

Department of Conservation and Development

County Planning Commission

Wednesday, August 27, 2025 – 6:30 P.M.

STAFF REPORT

Agenda Item # _____

Project Title:	Appeal of Kensington Design Review and Development Plan for New Single-Family Residence on Colusa Ave.
County File Number:	CDDP24-03060
Appellants:	David and Sandra Gerstel
Applicant:	Thomas Biggs
Owner:	Robel Asefaw
Zoning/General Plan:	R-6 Single-Family Residential District (R-6), Kensington Combining District (-K), Tree Obstruction of Views Combining District (-TOV)/ Residential Medium Density (RM)
Site Address/Location:	279 Colusa Ave, Kensington / APN: 571-350-018
California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Status:	Categorical Exemption, CEQA Guidelines Section 15303(a)-One Single-Family residence.
Project Planner:	Everett Louie, Planner III – Phone: (925) 655-2873 Email: everett.louie@dcd.cccounty.us
Staff Recommendation:	Approve (See section II for full recommendation)

I. PROJECT SUMMARY

This is a hearing on an appeal of the Zoning Administrator's decision to approve a Kensington Development Plan and Design Review to convert the existing residence to a dwelling unit (ADU) and construct a new approximately 1,643-square-foot, two-story, single-family residence with an approximately 54-square-foot covered front porch and an approximately 83-square-foot covered second story balcony. The combined gross floor area of the new residence and ADU will be 3,235 square feet,

where the threshold is 2,600 square feet for triggering a development plan hearing.

II. RECOMMENDATION

The Department of Conservation and Development, Community Development Division (CDD) Staff recommends that the County Planning Commission:

- A. OPEN the public hearing, RECEIVE testimony, and CLOSE the public hearing.
- B. DENY the appeal by David and Sandra Gerstel.
- C. FIND that the proposed project is exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15303(a).
- D. APPROVE the Development Plan and Design Review for the construction of a new two-story single-family residence (CDDP24-03060).
- E. APPROVE the findings in support of the project.
- F. APPROVE the project conditions of approval.
- G. DIRECT the Department of Conservation and Development to file a Notice of Exemption with the County Clerk.

III. BACKGROUND

The development plan and design review application was submitted to the Department of Conservation and Development (DCD) on December 12, 2024. The project was scheduled for a public hearing before the Zoning Administrator on May 19, 2025. At the hearing the Zoning Administrator opened the public hearing and received testimony from the applicant and neighbors. The Zoning Administrator continued the project as a closed public hearing to June 2, 2025, in order to review the public testimony. At the June 2, 2025, hearing, the Zoning Administrator approved the project with a few modifications to the conditions of approval #1 and 2. Revised condition of approval #1 rephrased the verbiage of what aspects of the project were being approved and revised condition of approval #2 rephrased the verbiage of what documents the approval was based on.

Subsequent the Zoning Administrator's decision, a letter appealing the decision was

timely filed by David and Sandra Gerstel on June 6, 2025. Staff's analysis and response to the appeal letter is discussed in Section VII (Appeal of Zoning Administrator's decision) of this Staff Report.

IV. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. General Plan: The subject property is located within a Residential Medium Density (RM) General Plan land Use designation.
2. Zoning: The subject property is located within the R-6 Single-Family Residential District (R-6), Kensington Combining District (-K), and Tree Obstruction of Views Combining District (-TOV).
3. California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Compliance: The proposed project is exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15303(a) – single-family residence. The proposed project will construct one new single-family residence. Therefore, the project is exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15303(a) which exempts one single-family residence.
4. Lot Creation: The subject property was created on July 7, 1913, Lot 24, as part of the Berkeley Park Subdivision.
5. Previous Applications:
 - 1) CDSU24-00141: An ADU application to convert the existing single-family residence into an Accessory Dwelling Unit was approved on February 10, 2025.

V. SITE/AREA DESCRIPTION

Site Description: The subject site is a 5,160-square-foot parcel located within a single-family residential neighborhood in the Kensington area. The subject parcel gains access from, and fronts Colusa Ave to the west. The rectangular shaped parcel is currently occupied with a 1,455-square-foot single-family residence with an attached garage. The existing residence will be converted to an accessory dwelling unit (ADU). The parcel slopes steeply up from Colusa Ave which is at 145 feet above sea level and rises to 163 feet above sea level at the rear. There are no existing trees on the site.

Surrounding Land Uses: Surrounding parcels are predominantly rectangular and all

contain existing single-family residences. Parcels on the western side of Colusa Ave are located within the City of El Cerrito jurisdiction. Parcels to the north, south and east share the same zoning as the subject property of R-6, -TOV and -K. Properties immediately north, south and east share the General Plan designation of Residential Medium Density (RM) General Plan. Land uses within this neighborhood are predominantly single-family uses and those uses accessory to a single-family dwelling.

VI. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant requests approval of a Development Plan and Kensington Design Review for the conversion of the existing single-family residence into an ADU and the construction of a new 1,643-square-foot, two-story single-family residence with an approximately 54-square-foot front covered porch and an approximately 83-square-foot covered second story balcony for a total gross floor area of 1,780-square-feet. The project requires a public hearing because the total gross floor area of all existing and proposed structures on the site is 3,235 square feet, which exceeds the threshold for a hearing of 2,600 square feet. The residence is designed to include two main floors of a conditioned living area and a second story balcony that faces the frontage. There will also be a covered porch over the front door. The conversion of the existing residence to an ADU will be processed ministerially in accordance with the County's accessory dwelling unit ordinance and is not subject to the discretion of the County and is not subject to the design review or development plan process.

VII. APPEAL OF ZONING ADMINISTRATOR'S JUNE 2, 2025, DECISION

During the appeal period following approval by the Zoning Administrator, one appeal was received from David and Sandra Gerstel on June 6, 2025. The concerns raised in the appeal letter, and staff's responses, are summarized as follows:

1. Summary of Appeal Point #1: The Zoning Administrator disregarded the Contra Costa County ADU Ordinance.

Staff Response: The project parcel has an approved Accessory Dwelling Unit Permit (ADU) County File #CDSU24-00151. An Accessory Dwelling Unit is required to be permitted ministerially under state law and is not subject to this Development Plan and Design Review permit. In order to obtain an Accessory Dwelling Unit Permit, an application must be filed and reviewed

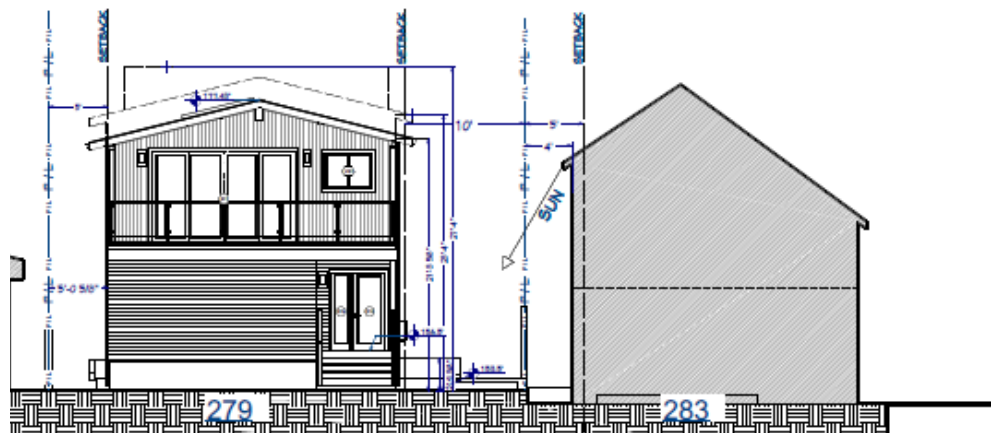
with the County. The Accessory Dwelling Unit proposed under County File #CDSU24-00151 was determined to comply with County Code 82-24.006 in that one internal conversion accessory dwelling unit is a permitted use on any lot in a single-family residential district (R-6). The Zoning Administrator determined that an ADU permit could be issued for the site because the ADU complied with the permitting procedure laid out in County Code 82-24.006. Furthermore, County Code 84-74.604(f) – Exemptions, determines that Accessory dwelling units that are in compliance with Chapter 82-24 – Accessory Dwelling Units, are exempt from the requirements of the Kensington Combining District Ordinance. Therefore, review of the ADU is not applicable to this project.

2. Summary of Appeal Point #2: *The appellant expresses concern that the project disregards the Kensington Combining District Ordinance and that the project impacts privacy and property value of 283 Colusa Avenue.*

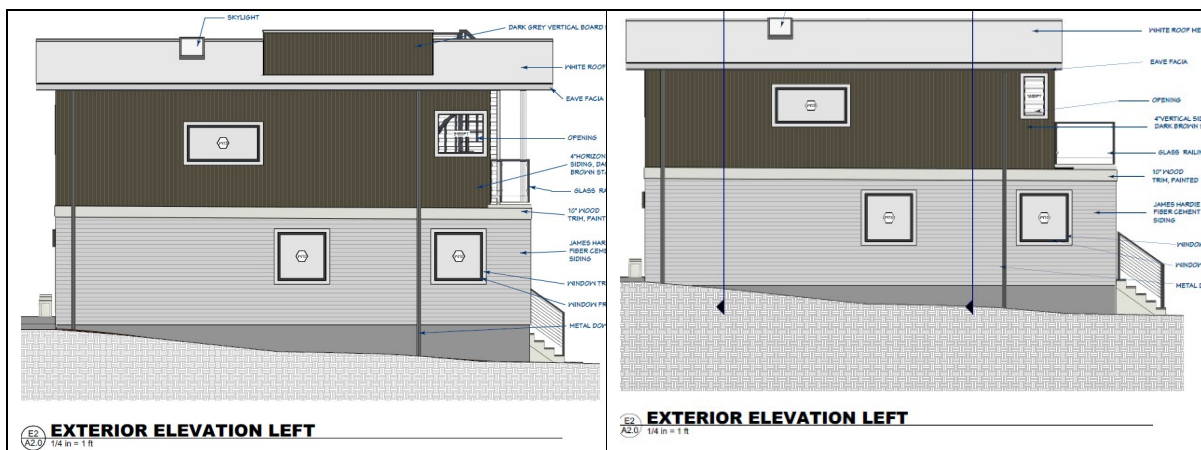
Staff Response: The project is subject to the Kensington Combining District Findings which address privacy and property values. The Zoning Administrator approved the project based on the Kensington Combining District Findings. Specifically, the project is designed to minimize impacts on the surrounding neighborhood by exceeding the required development standards of the R-6 Zoning district. The table below shows the proposed project and how the project exceeds the development standards. Most notable, the project is well below the maximum 35' height with a proposed height of 25.1'. The project exceeds the side, front and rear setback requirements and is subject to sliding scale because the property was created in 1913. Because the project exceeds the setbacks of the Zoning district, privacy in the neighborhood is increased as it prevents houses from being built to close, reduces direct sightlines into neighboring windows, yards and living areas, enhances noise reduction and reduces the visual clutter by creating a more spacious feeling between homes. All of this increases privacy for the neighborhood.

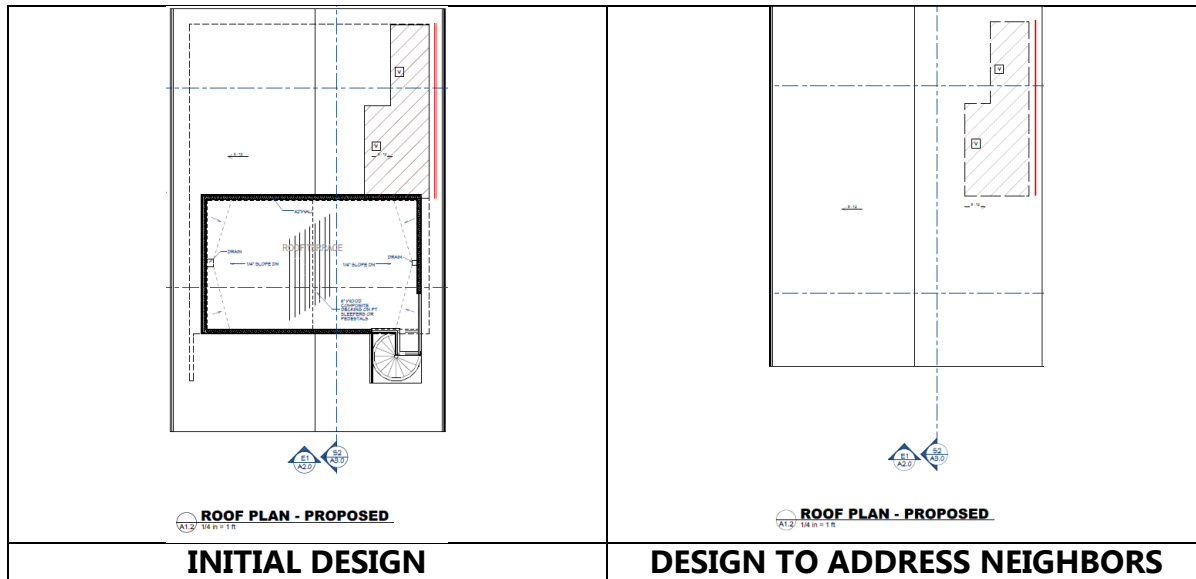
Development Standards	Proposed Project
Height – two and one-half stores or 35'	Two stories and 25.1'
Side Setback – sliding scale 8' aggregate and 3' min	15'-9" aggregate and 5' 5/8" min
Front Setback – 20'	Greater than 60'
Rear Setback – 15'	15'- 4 ^{13/16} "
Parking – 1 covered space	1 covered space

The project is also designed to not overshadow the neighboring property at 283 Colusa Avenue by mimicking the height of the residence for 283 Colusa Avenue. The applicant has submitted a plan sheet that shows the proposed project will be of similar height to the neighboring house. Sheet A1.0 – Site Section below shows that the project roofline is compatible with 283 Colusa.



To address privacy concerns, the applicant has removed the previously proposed rooftop terrace deck from the project. This revision was made in direct response to concerns that the deck would afford direct views into neighboring bedroom and bathroom windows and rear/side yards. The elimination of the rooftop deck significantly reduces potential privacy intrusions and helps address visual and spatial concerns raised by multiple neighbors.





Lastly, improving the site with a new single-family residence that is consistent with the development pattern in the neighborhood including generally meeting the R-6 standards will increase the parcel property value and enhance the existing neighborhood. New homes that meet zoning standards will increase the visual appeal of a neighborhood. As stated in Kensington Combining District Finding #5, construction of the new single-family residence will increase the value of the subject lot and maintain the value of the existing properties in the vicinity. Moreover, the project will increase the housing stock of this area (1 SFR and 1 ADU). The appellant states that the new residence is too large for the area. However Staff has found that the square-footage of the residence is consistent with the area in the below table:

Address	Size of House
279 Colusa Ave	1780 SF
275 Colusa Ave	1586 SF
285 Colusa Ave	1498 SF
295 Colusa Ave	2570 SF
1511 Valley Road	2158 SF
305 Colusa Ave	1837 SF

Overall, the proposed development is consistent with the neighborhood development pattern. Thus, property values are maintained.

3. Summary of Appeal Point #3: *The project sets a bad precedent for the neighborhood by allowing two residential units on one property as there is no similar development pattern in the area and that the project FAR is not*

consistent with 283 Colusa and the surrounding neighborhood

Staff Response: As mentioned in appeal point #1, State Law requires that ADU's are processed ministerially and therefore are reviewed separately from this Development Plan and Design Review permit. The applicant has obtained an ADU permit from the Department of Conservation and Development which allows them to have one additional residential unit on the property. Moreover, having two residences on one property is a common occurrence in the vicinity of the project. The table below shows the parcel number, configuration of the property and distance from the project site of properties containing two residential units.

Parcel	Configuration	Distance from project
571-350-017	2 SFR	South Neighbor Parcel
571-340-030	2 SFR	437 feet south
571-340-029	1 SFR + 1 ADU	478 feet south
571-340-027	2 SFR	560 feet south
571-340-026	2 SFR	560 feet south
571-320-005	1 SFR + 1 ADU	1315 feet south
571-300-015	1 SFR + 1 ADU	1006 feet southeast
571-170-010	1 SFR + 1 ADU	1897 feet east

In the appeal letter, the appellant states that allowing two residences on a property would be incompatible and that there is no similar development in kind. However, from the table above, it is evident that single-family zoning allows for multiple living units on a site. Moreover, the appellants are property owners where they have established a second residence (CDLP85-2106) which makes the project compatible with the adjacent parcels and surrounding neighborhood.

Lastly, the appellant states that because the project exceeds the gross floor area (GFA) threshold for the parcel, the project is incompatible with 283 Colusa and the surrounding neighborhood. County Code 84-74.404(h) defines gross floor to include all horizontal areas of any building and accessory building, accessory dwelling unit, and any covered areas. Therefore, the proposed project GFA is 3,235 square feet, which includes the proposed single-family residence, the existing Accessory Dwelling Unit, existing garage, and storage area adjacent to the garage. County Code 84-74.802(a) requires any proposed development that results in a gross floor area that exceeds the threshold standard to be heard at a public hearing. The proposed gross floor

area of 3,235 square feet exceeds the gross floor area threshold standard for this parcel which is 2,600 square feet. Therefore, this project is required to be heard at a public hearing. A project subject to a public hearing will be reviewed in compliance with the standards of consideration under County Code 84-74.1206 which requires all development to be evaluated based on the following factors listed in County Code 84-74.1206:

- 84-74.1206(b): In reaching a decision, the zoning administrator shall apply a standard that balances the following factors: (1) recognizing the rights of property owners to improve the value and enjoyment of their property; (2) recognizing the rights of property owners of vacant lots to establish a residence that is compatible with the neighborhood in terms of bulk, scale and design; (3) minimizing impacts upon surrounding neighbors; (4) protecting the value and enjoyment of the neighbors' property; (5) maintaining the community's property values; (6) maximizing the use of existing interior space; and (7) promoting the general welfare, public health, and safety. Balancing of these factors will not result in the prohibition of development that is compatible with the neighborhood with regard to bulk and scale on parcels that have not been developed.

Staff evaluated the above seven (7) Kensington Combining District Findings in the Attachment A: Findings and Conditions of Approval. These findings include determining the following factors for approval:

- The project allows the property owner to improve their value and enjoyment of the property.
- The project is designed to be compatible with the neighborhood in terms of bulk, scale and design in that it meets the R-6 Zoning standards and the size of the new residence is consistent with other surrounding residences.
- The project minimizes impacts on surrounding neighbors by again complying with the R-6 Zoning standards in terms of height and setbacks, does not cast shadows onto neighboring properties or disturbs privacy.
- The project protects the value and enjoyment of neighbors properties in that the project does not obstruct any views of the San Francisco Bay and does not create privacy concerns by orienting the balcony view points towards the front.
- The project maintains the community's property values because a single-family residence is an allowed use pursuant to the R-6 Zoning Code.

- The project is not subject to the existing interior space as it is a new proposed residence.
- The project promotes the general welfare, public health and safety of the area because it is a use that is allowed and will be required to obtain all the necessary permits.

A further detailed analysis of each finding is listed in Attachment A; Findings and Conditions of Approval. Therefore, because all criteria for approval stated in Section 84-74.1206 are satisfied for the proposed project as listed in the Findings, the proposed project can be found to be consistent and compatible with the surrounding neighborhood.

VIII. CONCLUSION

The proposed project is consistent with applicable goals and policies of the General Plan, with the Specific Area Policies of the Kensington area, complies with the Zoning District (R-6) standards and complies with the Kensington Combining District (-K). The project is in an older densely developed neighborhood where the allowance of small side yards are required in order to allow for reasonable construction. Moreover, the applicant has made several changes to the project such as lowering the building height and removing a previously requested rooftop terrace deck in order to address privacy and view concerns. Lastly, parcels with two residential units is a common development occurrence in this area of Kensington. Therefore, Staff recommends that the County Planning Commission deny the appeal and approve County File #CDDP24-03060, based on the attached findings and subject to the attached conditions of approval.

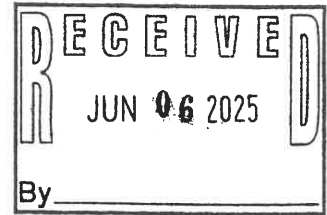
Attachments:

- A. Findings and Conditions of Approval
- B. Appeal Letter of Zoning Administrator's Decision
- C. Zoning Administrator Staff Report dated May 19, 2025
- D. Project Plans
- E. Site Photographs
- F. Power Point Slides

Appeal of Contra Costa County ZA decision regarding 279 Colusa Avenue, Kensington, CA / May 5, 2025

TO:

Department of Conservation and Development (C/O Ashley Thiry)
30 Muir Road
Martinez, CA 94553



FROM:

David and Sandra Gerstel, Owners of 283 Colusa Avenue, Kensington, CA
Mailing Address: 268 Coventry Road, Kensington, CA 94707
Phone: 510-524-1039 Email: davidugerstel@gmail.com

First Reason for Appeal

Disregard of ADU Law by ZA and KMAC:

*****Please see Contra Costa Code Chapter 82-24- ADU**

The passages in the chapter relevant to this appeal read as follows:

82-24.012 (a - 1 - D). In the Kensington (-K) combining district, an attached accessory dwelling unit may not exceed eight hundred fifty square feet if the accessory dwelling unit provides one bedroom and may not exceed one thousand square feet if the accessory dwelling unit provides more than one bedroom.

Comment by DG: The applicants are seeking to re-classify as an ADU the existing two-bedroom home at the front of 283 Colusa. However, at 1450 square feet it is well over the 1000 square foot limit stated in the above code. The applicants are attempting to call it a just under 1000 square foot ADU by "detaching" the existing first story garage and workshop/storage areas that are beneath the two-bedroom second story and somehow "attaching" them to the proposed 1650 square foot new house they propose to build at the rear of their lot. Nowhere does the CC County ADU Chapter allow for such a maneuver.

82-24.012 (f-2). If an accessory dwelling unit is detached from a primary dwelling unit, the accessory dwelling unit must be an internal conversion of a detached garage or other accessory building, or new construction.

Comment by DG: The two-bedroom home the applicants are seeking to re-classify as an ADU is not new construction as called for in the section of the code cited above. And it is not an accessory building. It is a full sized two story and two-bedroom existing home with a garage and workspace that is currently occupied by the applicants. (If they want a larger home for

themselves, they can remodel their existing home and build a legitimate ADU in their rear yard.)

***Please see Contra Costa County Code Chapter 88-36

The passages in the chapter relevant to this appeal reads as follows:

88-36.012: A residential unit or any portion of a residential unit that is located within a front, back, or side yard area applicable to residential construction in the zone in which the lot is located may not exceed 16 feet in height.

The existing full-sized two-story home at 283 Colusa is at least 19 feet in height (14 steps from grade to first floor = 8+ feet; door = 7'; from top of door trim to top of roof wall = 4'+; Total is over 19 feet.)

Comment by DG: The full-sized home the applicants are seeking to reclassify as an ADU substantially exceeds the height limit allowed under the Contra Costa Code for ADUs.

Note – I attempted to point out the laws governing ADUs and development in Kensington to both KMAC and the ZA. KMAC members repeatedly and rudely cut me off. The ZA declined to consider the law regarding ADUS, saying that he had no jurisdiction. However, while the state law governing ADUS requires ministerial procedures, that requirement extends to specific kinds of construction. It does not extend the requirement to re-classifying an existing full-size home as an ADU by fictitiously amputating part of the home and attaching it to another structure.

Second Reason for Appeal

Disregard for KMAC Combining Ordinance protections for neighboring property at 283 Colusa:

Contrary to the findings of the ZA that the proposed development does not compromise privacy or property value, it clearly does both at my property at 283 Colusa. As a result, it disregards the requirements of the KMAC Ordinance and fails to achieve the required balance between the interests of the owners of 279 Colusa and the interests of my wife and myself.

The Ordinance states that while it protects the rights of property owners to develop their properties, that right must be exercised and balanced with the rights of neighbors by “minimizing impacts upon neighbors” and “must *protect the value* and enjoyment of neighbors’ property.” Specifically, the ordinance states that neighbor’s access to views and their privacy should be taken into account.

The new structure proposed for 279 Colusa does not incorporate the required protections for neighbors but would in fact do the following:

- 1) It would compromise privacy at 283 Colusa. It features at its western end a balcony and along its southern wall windows which will afford views directly into bedrooms and

other living spaces at 283 Colusa. The balcony will also afford views directly down into the front yard and front deck at 283 Colusa, the now private outdoor living spaces at the property. (The ZA's finding that the balcony is oriented to the west is only partially correct, for it is also oriented to the east toward 283 Colusa, our property.)

- 2) The proposed new structure for 279 Colusa is much longer than the small house at 283 Colusa and as a result would loom above both the front and back yards of 283 Colusa. Thereby it would shut off the sky and views of the woodland beyond the property and replace the current pleasant feeling of openness with confinement.
- 3) The above impacts would severely impact the livability of the property.
- 4) As a result, *the value of the property will be seriously diminished.* The ZA found otherwise. But he is not correct. There is no way that a large new house built eight feet away from the property line between 279 and 283 Colusa, looming over both the front and back yards of 283, commanding views from its deck and through its second story windows of the bedrooms and other living spaces at 283, will not impair the value of the property. Of course it will, and likely a great deal.

In sum, if the county permits the proposed development at 283 Colusa, it will have disregarded the requirement for development that balances applicants' and neighbors' interests. The applicants would have been given everything they have asked for (except an outrageous roof top deck which would have compromised the views and privacy of several neighbors who strenuously objected to it). And while the applicants' interests would be catered to, my interests would be almost entirely disregarded. The value of my 283 Colusa property, which I built and have carefully cared for over four decades would be seriously diminished.

Third Reason for Appeal

Bad Precedent for neighborhood:

If the County approves the proposed development for 279 Colusa it will have established a bad precedent for the neighborhood. It would be allowing the applicants to build a second full-sized home on a narrow substandard lot by fictitiously "detaching" part of their existing home and "attaching" it to a large proposed new home.

The result would be two structures far exceeding - by around 30% - the .5 FAR (Floor Area to Parcel Size Ratio) that is the normal maximum.

That would serve as an awful precedent for further development along the 200 block of Colusa. (If the applicants are allowed to go ahead as proposed, why should other homeowners not be allowed to fictitiously detach part of existing homes and build a second large home on their substandard lots?) The result of such development would be extreme crowding of the neighborhood. Residents of the 200 block of Coventry Road, which parallels Colusa and is just above it, would face tall two-story homes close to the rear of their yards. Those homes would block out access to sun and sky and create a confined feeling in what are now pleasantly open spaces.

Contrary to what the applicants claim and the ZA found, there is no similar development along the 200 block of Colusa. Generally, the other properties include a single-family home at the front of the yard with, in some cases, a single-story accessory building to the rear. At 283 Colusa the home at the rear of the yard is two stories over less than half its width and is only 1350 square feet. The ADU structure at the front of the property is 960 square feet. Together the two buildings are far under the .5 FAR threshold, unlike the proposed development for 283 Colusa.

If the county allows the applicants to proceed as they have proposed, the county will have seriously compromised both my property and the surrounding neighborhood. Unfortunately, the ZA paid no attention to the concerns regarding precedent expressed not only by me but by other neighbors.

As my neighbors, Ellen and Rob Hanak Valletta, wrote to me in an email, "Thanks David. I found it interesting that they completely ignored comments and concerns from neighbors. And they erroneously assume that this construction will raise other neighbors' property values. There's absolutely no basis for that conclusion."

I agree. Some construction may raise property values in a neighborhood. But to say all construction does is an over-generalization. The proposed new construction for 283 Colusa certainly will not.

Conclusion:

It is clearly not the intention of the ADU laws, which provide for building small cottages on R-1 lots with existing homes, to force such development as is proposed for 279 Colusa.

If the County approves the proposed development, it is allowing two full sized homes, one of 1450 square feet, one of 1680 square feet on a single substandard R-1 lot. The proposed development would be a bad precedent for the neighborhood and seriously diminish the livability and value of my property.

As my wife succinctly puts it, "Are they really going to allow two big houses to be squeezed onto that small lot?"

PLEASE SEE ATTACHED LETTERS FROM NEIGHBORS

Thank you,

David Gerstel

PROPERTY PHOTOS

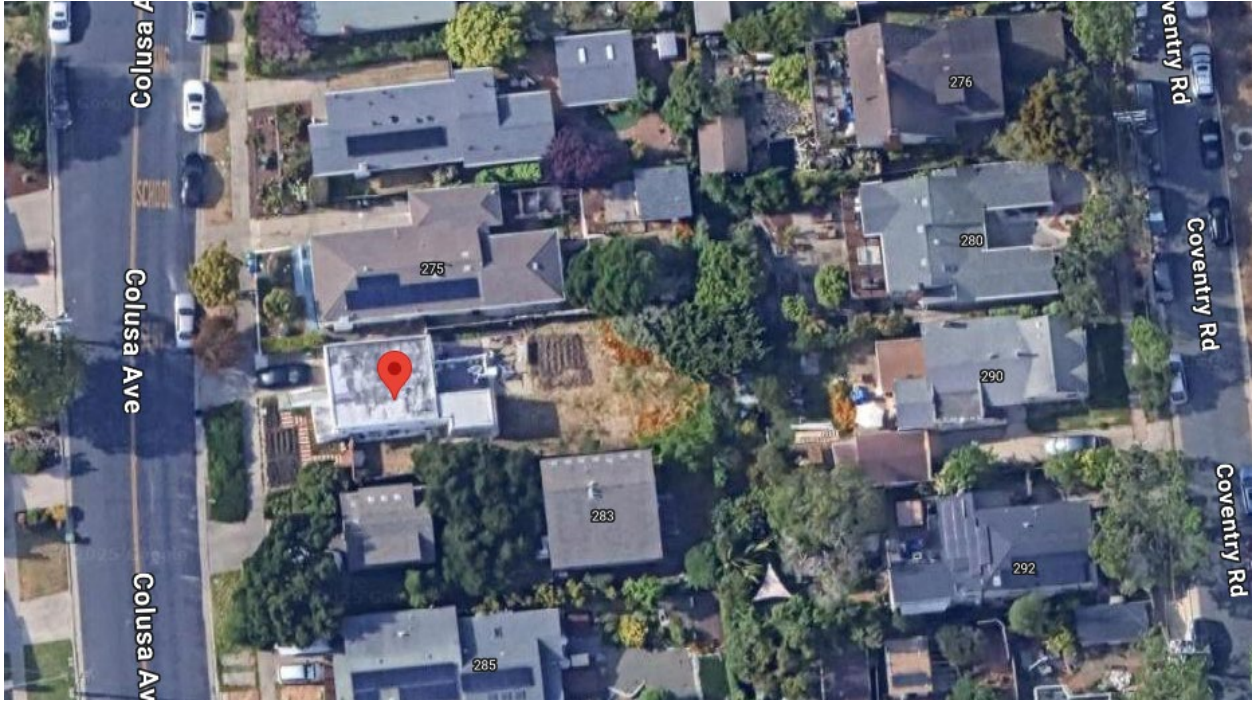


Figure 1 Aerial View of Property



View from Rear Property Line



View from Right Rear Corner



Front of Existing Structure at Front of Property



Front Sidewalk – Looking to North



Front Sidewalk – Looking to South



Front of Existing Building at Front Left Corner



AERIAL VIEW

APPEAL OF A DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND DESIGN REVIEW

County File #CDDP24-03060

COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

August 27, 2025

EVERETT LOUIE, PROJECT PLANNER

CONTACT: EVERETT.LOUIE@DCD.CCCCOUNTY.US 925-655-2873

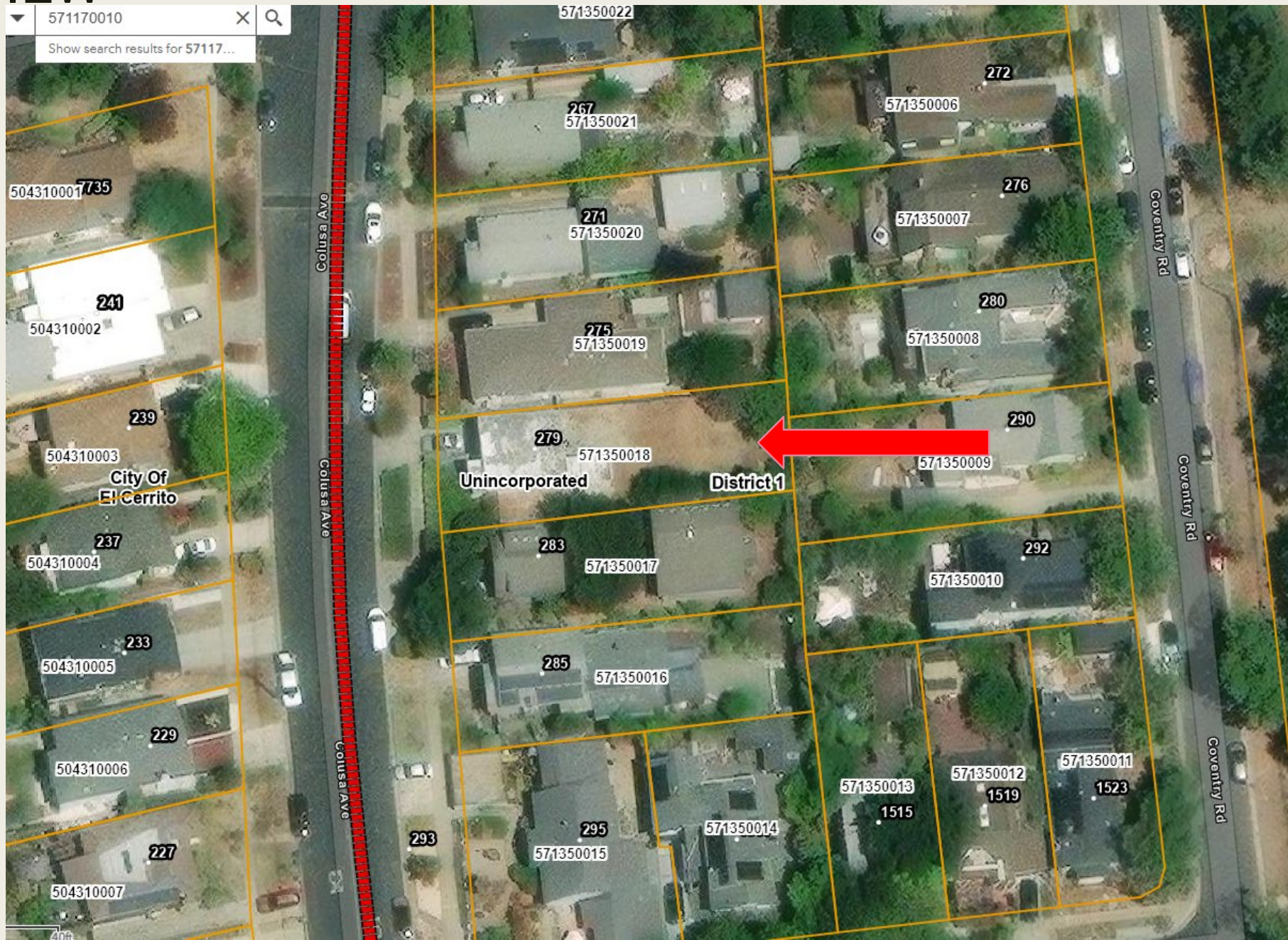


Background

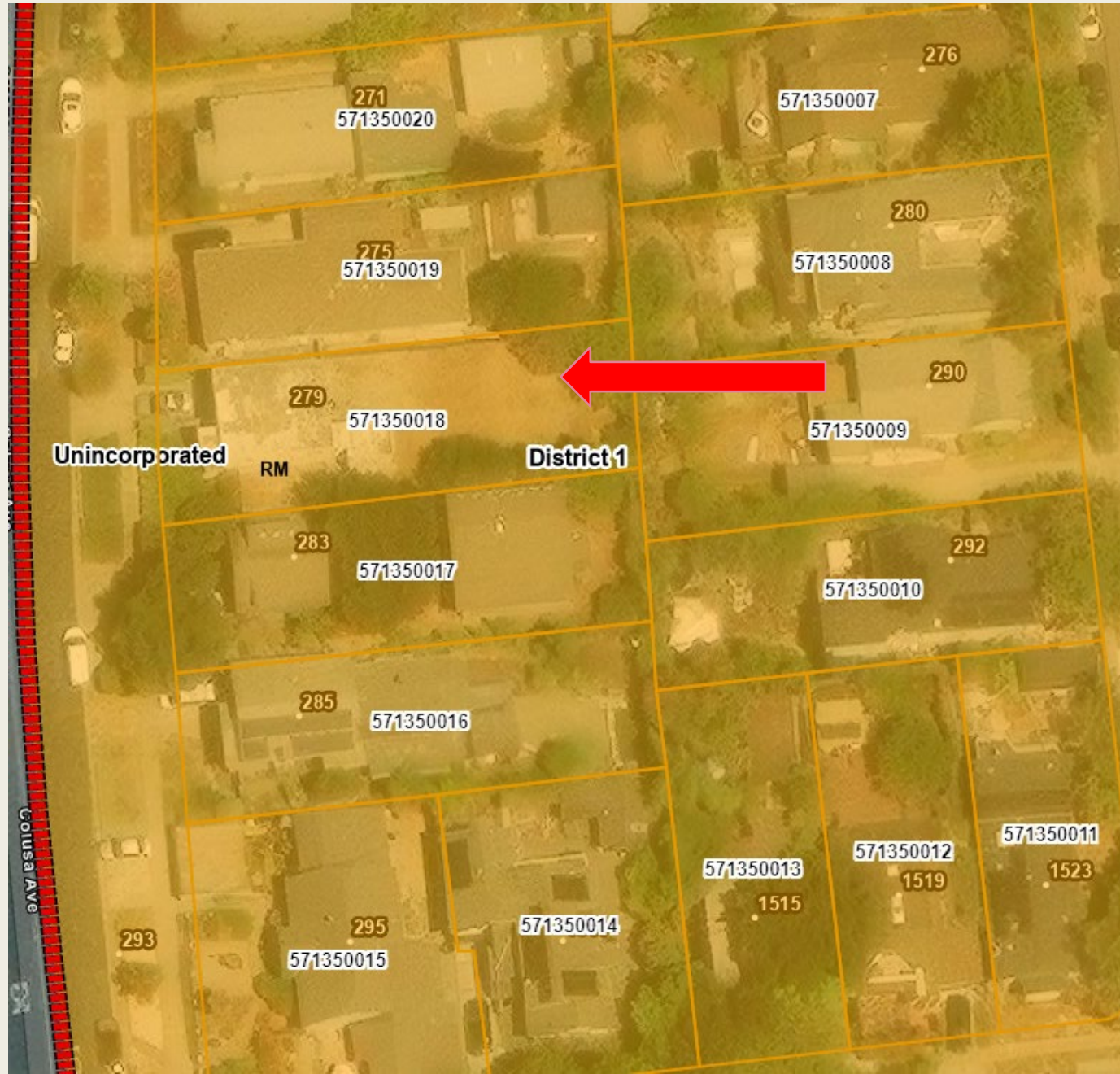
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- December 12, 2024– #CDDP24-03060 was submitted to DCD
- May 19, 2025 – Zoning Administrator continued the project as a closed public hearing.
- June 2, 2025 – Zoning Administrator approved the project.
- June 6, 2025– Appeal letter was filed

AERIAL VIEW



General Plan: Residential Medium Density RM)



Zoning:

R-6 SINGLE-FAMILY
RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT

TOV TREE OBSTRUCTION OF
VIEWS COMBINING DISTRICT

K KENSINGTON COMBINING
DISTRICT



SITE PHOTOS - FRONT



Front Sidewalk – Looking to North



Front of Existing Structure at Front of Property



Front of Existing Building at Front Left Corner



View from Rear Property Line



SITE PHOTO-REAR

General Plan/Zoning Analysis

GP: Residential Medium Density (RM) – Primary uses are detached single-family units

Zoning: R-6 – Single-Family dwelling is a permitted use.

Development Standards	Proposed Project
Height – two and one-half stories or 35'	Two stories and 25.1'
Side Setback – sliding scale 8' agg and 3' min	15'-9" agg and 5' 5/8" min
Front Setback – 20'	Greater than 60'
Rear Setback – 15'	15' - 4 ¹³ / ₁₆ "
Parking – 1 covered space	1 covered space

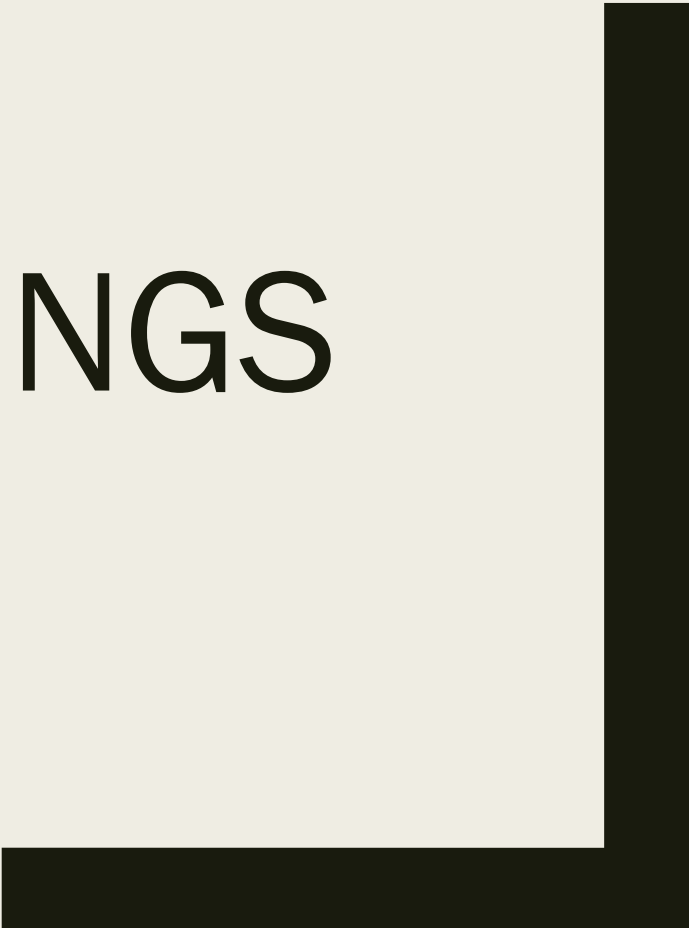
Project Description

Development Plan and Design Review (Kensington)

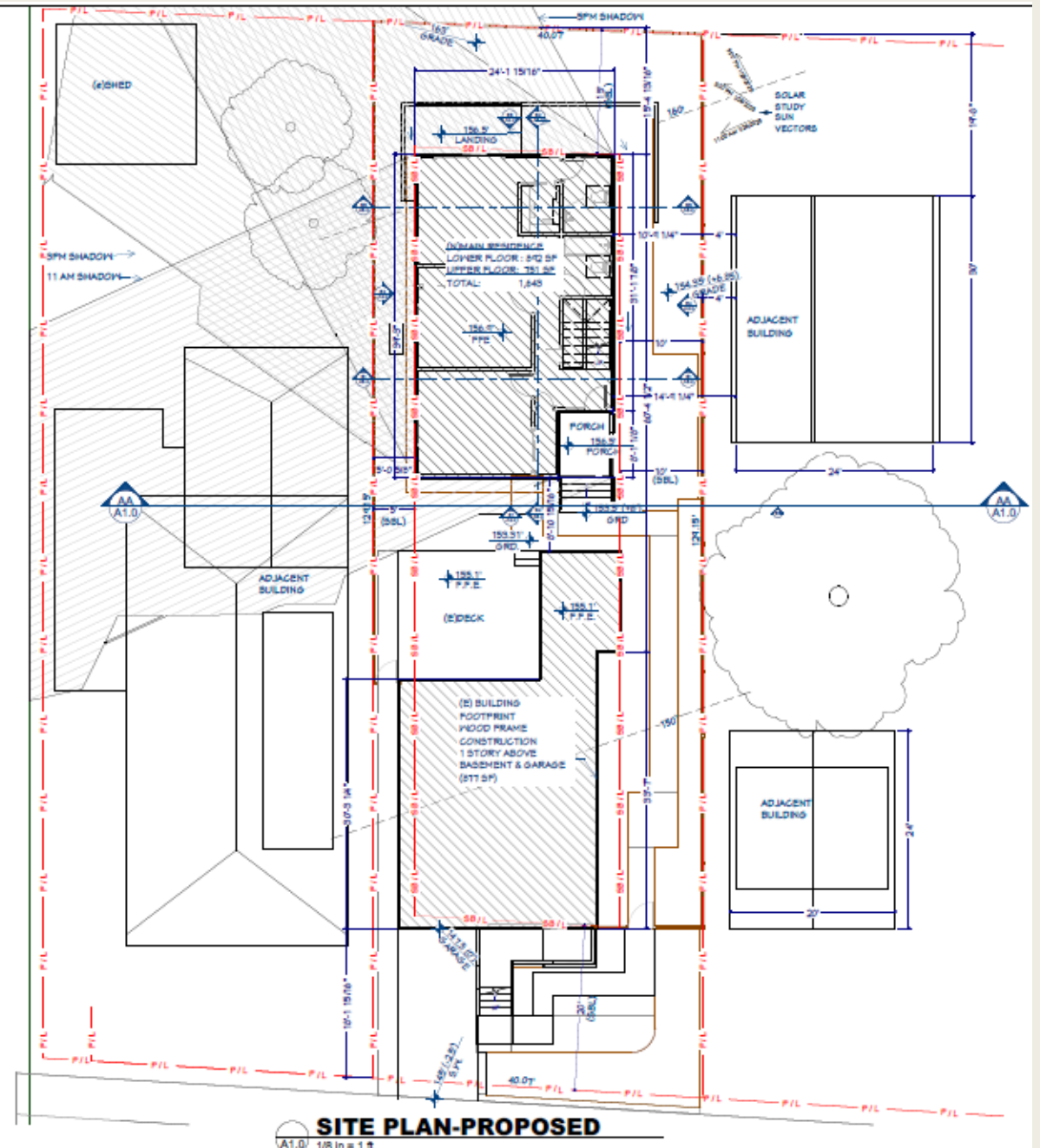
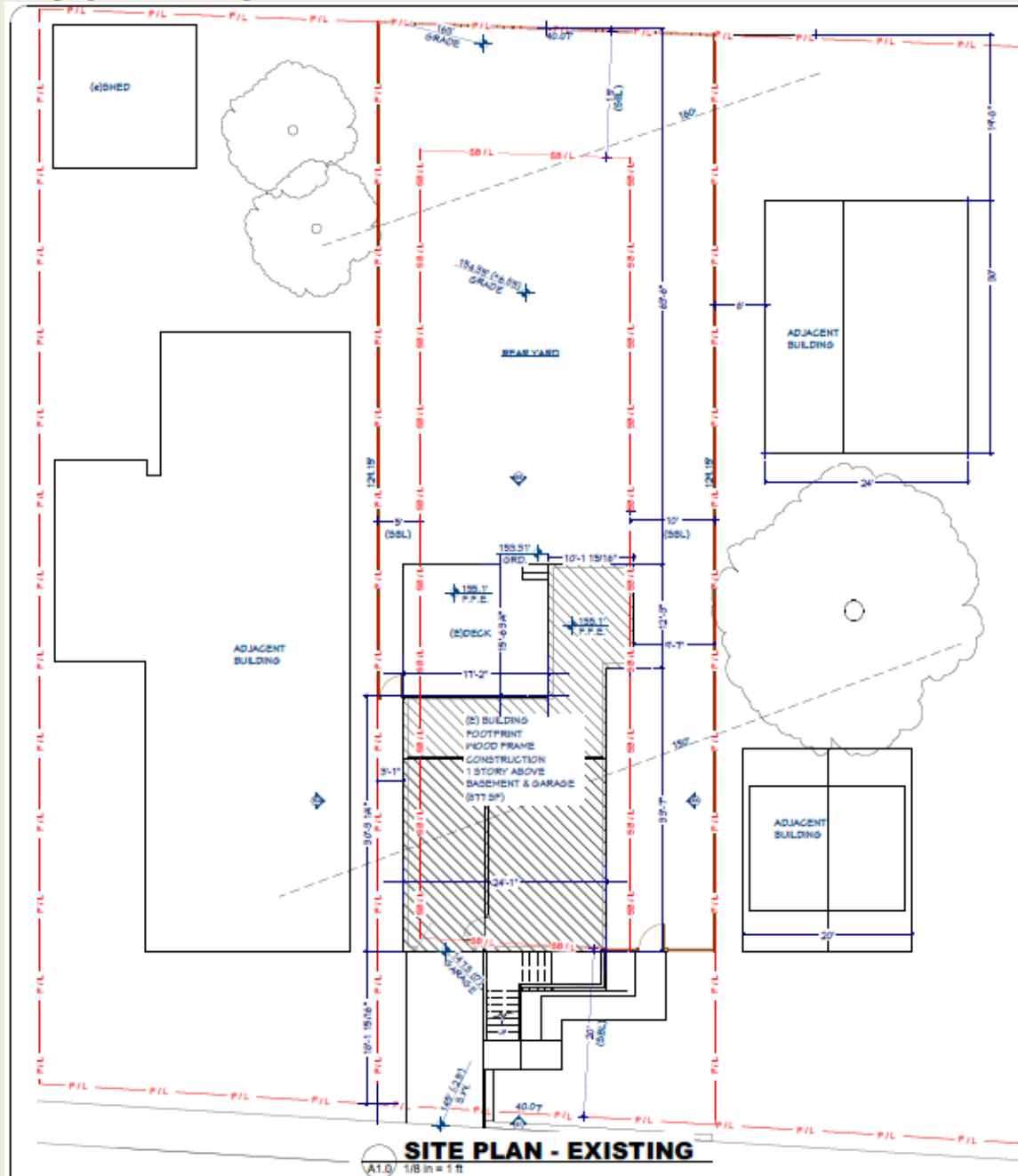
- New 1643-square-foot, two-story single-family residence
 - *54-square-foot covered porch*
 - *183-square-foot covered second story balcony facing frontage*
 - *The threshold for public hearing is 2,600 gross floor area. The parcel will have 3,235 total gross floor area.*



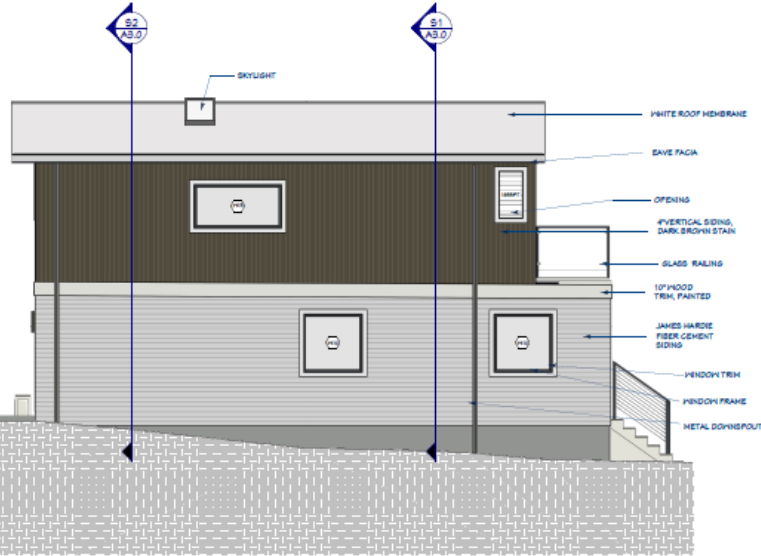
PROJECT DRAWINGS



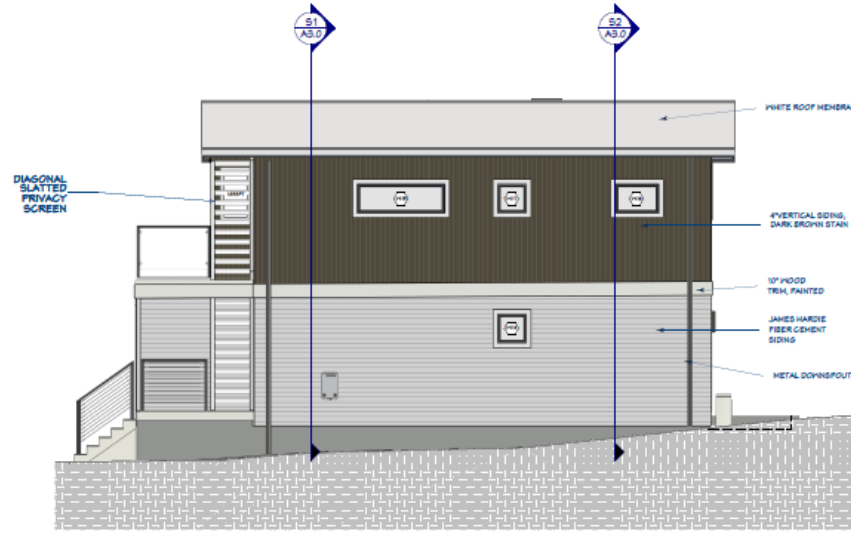
Site Plan:



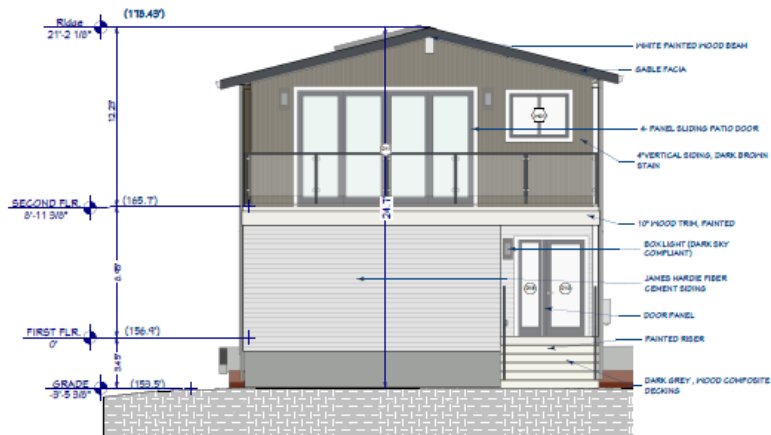
ELEVATIONS:



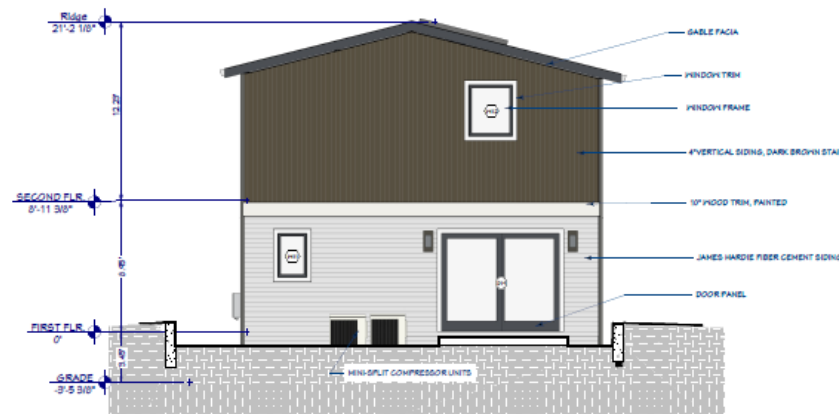
EXTERIOR ELEVATION LEFT
1/4" = 1' = 1"



EXTERIOR ELEVATION RIGHT
1/4" = 1' = 1"



EXTERIOR ELEVATION FRONT
1/4" = 1' = 1"



EXTERIOR ELEVATION BACK
1/4" = 1' = 1"

BIGGS GROUP
278 Lincoln Ave.,
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Phone: 510.375.6101
Email: info@biggsgroup.com

Client:
Rohel Ghazizadeh
279 Colusa Ave.
Kensington, CA 94707
Phone: 510.393.0871
Email:

NEW RESIDENCE
279 COLUSA AVE.
KENSINGTON, CA 94707

Revision Table		
NO.	USER	DESCRIPTION

EXTERIOR ELEVATIONS

Renderings



FRONT LEFT



FRONT RIGHT



RIGHT REAR

Renderings



VIEW FROM REAR

VIEW FROM 200 COVENTRY

27th COLUSA
(E) TREE LINE BEYOND



VIEW FROM REAR

VIEW FROM 27th COVENTRY

27th COLUSA



VIEW FROM ABOVE

(E) TREES

EXISTING TALL TREELINE



VIEW FROM REAR

VIEW FROM 24th COVENTRY

TREES ON WEST SIDE OF COLUSA

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

CEQA Guidelines

Section 15303(a) – One Single-Family Residence in a residential zone.

- **Project is exempt because it proposes a single-family residence in a R-6 (Residential Zone)**

Appeal Points (summary)

As the basis for their appeal, the appellants mentioned various concerns such as:

- *Disregard of the Contra Costa County ADU Ordinance*
- *Disregard of Kensington Ordinance*
- *Bad Precedent For The Neighborhood, No Similar Development or FAR*

Appeal Points

Disregard of the Contra Costa County ADU Ordinance

- The ADU is not subject to review under this Development Plan and Design Review. The ADU complies with the County ADU Ordinance

Disregard of Kensington Ordinance

- Kensington Combining District Findings are supported.

Bad Precedent For The Neighborhood

- The surrounding neighborhood consists of similar two-unit developments. Project who exceeds GFA must comply with standards listed in 84-74.1206(b) which is supported in Kensington Findings.

Solar Study

3 PM Shadow

11 AM shadow

Project Site

5 PM Shadow

Appellant
Location

Map of Parcels With Two Residential Units



0 125 250 500 Feet

Map Created: 7/21/2025
by Contra Costa County Department of
Conservation and Development, GIS Group
30 Muir Road, Martinez, CA 94553
37.59-41.79 N 122.07-03.75 W

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Staff Conclusion

- The project is consistent with the applicable policies/standards of:
 - *County General Plan*
 - *Zoning Consistency*
 - *Kensington Combining District*
 - *Appropriateness of the neighborhood*

- The project applicant redesigned the project to address neighborhood concerns.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that the County Planning Commission:

- DENY the appeal by David and Sandra Gerstel
- APPROVE the project based on the findings and conditions of approval



QUESTIONS?