

## PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA REPORT

**Meeting Date:** November 7, 2019

**Subject:** Study Session for New Multi-Family Building at 4896 El Camino Real

**Prepared by:** Sean K. Gallegos, Associate Planner

**Initiated by:** Ken Hayes, Applicant and Architect

**Attachments:**

- A. Cover Letter
- B. Vicinity and Notification Maps
- C. Architectural Design Plans

**Recommendation:**

Provide architectural and site design review input to the applicant and staff

**Environmental Review:**

This project *may* be categorically exempt from environmental review under Section 15332 of the California Environmental Quality Act because it is an in-fill development on a site that is under five-acres in size. A more detailed analysis will be conducted prior to formal Planning Commission review.

Since this is a discussion item and no formal action will be taken, this study session is covered by the general rule at Section 15061(b)(3) of the CEQA guidelines. The study session is exempt from CEQA because this discussion will not have a significant effect on the environment.

**Project Description:**

This is a design review study session for a new mixed-use development on a 0.84-acre site at 4896 El Camino Real. The proposed project is a four-story, mixed-use residential building with 45,082 square feet of office area and four condominium units with four levels of underground parking that provides 213 spaces. A fifth residential condominium unit designated as affordable at the low-income level will be provided off-site at 818 Jordan Avenue. In exchange for a 35 percent density bonus for the one affordable unit, the applicant is requesting development incentives to allow for a 56-foot height, where 45 feet is permitted.

The existing site is occupied by a one-story 1,507 square-foot commercial building, one-story 1,613 square-foot single-family house, landscape vegetation and ten trees to be demolished. The commercial building includes a fast food restaurant (Jack in the Box) use and drive-through facilities.

The following table summarizes the project’s technical details:

**GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION:** Thoroughfare Commercial  
**ZONING:** CT (Commercial Thoroughfare)  
**PARCEL SIZE:** 36,693 square feet (0.84 acres)  
**MATERIALS:** Smooth plaster siding with horizontal metal siding, board form concrete exterior material, aluminum frame windows and doors, and glass balcony railings

	<b>Existing</b>	<b>Proposed</b>	<b>Required/Allowed</b>
<b>SETBACKS:</b>			
Front (El Camino Real)	-	25.8 feet	25 feet
Rear for Structures <30 feet in Height	-	20 feet	20 feet
Rear for Structures >30 feet in Height	-	40 feet	20 feet
Rear Landscape Buffer	-	100 feet	100 feet
Exterior side (Jordan Ave)		15 feet	15 feet (avg.)
Interior side		7.5 feet (avg.)	7.5 feet (avg.)
<b>HEIGHT:</b>			
Average Height of Shed Roof	-	56 feet	45 feet
Top of parapet wall	-	61.6 feet	57 feet
Elevator tower	-	61.6 feet	57 feet
<b>PARKING:</b>	-	213 spaces	152 spaces
<b>DENSITY:</b>	-	4 units (6.5 du/ac)	31 units (38 du/ac)

## **Background**

### General Plan

The City’s General Plan provides goals and polices for new development in the El Camino Real corridor in number of different elements. The Land Use Element identifies the corridor as a special planning area with a goal to support affordable housing and allow for development intensification in a manner that is compatible with the adjacent residential neighborhoods and the local circulation system. Specific policies include:

- Discourage projects which are exclusively office use.
- Encourage residential development on appropriate sites within the El Camino Real corridor.
- Encourage the development of affordable housing.
- Encourage mixed-use projects with retail, housing, and/or lodging in addition to retail and office uses.
- Continue to review development proposals to ensure a balance between development rights and impact on surrounding residential neighborhoods.

The Community Design and Historic Resources Element identifies opportunities to create a more pedestrian environment along the corridor that can be visually and functionally more inviting to residents and visitors, and includes a goal to improve the visual character of El Camino Real commercial area. Specific policies include:

- Develop a streetscape improvement plan for consistent development of the El Camino Real right-of-way.
- Evaluate site development and design to ensure consistency in site design.
- Evaluate development applications to ensure compatibility with residential neighborhoods south of the corridor.

### Design Review

In order to preserve and protect the City's character and public safety, and enhance the aesthetic qualities and bicycle and pedestrian safety and functionality of its zone districts, design review approval is required for all new development. Specifically, the Planning Commission must make the following findings:

- The proposal meets the goals, policies and objectives of the general plan and any specific plan, design guidelines and ordinance design criteria adopted for the specific district or area;
- The proposal has architectural integrity and has an appropriate relationship with other structures in the immediate area in terms of height, bulk and design;
- Building mass is articulated to relate to the human scale, both horizontally and vertically. Building elevations have variation and depth, and avoid large blank wall surfaces. Residential or mixed-use residential projects incorporate elements that signal habitation, such as identifiable entrances, stairs, porches, bays and balconies;
- Exterior materials and finishes convey high quality, integrity, permanence and durability, and materials are used effectively to define building elements such as base, body, parapets, bays, arcades and structural elements. Materials, finishes, and colors have been used in a manner that serves to reduce the perceived appearance of height, bulk and mass, and are harmonious with other structures in the immediate area.
- Landscaping is generous and inviting, and landscape and hardscape features are designed to complement the building and parking areas, and to be integrated with the building architecture and the surrounding streetscape. Landscaping includes substantial street tree canopy, either in the public right-of-way or within the project frontage;
- Signage is designed to complement the building architecture in terms of style, materials, colors and proportions;
- Mechanical equipment is screened from public view and the screening is designed to be consistent with the building architecture in form, material and detailing; and
- Service, trash and utility areas are screened from public view, or are enclosed in structures that are consistent with the building architecture in materials and detailing.

### Zoning Design Controls

In addition to the required design review findings, the CT District includes the specific design controls for all new development:

- Scale: Because of the relationship of this district to a larger region, a mixture of scales may be appropriate with some elements scaled for appreciation from the street and moving automobile and others for appreciation by pedestrians.
- The proportions of building elements, especially those at ground level, should be kept close to human scale by using recesses, courtyards, entries, or outdoor spaces.

- The proportions of building elements at a commercial or residential interface shall be designed to limit bulk and to protect residential privacy (including but not limited to window placement), daylight and environmental quality.
- Rooftop mechanical equipment must be within the height limit and screened architecturally from public view.
- Firewalls: Consideration should be given to the aesthetic treatment of firewalls including increased side yard setback, contouring the firewall to the building, use of noncombustible roofing materials, and creative use of architectural features in the firewall.

### **Discussion/Analysis**

This is a pre-application study session and the goal is for the Commission to provide early input to the applicant and staff on the proposed development. Since this is a preliminary review, the Commission should focus on the architecture and site design aspects of the project. In addition to providing feedback on how well the project complies with the General Plan and Zoning Code, the Commission should weigh in on the following policy questions:

- Is the building mass well-articulated to relate to the human scale, both horizontally and vertically, as well as to the surrounding buildings to the side, rear and across Los Altos Avenue?
- Are the proposed exterior materials and finishes integral to the project's architectural design and do they convey a sense of quality, integrity, permanence and durability?
- Does the building have an appropriate mass and scale for a prominent corner property?
- Does the building have an appropriate relationship and rear yard setback with the residential properties behind the site?
- Does including an offsite affordable unit appropriate for the inventive waiver requested.

Next steps for the project include submittal of a formal development application, staff review for technical completeness, environmental review and a public meeting before the Complete Streets Commission. When the application comes back to the Planning Commission for formal review and consideration, it will include all requirements outlined in the City's submittal requirements, which includes a density bonus report, photo renderings, a 3D model and appropriate technical reports (traffic, acoustical, etc.). Story poles will also be installed on the project site.  
site.

The logo for Hayes Group Architects is a black square with the words "HAYES", "GROUP", "ARCHI", and "TECTS" stacked vertically in white, all-caps, sans-serif font.

October 15, 2019

**Mr. Sean Gallegos**  
Project Planner  
Town of Los Altos  
1 North San Antonio Road  
Los Altos, CA 94022

RE: 4896 El Camino Real – Project Description

Dear Mr. Gallegos,

Attached is Hayes Group Architect's submission package for the above project for a joint study session with Planning Commission and City Council. The project applicant is Hayes Group Architects on behalf of John Vidovich of De Anza Properties. This package includes five (5) full size and fourteen (14) half size sets of preliminary plans including existing site survey, proposed site plan, project data information, floor plans, elevations, sections, and perspectives. A digital copy in pdf format will be submitted to the planner once the planner is known.

### 1. EXISTING CONDITIONS

The site, a 39,747 sf parcel, including the area within the road right-of-way, is located on the north-west corner of El Camino Real and Jordan Avenue. The property is currently developed with a Jack-in-the-Box restaurant on the corner and a single-family residence at the rear of the site, accessed from Jordan Avenue. To the west of the site (rear) is a multi-family residential neighborhood, while a new multi-family development is under construction to the north along the El Camino Real frontage. Across Jordan Avenue, is a one-story, retail, strip center building. Across El Camino Real, are multi-story commercial office buildings in the city of Mountain View.

### 2. ZONING

The property is located in the CT, Commercial Thoroughfare, zoning district. Goals for this district are to allow for mixed-uses of commercial and residential uses on aggregated parcels and to buffer potential impacts on the neighboring residential properties. Permitted Uses include retail, professional and administrative offices. Conditional Uses include mixed-use commercial and multi-family residential uses. The district requires a minimum 20,000 SF

An existing Jack in the Box drive thru restaurant occupies the majority of the site with building and parking lot improvements. At the rear of the site, facing Jordan, is a single-family residence. Both of these existing uses will be demolished for the proposed project. The proposed uses include commercial ground floor uses permitted by the CT zoning district, including retail uses. The second and third floors will be professional office uses while the fourth floor will have multi-family uses. At this stage of the project development process actual tenants are not known for any of the uses; however, professional office uses typically occupy at a rate of 3 to 5 persons per 1000 GSF of building area. Using this ratio, if all commercial areas (floors 1-3) were professional office, the number of occupants would be 135 – 225. Hours of operation would be consistent with typical office hours M-F 8:30 AM – 5:30 PM unless circumstances required otherwise. The residential uses are all three-bedroom condominiums, so on average there could be four (4) residents per unit for a total of 16 persons on site.

## 5. PARKING

Parking for the project is provided for at grade and in a below grade, multi-level parking garage. A total of 213 parking spaces will be provided. At a rate of 1/300 NSF, 143 spaces are needed for the commercial area and 9 spaces for the four residential units including one guest space. The total provided exceeds the required of 152 spaces by 61 parking spaces.

## 6. GREEN BUILDING

The project will be equivalent to LEED Silver minimum and comply with the City of Los Altos green building program. The project will incorporate photovoltaic panel arrays at the residential roofs as well as the third-floor terrace, where there is also a planted vegetated roof.

## 7. RESIDENTIAL AFFORDABILITY

The project is one where the upper floor is a unique residential use, large three-bedroom condominiums with great views and large roof terraces for the resident's enjoyment. The units also share an outdoor courtyard at the fourth-floor level.

De Anza Properties is committed to providing affordable units and we think this project, with only four (4) units onsite is better suited with an offsite affordable unit for low income candidates. In total, with the offsite unit, we are proposing five (5) total units, making this development project eligible for density bonus incentives pursuant to LAMC 14.28, Multiple-Family Affordable Housing. We are offering 20% of the five (5) units as affordable at the low-income level allowing for two (2) on-menu site development incentives in accordance with 14.28.040C1(a)ii, Table DB2. One incentive will be used to increase the building height to accommodate the units while the second incentive is undetermined at this time. The low-income affordable unit is a townhome at 818 Jordan Avenue (photos attached). It has a separate lot with a back yard suitable for a small family. The townhome was purchased for \$1,500,000 and is in a small subdivision of eight (8) homes, all identical.

The affordable housing program is designed to address housing for valuable people needed in a community but due to their profession and pay they would not be able to live in Los Altos. LAMC

HAYES  
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ARCHI  
TECTS

14.28 allows for an in-lieu payment instead of providing the affordable unit for development projects of this size; however, we would like to provide a unit instead of making an in-lieu payment. We offer the affordable unit as either a for sale unit or a rental unit at the city's discretion.

We look forward to working with staff and introducing the project at a study session to the council and planning commission.

Please call me at (650) 365-0699 x15 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Ken Hayes, AIA  
Principal

Encl: 818 Jordan photos

CC: John Vidovich



# Photo Exhibit

818 Jordan Avenue  
Los Altos, CA

818 Jordan Ave Description (002).docx

Open with

**818 Jordan Avenue**  
**Los Altos, California 94022**  
**MLS#:ML81754160**  
**\$1,488,000**

**2Bedrooms**  
**1Full Baths**  
**1Half Baths**  
**1,200sqft**  
**2,356Lot SqFt**  
**Built in1977**

North-facing townhouse with great Los Altos schools that is almost a detached home! Only common wall is at garage! The large, private backyard must be seen to be believed! Living room opens to the covered patio where you can enjoy your own garden oasis, with it's lush beautiful landscaping! This well-maintained home has stainless appliances in a kitchen that opens to the dining area. New paint and carpet! Newer brushed nickel door knobs and some newer brushed nickel light fixtures! Living room and each of the two bedrooms have their own thermostats for the all-electric heating! Located on a quiet landscaped street, a short walk to a wealth of amenities including Whole Foods, Trader Joes, Chef Chu's, Peet's Coffee, and The Village at San Antonio Center! The CalTrain station and Central Expressway are less than a mile away! Excellent Los Altos schools: Almond Elementary, Egan Middle, and Los Altos High (buyers

Thomas Scott, HOA President

806 Jordan Avenue

[Thomas.Scott10@gmail.com](mailto:Thomas.Scott10@gmail.com)

Phone: 4089109565

Jeanie Cole, HOA Treasurer

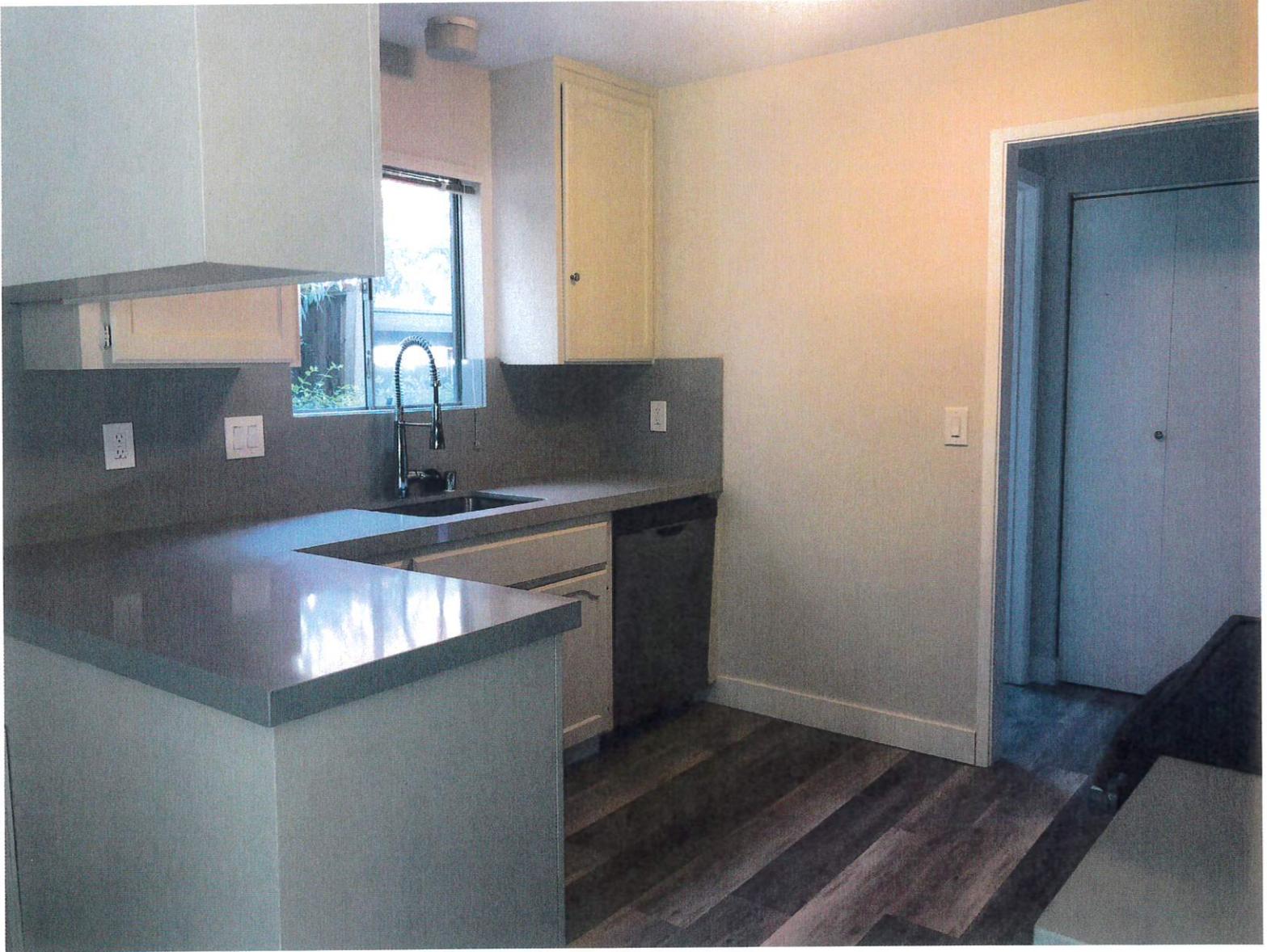
[Jeaniecole2@gmail.com](mailto:Jeaniecole2@gmail.com)





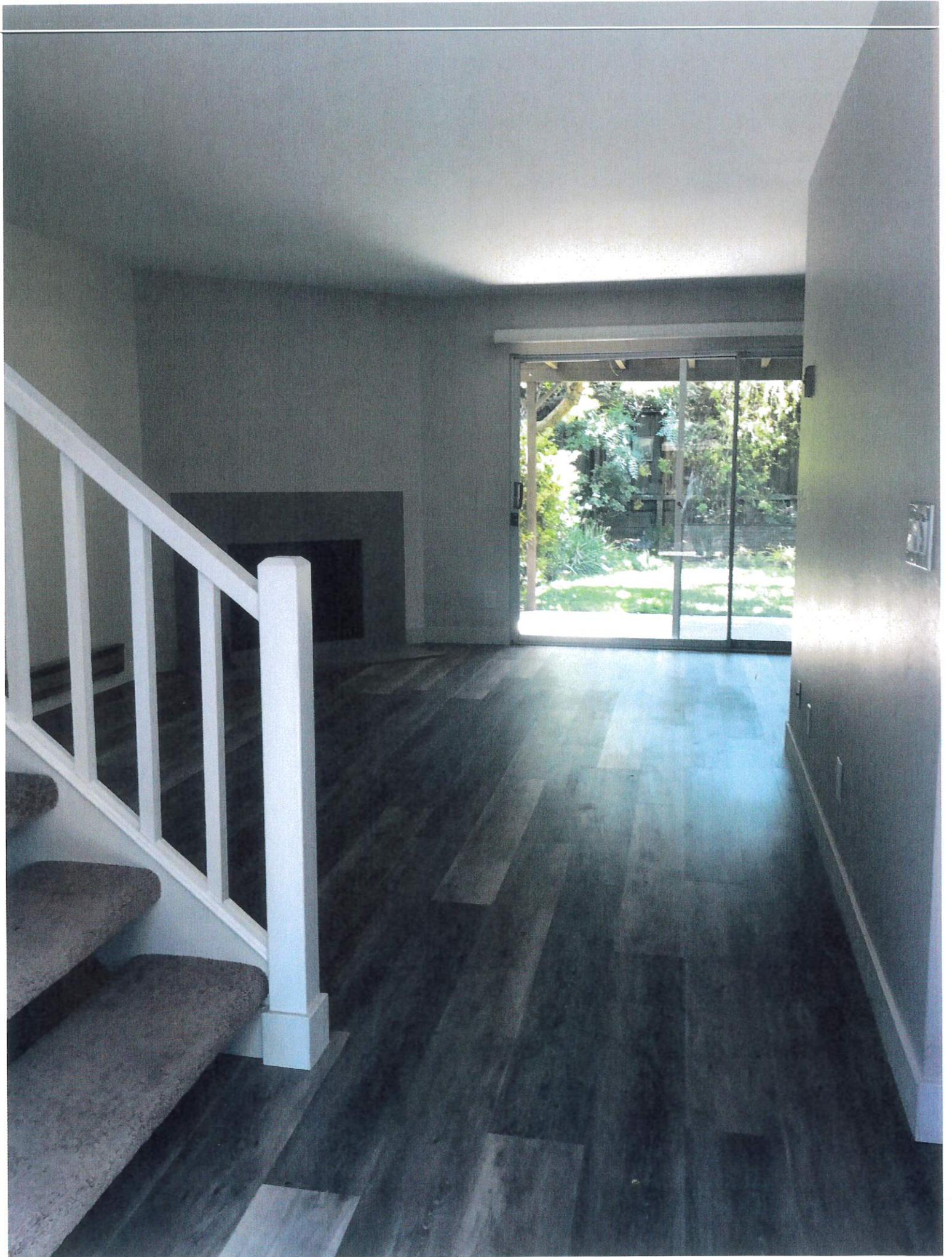












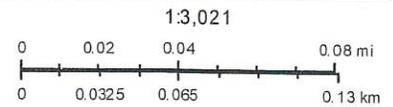




# VICINITY MAP



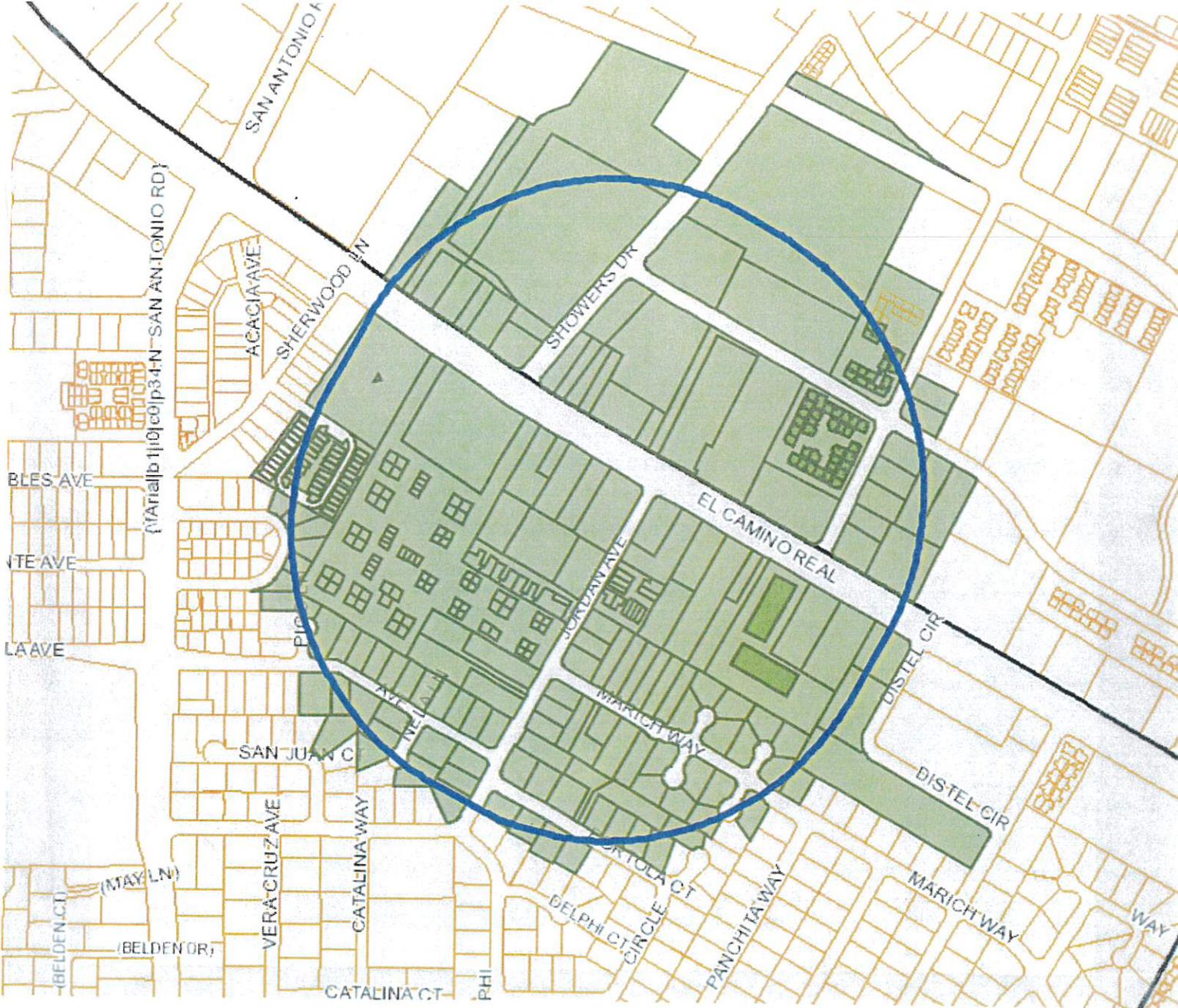
Print Date: September 5, 2019



## CITY OF LOS ALTOS

**APPLICATION:** PPR19-0007  
**APPLICANT:** Ken Hayes – Hayes Group Architects  
**SITE ADDRESS:** 4896 El Camino Real

# NOTIFICATION MAP



## CITY OF LOS ALTOS

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