



# Architectural Review Board

Staff Report (ID # 7078)

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**Report Type:** Action Items **Meeting Date:** 8/4/2016

**Summary Title:** 639 Arastradero Road (Three single family homes)

**Title:** 639 Arastradero Road [15PLN-00442]: Request by Michael Ma, on behalf of Catherine Shen, for Preliminary Architectural Review to allow demolition of two existing one-story single family homes with accessory structures and construction of three single-family homes for a total of 11,800 square feet on three new parcels. A separate parcel map application would subdivide the two existing parcels into three parcels. Environmental Assessment: Not a project. Zoning District: Single-Family Residence (R-1)

**From:** Hillary Gitelman

## Recommendation

It is recommended that the Architectural Review Board (ARB) take the following action(s):

1. Review and provide comments.

## Report Summary

The subject application is a request for preliminary review. No formal direction is provided to the applicant and Board members should refrain from forming and expressing opinions either in support or against the project.

As a preliminary review application, the Planning and Community Environment department has only performed a cursory review of the project for compliance with the zoning code. A comprehensive review of a future project to applicable codes, including context-based design criteria and other standards, would follow the submittal of a formal application. Accordingly, there may be aspects of this preliminary review application that do not comply with municipal regulations or require additional discretionary applications beyond architectural review.

Similarly, there has been no comprehensive review of the project to the comprehensive plan or other policy documents. Such review will occur upon the filing of a formal application.

The purpose of this meeting is to provide an applicant an opportunity to present a conceptual project to the Board and receive initial comments. Board members may identify aspects of the project that are appropriate given the neighborhood context and consistent with city policies or areas of concern that the applicant may want to reconsider in a formal submittal. Community members are also encouraged to provide early input to the project.

**Background**

Project Information

Owner:	Catherine Shen
Architect:	Michael Ma
Representative:	Not Applicable
Legal Counsel:	Not Applicable

Property Information

Address:	639 Arastradero Road and 640 Fairmede Avenue
Neighborhood:	Palo Alto Orchards
Lot Dimensions & Area:	639 Arastradero Road- irregular shaped lot, 24,991 sf and 640 Fairmede Avenue- irregular shaped lot, 7,976 sf
Housing Inventory Site:	Not Applicable
Located w/in a Plume:	Not Applicable
Protected/Heritage Trees:	Not Applicable
Historic Resource(s):	Not Applicable

Existing Improvement(s): 639 Arastradero Road- 1 single story single-family home and two accessory structures, 640 Fairmede Avenue-1 single story single-family home

Existing Land Use(s): Single-family homes

Adjacent Land Uses & Zoning: North: R-1 (single-family home)  
West: R-1 (single-family home)  
East: R-1 (single-family home)  
South: R-1 (single-family home)

Aerial View of Property:

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Land Use Designation & Applicable Plans

Zoning Designation:	R-1 Single-Family Residential
Comp. Plan Designation:	Single-Family Residential
Context-Based Design Criteria:	Not Applicable
Downtown Urban Design Guide:	Not Applicable
South of Forest Avenue Coordinated Area Plan:	Not Applicable
Baylands Master Plan:	Not Applicable
El Camino Real Design Guidelines (1976 / 2002):	Not Applicable
Proximity to Residential Uses or Districts (150'):	Yes, in a residential neighborhood
Located w/in Airport Influence Area:	Not Applicable

Prior City Reviews & Action

City Council:	None.
PTC:	None.
HRB:	None.
ARB:	None.

**Project Description**

The project site includes two existing homes on two different lots; one parcel located at 639 Arastradero Road exceeds the maximum lot coverage of 9,999 (24,107 square feet existing). A second parcel at 640 Fairmede is conforming at 7,976 square feet. The applicant is interested in adjusting the lot lines and subdividing the project site into three independent lots. Two lots would require a subdivision exception to exceed the maximum 9,999 square foot parcel size (~11,000 SF) and the third parcel would comply (~9,000 SF). A new home is proposed on each parcel resulting in one net new dwelling unit. Access to two of the lots would be from Arastradero Road; the other accessed from Fairmede. The proposed homes would range from 3,453 square feet to 4,310 square feet (including garage) which results in approximately 36% to 38% Floor Area Ratio (FAR). Each home contains 5 bedrooms and 5 to 6 bathrooms. (See Table I below).

The homes are centrally located on the lots and meet the required setbacks, including the 24-foot special setback along Arastradero Road.

The neighborhood contains a mix of architectural styles with ranch style being the most predominant form. The architectural style of the project utilizes some Mediterranean with some contemporary features. Each home contains a two-car garage. The new single-family residences will not contain basements.

**Table I**  
**Project Summary**

<b>Lot</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Proposed Lot Area sq ft</b>	<b>FAR</b>
Lot 1	642 Fairmede	11,865	36.3%
Lot 2	640 Fairmede	11,205	36.6%
Lot 3	639 Arastradero	9,012	38.2%

Anticipated Entitlements:

The following discretionary applications are anticipated:

- **Architectural Review: Major (AR):** The process for evaluating this type of application is set forth in PAMC 18.77.070. AR applications are reviewed by the ARB and recommendations are forwarded to the Planning and Community Environment Director for action within five business days of the Board's recommendation. Action by the Director is appealable to the City Council if filed within 14 days of the decision. AR projects are evaluated against specific findings. All findings must be made in the affirmative to approve the project. Failure to make any one finding requires project redesign or denial. The findings to approve an AR application are provided in Attachment B.

As part of the AR review, the Board will also be evaluating the project to the City's Individual Review standards.

- Preliminary Parcel Map: The process for evaluating a subdivision is set forth in PAMC 21.12.090. Preliminary Map applications are reviewed by the Planning and Community Environment Director. Action by the Director is appealable to the City Council if filed within 14 days of the decision (as noted above, this application is being processed separately). The project requires approval of a subdivision exception to allow two of the parcels to exceed the maximum allowed site area.

### **Discussion**

Preliminary review applications receive a cursory review for compliance with zoning regulations and consistency with the comprehensive plan and other applicable policy documents. This information was previously transmitted to the applicant. A more comprehensive review will occur upon formal submittal, which may reveal other code or policy concerns.

### Comprehensive Plan Policies

As noted above, the site has a Comprehensive Plan land use designation of Single-family Residential. Single family residential includes one dwelling unit on each lot as well as conditional uses requiring permits such as churches and schools. The net density in single-family areas will range from 1 to 7 units per acre, but may rise to a maximum of 14 units in areas where second units or duplexes are allowed. Population densities will range from 1 to 30 persons per acre. The proposed three new homes meet the intent of the Comprehensive Plan.

### Zoning Compliance

The project is located in a single-family neighborhood. The proposed single-family homes comply with R-1 zoning district as noted in Table II below. However, two of the lots (640 and 642 Fairmede Road) exceed the allowed maximum lot size of 9,999 square feet. Additionally, Site Development Standards set forth in PAMC 18.12.040 (d) limit the potential for lot combinations that would result in a net loss of housing stock and resultant homes that would be out of scale with homes in the surrounding neighborhood. Lots larger than the prescribed maximum size are permitted only under the following circumstances:

- i. Where a village residential land use is approved concurrent with the new lot resulting in no net loss of housing units on the site(s);
- ii. Where underlying lots must be merged to eliminate nonconformities and no net loss of housing units would result;
- iii. Where an adjacent substandard lot of less than 25 feet in width is combined with another lot, resulting in not net loss of housing units on the site;
- iv. Where the number of resultant lots increases or stays the same and results in no net loss of housing units.

639 Arastradero Road is a large irregular shaped lot, approximately 24,991 square feet. The deepest length is 280 feet. 640 Fairmede Avenue has a very shallow lot depth which results in

an irregular shaped lot and shallow rear yard. The merger of the two existing lots results in three lots that conform to lot width and depth requirements for the R-1 zone district. The size of the lots would exceed the maximum allowed size. However, the proposed project meets circumstance iv in that it increases the number of lots and homes by providing one additional single-family home.

**Table II**  
**Project Zoning Summary**

<b>Feature</b>	<b>Regulation</b>	<b>642 Fairmede</b>	<b>640 Fairmede</b>	<b>639 Arastradero</b>
Lot size	Minimum: 6,000 sf Maximum: 9,999 sf	11,865	11,205	9,012
Front	20 ft /24 ft (special setback on Arastradero)	20'	20'	24'
Side	6 ft	6'/6'	6'/6'	8'/9'-4 ½"
Rear	20 ft	78'-10"	84'-3"	34'-1"
Height	30 ft	26	26'-4"	25'-3"
Site Coverage	Equivalent to max FAR	3,449	3,154	3,149
FAR	45%	36.3%	36.6%	38.2%

Individual Review (IR) Guidelines

There are five specific guidelines that need to be met for each property's proposal to ensure conformance with the Guidelines, as listed below.

1. Basic Site Planning: Placement of Driveway, Garage and House
2. Neighborhood Compatibility for Height, Mass and Scale
3. Resolution of Architectural Form, Massing and Roof lines
4. Visual Character of Street Facing Facades and Entries
5. Placement of Second Story Windows and Decks for Privacy

The project has received preliminary project review comments by the City's consulting architect (See Attachment C). For additional information about the goals and requirements of the Guidelines, please see the Palo Alto Single-Family Individual Review Guidelines booklet dated June 10, 2005. As part of the formal application, Staff will review the application of conformance with key points in the Guidelines. Checklists for each property would be provided at that time. Please note that when more than one contiguous lot is being developed concurrently, privacy between proposed new homes is considered in the evaluation.

At this point in project development, the ARB is encouraged to provide objective feedback to the applicant on the preliminary drawings. The Board may want to consider comments that relate to:

- Scale and mass

- Transitions in scale to adjacent properties
- Relationship to the neighborhood setting and context
- Pedestrian-orientation and design
- Access to the site
- Consideration to any applicable policy documents (Background Section)
- Architectural design, theme, cohesiveness, and quality of materials
- Preservation of existing native or mature landscaping or features, if any

### **Next Steps**

There is no further action required by the ARB after its discussion. The applicant may elect to file a formal application.

### **Environmental Review**

The subject review involves no discretionary action and is therefore not a project and not subject to review pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). If a formal application is filed, an analysis of the project to CEQA will be performed.

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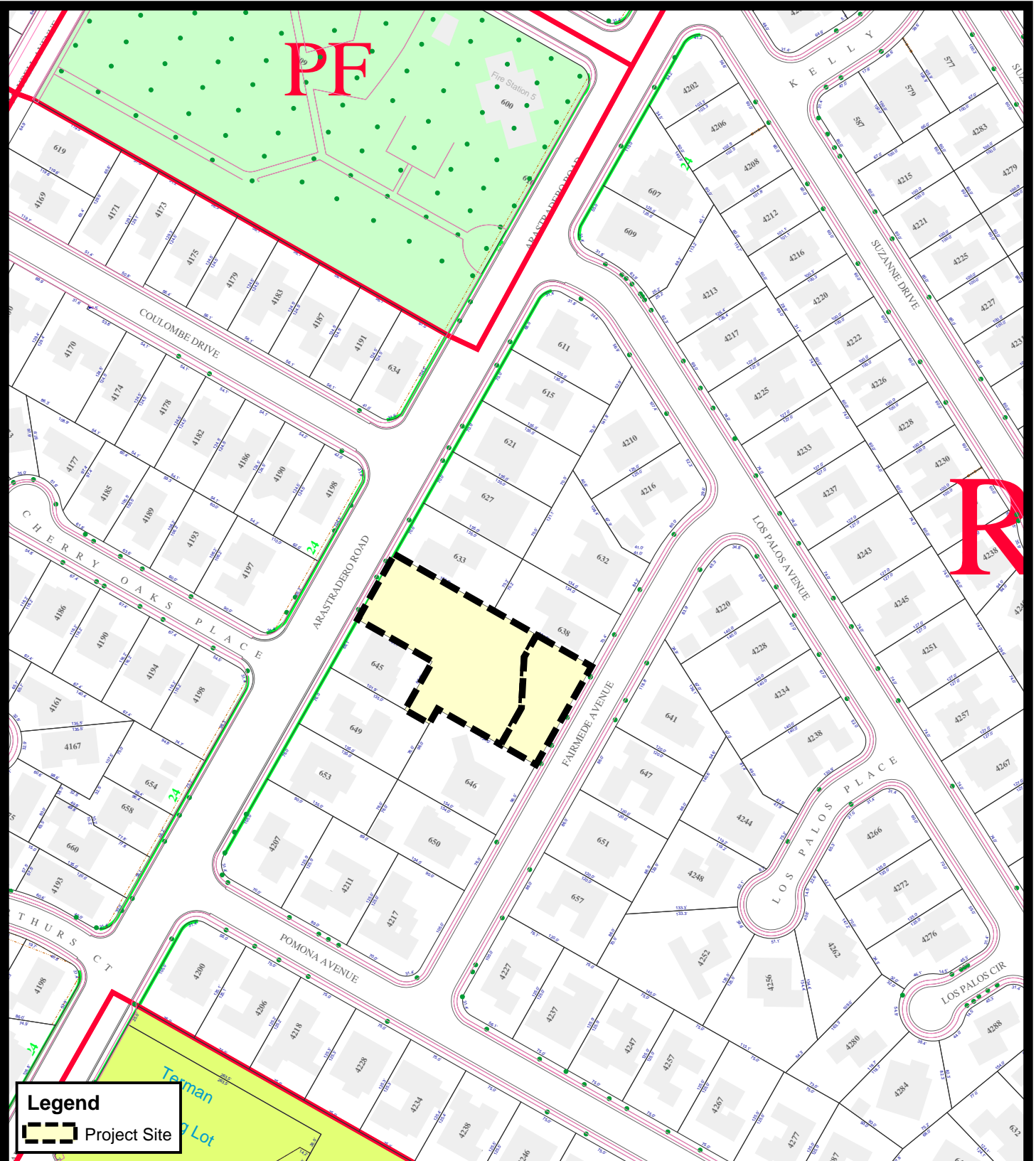
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### **Attachments:**

- Attachment A: Location Map (PDF)
- Conflict of Interest Map (DOCX)
- Attachment B: Architectural Review Findings (DOCX)
- Attachment C: Individual Review Evaluation (DOCX)
- Attachment C: IR Guidelines ALICIA - WE SHOULD PRINT OFF A NICE SPIRAL VERSION THE ARB CAN KEEP (PDF)
- Attachment D: Applicant's Project Description (PDF)
- Attachment E: Applicant's letter of Application (PDF)
- Attachment F: Project Plans (DOCX)

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<sup>1</sup> Emails may be sent directly to the ARB using the following address: [arb@cityofpaloalto.org](mailto:arb@cityofpaloalto.org)



**Legend**  
 Project Site



The City of  
**Palo Alto**



**639 Arastradero Road**  
**15PLN-00442**

This map is a product of the  
 City of Palo Alto GIS





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**ATTACHMENT B**  
**ARB FINDINGS FOR APPROVAL**

639 Arastradero Road  
15PLN-00442

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The design and architecture of the proposed improvements, as conditioned, complies with the Findings for Architectural Review as required in Chapter 18.76 of the PAMC.

**Comprehensive Plan and Purpose of ARB:**

Finding #1: The design is consistent and compatible with applicable elements of the Palo Alto Comprehensive Plan.

Finding #16: The design is consistent and compatible with the purpose of architectural review, which is to:

- Promote orderly and harmonious development in the city;
- Enhance the desirability of residence or investment in the city;
- Encourage the attainment of the most desirable use of land and improvements;
- Enhance the desirability of living conditions upon the immediate site or in adjacent areas; and
- Promote visual environments which are of high aesthetic quality and variety and which, at the same time, are considerate of each other.

**Compatibility and Character:**

Finding #2: The design is compatible with the immediate environment of the site.

Finding #4: This finding of compatibility with unified or historic character is not applicable to the project (there is no unified design or historic character along this portion of El Camino Real).

Finding #5: The design promotes harmonious transitions in scale and character in areas between different designated land uses.

Finding #6: The design is compatible with approved improvements both on and off the site.

**Functionality and Open Space:**

Finding #3: The design is appropriate to the function of the project.

Finding #7: The planning and siting of the building on the site creates an internal sense of order and provides a desirable environment for occupants, visitors and the general community.

Finding #8: The amount and arrangement of open space are appropriate to the design and the function of the structures.

### **Circulation and Traffic:**

Finding #9: Sufficient ancillary functions are provided to support the main functions of the project and the same are compatible with the project's design concept.

Finding #10: Access to the property and circulation thereon are safe and convenient for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles.

### **Landscaping and Plant Materials:**

Finding #11: Natural features are appropriately preserved and integrated with the project.

Finding #12: The materials, textures and colors and details of construction and plant material are an appropriate expression to the design and function and compatible with the adjacent and neighboring structures, landscape elements and functions.

Finding #13: The landscape design concept for the site, as shown by the relationship of plant masses, open space, scale, plant forms and foliage textures and colors create a desirable and functional environment on the site and the landscape concept depicts an appropriate unit with the various buildings on the site.

Finding #14: Plant material is suitable and adaptable to the site, capable of being properly maintained on the site, and is of a variety that would tend to be drought-resistant and to reduce consumption of water in its installation and maintenance.

### **Sustainability:**

Finding #15: The design is energy efficient and incorporates renewable energy design elements including, but not limited to:

- a. Careful building orientation to optimize daylight to interiors
- b. High performance, low-emissivity glazing
- c. Cool roof and roof insulation beyond Code minimum
- d. Solar ready roof
- e. Use of energy efficient LED lighting
- f. Low-flow plumbing and shower fixtures
- g. Below grade parking to allow for increased landscape and stormwater treatment areas

**INDIVIDUAL REVIEW EVALUATIONS**  
**640 and 642 Fairmede Avenue and 639 Arastradero Road**  
**Date: 4-25-16**

**BACKGROUND**

An Individual Review Guideline evaluation summary is provided below for the three abutting properties. There are five specific guidelines that need to be met for each property's proposal. Staff considers the application of key points with each guideline in the evaluation. Checklists for each property are not provided at this time. Please note that when more than one contiguous lot is being developed concurrently, privacy between proposed new homes is considered in the evaluation. For additional information about the goals and requirements of the guidelines, please see the Palo Alto Single-Family Individual Review Guidelines booklet dated June 10, 2005.

**INDIVIDUAL REVIEW GUIDELINES — EVALUATION:**

**Site and Neighborhood Information:**

Existing structures are on two abutting properties fronting Fairmede Avenue and Arastradero Road. At 640 Fairmede Avenue a one-story ranch style house fronts the street on a shallow lot. The house is consistent with the existing context of ranch style homes sprawling across their lots but adjacent lots are deeper with large rear yards with swimming pools and usable side yard patios. At 639 Arastradero Road the lot is very large and deep and has 3 structures. A modest sized home in the middle of the lot and two cottages along the rear lot line. This lot has considerable vegetation and is abutted by smaller lots to each side. The adjacent lots have patios/pool areas in their rear yards across from side lot lines of the subject lot, and despite what appears to be small second floor additions are generally sprawling ranch style homes.

**Review Comments in Summary:**

See comments for each lot below noting that the lot lines are to be reconfigured with 3 lots created—two fronting Fairmede Avenue and one fronting Arastradero Road. The Individual Review Evaluation does not comment on the appropriateness of the revised lot configuration, but does recognize that the resulting lots along Fairmede Avenue are deeper with less frontage than adjacent lots.

**639 Arastradero Road**

Individual Review comments are minimal on this lot. The chimney seems awkwardly tall and should be 3 to 4 feet lower to be more in scale with its one-story form at the living room.

The 14 foot wide by 6 foot deep balcony off the master bedroom is somewhat larger than common for meeting the privacy guideline (see key point 4) but is centered on the wide lot to give extra distance to adjacent properties at each side. The master bath partially screens views towards the right side lot line and towards the left side lot line the privacy wing wall only extends a couple feet out from the upper floor's rear corner. As a result an occupant at the rear wall of the balcony or for a few feet back from the rear wall would have clear views towards both side lot lines as well as across the rear lot line. Given the modest amount of landscape (see attached image and consider the amount of landscape to be removed), the balcony would allow views towards 645 Arastradero Road's large rear patio. It would also view the rear yard of 633 Arastradero Road as well as the pool area in the rear yard of 638 Fairmede Avenue. Given that only one tree will remain in the rear yard, the balcony would also have a good view of whole of the rear yard of the proposed home at 640 Fairmede Avenue.

The balcony needs to be reduced in size to reduce potential use and better screened at side wing walls. Additionally, planting should be provided along the interior lot lines to mitigate aforementioned views to neighboring properties' yard, patio, and pool areas.

**640 Fairmede Avenue**

The main issue with this proposal is the large visible building mass that results from the centralized form set forward on the lot, including the single large rectangular form used at the upper floor. Given the adjacent low height and more horizontally proportioned ranch style homes forming the streetscape and the depth of the subject lot, it would seem appropriate that the house would have used more site area to spread out and limit the impact of the upper floor's volume on the streetscape. Also it appears that the front wall of the proposed home at the porch would be about 5 feet forward of the front wall at the garage of the adjacent home to the right.

While the upper floor is set back about 15 feet from the front and 4 feet from each side relative to the lower floor it is still over 44 feet wide and between 34 and 38 feet deep in a single large rectangle that would present considerable mass as seen from across the street and from down the street looking across the front yard and roofline of the 638 Fairmede Avenue home. (See attached image). While the right/north side wall is quiet in its massing along this highly visible side, having bay windows with gables facing the street on the upper level and the dormer over the center of the mass add to the prominence of the upper floor's height, mass, and scale on the street. (Note: It is not clear that the bay windows are being counted towards floor area from the plan set provided. Bay windows with rooflines that exceed the adjacent roof need to be counted as floor area).

The following mitigations are intended to lessen impacts on neighborhood development patterns, including differences in height, mass, and scale from the proposed home to directly adjacent and nearby homes along Fairmede Avenue and to refine the forms.

- Set the house back at least 5 feet more than shown to increase yard area set building corners and the upper floor further away/back from the adjacent home.
- Plant a large screening tree near the right side lot line within the front yard area as near to the building corner as practical to provide future landscape mass to the building side as seen over the neighbor's front yard/garage roof.
- Eliminate the gables over the street facing bay windows at bedroom one and two. Instead extend the roof plane forward over these windows to create a lowered roof edge. Also consider making them true bay windows with 3 equal windows to mimic the bay window at the living room on the first floor with only posts between the windows.
- Confirm that the height of the roof edge at the front porch is no taller than the roof edge at the 438 Fairmede Avenue home's garage as shown on the streetscape drawing. Based on the elevation and street view it looks like it would be at least 15 inches taller. Note: pushing the house back on the site could allow the porch to be deeper; and therefore, facilitate lowering the height of its street facing eave.
- Look at narrowing the front wall of the second floor at the secondary bedrooms so that the right corner of bedroom 2 sits on the ridge of the living room's roof. On left side equally narrow the façade to shift bedroom 1 away from the side lot line. This would narrow the upper floor's width at the front bedrooms about 2.5' in on each side. The rooms would shift inward as would the bay windows. The loft and overlook would narrow some and the 5-panel window and dormer may need to be reduced to 3 or 4 panels.
- Also look at reducing the plate height at the front wall at the loft and overlook to 8'-0" and increasing the plate height of bedrooms one and two to 8'-10" so that the hip form of each bedroom is expressed. This approach seems to work well at keeping the basic roof geometry. The plate height around the rest of upper floor would be reduced to 8'-0" so that more hips and valleys are not created at main roof. A tall vaulted ceiling would still be possible at the master bedroom with this configuration and if desired a high dormer could be placed facing the rear yard to improve the bedroom's volume and allow high light to enter the room. Note: There are different options for the roof layout but the main purpose is to reduce the prominence of the upper floor as seen from the front and corners. Secondarily improving the use of forms would be desirable and the aforementioned comment could achieve this goal.
- While horizontal wood siding would be acceptable to provide scale and texture to the upper floor walls and living room walls, the design of the house suggests cedar shingles would enhance its character and reinforce the existing Craftsman architectural features, window patterns and some details. Make sure to clad the sidewall of the living room in the siding or shingle and not stucco, as it will be visible from the street.
- Additionally, instead of a deep fascia board on the eave sides use a shallow one to express the ends of the rafter tails. This will reflect the building style better.

In regards to privacy the main concern is the size (8' x 15') of the rear balcony off the master bedroom with no side wing walls and its potential to allow views into the rear yard/pool area of 638 Fairmede Avenue and to the undeveloped rear

yard of 642 Fairmede Avenue. Also the side facing windows at bedrooms 1 and 3 appear to look into the side facing windows on 642 Fairmede Avenue's proposed bedrooms 1 and 3. Even though the homes are being developed at the same time they need to provide privacy as if they were developed separately. Reduced deck sizes, high sidewalls at decks along with similar mitigation measures and obscure glazing at windows need to be considered. If possible offset windows more between homes. Also look at landscape screening along interior lot lines as supportive measures to improve long-term privacy and show added landscape on the site plan.

### **642 Fairmede Avenue**

This house has some of the same height/mass/scale issues as 640 Fairmede Avenue as summarized here along with related comments for guidelines one to four. It, however, would have the most concerns for site planning due to the conditions at the adjacent home to the left.

- The house should be set back 5 feet more on the lot than shown on the site plan to coordinate with the 642 Fairmede Avenue home's setback and to diminish the impact of the first floor's tall corner/side facing eave relative to the adjacent home.
- Plant a large screening tree near the left side lot line within the front yard area as near to the building corner as practical to provide future landscape mass to the building side as seen over the neighbor's front and side yard.
- The front wall is very wide and in this case the wide second floor side wall facing 646 Fairmede Avenue would substantially overwhelm the much lower house as well as being visible from the street. (See attached image). That the wall is rendered stucco and that this neighbor has its family room, side facing patio and pool area looking up to the wall make the impact greater. Note that as shown on guideline one, when next to a one-story home the roof of the proposed home should clear the daylight plane by several feet. In this case the eave intersects the daylight plane along this side of the house for over 42 feet.
- Given streetscape and neighbor impacts relocating bedroom 1 to the ground floor and making other adjustments to the upper floor appear necessary. The upper floor is 39 percent of the program, quite high given the one-story context, and with the compact footprint on the deep lot the resulting mass of the upper floor is disruptive to the neighborhood scale.
- The eave at the living room and entry feature is over 11 feet above grade and considerably taller than the adjacent home. The tall additive entry feature is also out of character with entries along the street, which would not be conforming the requirements of guideline four. The tall chimney also stands out to increase scale impacts. Height reduction at the first floor eave at the living room and a more integrated entry feature would be needed.
- This house has the least resolved use of form of the three and looks somewhat generic. There are a few Spanish Eclectic details such as the wing walls at the building corners, but the house does not have the massing of a Spanish style home and generally lacks distinction to its forms while being visually heavy.

In regards to privacy, although effort has been made to use the master bathroom to screen views to the 646 Fairmede Avenue property from the large master balcony, occupants along the rear edge of the balcony would have clear views over the side lot line to the neighbor's family room and adjacent pool and patio including over the neighbor's family room roof to the whole of the neighbor's rear yard. Reducing the master balcony's depth 18 inches as well as adding a planter or bench along the rear edge of the deck would discourage views sideways. Similarly bedroom 3's balcony needs to be much reduced in size or removed and should be well screened along its side facing 640 Fairmede Avenue with a 5'-6 inch wing wall. Obscure glazing would be needed for upper floor windows along both sidewalls. (Note: privacy considerations reflect the present design and not the suggested redesign that follows.)

Additional comment: This proposed design would lead to difficulties in making necessary determinations that it meets the IR guidelines and does not lend itself to lesser modifications to mitigate issues, such as with the 640 Fairmede Avenue's proposal. It would be best to step back and reconsider the design of this house as it does not blend well with the scale of its surroundings nor has taken cues from the lot or adjacent lot for site planning. Also the architectural lines are still tentative. The site plan configuration that seems most related to the context would have a near L shape for the first floor with the long side of the L running parallel to the lot line shared with 640 Fairmede Avenue lot and a deep side yard facing 646 Fairmede Avenue behind the short side of the L. The short side of the L should be one-story especially near the 646 Fairmede Avenue side and the upper floor could have a deep footprint weighted towards the long side of the L. This not only allows a large side yard for south facing solar access it pushes the upper floor away from the neighbor's outdoor spaces. Since the footprint on each floor could be elongated instead of near square, simple roof forms with short spans and eave sides facing the street on the short side of the L as well as the side lot lines on the long side of the L would be

possible. The building shape would work well with various styles, but a style with low pitch rooflines and limited wall mass would fit best with the context. It may be helpful to meet with staff to discuss this further.



## **Project Description**

**Project Location:** 639 Arastradero Road & 640 Fairmede.

**Project Proposal:** 3 new parcels with 3 new single family residences

### **Project Background**

The property owners, Mr. & Mrs. Wong have been residing at 640 Fairmede Avenue for a number of years. They like and enjoy the neighborhood very much and plan to stay here for a long time. The only shortcoming is that the existing house virtually has no rear yard at all, due to the shallow and odd lot size.

Earlier this year, they had the opportunity to acquire the property from the rear neighbor at 639 Arastradero. They plan to combine the 2 lots and subdivide into three parcels, and then build a dream home for themselves.

### **Existing Site Conditions:**

639 Arastradero is a large lot with approximately 24,991 s.f. with an irregular lot shape. The deepest lot length is approximately 280 feet. There are three old structures on this property: one main house which is recessed more than 100 feet from the street, and two large accessory structures which are located against the rear fences. From the street, the houses and structures are virtually invisible due to its deep setback and landscaping condition. 640 Fairmede has a very shallow lot depth, which resulted a shallow house configuration and rear yard. The narrowest width between the existing house and rear fence is approximately 3 feet. Due to these existing site conditions, reconfiguring the lot size and shape is highly logical and desirable.

### **Proposed Lot Sizes & Shapes**

Since the combined lot size is approximately 32,000 s.f, the project proposes to subdivide the combined parcel for three (3) lots, and each with approximately 10,000 s.f. with proportional street frontage and lot depth.

### **House Design**

The parcels are located in single family residential zoning area, R-1. Therefore, the project proposed 3 single family residential houses (one on each lot). All three houses are designed by following Palo Alto's single family house design guidelines and ordinance, including setbacks, massing, FAR, coverage, height, daylight planes, and other criteria. The proposed house style is generally Mediterranean and/ or Spanish with exterior materials such as cement plaster, tile roof, stained wood trims, precast materials, and stone veneer. Each house will have a 2-car garage.

The property owners have communicated with their adjacent neighbors regarding the proposed project. All of them like the new houses, and virtually have no negative opinions.





## **Letter of Application**

**Project Location:** 639 Arastradero Road & 640 Fairmede.

**Project Proposal:** Minor Subdivision (combining existing 2 parcels and subdivide for 3 new parcels)

### **Project Background**

The property owners, Mr. & Mrs. Wong have been residing at 640 Fairmede Avenue for a number of years. They like and enjoy the neighborhood very much and plan to stay here for a long time. The only shortcoming is that the existing house virtually has no rear yard at all, due to the shallow and odd lot size.

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### **Existing Site Conditions:**

639 Arastradero is a large lot with approximately 24,991 s.f. with an irregular lot shape. The deepest lot length is approximately 280 feet. There are three old structures on this property: one main house which is recessed more than 100 feet from the street, and two large accessory structures which are located against the rear fences. From the street, the houses and structures are virtually invisible due to its deep setback and landscaping condition. 640 Fairmede has a very shallow lot depth, which resulted a shallow house configuration and rear yard. The narrowest width between the existing house and rear fence is approximately 3 feet. Due to these existing site conditions, reconfiguring the lot size and shape is highly logical and desirable.

### **Proposed Parcels:**

Since the combined lot size is approximately 32,000 s.f, the project proposes to subdivide the combined parcel for three (3) lots, and each with approximately 10,000 s.f. with proportional street frontage and lot depth.

Even though the City's municipal codes requires all new parcels to be under 10,000 s.f. for single family residential lot, the proposed lot lines, shapes, and sizes are believed to be the best possible layout of the new parcels.

The following address the "exception findings" (21.32.020b) PAMC) can be supported:

- A. There are special circumstances or conditions affecting the property.

The current parcel size of 639 Arastradero Road is significantly larger than any of the surrounding properties. With nearly 23,000 s.f., it is too wide and too deep to be compatible with the neighborhood.

The current parcel depth of 640 Fairmede Avenue is too shallow to provide a decent rear yard.

Therefore, this proposed division can restore the proper parcel size for the future single family house development.

- B. The exception is necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of a substantial right of the petitioner.

The total combined area is approximately 32,967 s.f. If more the subdivision is for more than 3 parcels, each parcel can be under 10,000 s.f. However, consider the width of the street frontage on both Arastradeo & Fairmede, only 3 parcels can be achieved.

- C. The granting of this exception will not be detrimental to the public welfare or injuries to other property in the territory in which the property is situated.

The proposed subdivision has 2 parcels exceeding the 10,000 s.f. by 1,205 s.f, and 1,865 s.f. The condition shall not be detrimental to the public welfare or injuries to other property in the area.

- D. The granting of the exception will not violate the requirements, goals, policies, or spirit of the law.

Granting this subdivision, by allowing 2 parcels exceeding 10,000 s.f. will not violate the requirements, goals, and policies or spirit of the law.

## Attachment F

Hardcopies were provided to ARB members and Libraries only

Project plans can be reviewed at:

<http://www.cityofpaloalto.org/planningprojects>