OFFICE OF ZONING ADMINISTRATION

200 N. SPRING STREET, ROOM 763 LOS ANGELES, CA 90012-4801 (213) 978-1318

**ESTINEH MAILIAN** 

CHIEF ZONING ADMINISTRATOR

#### ASSOCIATE ZONING ADMINISTRATORS

JACK CHIANG HENRY CHU JONATHAN A. HERSHEY, AICP THEODORE L. IRVING, AICP CHARLES J. RAUSCH JR. CHRISTINA TOY LEE

#### **CITY OF LOS ANGELES**

**CALIFORNIA** 



**ERIC GARCETTI MAYOR** 

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planning.lacity.org

April 23, 2021

Carlos Rittner (O)(A) 530 South Hewitt Street, Unit 520 Los Angeles, CA 90013

Peter Shirley (R) Peter Shirley PE Inc. 4429 Dawes Avenue Culver City, CA 90230

CASE NO. ZA-2017-409-ZV-ZAD-ZAA ZONE VARIANCE, ZONING ADMINISTRATOR'S DETERMINATION 2927-2943 North Alta Street Northeast Los Angeles Community Plan

Zone : [Q]RE20-1D : 141A225 D. M.

C. D. : 1

CEQA: ENV-2017-410-CE

Legal Description: Lots 7-10, Block M,

Ela Hills Tract

### Pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act, I hereby DETERMINE:

based on the whole of the administrative record, the project is exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15303, Class 3, and there is no substantial evidence demonstrating that any exceptions contained in Section 15300.2 of the State CEQA Guidelines regarding location, cumulative impacts, significant effects or unusual circumstances, scenic highways, or hazardous waste sites, or historical resources applies:

Pursuant to Charter Section 562 and Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC) Section 12.27 B, I hereby APPROVE:

a Zone Variance from the [Q] Conditions of Ordinance No. 180,403 to permit a 240-foot long retaining wall in lieu of the 75-foot long maximum length otherwise allowed:

Pursuant to Charter Section 562 and LAMC 12.27 B, I hereby APPROVE:

a Zone Variance from the [Q] Conditions of Ordinance No. 180,403 to permit grading of 3,849 cubic yards of earth in lieu of the 1,000 maximum cubic yards otherwise allowed;

#### Pursuant to LAMC Section 12.24 X.28, I hereby <u>DENY</u>:

a Zoning Administrator's Determination to permit the construction, use, and maintenance of a new single-family dwelling on a lot fronting a Substandard Hillside Limited Street without providing a 20-foot wide Adjacent Minimum Roadway adjacent to the property along Alta Street as required by LAMC Section 12.21 C.10(i)(2);

#### Pursuant to LAMC Section 12.24 X.28, I hereby APPROVE:

a Zoning Administrator's Determination to permit the construction, use, and maintenance of a new single-family dwelling on a lot fronting a Substandard Hillside Limited Street where a minimum 20-foot wide Continuous Paved Roadway is not provided from the driveway apron to the boundary of the Hillside Area, as required by LAMC Section 12.21 C.10 (i)(3); and,

#### Pursuant to LAMC 12.24 X.28, I hereby <u>APPROVE</u>:

a Zoning Administrator's Determination to permit the export of more than 75-percent of the maximum by-right grading quantities established in LAMC Section 12.21 C.10(f)(2)(ii).

#### Upon the following additional terms and conditions:

- 1. All other use, height and area regulations of the Municipal Code and all other applicable government/regulatory agencies shall be strictly complied within the development and use of the property, except as such regulations are herein specifically varied or required.
- 2. The use and development of the property shall be in substantial conformance with the plot plan submitted with the application and marked Exhibit "A", except as may be revised as a result of this action.
- 3. The authorized use shall be conducted at all times with due regard for the character of the surrounding district, and the right is reserved to the Zoning Administrator to impose additional corrective Conditions, if, in the Administrator's opinion, such Conditions are proven necessary for the protection of persons in the neighborhood or occupants of adjacent property.
- 4. All graffiti on the site shall be removed or painted over to match the color of the surface to which it is applied within 24 hours of its occurrence.
- 5. A copy of the first page of this grant and all Conditions and/or any subsequent appeal of this grant and its resultant Conditions and/or letters of clarification shall be printed on the building plans submitted to the Development Services Center and the Department of Building and Safety for purposes of having a building permit issued.

- 6. Prior to the issuance of any permits relative to this matter, a covenant acknowledging and agreeing to comply with all the terms and conditions established herein shall be recorded in the County Recorder's Office. The agreement (standard master covenant and agreement form CP-6770) shall run with the land and shall be binding on any subsequent owners, heirs or assigns. The agreement with the conditions attached must be submitted to the Development Services Center for approval before being recorded. After recordation, a certified copy bearing the Recorder's number and date shall be provided to the Zoning Administrator for attachment to the subject case file.
- 7. Approved herein is the construction, use, and maintenance of a new 6,754 square foot, three-story single-family dwelling with an attached four car garage on four rectangular-shaped lots fronting on a Substandard Hillside Limited Street that does not provide a minimum 20-foot wide Continuous Paved Roadway from the driveway apron of the property to the boundary of the hillside area; and two retaining walls measuring 68 and 240-foot long and six feet in height.
- 8. The maximum building height shall not exceed 26 feet above adjacent finished grade, as designed with a roof pitch that has a slope of less than 25 percent.
- 9. The applicant shall obtain all necessary permits from the Bureau of Engineering to complete the street improvements of the adjacent minimum roadway along the frontage of the subject property along Alta Avenue to the satisfaction of City Engineer.
- 10. Prior to the sign-off of plans by the Development Services Center, the project shall comply with all of the conditions required in the department of Building and Safety Grading Division's Geology and Soils Report approval letter dated March 14, 2018, Log ##99429-01. All conditions shall be printed on the plans submitted to the development Services Center for plan check.
- 11. The applicant shall observe the <u>Tree Protection Guidelines</u> set forth in the Tree Report conducted by Carlberg Associates, dated December 11, 2014, during the Pre-Construction Phase and Construction Phase.
- 12. Prior to the sign-off of plans by the Development Services Center, the applicant shall submit the plans for review and approval to the Fire Department.
- 13. No other deviations have been requested from any other applicable provisions of the Ordinance No. 180,403 and Hillside regulations (Section 12.21 C.10 of the LAMC). All applicable provisions shall be observed.
- 14. Prior to any sign-off of plans by the Development Services Center, the plot plan and the landscape plan shall be submitted to the Fire Department for review of compliance with the Los Angeles Municipal Code fire protection provisions for hillside dwellings including a consideration for a fire hydrant.

- 15. The applicant shall incorporate a sprinkler system throughout the interior of the proposed house.
- 16. Outdoor lighting shall be designed and installed with shielding, so that the light does not overflow into adjacent residential properties.
- 17. Construction Requirements/Restrictions
  - a. Posting of Construction Activities. During construction, the adjacent residents shall be given regular notification of major construction activities and their duration. A visible and readable sign (at a distance of 50 feet) shall be posted on the construction site identifying a telephone number for (1) Department of Transportation, Parking Enforcement; (2) Building and Safety enforcement; and, (3) the owner and/or construction contractor where residents can inquire about the construction process and register complaints. The applicant shall be required to respond within 24 hours of any complaint. A construction superintendent shall be present on-site during construction.
  - b. <u>Community Relations.</u> A 24-hour "hotline" phone number for the receipt of construction-related complaints from the community shall be provided to immediate neighbors. The applicant shall be required to respond within 24 hours of any complaint received on this hotline.
  - c. <u>Deliveries of Equipment Supplies.</u> All deliveries during construction shall be coordinated so that only one vendor delivery vehicle is at the site at one time and that a construction supervisor is present at such time to mitigate any potential traffic impacts. A flag person shall be provided to assist with the delivery of any construction materials to the site on trash-pick up days until the trash collection has been completed.
  - d. <u>Truck Traffic Restricted Hours.</u> Truck traffic directed to the project site for the purpose of delivering materials, construction-machinery, any delivery of fill material or removal of graded soil shall be limited to the hours beginning at 9 a.m. and ending at 3 p.m., Monday through Friday only. No truck deliveries shall occur outside of the time period.
  - e. <u>Construction Activities</u>. Prior to the commencement of site excavation and construction activities, the applicant shall notify residents within a 100-foot radius of the project site and provide residents with a written construction schedule. The applicant and the project construction manager shall identify a contact person and provide a telephone number for any inquiries from residents regarding construction activities. The phone number shall be provided to all residents within the 100-foot radius and as noted above it shall be posted on the site in a manner which is readily visible to any interested party

- f. <u>Flag Persons.</u> Flag persons shall assist with the movement of traffic whenever two-way traffic is obstructed as a result of construction activity.
- g. <u>Off-Site Staging Area.</u> The contractor shall establish an off-site staging area for large trucks and any other construction vehicles in order to control the frequency of construction traffic to the site, to the satisfaction of the Department of Building and Safety.
- h. <u>Storage of Materials</u> During all phases of construction, all materials related to the construction of the proposed project shall be stored on-site.
- i. All debris, trash and waste generated by the construction or by any worker, including but not limited to building material remnants, removed weeds, dirt, food or drinks consumed by workers, etc., must be removed from the site or kept in a covered, on-site trash receptacle on the properties being developed. Any trash stored on-site must be removed at least once per week, or whenever the storage receptacle is full, whichever is sooner.
- 18. Construction and demolition shall be restricted to the hours of 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.
- 19. The project shall comply with the City of Los Angeles Noise Ordinance Nos. 144,331 and 161,574, and any subsequent ordinances, which prohibit the emission or creation of noise beyond certain levels at adjacent uses unless technically infeasible.
- 20. INDEMNIFICATION AND REIMBURSEMENT OF LITIGATION COSTS.

Applicant shall do all of the following:

- a. Defend, indemnify and hold harmless the City from any and all actions against the City relating to or arising out of, in whole or in part, the City's processing and approval of this entitlement, including <u>but not limited to</u>, an action to attack, challenge, set aside, void or otherwise modify or annul the approval of the entitlement, the environmental review of the entitlement, or the approval of subsequent permit decisions or to claim personal property damage, including from inverse condemnation or any other constitutional claim.
- b. Reimburse the City for any and all costs incurred in defense of an action related to or arising out of, in whole or in part, the City's processing and approval of the entitlement, including but not limited to payment of all court costs and attorney's fees, costs of any judgments or awards against the City (including an award of attorney's fees), damages and/or settlement costs.

- c. Submit an initial deposit for the City's litigation costs to the City within 10 days' notice of the City tendering defense to the Applicant and requesting a deposit. The initial deposit shall be in an amount set by the City Attorney's Office, in its sole discretion, based on the nature and scope of action, but in no event shall the initial deposit be less than \$50,000. The City's failure to notice or collect the deposit does not relieve the Applicant from responsibility to reimburse the City pursuant to the requirement in paragraph (b).
- d. Submit supplemental deposits upon notice by the City. Supplemental deposits may be required in an increased amount from the initial deposit if found necessary by the City to protect the City's interests. The City's failure to notice or collect the deposit does not relieve the Applicant from responsibility to reimburse the City pursuant to the requirement (b).
- e. If the City determines it necessary to protect the City's interests, execute an indemnity and reimbursement agreement with the City under terms consistent with the requirements of this condition.

The City shall notify the applicant within a reasonable period of time of its receipt of any action and the City shall cooperate in the defense. If the City fails to notify the applicant of any claim, action or proceeding in a reasonable time, or if the City fails to reasonably cooperate in the defense, the applicant shall not thereafter be responsible to defend, indemnify or hold harmless the City.

The City shall have the sole right to choose its counsel, including the City Attorney's office or outside counsel. At its sole discretion, the City may participate at its own expense in the defense of any action, but such participation shall not relieve the applicant of any obligation imposed by this condition. In the event the Applicant fails to comply with this condition, in whole or in part, the City may withdraw its defense of the action, void its approval of the entitlement, or take any other action. The City retains the right to make all decisions with respect to its representations in any legal proceeding, including its inherent right to abandon or settle litigation.

For purposes of this condition, the following definitions apply:

"City" shall be defined to include the City, its agents, officers, boards, commission, committees, employees and volunteers.

"Action" shall be defined to include suits, proceedings (including those held under alternative dispute resolution procedures), claims or lawsuits. Actions includes actions, as defined herein, alleging failure to comply with any federal, state or local law.

Nothing in the definitions included in this paragraph are intended to limit the rights of the City or the obligations of the Applicant otherwise created by this condition.

#### OBSERVANCE OF CONDITIONS - TIME LIMIT - LAPSE OF PRIVILEGES

All terms and conditions of the approval shall be fulfilled <u>before</u> the use may be established. The instant authorization is further conditional upon the privileges being utilized within three years after the effective date of approval and, if such privileges are not utilized or substantial physical construction work is not begun within said time and carried on diligently to completion, the authorization shall terminate and become void.

#### **TRANSFERABILITY**

This authorization runs with the land. In the event the property is to be sold, leased, rented or occupied by any person or corporation other than yourself, it is incumbent upon you to advise them regarding the conditions of this grant.

#### **VIOLATIONS OF THESE CONDITIONS, A MISDEMEANOR**

Section 12.29 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code provides:

"A variance, conditional use, adjustment, public benefit or other quasi-judicial approval, or any conditional approval granted by the Director, pursuant to the authority of this chapter shall become effective upon utilization of any portion of the privilege, and the owner and applicant shall immediately comply with its Conditions. The violation of any valid Condition imposed by the Director, Zoning Administrator, Area Planning Commission, City Planning Commission or City Council in connection with the granting of any action taken pursuant to the authority of this chapter, shall constitute a violation of this chapter and shall be subject to the same penalties as any other violation of this Code."

Every violation of this determination is punishable as a misdemeanor and shall be punishable by a fine of not more than \$2,500 or by imprisonment in the county jail for a period of not more than six months, or by both such fine and imprisonment.

#### **APPEAL PERIOD - EFFECTIVE DATE**

The applicant's attention is called to the fact that this grant is not a permit or license and that any permits and licenses required by law must be obtained from the proper public agency. Furthermore, if any Condition of this grant is violated or if the same be not complied with, then the applicant or his successor in interest may be prosecuted for violating these Conditions the same as for any violation of the requirements contained in the Municipal Code. The Zoning Administrator's determination in this matter will become effective after May 10, 2021, unless an appeal therefrom is filed with the City Planning Department. It is strongly advised that appeals be filed early during the appeal period and in person so that imperfections/incompleteness may be corrected before the appeal period expires. Any appeal must be filed on the prescribed forms, accompanied by the required fee, a copy of the Zoning Administrator's action, and received and receipted at a public office of the Department of City Planning on or before the above date or the appeal will not be accepted. Forms are available on-line at <a href="http://planning.lacity.org">http://planning.lacity.org</a>. Public offices are located at:

#### Downtown

Figueroa Plaza
201 North Figueroa Street,
4th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90012
(213) 482-7077

#### San Fernando Valley

Marvin Braude Constituent Service Center 6262 Van Nuys Boulevard, Room 251 Van Nuys, CA 91401 (818) 374-5050

#### **West Los Angeles**

Development Services Center 1828 Sawtelle Boulevard, 2nd Floor Los Angeles, CA 90025 (310) 231-2598

If you seek judicial review of any decision of the City pursuant to California Code of Civil Procedure Section 1094.5, the petition for writ of mandate pursuant to that section must be filed no later than the 90th day following the date on which the City's decision became final pursuant to California Code of Civil Procedure Section 1094.6. There may be other time limits which also affect your ability to seek judicial review.

#### **NOTICE**

The applicant is further advised that subsequent contact regarding this determination must be with the Development Services Center. This would include clarification, verification of condition compliance and plans or building permit applications, etc., and shall be accomplished **BY APPOINTMENT ONLY**, in order to assure that you receive service with a minimum amount of waiting. You should advise any consultant representing you of this requirement as well.

#### **FINDINGS OF FACT**

After thorough consideration of the statements contained in the application, the plans submitted therewith, and the statements made at the public hearing on September 15, 2020, all of which are by reference made a part hereof, as well as knowledge of the property and the surrounding district, I find that the requirements and prerequisites for granting a Zone Variance as enumerated in Section 12.27 and a Zoning Administrator's Determination as enumerated in Section 12.24 X.28, of the LAMC have been established by the following facts:

#### **BACKGROUND**

The project site consists of four parcels, rectangular-shaped and up-sloped, with a total of 40,000 square feet. The site is located within the Northeast Los Angeles Community Plan area, zoned [Q]RE20-1D and designated for Very Low Residential land uses. The site is located within the Northeast Hillside Ordinance area, Urban Agriculture Incentive Zone, Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone, Special Grading Area (BOE Basic Grid Map A-13372), and Upper Elysian Park Fault zone. The lot is vacant and has approximately 200 feet of frontage along Alta Street to the west.

The applicant proposes to construct a new 6,754 square foot, three-story single-family dwelling with an attached four-car garage [and an attached 1,304 square foot, two-story ADU under separate Administrative review] and two retaining walls, measuring 68 and 240 feet long. The project also includes the removal of six Protected Trees and one significant tree, grading of 3,849 cubic yards of earth, and exporting approximately 3,775 cubic yards of earth. No portion of a Building or Structure will be erected or enlarged which exceeds the envelope height limits as outlined in Ordinance No. 180,403.

The surrounding properties to the north, south, and west are rectangular-shaped, sloped lots that are zoned [Q]RE20-1D and developed with single-family dwellings or are vacant. The surrounding properties to the east across Alta Street are rectangular-shaped, sloped lots that are zoned [Q]R1-1D and developed with single-family dwellings or are vacant.

<u>Alta Street</u> is a designated Local Street-Standard that is a Substandard Hillside Limited Street with right-of-way width of 60 feet and a paved roadway width of zero feet as identified by the Bureau of Engineering Preliminary Referral Form. The roadway along the project site is not improved with sidewalk, curb, and gutter. Alta Street provides vehicular access to and from the subject lot.

#### Previous zoning related actions on the site include:

Ordinance No. 180,403: On November 26, 2008, the City Council adopted the Ordinance and Qualified "Q" Conditions and Development "D" Limitations for parcels located within the Northeast Los Angeles Community Plan area related to the development of residential dwelling units.

#### Surrounding Properties (within a 500-foot radius):

Case No. ZA-2019-6867-ZAD - On March 3, 2021, the Zoning Administrator denied a Zoning Administrator's Determination to permit the construction of a new single family dwelling on a lot fronting a Substandard Hillside Limited Street (Clifton Street) with an Adjacent Minimum Roadway that is less than the 20 feet; approved a Zoning Administrator's Determination to permit the construction of a new single family dwelling on a lot which does not have vehicular access from a 20-foot wide Continuous Paved Roadway from the driveway apron to the boundary of the hillside area; and approved a Zoning Administrator's Determination to allow the construction, use and maintenance of three retaining walls in lieu of the otherwise two retaining walls for the construction of a new two-story single-family dwelling with an attached garage in the [Q]R1-1D Zone, located at 506 East Clifton Street.

Case No. ZA-2019-4258-ZAD - On March 3, 2021, the Zoning Administrator denied a Zoning Administrator's Determination to permit the construction of a new single family dwelling on a lot fronting a Substandard Hillside Limited Street (Clifton Street) with an Adjacent Minimum Roadway that is less than the 20 feet; approved a Zoning Administrator's Determination to permit the construction of a new single family dwelling on a lot which does not have vehicular access from a 20-foot wide Continuous Paved Roadway from the driveway apron to the boundary of the hillside area; and approved a Zoning Administrator's Determination to allow the construction, use and maintenance of five retaining walls in lieu of the otherwise two retaining walls for the construction of a new 1,862.5 square foot, two-story single-family dwelling with an attached garage in [Q]R1-1D Zone, located at 500 East Clifton Street.

Case No. ZA-2014-3206-ZAD - On February 19, 2019, the Zoning Administrator took the case under consideration for a deviation from Section 12.21 C.10(i)(2) of the LAMC to allow roadway widening to a width of less than 20 feet as required by the Code for a substandard hillside street, a waiver from Section 12.21 C.10(i)(3) of the LAMC to grant relief from providing a 20-foot wide continuous paved roadway width from the driveway apron to the boundary of the hillside area, and a waiver from Section 12.21 C.10(a) of the LAMC to allow a six-foot side yard setback in lieu of the required 11-foot side yard setback in the [Q]RE20-1D Zone, located at 2900 North Thomas Street and 2837 North Ashland Avenue.

Case No. ZA-2014-3207-ZV-ZAD - On February 19, 2019, the Zoning Administrator took the case under consideration for a deviation from Section 12.21 C.10(i)(2) of the LAMC to allow roadway widening to a width of fewer than 20 feet as required by the Code for a substandard hillside street, a waiver from Section 12.21 C.10(i)(3) of the LAMC to grant relief from providing a 20-foot wide continuous paved roadway width from the driveway apron to the boundary of the hillside area, a waiver from Section 12.21 C.10(a) of the LAMC to allow a six (6) foot side yard setback in lieu of the required 11-foot side yard setback, and a Zone Variance from [D] Development Limitation Number 1 of Ordinance 180,403 to allow a 31-foot 11.5-inch envelope height for a portion of a single-family home, in lieu of the maximum 26 feet allowed in [Q]RE20-1D Zone, located at 2840 N. Thomas Street.

Case No. ZA-2014-3208-ZAD - On February 19, 2019, the Zoning Administrator took the case under consideration for a deviation from Section 12.21 C.10(i)(2) of the LAMC to allow roadway widening to a width of less than 20 feet as required by the Code for a substandard hillside street, a waiver from Section 12.21 C.10(i)(3) of the LAMC to grant relief from providing a 20-foot wide continuous paved roadway width from the driveway apron to the boundary of the hillside area, and a waiver from Section 12.21 C.10(a) of the LAMC to allow a six-foot side yard setback in lieu of the required 11-foot side yard setback in the [Q]RE20-1D Zone, located at 2900 North Thomas Street.

Case No. ZA-2014-3209-ZAD - On February 19, 2019, the Zoning Administrator took the case under consideration for a deviation from Section 12.21 C.10(i)(2) of the LAMC to allow roadway widening to a width of less than 20 feet as required by the Code for a substandard hillside street, a waiver from Section 12.21 C.10(i)(3) of the LAMC to grant relief from providing a 20-foot wide continuous paved roadway width from the driveway apron to the boundary of the hillside area, and a waiver from Section 12.21 C.10(a) of the LAMC to allow a six-foot side yard setback in lieu of the required 11-foot side yard setback in the [Q]RE20-1D Zone, located at 2906 North Thomas Street.

Case No. ZA-2014-3210-ZAD - On February 19, 2019, the Zoning Administrator took the case under consideration for a deviation from Section 12.21 C.10(i)(2) of the LAMC to allow roadway widening to a width of less than 20 feet as required by the Code for a substandard hillside street, a waiver from Section 12.21 C.10(i)(3) of the LAMC to grant relief from providing a 20-foot wide continuous paved roadway width from the driveway apron to the boundary of the hillside area, and a waiver from Section 12.21 C.10(a) of the LAMC to allow a six-foot side yard setback in lieu of the required 11-foot side yard setback in [Q]RE20-1D Zone, located at 2912 North Thomas Street.

Case No. ZA-2014-3211-ZAD - On February 19, 2019, the Zoning Administrator took the case under consideration for a deviation from Section 12.21 C.10(i)(2) of the LAMC to allow roadway widening to a width of less than 20 feet as required by the Code for a substandard hillside street, a waiver from Section 12.21 C.10(i)(3) of the LAMC to grant relief from providing a 20-foot wide continuous paved roadway width from the driveway apron to the boundary of the hillside area, and a waiver from Section 12.21 C.10(a) of the LAMC to allow a six-foot side yard setback in lieu of the required 11-foot side yard setback in [Q]RE20-1D Zone, located at 2918 North Thomas Street.

### **Building Permit History:**

<u>Permit Application No. 18010-30000-05310</u>: On October 30, 2018, an application was submitted to the Department of Building and Safety for the construction of a new three-story single-family dwelling with an attached and garage.

<u>Permit Application No. 18030-10000-07495</u>: On October 30, 2018, a Grading application was submitted to the Department of Building and Safety for grading for new single-family dwelling with attached garage, ADU, basement level, site retaining walls, and shoring.

<u>Permit Application No. 18030-10000-07497</u>: On October 30, 2018, a Grading application was submitted to the Department of Building and Safety for GPI with posting for a new 3-story single-family dwelling, retaining wall, and shoring.

<u>Permit Application No. 18030-10000-03247</u>: On October 30, 2018, an application was submitted to the Department of Building and Safety for temporary shoring for proposed new three-story single-family dwelling with attached ADU per AB 494 and SB 229 over basement level with garage.

<u>Permit Application No. 18030-10000-03623</u>: On October 30, 2018, an application was submitted to the Department of Building and Safety for one new 6'-0" max height; 75'-0" max length site retaining wall.

<u>Permit Application No. 18030-10000-03646</u>: On October 30, 2018, an application was submitted to the Department of Building and Safety for one new 6'-0" max height; 75'-0" max length site retaining wall.

#### **PUBLIC HEARING**

The hearing was held on September 15, 2020 at approximately 9:30 a.m. In conformity with the Governor's Executive Order N-29-20 (March 17, 2020) and due to concerns over COVID-19, the Office of Zoning Administration Public Hearing was conducted entirely telephonically.

Peter Shirley, the project representative, stated the following:

- This is four lots and each are 10,000 square feet.
- This is upsloping and 75% of the site is sloped and therefore requires entitlement.
- Alta is undeveloped.
- Tried to stay within the Code, the Hillside Ordinance and the Q's; with the exception
  of the length of the retaining walls and the grading.
- Keeping height to six feet retaining walls.
- Complies with the front, side, and height limitation, but sinks to the hillside to necessitate grading.
- Request is for export and street frontage on Alta, but meets everything else.
- Regarding height, grading and floor area, addressed in BHO, but the Northeast stayed the same.
- The BHO increased the grading and would be in compliance.
- House is built for Carlos and his family, however site could be developed with five single-family dwellings.
- Lowered the house and requires a retaining wall and if it wasn't lowered, the house will be over in height.
- Fits in to the Hillside Ordinance and compliance with all the feasible conditions.
- Request from the Q for length of the retaining walls. They are proposed at the back and side to provide fire access.
- Request that the case to remain under advisement for three weeks to meet with the Neighborhood Council and to submit findings.
- Added the fourth lot for calculating the site.
- There will be no construction on 2927 Alta.

A total of 16 speakers spoke in opposition of the proposed project with the following comment:

- Need more protected areas and this will destroy the natural area.
- No one has had the ability to go before the Neighborhood Council since they have not met in three months.
- There is no record that they came before the Neighborhood Council
- Questions on the site plan.
- Concerned with the retaining walls.
- This will block access to Flap Top Park.
- This is part of Flap Top mountain.
- Impacts to green space.
- Doesn't fit in with the neighborhood.
- Removes agricultural zone.
- Preserve land and area suffers lack of parkland.
- This opens the door to Flap Top Hills and it needs to be left alone.
- Concerned about the proposed size and land removed.
- Landslide and structural issues.
- Should consider the land and the people in the area.
- The proposed ADU is bigger than anything in the neighborhood.
- Would rather see nothing built on the site or have small five homes proposed.
- There will be months of construction.
- Why build a home if the street is not improved.
- The case was terminated and now it is being heard and there wasn't enough time to review everything.
- No findings were submitted in the case file.
- Request that the record be open for two months.
- Northeast Trees used public funds and were managers and owner of the park.
- Concerns with public safety and there needs to be fire access.
- There will be rats that will cause diseases.
- There will be a removal of six Black Walnut trees
- Need to protect open space.
- Middle of the hillside is used by neighbors.

A total of six speakers spoke in support of the proposed project with the following comment:

- The owner is misunderstood.
- This is not a condo and supports single-family residences.
- There will be tree plantings.
- Flap Top will still be accessible.
- One proposed home is better than five homes.
- The ADU is to house family members.
- The lots were on sale and the owners bought it and should be allowed to build a home.
- This is private property and the owner has the right to develop.
- All developers are not in it for the money.

- This project does not displace anyone and this is an empty lot.
- The retaining walls will help with landslides.
- The hilltop portion is a park and will be kept.
- An empty lot provides no taxes.
- The park will still be accessible.
- The site is zone for residential use.

Carlos Rittner, the property owner, stated the following:

- Worked hard to build this home for him and extended family.
- The lots will be tied together to be build as one lot for a single-family home.
- It will be a low profile home, built below grade and hillside but will need walls.
- If shorter walls are proposed, it will increase the height of the building.
- Lots surrounding are vacant.
- Trees are important.
- Reached out to neighbors.
- No construction on the top of the hill.

The Zoning Administrator stated that the case was terminated, but re-instated; and the appropriate notice was given for the hearing. The case was held under advisement for a three weeks to allow the applicant to meet with the Neighborhood Council.

#### Correspondence

Prior to the public hearing, nine correspondences were received in opposition of the proposed project stating the following:

- Questions related to whether the project was for three lots of four lots.
- The case was terminated on January 16, 2020 and was required to re-file. How can the case be resurrected and why this was not communicated to the public?
- Concerns to grading, roadway and walls.
- Risk to open space park and Flat Top
- This will set a precedence
- Owner intentionally circumvented and overreached the RE20 Zone.
- Concerns related to the removal of six protected trees.
- Proposed excavation will alter the topography of the area and may cause damage to surrounding home.
- Traffic impacts due to the amount of soil being hauled.
- The street nor the hillside can support this type of development.
- The site is used to access Flat Top and will impact access by closing off access paths; consider adding easement for access.
- Impacts to the hillside and environment.
- Out of scale and for the area.
- ADU is larger than most homes in the area.
- Concerns related to the size of the retaining wall.
- Concerns related to an un-improved road.
- This is a mega-mansion influenced by affluent developers;

- Lack of parks in area.
- Area is zoned agricultural and should remain open space for the public.

Prior to the hearing, three correspondences were received in support, stating the following:

- The owner is someone who is invested in the neighborhood and not a corporate developer.
- Cooperative and well meaning owner who will support the community and be asset in area.
- Owners have tree planting plan which support beautification of the site.
- Hope to see projects like this that promote family residences.

Prior and after the hearing, correspondences were received from a member of the Neighborhood Council stating the following:

- Project previously did not come before the NC; no record of minutes.
- Drawings do not reflect the soils report and the soils report was conditionally approved.
- Lots of unlawful dumping on Flat Top.
- The lot cut under Case No. AA-2017-4689-COC is involved.
- Concerns related to the size of the ADU.
- Agenda was posted for the Neighborhood Council PLUC meeting was incomplete and considering another meeting after the public hearing.
- Neighborhood Council PLUC did not have enough information for a vote and tabled the project.
- Hilly area used as a local park for generations and was proposed RE20 by former Councilman with the intention it would remain a park for the community.
- Project was terminated that reinstated and needs to be fully vetted.
- Concerns of soils report stating 28-foot high retaining walls for area slated to have six-foot walls and a maximum length of 40 feet and are proposing 300 feet.
- Concerns and questions related to the soils report.
- Concerns related to the removal of proposed cubic yards.
- Request retaining walls elevations
- Concerns related to hauling.

After the public hearing, two correspondences were received in opposition, stating the following:

- Mansion would rob the community of much needed green/park space.
- Concerns related to the removal of protected trees.
- City does not need more luxury housing, but higher density and affordable housing.
- Preserve Flat Top.

After the public hearing, one correspondence was received stating the following:

- Attended both NC meetings and disappointed with the tone of NC meetings; poorly run and unprofessional.
- Commend family and fellow community members for being patient.
- Sure that the City will focus decisions on concrete information.

The project owner and project representative submitted the following:

- a Google Map depicting different access to Flat Top; development would not prevent access to Flat Top.
- A petition signed by 17 neighbors in support of the project.
- In response to a correspondence received:
  - The 'higher retaining walls" is part of the building which meets the developments standards of the BHO and NE Hillside Ordinance.
  - The walls are part of the foundation system of the building and cannot be seen; below grade.
  - Plans are for reviewing the planning aspects, not structural design or building code compliance.
  - Not requesting increase in the size or mass of building and is below the maximum allowed.
  - Hillside pathway is over 100 feet from the site.
  - Project observes a rear yard setback of 80 feet and is not parkland, but private property.
  - Recommendations of soils report are not part of planning entitlements/plans, but will be incorporated into plans reviewed by Building and Safety.
  - Plans show retaining wall locations with topographic survey overlaid, finish surfaces and wall heights shown on plans as required by Planning.
  - Will show views of retaining walls.
  - Haul rote application was completed within haul route guidelines and subject to review and conditions required by the haul route approval.
- Gone before the NC twice.

#### ZONE VARIANCE FINDINGS

1. The strict application of the provisions of the Zoning Ordinance would result in practical difficulties or unnecessary hardships inconsistent with the general purpose and intent of the zoning regulations.

The subject property is a vacant, approximately 40,000 square foot, rectangular-shaped, up-sloped lot. The property is located in the Northeast Los Angeles Community Plan area and is zoned [Q]RE20-1D, and designated for Very Low Residential land uses. The property has a frontage of approximately 200 feet along Alta Street. The project is subject to the provisions of the Northeast Hillside Ordinance No. 180,403 and the Baseline Hillside Ordinance (BHO). The subject property is located within the Northeast Hillside Ordinance area, Urban Agriculture Incentive Zone, Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone, Special Grading Area (BOE Basic Grid Map A-13372), and is 1.1 km away from the Upper Elysian Park Fault.

The proposed project includes the construction of a new 6,754 square-foot, three-story single-family dwelling with an attached four-car-garage [and an attached 1,304-square foot, two-story ADU under separate Administrative review], construction of two retaining walls measuring 68 and 240 foot long and six feet in height, removal of six Protected Trees and one significant tree, grading of 3,849 cubic yards of earth, and exporting of approximately 3,775 cubic yards of earth.

The applicant is requesting Variance from the [Q] Conditions of Ordinance No. 180,403 to permit a 240-foot long retaining wall in lieu of the 75-foot long maximum length; and to permit grading of 3,849 cubic yards of earth in lieu of the 1,000 maximum cubic yards.

The subject site is located within the Northeast Hillside Ordinance area (Ordinance No. 180,403) which contains [Q] Qualified Conditions and [D] Development Limitations that regulate size, height, retaining walls, grading, design and landscaping. The [Q] Conditions and [D] Limitations are intended to reduce the visual bulk and massing of new structures constructed on the Northeast hillsides and assure minimal disturbances to the natural terrain, which helps preserve the existing scale and neighborhood character. [Q] Condition, No. 3. Retaining Walls, requires that the maximum total height of all freestanding retaining walls shall not exceed 12 feet, with no individual wall measuring higher than 6 feet on private property. Each freestanding retaining wall also shall not exceed 75 feet in linear length, nor extend beyond one lot. The intent of the [Q] is to reduce the visual impact associated with long and tall retaining walls.

The requested Variances would allow the single-family dwelling to be terraced into the hillside and provide adequate hillside setback and access around the dwelling. The requested Variances would allow in lieu of the otherwise allowed maximum of 75 feet in linear length retaining wall and grading up to a maximum of 1,000 cubic yards set by the [Q] conditions of the Northeast Los Angeles Hillside Zone Change Ordinance. The proposed single-family dwelling is three-stories and is located at steep terrain such that the retaining walls are not visible from neighboring properties.

The proposed design fulfills the intent of the Northeast Los Angeles Hillside Zone Change Ordinance which was established to reduce the visual bulk and mass of new buildings in the hillsides. By requiring the retaining wall not to exceed 75 feet in linear length, and limiting grading to a maximum of 1,000 cubic yards would result in either more grading to lower the house, or more massing added onto the main structure, and thereby it would not meet the intent of the Northeast Los Angeles Hillside Ordinance. Therefore, the strict application of the provisions of the Zoning Ordinance would result in practical difficulties and unnecessary hardships inconsistent with the general purpose and intent of the zoning regulations.

2. There are special circumstances applicable to the subject property such as size, shape, topography, location or surroundings that do not apply generally to other property in the same zone and vicinity.

The Zone Variance requests are to allow a longer retaining wall than what is allowed by [Q] Condition No. 3 and more grading than what is allowed by [Q] Condition No. 5. The subject site is a vacant, up-sloping, and rectangular-shaped lot. It is surrounded by vacant lots and lots with single-family dwelling units. The subject site contains California Black Walnut Trees, some of which are proposed

to remain. The proposed project incorporates a four-car garage underneath the main dwelling without building a separate garage, thereby causing less grading and construction impacts on the site.

The subject site and surrounding sites are all within the Northeast Los Angeles Hillside Zone Change Ordinance. The topography does limit the design of the project. The single-family dwelling is terraced into the hillside and provides adequate hillside setback and access around the dwelling. There is a special circumstance applicable to the subject property or properties in this general area in that no property is alike due to the hillside topography. Some properties contain more steep topography than others. The proposed project site has steep terrain with a 200-foot width, therefore, the topography would limit the design of the project unlike surrounding properties with less steep terrain in the general vicinity. Complying with said [Q] Condition would make the design of the proposed dwelling inconsistent with the intent of the Ordinance, which is to reduce mass and bulk on the hillsides. Considering this is an up-sloping lot, providing shorter retaining walls or less grading would, in fact, increase the structure bulk and mass appearance on the hillside. Furthermore, the lot size of 40,000 square feet is double the size of the minimum requirement of 20,000 square feet for a RE20 Zoned lot. In addition, the proposed project is not asking for the construction of a bigger house in the floor area, and so the excess grading amount being done is due to the natural terrain and is what is needed to build a compatible house. Therefore, the requested variance for the proposed design helps to achieve the intent of the Northeast Hillside Ordinance.

3. Such variance is necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of a substantial property right or use generally possessed by other property in the same zone and vicinity but which, because of such special circumstances and practical difficulties or unnecessary hardships, is denied the property in question.

The proposed single-family dwelling complies with all other applicable Municipal Code, Baseline Hillside Ordinance, and Northeast Los Angeles Hillside Zone Change Ordinance regulations with regard to building design, floor area, height, setbacks, lot coverage, and landscaping. The intent of the regulation requiring that all freestanding retaining walls not exceed 75 feet in linear length and grading be limited to a maximum of 1,000 cubic yards is to reduce the visual impact of the structures on hillside lots that may be visible from various locations. Many homes in the hillside area already have retaining walls and grading exceeding allowed length and amount. The special circumstance applicable to the subject property and properties in this general area is that no property is alike due to the hillside topography. Some properties contain more steep topography than others. In addition, the proposed project site is a rectangular-shaped lot with a 200-foot width, therefore, the shape and the topography would limit the design of the project unlike surrounding properties in the general vicinity.

Prior to the public hearing and during the hearing, correspondence and testimony stated concerns that the project does not fit in with the neighborhood, that the project would impede access to Flat Top, and concerns related to excavation of the hillside. Requiring the project to comply with all [Q] Conditions means requiring the applicant to build a larger structure or grade more on the hillside which goes against the intent of the Northeast Los Angeles Hillside Zone Change Ordinance in reducing mass and bulk of new structures on the hillsides. Furthermore, the location and the slope of the lot will contribute to shielding the retaining wall from the view of the adjacent properties. The proposed project is consistent with the existing development pattern and the intent of the Northeast Los Angeles Hillside Zone Change Ordinance and is zoned for single-family and is proposed for such. The grant of the requested variance are necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of a substantial property right or use generally possessed by other properties in the same zone and vicinity.

4. The granting of such variance will not be materially detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to the property or improvements in the same zone or vicinity in which the property is located.

Prior to the public hearing and during the hearing, correspondence and testimony stated concerns that the project does not fit in with the neighborhood. The granting of the Variance to allow a 240-foot long retaining wall and grading of more than 1,000 cubic yards as opposed to the maximum allowed would not affect any other aspects of the zoning or land use on the property. The proposed retaining wall and grading amount are reasonable in size and amount for the proposed wide and steep lot. The retaining wall is embedded into the hillside thus it cannot be viewed from the street or other adjacent properties and has no exterior aesthetic impact. In addition, the applicant will incorporate landscaping to enhance the project, thus it is anticipated that the requested variance will not result in a visual impact. The granting of the variance would result in a single-family dwelling that supports the intent of the Northeast Hillside Ordinance without creating an aesthetic impact.

However, the project is in compliance with all other zoning regulations related to floor area, density, setbacks, height, lot coverage, and parking regulations. No portion of a Building or Structure will be erected or enlarged which exceeds the envelope height limits as outlined in Ordinance No. 180,403. Additionally, the proposed project has been determined to be categorically exempt from CEQA. As such, the requested variance is not anticipated to be materially detrimental to the public welfare of injurious to the property or improvements in the same zone or vicinity in which the property is located.

## 5. The granting of the variance will not adversely affect any element of the General Plan.

The General Plan is the City's roadmap for future growth and development. The General Plan Elements establish goals, policies, purposes, and programs that provide for the regulatory environment in managing the City, and for addressing environmental concerns and problems. The majority of the policies derived from these elements are in the form of LAMC requirements. The General Plan is comprised of the Framework Element, seven state-mandated elements, and four additional elements. The Framework Element establishes the broad overall policy and direction for the General Plan. The Framework Element establishes the broad overall policy and direction for the General Plan. Approval of the project is in substantial conformance with the following Framework Element housing goals and objectives:

GOAL 3B: Preservation of the City's stable single-family residential

neighborhoods.

Objective 3.5: Ensure that the character and scale of stable single-family

residential neighborhoods is maintained, allowing for infill development provided that it is compatible with and maintains the scale and character of existing

development.

Goal 4A: An equitable distribution of housing opportunities by type

and cost accessible to all residents of the City.

Objective 4.4: Reduce regulatory and procedural barriers to increase

housing production and capacity in appropriate locations.

The Housing Element provides a plan for the City's existing and future housing needs to ensure a range of housing choices for residents of all income levels. The Housing Element determined the City was "facing an unprecedented housing crisis" due to the high demand for housing and the lack of affordable options. The Housing Element provides decision-makers policy guidance to evaluate discretionary housing applications. This approval conforms to the following goals and objectives in the Housing Element:

Goal 1: A City where housing production and preservation result in an adequate supply of ownership and rental housing

that is safe, healthy, sanitary and affordable to people of all income levels, races, ages, and suitable for their

various needs.

Objective 1.5: Reduce regulatory and procedural barriers to the

production and preservation of housing at all income levels

and needs.

Objective 2.4: Promote livable neighborhoods with a mix of housing types, quality design and a scale and character that respects unique residential neighborhoods in the City.

The Land Use Element of the General Plan divides the City into 35 Community Plan areas. The Northeast Los Angeles Community Plan Map designates the subject property for Very Low Residential land uses with the corresponding zones of RE20, RA, RE15, and RE11 Zones. The proposed project is also within the Northeast Los Angeles Hillside Ordinance area, which the project is designed to be in substantial conformance with, excepting the requested deviations. The proposed use of the property is consistent with the Plan. The proposed project will adhere to the purpose, intent, and provisions of both the General Plan and the Community Plan.

The Northeast Los Angeles Community Plan, a part of the General Plan's Land Use Element, sets various objectives for the planning and development of the area, and seeks to guide development to be in character with the community. The 'Residential' section of the plan sets the following objectives:

- Objective 1-1 To preserve and enhance existing residential neighborhoods.
- Objective 1-2 To allocate land for new housing to accommodate a growth of population that is consistent with and promotes the health, safety, welfare, convenience, and pleasant environment of those who live and work in the community based on adequate infrastructure and government services, especially schools.
- Objective 1-3 To preserve and enhance the residential character and scale of existing single- and multi-family neighborhoods.
- Objective 1-5 To limit the intensity and density of development in hillside areas.

By making use of a vacant site with a new single-family dwelling, the proposed project will serve to enhance the existing residential neighborhood. Moreover, as a new single-family dwelling, the proposed project will help to fulfill Objectives 1-1 and 1-3 noted above by adding new housing to the community and Objectives 1-5 and 1-5 by preserving the low-density residential character of the surrounding area. Therefore, the grant of this request will not adversely affect any element of the General Plan as the basic use of the property is consistent with the General Plan.

#### **ZONING ADMINISTRATOR DETERMINATION FINDINGS**

6. The proposed project will enhance the built environment in the surrounding neighborhood or will perform a function or provide a service that is essential or beneficial to the community, city, or region.

The project site consists of four parcels, rectangular-shaped, measuring 40,000 square-feet, up-sloped, and vacant, located within the Northeast Los Angeles Community Plan area. The property is zoned [Q]RE20-1D and designated for Very Low Residential land uses. The property has a frontage of approximately 200 feet along Alta Street. The site is located within the Northeast Hillside Ordinance area, Urban Agriculture Incentive Zone, Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone, Special Grading Area (BOE Basic Grid Map A-13372), and Upper Elysian Park Fault zone.

The proposed project includes the construction of a new 6,754 square-foot, three-story single-family dwelling, with an attached four-car-garage [and an attached 1,304 square foot, two-story ADU under separate Administrative review]. The project fronts on Alta Street. Per the Bureau of Engineering's (BOE) Hillside Referral Form, Alta Street is a Substandard Hillside Limited Street with a right-of-way width of 60 feet and a roadway width of zero feet.

The applicant is requesting a Zoning Administrator's Determination for three requests: to permit the construction of a new single-family dwelling fronting a Substandard Hillside Limited Street without providing a 20-foot wide Adjacent Minimum Roadway adjacent to the property along Alta Street; to permit the proposed single-family dwelling not providing a minimum 20-foot wide Continuous Paved Roadway from the driveway apron to the boundary of the Hillside Area, and to permit the export of more than 75-percent of the maximum by-right grading quantities established in LAMC Section 12.21 C.10(f)(2)(ii).

The BOE has required the applicant to provide a 20-foot roadway along Alta Street, with a 14-foot half roadway and four-foot sidewalk adjacent to the property within a minimum 18-foot half right of way, in compliance with the Baseline Hillside Ordinance (BHO). The applicant has requested relief from providing the full 20-foot roadway width in front of the property (LAMC Section 12.21C.10(i)(2)), and relief from the requirement to provide a 20-foot wide Continuous Paved Roadway to the boundary of the hillside area (Section 12.21C.10(i)(3)).

The project will perform a function that is beneficial to the City by increasing the housing supply. There are cases where providing a 20-foot adjacent roadway is a hardship, but there is no evidence to support that assessment in this case. As a matter of policy and practice, the City seeks to incrementally secure the required roadway widening directly adjacent to a hillside property as each one is being developed. Completion of the roadway widening adjacent to the property will enhance the built environment of the surrounding neighborhood, and incrementally improve public safety by allowing for an enlarged passing area for vehicles.

The request to waive the Continuous Paved Roadway requirement is approved because compliance with that regulation would involve removal of structures and improvements not under the applicant's ownership. Improving the Continuous Paved Roadway of Alta Street could result in the demolition of existing walls, structures, buildings, fences and other improvements on all other private properties and within the public right-of-way. The applicant does not have access to property rights at these locations, which makes such improvements infeasible. Improvements necessary to meet the strict application of the Code would not be proportionate to potential impacts generated by the project.

As conditioned, the construction of this single-family dwelling on a vacant lot will enhance the built environment as it is designed to meet the intent of the Northeast Los Angeles Hillside Ordinance and Baseline Hillside Ordinance. By constructing the garage under the dwelling, the project meets the covered parking requirements while also preserving the rest of the lot as open space. This grant permits reasonable development of a privately-owned lot and affords the property owner his/her privilege of construction which has been experienced by other property owners abutting the subject site.

The Department of Building and Safety Grading Division approved the project's soils report subject to numerous conditions. The site plan and landscape plan will be reviewed by the Fire Department for compliance with the hillside fire protection requirements. Therefore, as conditioned herein, the addition of a new single-family dwelling and the required street widening will increase the City's housing supply and will enhance the built environment.

7. The project's location, size, height, operations and other significant features will be compatible with and will not adversely affect or further degrade adjacent properties, the surrounding neighborhood or the public health, welfare and safety.

Prior to the public hearing and during the hearing, correspondence and testimony stated concerns that the project does not fit in with the neighborhood, that the project would impede access to Flat Top, and concerns related to excavation of the hillside. The proposed project will be built in accordance with all Hillside Ordinance regulations, with the exception of the requested. The proposed development of is designed below the allowable floor area permitted by the Northeast Los Angeles Hillside ordinance. The dwelling is set back from the front property by 25 feet and the building is stepped up the hillside, conforming with the step-back requirement; therefore, it avoids any vertical massing at street-level. The proposed project is a new three-story 6,754 square-foot single-family dwellings with a four-car garage [and an attached 1,304 square foot, two-story ADU under separate Administrative review], which is consistent with the designated Very Low Residential land use for the site and will not adversely affect or further degrade adjacent properties. The proposed project is a private land and will be compatible with the adjacent properties, in that they are also designated for Very Low Residential land use and located in the [Q]RE20-1D zone and either consist of

vacant land or are developed with single-family dwellings. The surrounding neighborhood is also designated for Very Low Residential or Low Residential land uses and zoned [Q]RE20-1D or [Q]R1-1D.

Conditions have been imposed to ensure that during temporary construction activities for the project do not burden the neighborhood. Conditions include that neighbors are informed of building schedules; a contact name and phone number be provided to adjoining neighbors, and posted on the site; and that a staging/parking area is provided for construction. The project as conditioned, will protect public health, safety and welfare.

8. The project substantially conforms with the purpose, intent and provisions of the General Plan, the applicable community plan and any specific plan.

The General Plan is the City's roadmap for future growth and development. The General Plan Elements establish goals, policies, purposes, and programs that provide for the regulatory environment in managing the City, and for addressing environmental concerns and problems. The majority of the policies derived from these elements are in the form of LAMC requirements. The General Plan is comprised of the Framework Element, seven state-mandated elements, and four additional elements. The Framework Element establishes the broad overall policy and direction for the General Plan. The Framework Element establishes the broad overall policy and direction for the General Plan. Approval of the project is in substantial conformance with the following Framework Element housing goals and objectives:

GOAL 3B: Preservation of the City's stable single-family residential neighborhoods.

Objective 3.5: Ensure that the character and scale of stable single-family residential neighborhoods is maintained, allowing for infill development provided that it is compatible with and maintains the scale and character of existing development.

Goal 4A: An equitable distribution of housing opportunities by type and cost accessible to all residents of the City.

Objective 4.4: Reduce regulatory and procedural barriers to increase housing production and capacity in appropriate locations.

The Housing Element provides a plan for the City's existing and future housing needs to ensure a range of housing choices for residents of all income levels. The Housing Element determined the City was "facing an unprecedented housing crisis" due to the high demand for housing and the lack of affordable options. The Housing Element provides decision-makers policy guidance to evaluate discretionary housing applications. This approval conforms to the following goals and objectives in the Housing Element:

Goal 1: A City where housing production and preservation result in an adequate supply of ownership and rental housing that is safe, healthy, sanitary and affordable to people of all income levels, races, ages, and suitable for their various needs.

Objective 1.5: Reduce regulatory and procedural barriers to the production and preservation of housing at all income levels and needs.

Objective 2.4: Promote livable neighborhoods with a mix of housing types, quality design and a scale and character that respects unique residential neighborhoods in the City.

The Land Use Element of the General Plan divides the City into 35 Community Plan areas. The Northeast Los Angeles Community Plan Map designates the subject property for Very Low Residential land uses with the corresponding zones of RE20, RA, RE15, and RE11 Zones. The proposed project is also within the Northeast Los Angeles Hillside Ordinance area, which the project is designed to be in substantial conformance with, excepting the requested deviations. The proposed use of the property is consistent with the Plan. The proposed project will adhere to the purpose, intent, and provisions of both the General Plan and the Community Plan.

The Northeast Los Angeles Community Plan, a part of the General Plan's Land Use Element, sets various objectives for the planning and development of the area, and seeks to guide development to be in character with the community. The 'Residential' section of the plan sets the following objectives:

Objective 1-1 To preserve and enhance existing residential neighborhoods.

Objective 1-2 To allocate land for new housing to accommodate a growth of population that is consistent with and promotes the health, safety, welfare, convenience, and pleasant environment of those who live and work in the community based on adequate infrastructure and government services, especially schools.

- Objective 1-3 To preserve and enhance the residential character and scale of existing single- and multi-family neighborhoods.
- Objective 1-5 To limit the intensity and density of development in hillside areas.

By making use of a vacant site with a new single-family dwelling, the proposed project will serve to enhance the existing residential neighborhood. Moreover, as a new single-family dwelling, the proposed project will help to fulfill Objectives 1-1 and 1-3 noted above by adding new housing to the community and Objectives 1-5 and 1-5 by preserving the low-density residential character of the surrounding area. However, the Zoning Administrator has denied the applicant's request to not widen the Adjacent Minimum Roadway on Alta Street. The widening in front of the applicant's property will incrementally improve access on the street. Therefore, the grant of this request will not adversely affect any element of the General Plan as the basic use of the property is consistent with the General Plan.

9. The request is in conformity with the public necessity, convenience, general welfare, and good zoning practice and the action will be in substantial conformance with the various elements and objectives of the General Plan.

The property is zoned [Q]RE20-1D and the Northeast Los Angeles Community Plan designates the subject parcel for Vert Low Residential land use. The addition of a new single-family dwelling on a lot zoned and designated for such use can be deemed to be in conformity with public necessity, convenience, general welfare and good zoning practice. The intent of the Hillside regulations are to provide for safe vehicular access for public traffic, and for access by emergency vehicles in case of fire or other emergency. This property, and others in the area, are located in a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone, designated by the City of Los Angeles Fire Department based on criteria that includes fuel loading, slope, fire weather, and other relevant factors. The site fronts on Alta Street, a Substandard Hillside Limited Street. Requiring the applicant to provide street improvements for the roadway adjacent to the site along Alta Street in compliance with Section 12.21C.10(i)(2) while allowing relief from the off-site Continuous Paved Roadway improvements is logical and appropriate relative to the scope of the proposed development. As conditioned herein, the addition to an existing dwelling with the construction of the on-site street improvements can be deemed to be in conformity with the public necessity, convenience, general welfare and good zoning practice.

## ADDITIONAL ADJACENT MINIMUM ROADWAY AND CONTINUOUS PAVED ROADWAY FINDINGS

10. The vehicular traffic associated with the Building or Structure will not create an adverse impact on Street access or circulation in the surrounding neighborhood.

The roadway of Alta Street is zero feet adjacent to the site. Four parking spaces will be provided in the garage with a driveway on the westerly side of the street frontage. The traffic associated with the dwelling itself will not create any additional adverse impact on street access or circulation except for typical vehicular traffic associated with a new single-family dwelling, which is consistent with the Community Plan, will not significantly alter the existing character and permitted density in the area. Access to the subject property will be from Alta Avenue.

The addition of a new dwelling and driveway without providing the required street dedication and improvements could create an adverse impact on street access. The request to deviate from the requirements of LAMC Section 12.21 C.10(i)(2), to widen the portion of the street adjacent to the property, would adversely affect street access and circulation of Alta Street adjacent to the subject property, and it would set a negative precedence for the future development in the area. The intent of the Hillside area access regulations is to provide for safe vehicular access for residents, visitors, and emergency vehicles in case of fire or other emergencies.

To deviate from LAMC Section 12.21 C.10(i)(3) of the Baseline Hillside Ordinance would not hamper the implementation of Hillside policies and programs as other projects in the area received the same exemption and many residents wish to maintain the existing rural character of the street and the neighborhood. Unlike the Adjacent Minimum Roadway improvement, the widening and improvement of the Continuous Paved Roadway would require access to other private property owner's improvements or land where the road construction that may impact those sites. Transferring responsibility from the neighboring property owners along the street to the project applicant would be an unfair burden and is disproportionate to the vehicular traffic generated by the single-family dwelling. The waiver of the Continuous Paved Roadway associated with the single-family dwelling would not adversely affect street access or circulation on Alta Street as traffic trips generated is insignificant. The vehicular traffic of the addition a new single-family dwelling is unlikely to result in an adverse impact to street access or circulation. Due to these reasons, the Department has consistently granted the request to relieve hillside projects from widening and improving continuous paved roadway. Furthermore, required off-street parking will be provided on-site. A number of conditions have been imposed as part of this grant to ensure that during construction, neighbors are informed of building schedules, including requirements for a flag person, offsite staging and limits on truck hours and sequential deliveries.

# 11. The building or structure will not be materially detrimental or injurious to the adjacent property or improvements and will not have a materially adverse safety impact on the surrounding neighborhood.

Prior to the public hearing and during the hearing, correspondence and testimony stated concerns that the project does not fit in with the neighborhood, that the project would impede access to Flat Top, and concerns related to excavation of the hillside. With the exception of the requested deviations, the proposed singlefamily dwelling will be built in accordance with the Northeast Los Angeles and Baseline Hillside Ordinance regulations, as well as with adherence to building codes and other Federal and State regulations. As a single-family dwelling, the proposed project will fit with the character of the surrounding community as a lowdensity residential development. The proposed development will not exceed the allowable floor area and is set back sufficiently from the lot to avoid any vertical massing at street-level. In addition, it will remain compatible in height with the adjacent properties. The new single-family dwelling will be built in accordance with all building codes by the Department of Building and Safety's Grading Division: and is conditioned that prior to the sign-off of plans by the Development Services Center, the project shall comply with all requirements of the Department of Building and Safety's Grading Division including the conditions of approval contained in the Geology and Soils Report Approval Letter, dated March 14, 2018, [Log #99429-01]. A copy of the grading and soil approval letter is attached to the case file, which indicates that the project is not materially detrimental or injurious to adjacent properties.

Each hillside developer is expected to comply with the on-site street improvements to ensure their development does not materially affect safety in the neighborhood. Requiring improvement of the roadway to the boundary of the hillside would be impractical, as many properties have improvement in the public right-of-way or front yard setback. The applicant does not have rights to the properties that he/she does not own to dedicate and improve, therefore, making such improvements infeasible and without rational nexus.

# 12. The site and/or existing improvements make strict adherence to Paragraph (i) of Subdivision 10 of Subsection C of Section 12.21 of this Code impractical or infeasible.

The applicant seeks a waiver of the requirements to provide a minimum 20-foot wide Adjacent Minimum Roadway to the property and Continuous Paved Roadway improvements on Alta Street located at the front of the subject property.

The subject determination must take future growth of the area into account. If the relief to improve the Adjacent Minimum Roadway is granted, it would undermine the authority of the City to provide safe roadway for local property owners and emergency services. There is not any compelling reason found to grant the relief of improving the Adjacent Minimum Roadway. Therefore, the site does not make strict adherence to Section 12.21 C.10(i)(2) of the Code impractical or infeasible.

Strict adherence to the requirement for a 20-foot Continuous Paved Roadway improvement on Alta Street is infeasible as there are multiple existing structures that exist between the subject property and the boundary of the hillside area. It will be infeasible for the applicant to acquire right-of-way for private property, some of which have structures within the improvement area. To require the applicant to further improve the roadway from their driveway to the boundary of the Hillside Area is disproportionate to the impact created by a single-family home project. The financial and legal burden on the applicant to bear the cost associated with purchasing or obtaining rights to demolish improvements belonging to lots located along the route, and the construction of the retaining walls and the roadway, would render the proposed addition of a new single-family project infeasible.

#### **ADDITIONAL GRADING FINDINGS**

13. The grading for the proposed project will be done in accordance with the Department of City Planning - Planning Guidelines, Landform Grading Manual (adopted by the City Council in June 1983; available under Forms & Processes at http://planning.lacity.org); and the grading will be used to reflect original landform and result in minimal disturbance to natural terrain.

The subject property's total lot size is 40,000 square feet, and proposes a total export of 3,775 cubic yards. The increase in the maximum quantity of earth to be exported from the subject site by an excess of 2,849 cubic yards will not result in the significant alteration of the existing natural terrain. Construction of the single-family dwelling requires all cut grading so that the structure and is minimally visible from the street. The proposed single-family dwelling will be built into the current hillside-maintained elevation of the natural terrain.

Although the export for the proposed project exceeds the maximum by-right grading, the proposed project will be conditioned to comply with the Regulatory Compliance Measure which specifically requires for grading in hillside area to conform with the City's Landform Grading Manual Guidelines, subject by the Advisory Agency and the Department of Building and Safety's Grading Division (See RC-GEO-2). Therefore, this ensures that the grading for the proposed project will be done in accordance with the Department of City Planning - Planning Guidelines, Landform Grading Manual and that the grading will be used to reflect original landform and result in minimal disturbance to natural terrain.

14. The increase in the maximum quantity of earth to be imported or exported from the site will not lead to the significant alteration of the existing natural terrain.

The subject property's total lot size is 40,000 square feet, and proposes a total export of 1,921.8 cubic yards which is proportion to the lot size would not lead to a significant alteration of the existing natural terrain. The lot size of 40,000 square feet is double the size of the minimum requirement of 20,000 square feet for a RE20 Zoned lot. In addition, the proposed project is not asking for the construction

of a bigger house in the floor area, and so the excess grading amount being done is due to the natural terrain and is what is needed to build a compatible house.

15. The method to be used to haul earth will not significantly affect the existing conditions of the Street improvements and traffic of the Streets along the haul route.

The subject property is adjacent to vacant lots and single-family dwellings in a residential area that should not create a significant amount of traffic due to the lower density of the location. In addition, the Regulatory Compliance Measures and any additional measures would be imposed by Building and Safety Commissioners, who act on haul route requests and permits, would ensure that the method used to haul earth would not significantly affect the existing conditions of the Street improvements and traffic of the street along the haul route.

16. The potentially significant impacts to the public health, safety and welfare of the surrounding community, associated with the import or export of earth, will be mitigated to the fullest extent feasible.

Regulatory Compliance Measures (RCMs) in the City of Los Angeles were included in this case's Categorical Exemption justification that regulate the grading and construction of projects and will reduce any potential impacts to less than significant. The RCMs include Aesthetics (RC-AE-1 (Hillside): Compliance with Baseline Hillside Ordinance); Air Quality (RC-AQ-1 (Demolition, Grading and Construction Activities): Compliance with provisions of the SCAQMD District Rule 403, RC-AQ-2, RC-AQ-3, RC-AQ-4, RC-AQ-5, RC-AQ-6); Geology and Soils (RC-GEO-1 and RC-GEO-2 (Hillside Grading Area)); Hydrology and Water Quality (RC-WQ-3: Low Impact Development Plan); Land Use and Planning (RC-LU-1 (Slope Density)); (Noise (RC-NO-1 (Demolition, Grading, and Construction Activities)); and Public Utilities and Service Systems (RC-WS-2 (Green Building Code), RC-EN-1(Green Building Code)). RC-GEO-1 and GEO 2 include requirements to conform to the California Building Code and the City's Landform Grading Manual (see attached Regulatory Compliance Measures). These RCMs have been historically proven to work to the satisfaction of the City Engineer to reduce any impacts from the specific environment the project is located.

The haul route approval will be subject to recommended conditions prepared by LADOT to be considered by the Board of Building and Safety Commissioners that will reduce the impacts of construction-related hauling activity, monitor the traffic effects of hauling, and reduce haul trips in response to congestion. Furthermore, LADBS staggers the haul route schedules so as to ensure that all of the haul routes do not occur simultaneously. The project shall also comply with the conditions contained with the Geology and Soils Approval Letter (Log # 99429-01) by the Department of Building and Safety dated March 14, 2018 for the proposed project. Therefore, the potentially significant impacts to the public health, safety and welfare of the surrounding community, associated with the export of earth, will be mitigated to the fullest extent possible resulting in less than significant impact.

#### **FLOOD HAZARD FINDING**

17. The National Flood Insurance Program rate maps, which are a part of the Flood Hazard Management Specific Plan adopted by the City Council by Ordinance No. 172,081, have been reviewed and it has been determined that this project is located outside of flood zone.

Inquiries regarding this matter shall be directed to Adrineh Melkonian, Planning Staff for the Department of City Planning at (213) 978-1301 or adrineh.melkonian@lacity.org.

CHRISTINA TOY LEE Associate Zoning Administrator

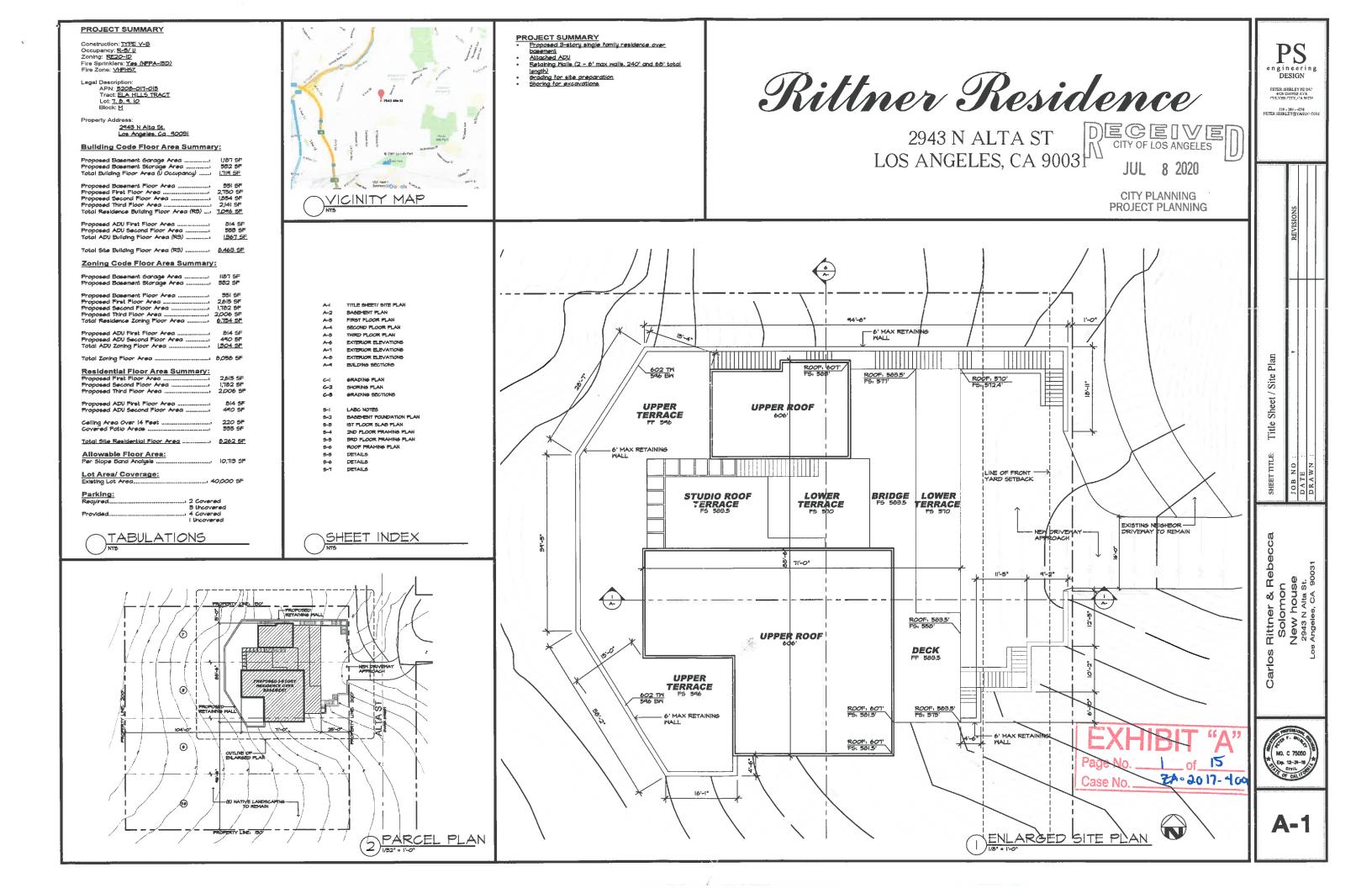
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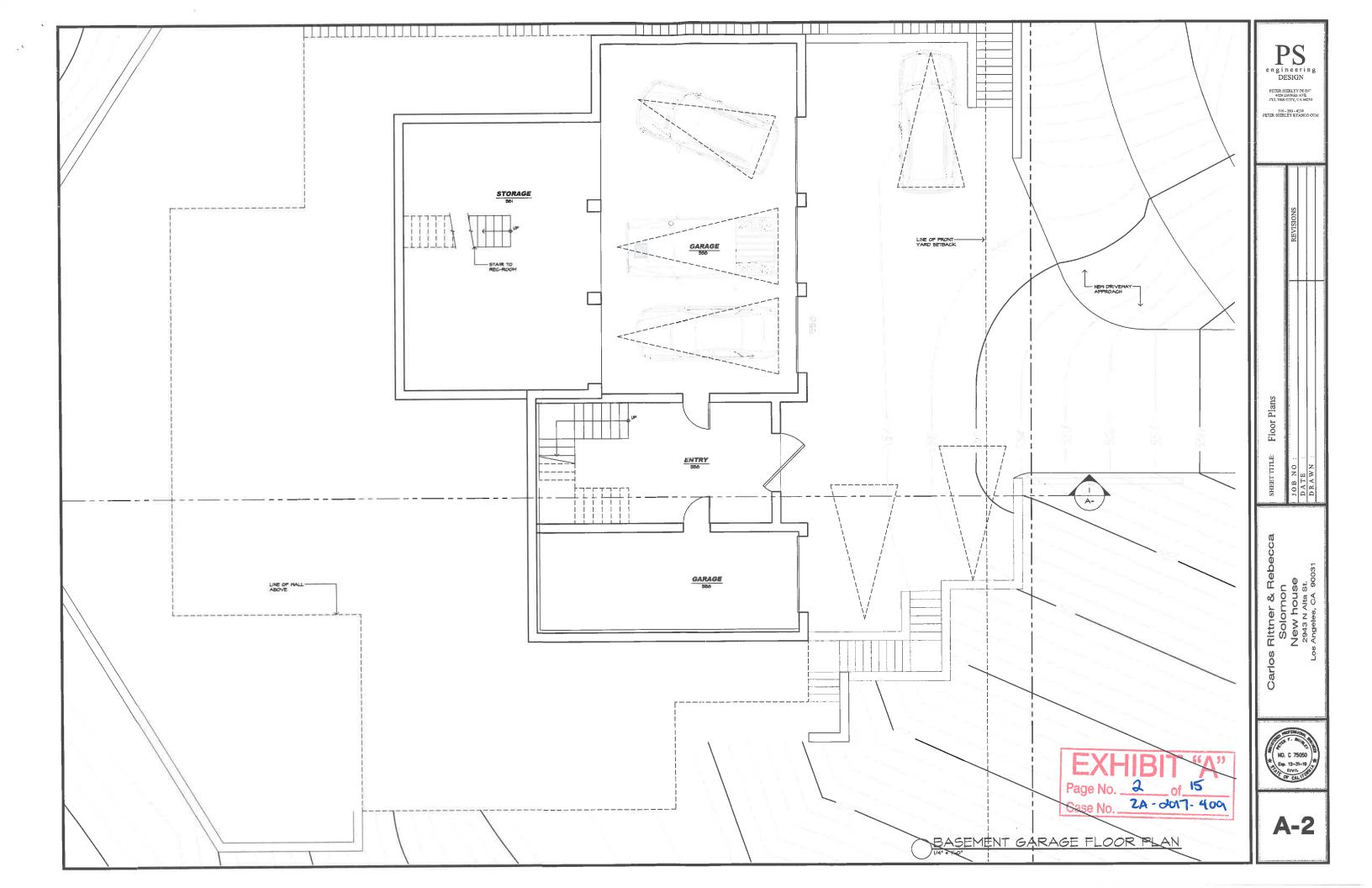
cc: Councilmember Gilbert Cedillo

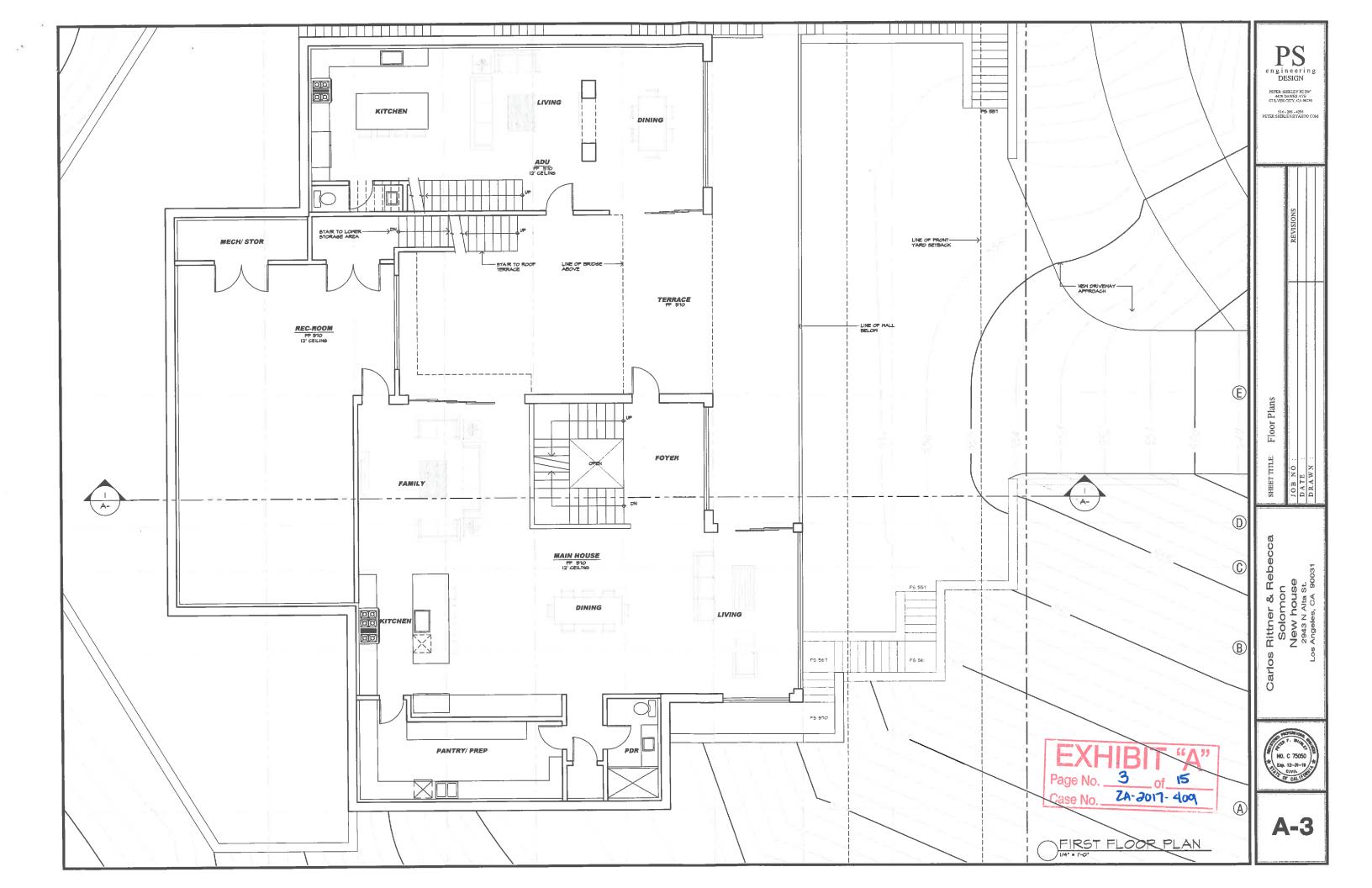
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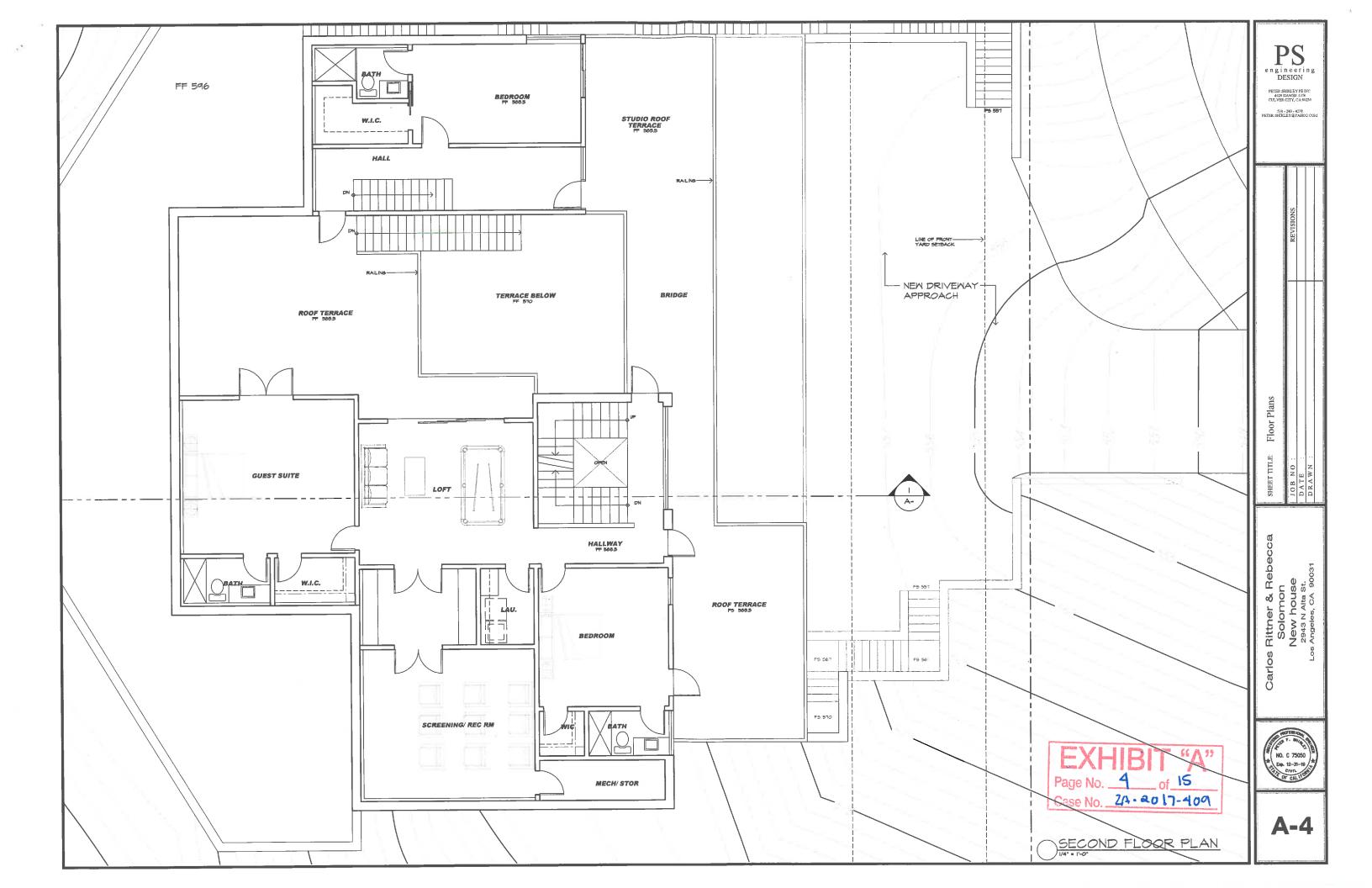
Adjoining property owners

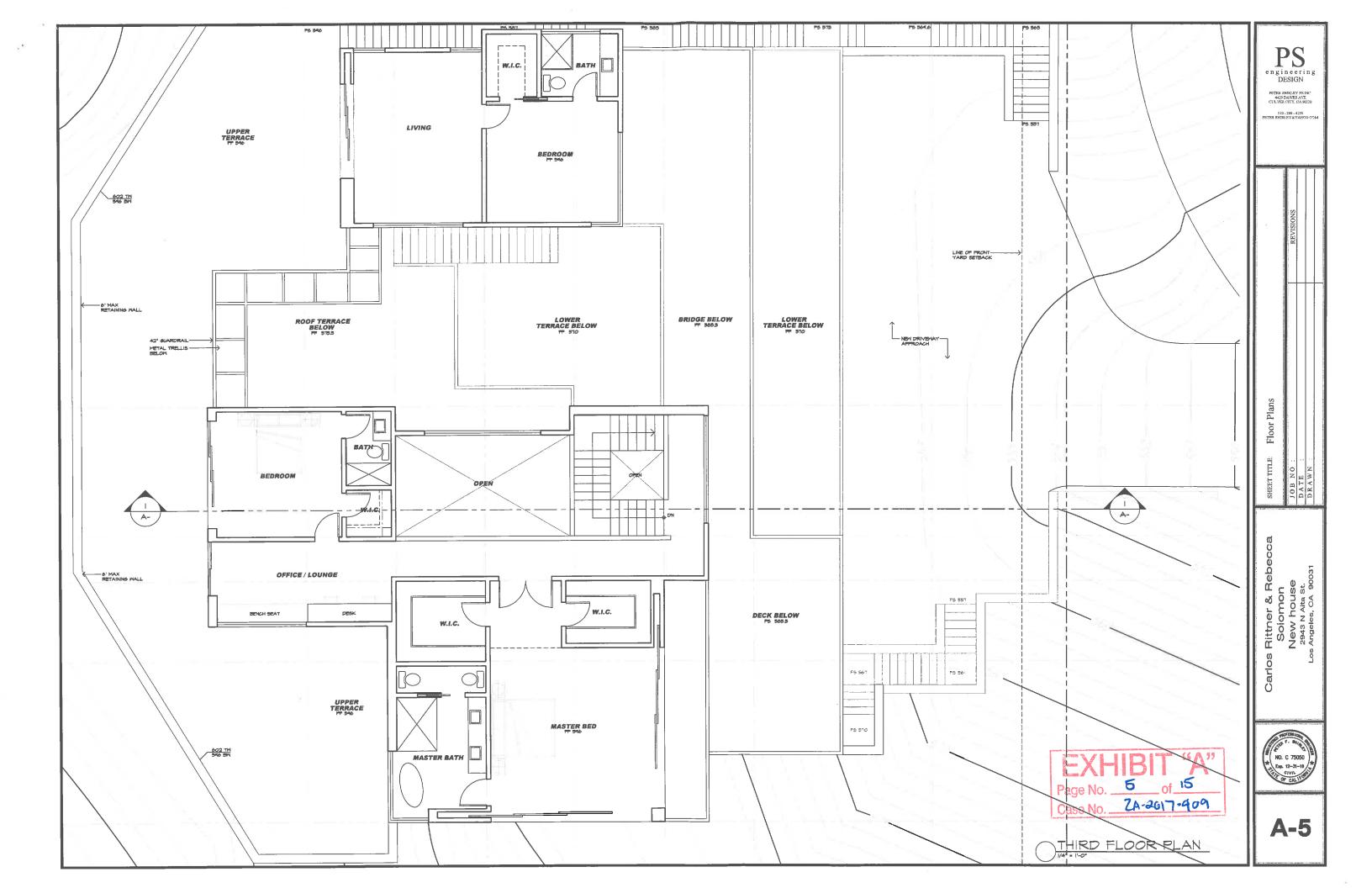
**Interested Parties** 

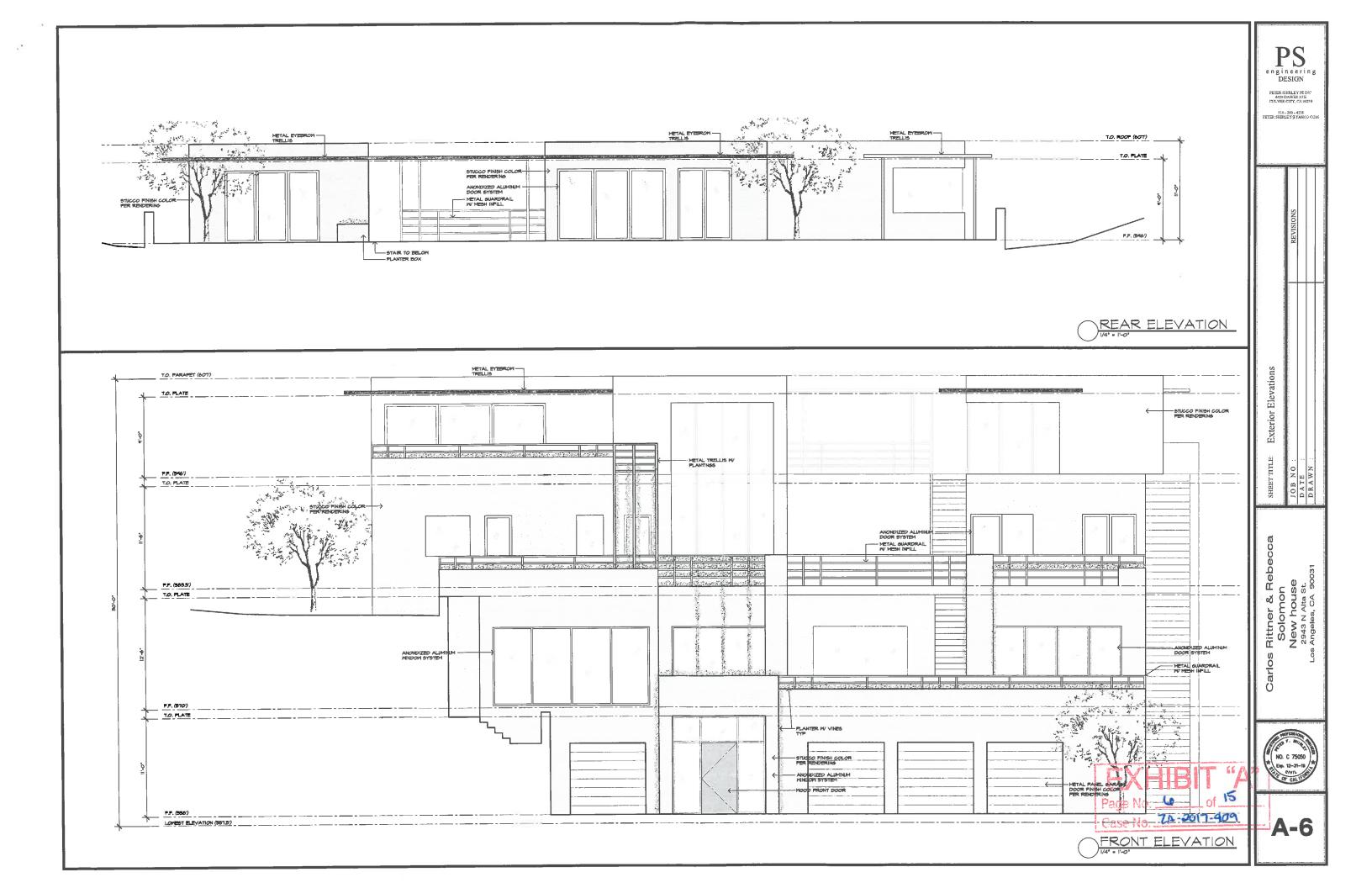


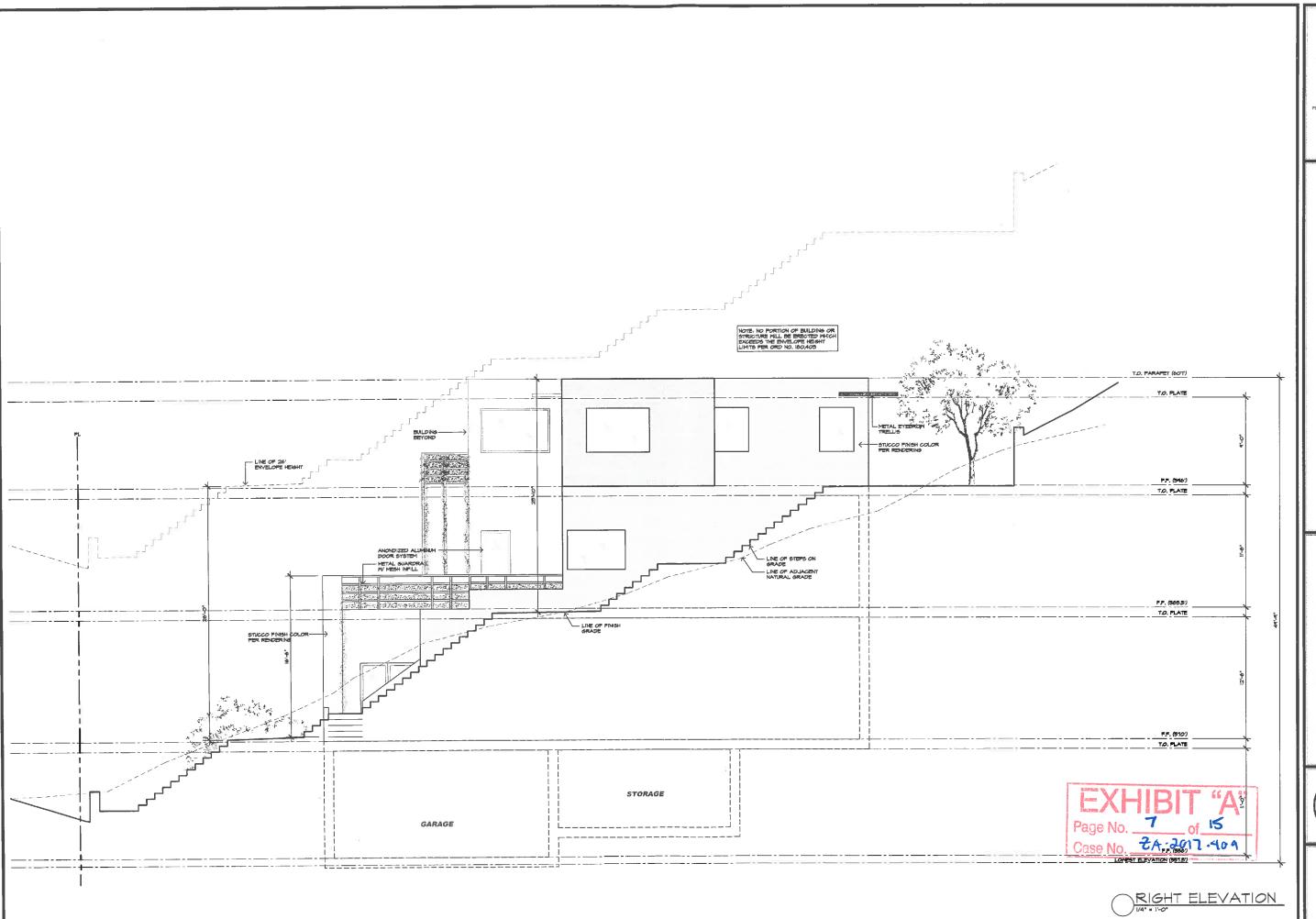










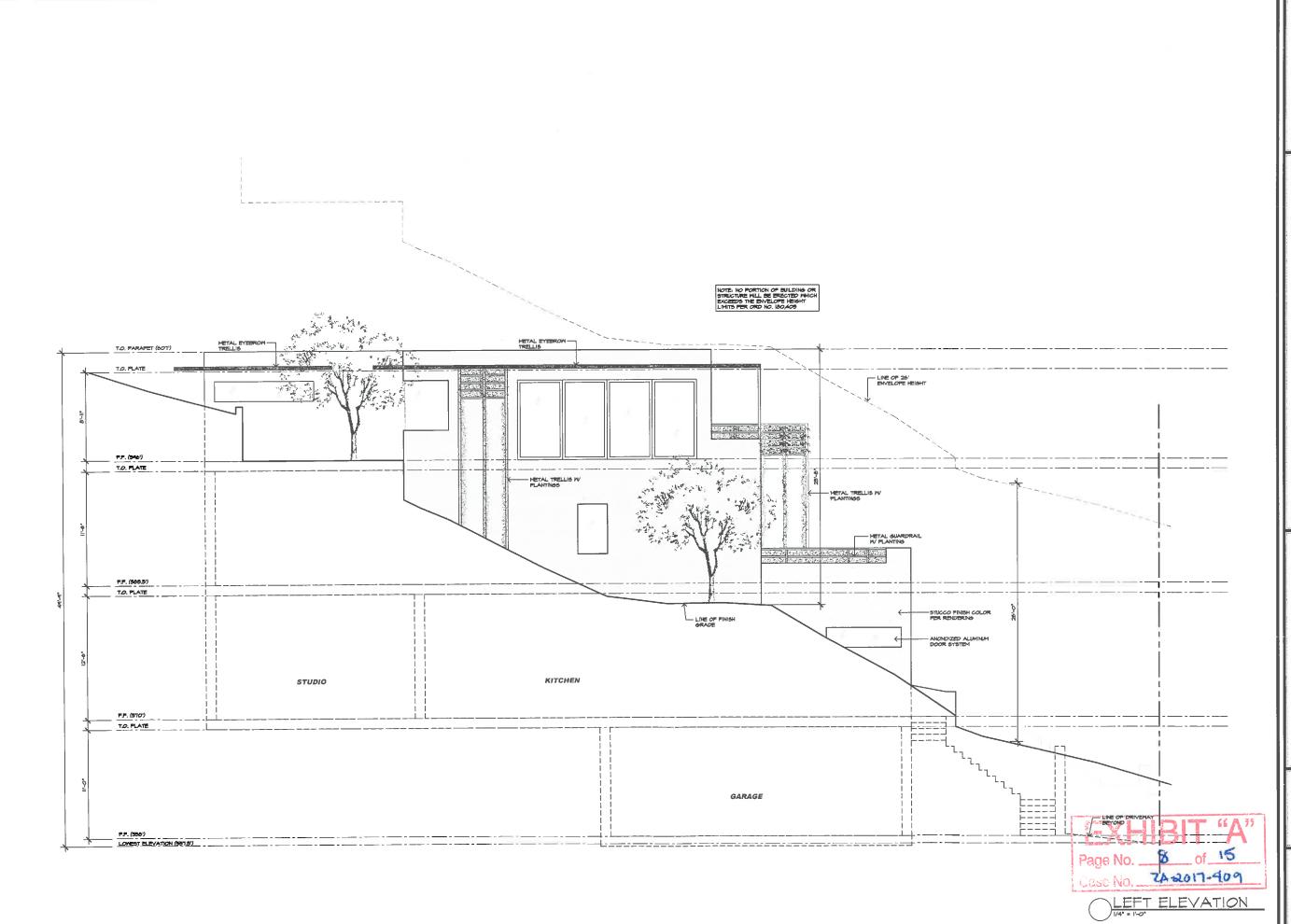


PS engineering DESIGN

Exterior Elevations



**A-7** 



PS engineering DESIGN

PETER SHIPLEY PE I 4429 DAWES AVE

510 - 289 - 4238 PETER SHIRLEY@YAHOO

Rebecca	Solomon	New house	2943 N Alta St.	0031	
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Exterior Elevations					

MO. C 75050 Esp. 12-31-19 CIVIL

**A-8** 

