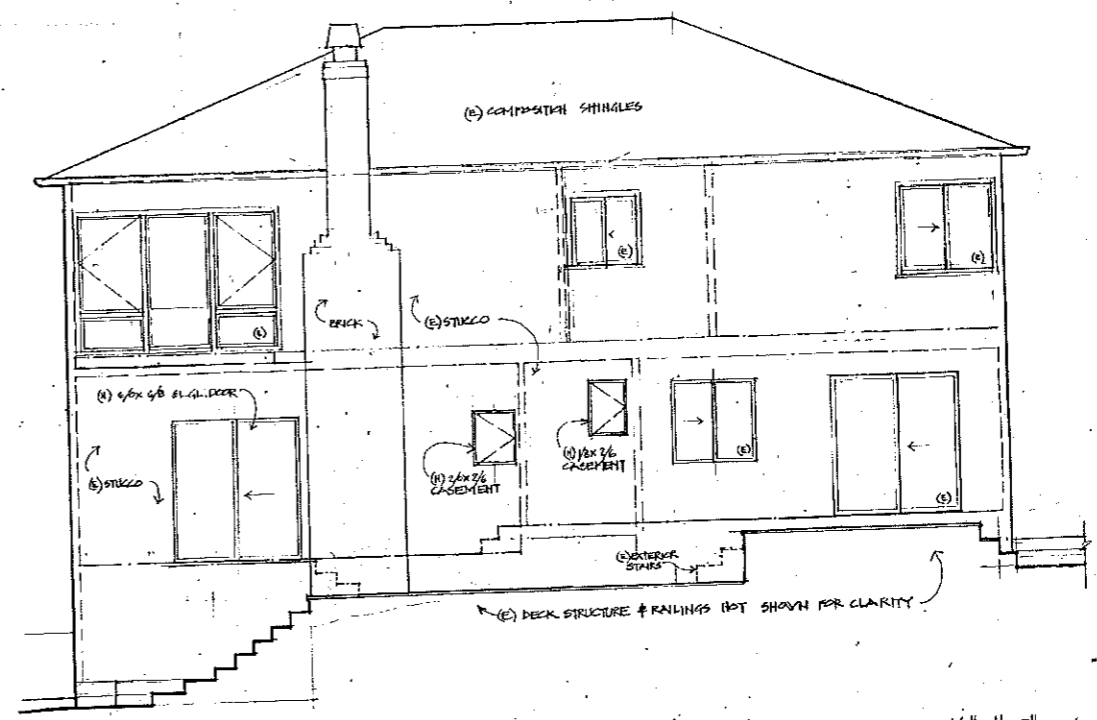
2 EAST ELEVATION (NO CHANGE) 1/4" = 1'-0"



1 NORTH ELEVATION (NO CHANGE) 1/4" = 1'-0"



4 WEST ELEVATION 1/4" = 1'-0"



3 SOUTH ELEVATION 1/4" = 1'-0"

PROJECT
 VOLUNTARY SEISMIC
 UPGRADE
 CONVERT STORAGE TO
 HABITABLE SPACE
 5918 FERN ST.
 EL CERRITO CA

FOR
 DIANE & AXA DREW

REVISIONS:

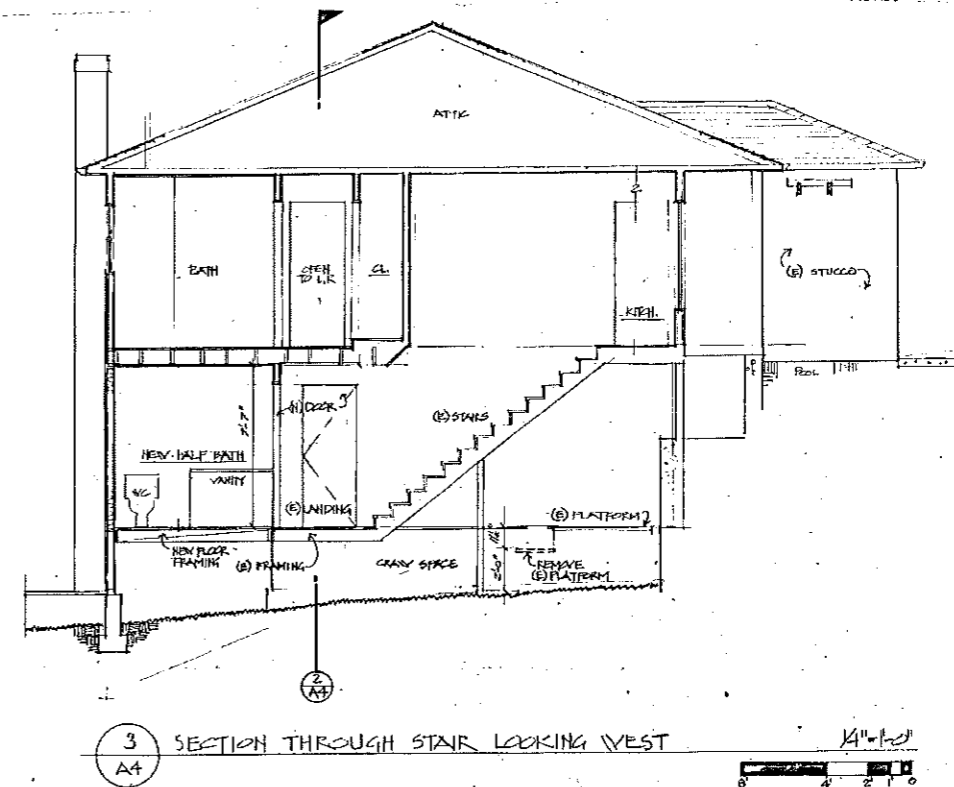
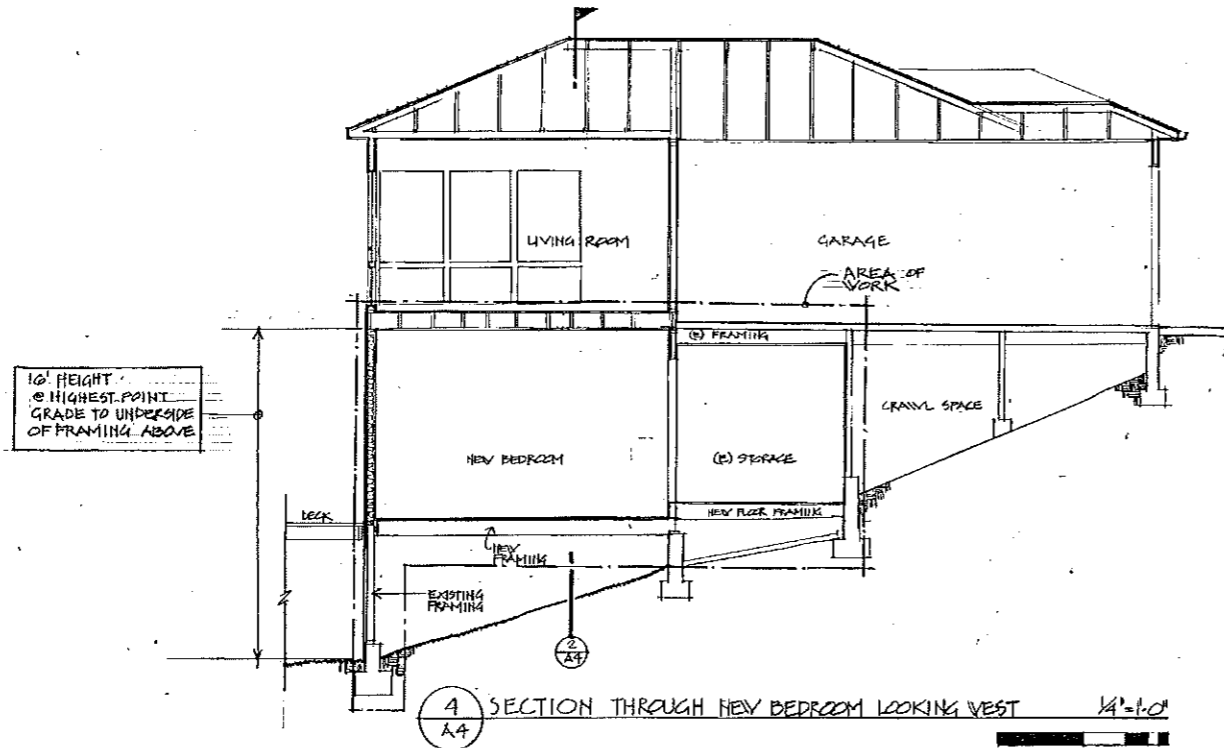
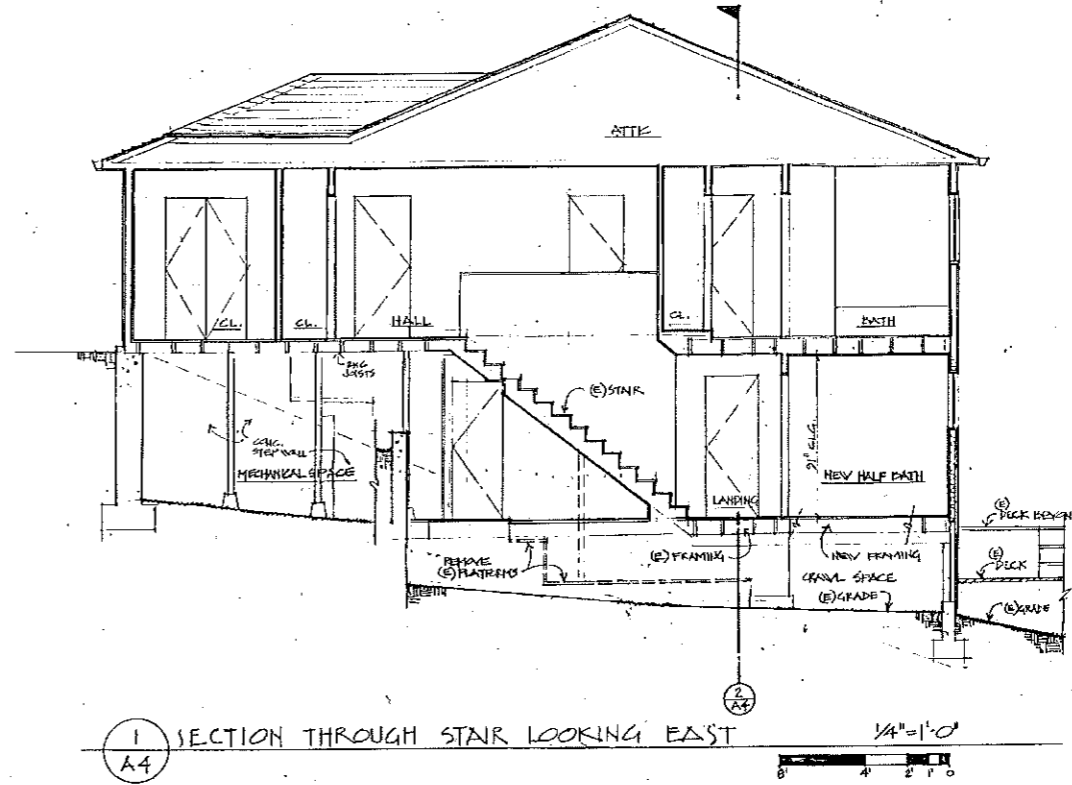
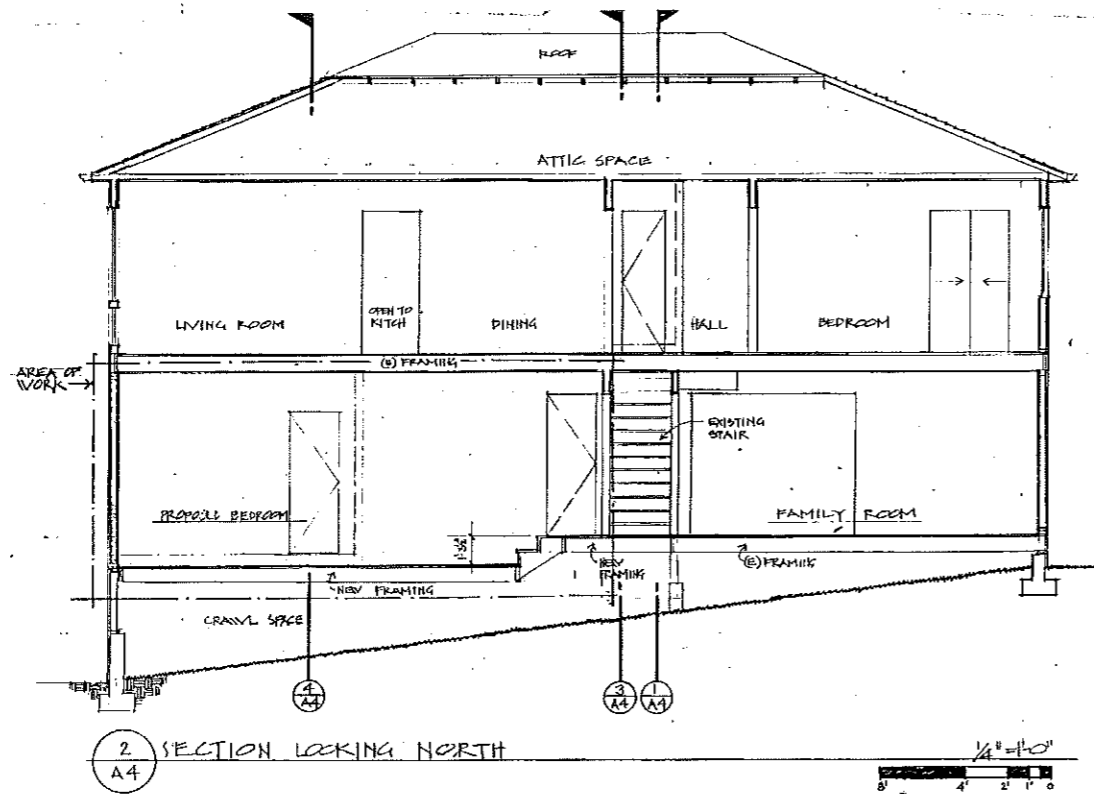
Sheet Title:
 ELEVATIONS

DATE 9-28-15	Sheet A3
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CHECKED BY	
PROJECT NO. 201508	3/4

ITALO CALPESTRI III, AIA
ARCHITECT & ASSOCIATES

220 COLUMBIA AVENUE
KENSINGTON, CA 94708
CELL: (510) 851-2387
FAX: (510) 525-3140

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PROJECT
VOLUNTARY SEISMIC
UPGRADE
CONVERT STORAGE TO
HABITABLE SPACE
8915 FERN ST.
EL CERRITO, CA

FOR
DIANE & ASA DREV

REVISIONS:

Sheet Title:
SECTIONS

DATE: 9-28-15

DRAWN BY: V.L.C.

CHECKED BY:

SCALE:

PROJECT NO: 201508

Sheet:

A4

4/1



Community Development Department - Planning and Building Division
10890 San Pablo Avenue, El Cerrito, CA 94530
(510) 215-4330 - FAX: (510) 233-5401
planning@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us

PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT
Meeting Date: November 18, 2015

I. SUBJECT

Applicant: City of El Cerrito
Request: Receive a presentation regarding the Urban Greening Plan and recommend adoption of the Plan and approval of the Mitigated Negative Declaration to City Council
CEQA: An Initial Study with a Mitigated Negative Declaration has been prepared for this Plan.

II. BACKGROUND

The proposed Urban Greening Plan (Plan) has been underway since 2013, when the City received grant funding from Proposition 84 to improve the sustainability and livability of California's communities, through the Strategic Growth Council's Urban Greening for Sustainable Communities Grant Program. The Plan identifies projects, policies and programs to achieve environmental sustainability, support environmental stewardship, promote active recreation and transportation, encourage economic vitality and prioritize urban livability. These goals are consistent with the grant program and recent and concurrent City planning efforts, including the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan (2014), Climate Action Plan (2013), Strategic Plan (2013) and Active Transportation Plan (draft) as well as with the City's General Plan. The Plan is intended to build upon these efforts and carry forward existing policy direction from other City documents, where relevant.

A citywide Urban Greening Plan is naturally broad in scope. The policy and project framework have been defined by community priorities identified throughout the planning process. Other communities have opted to tackle a specific environmental topic, such as urban forestry or low impact development stormwater design guidelines, but this Urban Greening Plan was developed as a broader, more comprehensive Plan to help coordinate and build consensus for community and City efforts. The Climate Action Plan identifies the importance of increasing transit-oriented development along our transit corridors in order to reduce reliance on the private automobile and cause a reduction in vehicle-miles travelled and greenhouse gas emissions. The San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan implements this goal. These plans both also identified the need to provide green amenities and open space in order to achieve a livable urban fabric, but additional analysis and community engagement was needed to define how this would be achieved. This Plan has been developed over two years with extensive community engagement that helped defined the goals and objectives that guided plan development, identify opportunity sites and define priority projects, programs and policies.

The City has access to limited funds for park and street improvements. Measure J, Measure WW as well as a number of regional, State and federal grant funding sources exist to help pay for parks improvements, natural area and creek restoration activities, landscape, sidewalk and green infrastructure projects. One of the goals of this planning effort was to identify focus area projects that would likely be eligible and competitive for these funding sources. Conceptual designs and a catalog of improvements for these fourteen focus areas were developed and presented to the community at the second community workshop and design Charrette. Additional design and community engagement would be required for many of these projects to move forward.

III. DISCUSSION

The primary objective of the report before the Planning Commission this evening is to provide an overview of the entire Plan as well as the Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration in order for the Commission to consider a recommendation to City Council. As the Plan was originally conceived of and asked for by the Environmental Quality Committee and Parks and Recreation Commission, regular updates were provided to those bodies and the draft Plan has been reviewed and recommended for approval by both the Environmental Quality Committee (June 30, 2015) and the Parks and Recreation Commission (June 24, 2015).

Included in the Commission's packet are links to the draft Plan (Attachment 2), Initial Study (Attachment 3) including Mitigated Negative Declaration and the Mitigation Monitoring & Reporting Program (Attachment 4). These documents are also available for viewing at City Hall and on the city's website at <http://www.el-cerrito.org/urbangreening>.

Overview of Comments by Theme

The Draft Urban Greening Plan was released for public review on May 1, 2015. Staff received a robust list of comments from the public and other interested parties like the Friends of Five Creeks. These comments were reviewed and incorporated, as appropriate, into this version of the Plan.

The major themes of the public comments are summarized below:

Aspirational Planning: Staff received comments that the range of policies and programs laid out in the Plan were either too broad and that program specifics had not been adequately defined, while others thought that as an aspirational plan, it could have covered other topics and pushed policy direction farther.

Response: The Plan was developed through extensive community and staff engagement. Urban greening plans, which are a relatively new planning mechanism, are often broad in scope. The overall vision framework and list of key objectives went through several iterations to incorporate community feedback received at the second community workshop, task force meetings and a Joint Study Session with the Parks and Recreation Commission and the Environmental Quality Committee. Specific policies and programs were then identified based on existing policy and practice, and a catalog of national best practices.

Connectivity Analysis: Staff received comments on the Connectivity Analysis, including that the Ohlone Greenway was given too much emphasis on several of the maps and that there may be some inaccurate service gaps identified near the Hillside Natural Area.

Response: The Connectivity Analysis was completed early on in the planning process and was undertaken as a preliminary planning exercise to help identify major level of service gaps. Based on the common metrics used, there were no major service gaps which led staff and the consultant team to propose and develop projects based more on the qualitative results of the survey and community input, rather than the connectivity analysis.

Plant Palette: Several people submitted comments on the Plant Palette, encouraging staff to redefine the proposed space types, plant selection criteria and provide further clarification of the purpose of the Plant Palette.

- Native Plants: Commenters felt that there were insufficient native plants and that several were misidentified in the draft Plant Palette.
- Drought Tolerant Plants: Commenters felt that there was a need for additional drought tolerant plants and that these plants should be given priority in the Plant Palette.

Response: The Plant Palette released during the public comment period was an initial draft. It had not yet been vetted by the community and staff was happy to receive extensive comment on plant selection and landscape criteria. Most of the comments were received and staff has worked closely with the landscape architect on the consultant team to create a more robust plant palette.

Maintenance and Maintainability: During community engagement and as part of the public comment period, staff received comments about the current level of maintenance in existing parks and natural areas. Staff discussed these issues in detail as part of the Staff Charrette and other interdepartmental meetings. Staff and the consultant team carefully considered opportunities to improve maintenance through the Urban Greening Plan. The Plan proposes maintenance projects at focus area sites and identifies where current maintenance practices either hinder or support the natural function of creeks, fields, groves, riparian corridors and native plantings. The Urban Greening Plan is part of a larger decision-making process to identify and prioritize maintenance needs. The dialog undertaken as a part of the planning process and the Plan itself will help frame the discussion and community priorities as maintenance considerations relate to the environmental impacts of certain practices. Additional funding sources for maintenance are clearly needed and this Plan underscores the need to adequately consider the maintenance requirements of a project prior to construction.

Response: Staff amended the Supporting Policies: *Sustainable Landscape Maintenance* section to better highlight existing City policies and to more succinctly convey and balance maintenance needs. Staff amended language in the focus area projects, where appropriate, to capture current maintenance issues and to ensure that project design would account for maintenance needs.

Project Specifics: Commenters submitted comments on project specifics, including:

- The need for traditional play equipment at Fairmont Park, as it is the only park serving the surrounding neighborhood and there is a lack of playground facilities
- Route suggestions for the Blue-to-Green Connections
- Additional improvements in the Hillside Natural Area catalog and a better discussion of the vegetation management concerns
- That projects involving Cerrito Creek should incorporate existing City policies outlined in the General Plan, Resolution 1996-103 and the Cerrito Creek Trail Connector Study

Response: Staff incorporated additional project elements and revised project language, where appropriate. In some instances, comments were submitted that contradicted earlier direction received from the community, so these comments were not incorporated. Where comments were not relevant to the Urban Greening Plan scope, they were cataloged and/or conveyed to appropriate City staff.

Drought: The draft Urban Greening Plan was in development when Governor Jerry Brown issued his Executive Order for the State of California to reduce its water consumption by 25%. The Plan, which has taken direction on drought issues from local, regional and statewide initiatives, makes

reference to and incorporates drought related policies, as appropriate. Several people had hoped that the Plan would include further guidance on how to address questions about new landscaping and street trees and the maintenance of existing plantings.

Response: In a number of projects and policies the issue of transitioning water-intensive landscapes to less water-intensive landscapes is highlighted. Staff has incorporated additional language about the need to conserve water and consider drought conditions when planning new fields, landscaping, and other major projects. Staff has added a Drought Response and Management Plan and evaluation process to the Sustainable Landscape and Maintenance policies.

Existing City Policies: Commenters encouraged City staff to review, cross-reference and incorporate specific existing City policies including: the Urban Forest Management Plan (2007), the Landscape Management Plan (2003), Hillside Natural Area Fire Hazard Reduction Plan (1994); Hillside Natural Area Vegetation Management Plan (1987), the General Plan as it relates to Cerrito Creek, Resolution 1996-103 and the Cerrito Creek Trail Connector Feasibility Study.

Response: Staff added language referencing Appendix D: Existing Policies and Programs, which provides a summary of relevant adopted policies, and have added specific reference to existing policies in some cases, such as in focus area descriptions. As a part of implementing the Plan, after it is adopted, an additional tool will be developed to help provide an easier way for staff and the public to access and cross-reference all existing urban greening related policies to assure consistency, facilitate implementation and help avoid redundancy.

Creeks: Commenters submitted additional creek segments to be added to the maps and questioned some of the identified creeks.

Response: Staff added a note to maps showing creeks explaining the origin of the creek alignments depicted. The creeks illustrated were derived from the City's GIS, which was created based on the Oakland Museum of California's Creek and Watershed mapping effort. These maps may not capture all existing creeks and creek alignments may not be exact.

Consistency with the General Plan and other City Planning Documents:

Exhibit H of the Urban Greening Plan lists the many instances that this Plan furthers the plans and policies of the City of El Cerrito. The document list includes:

1999 General Plan

2009 Ohlone Greenway Master Plan

2013 Strategic Plan

2013 Climate Action Plan

2014 San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan

ADA Transition Plan (2009)

Integrated Pest Management Policy (2013)

Baxter Creek Maintenance and Management Guide (2006)

El Cerrito Creeks Inventory (2007)

Landscape Management Plan (2003)

Urban Forest Management Plan (2007)

Circulation Plan for Bicyclists and Pedestrians (2007)

El Cerrito Hillside Natural Area Vegetation Management Plan (1987)

El Cerrito Hillside Natural Area Fire Hazard Reduction Plan (1994)

Implementation

The Plan is an aspirational, long-range planning effort. It identifies both policies and projects that may be implemented over time. Project design and construction is contingent on additional funding and may be incorporated as part of other projects. The additional planning and policy-making

efforts identified as part of this Plan provide a framework. Specific efforts may be undertaken over time when the need or opportunity exists, based upon staffing levels, regulatory mandates and funding opportunities. The City's overall environmental sustainability is not contingent on the full implementation of this Plan, but the Plan should be used as a reference point for future efforts.

Environmental Review

Initially, the Urban Greening Plan was considered a feasibility level document and therefore exempt from review under the California Environmental Quality Act. However, as the Plan was developed, it became clear to staff that the content of the document required the preparation of an Initial Study with a Mitigated Negative Declaration). The document was prepared over the summer and circulated for thirty days for public comment. The comment period closed on November 5, 2015. No comments were received. The IS/MND is attached and available at City Hall. It is also currently on the City's Urban Greening web page at www.el-cerrito.org/UrbanGreening.

IV. RECOMMENDATION

Staff requests that the Planning Commission consider all of the information, receive public comment and recommend adoption of the 2015 Draft of the Urban Greening Plan and approval of the final Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration to City Council.

Proposed Motion: Move adoption of Planning Commission Resolution PC15-12 recommending that the City Council adopt the Urban Greening Plan and approve the Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration.

Appeal Period: Within ten (10) working days after the date of the decision, the Planning Commission action may be appealed to the City Council.

Attachments:

Attachments:

- 1) Draft Resolution
- 2) Draft Urban Greening Plan ([Link](#))
- 3) Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration ([Link](#))
- 4) Mitigation Monitoring & Reporting Program ([Link](#))

Planning Commission Resolution PC15-12

A RESOLUTION OF THE EL CERRITO PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDING THAT THE CITY COUNCIL APPROVE AND ADOPT THE URBAN GREENING PLAN AND MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION.

WHEREAS, the planning process began in 2013 when the City received grant funding from Proposition 84 to improve the sustainability and livability of California’s communities, through the Strategic Growth Council’s Urban Greening for Sustainable Communities Grant Program;

WHEREAS, the Draft Urban Greening Plan was released for public review on May 1, 2015;

WHEREAS, on October 7, 2015, the City released for a 30-day public review period a Draft Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration which identified and evaluated the potential environmental impacts of the proposed Urban Greening Plan;

WHEREAS, the City prepared a Mitigation Monitoring & Reporting Program available for review on November 18, 2015;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the El Cerrito Planning Commission, based on its review and consideration of the Urban Greening Plan, attached exhibits, and associated Final Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration, and all public testimony, finds as follows:

1. The Urban Greening Plan is in the public interest and will advance the health, safety, and general welfare of the City of El Cerrito.
2. The Urban Greening Plan is consistent with the El Cerrito General Plan.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Planning Commission recommends that the City Council approve the Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration and adopt the Urban Greening Plan.

CERTIFICATION

I CERTIFY that this resolution was adopted by the El Cerrito Planning Commission at a regular meeting held on November 18, 2015 upon motion of Commissioner _____, second by Commissioner _____:

AYES:
NOES:
ABSTAIN:
ABSENT:

Margaret Kavanaugh-Lynch
Development Services Manager



Community Development Department - Planning and Building Division

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The Draft Urban Greening Plan, including
appendices is available for review at
<http://www.el-cerrito.org/urbangreening>



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The Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration prepared for the Urban Greening Plan is available for review at <http://www.el-cerrito.org/urbangreening>



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