

February 10, 2015

Ms. Christine Usher
Department of Community Development
City of San Mateo
330 West 20th Avenue
San Mateo, CA 94403-1388

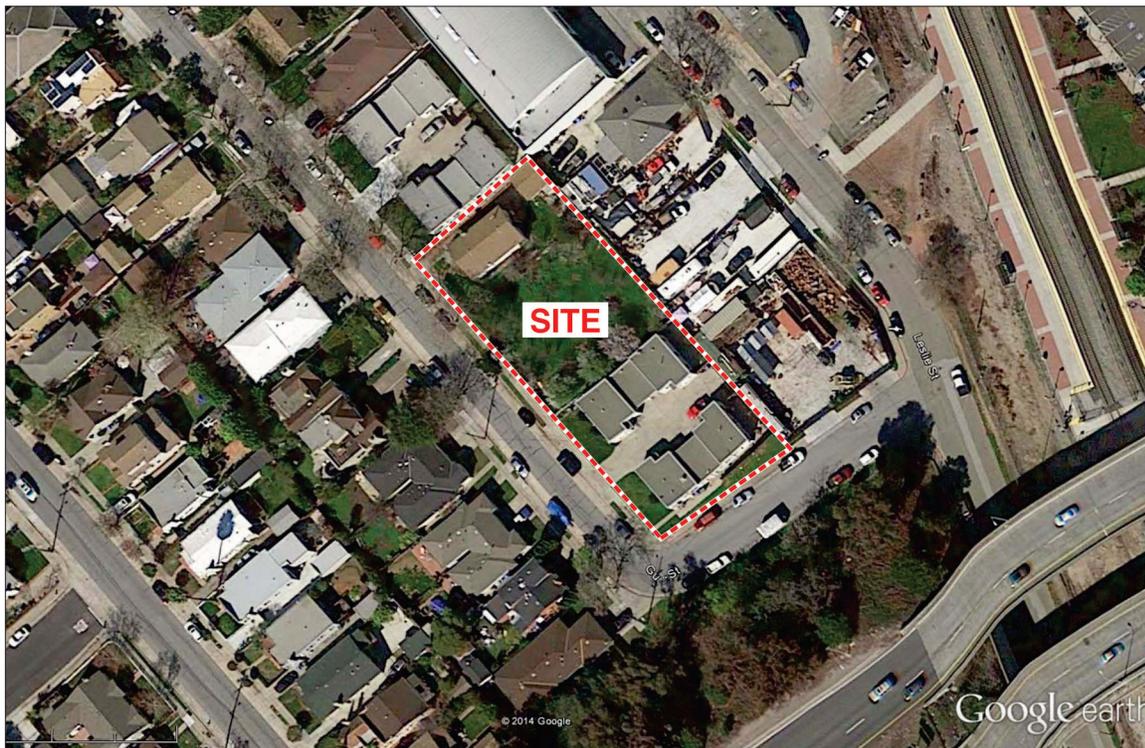
RE: 1753 - 1805 Gum Street

Dear Christy:

I reviewed the drawings, visited the site, and prepared a preliminary review of the project last August. My comments and recommendations on the revised design are summarized below.

Neighborhood Context

The site is currently occupied by a single family home, a small six-unit motor court residential complex, and a large undeveloped lot. Nearby homes are one and two-stories in height and modest in size, but widely variable in terms of architectural form and style. Most are older homes. The site is located a short distance from a Caltrain station. Photos of the site and surrounding neighborhood are shown on the following page.





Existing house on the site and adjacent residential motor court complex to the left



The Site



Immediately adjacent residential complex to the left



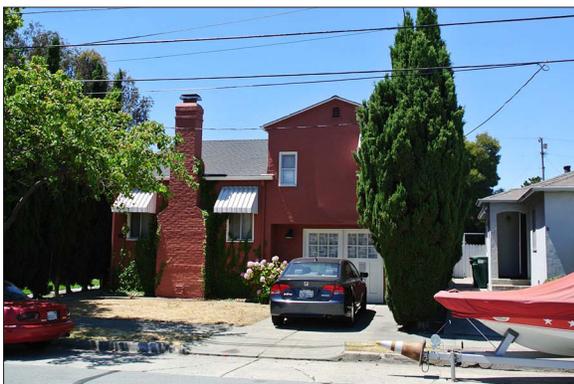
Nearby two-story residential auto court complex



Nearby one-story homes



Nearby adjacent one-story and two-story homes



Nearby home with partial second story



Nearby homes with partial second story

Issues and Concerns

The project has been revised from the previous design that I reviewed in August. The number of units has been reduced from nine to eight, and the complex should have a slightly more open, single family feel along the Gum Street frontage (See streetscape comparison of the current and previous projects below). The homes are a bit wider than the original proposal, but because of the second floor setbacks should be compatible with the other homes in the neighborhood.



CURRENT GUM STREET ELEVATION



PREVIOUS GUM STREET ELEVATION

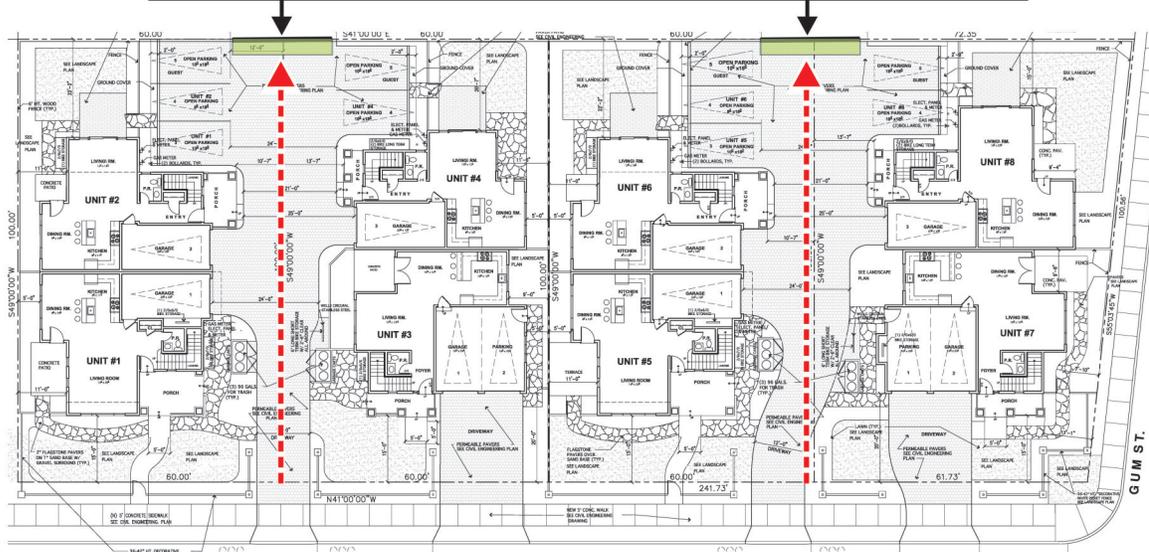
Overall, the complex is well designed with a well thought out architectural style and details authentic to that style. The style has changed slightly with the current design very much in the Craftsman Style. The project is consistent with the *San Mateo Duplex Design Guidelines* with particular relevance to the following:

- The front units have entries strongly oriented to the street, and varied in design.
- The auto court layout is consistent with similar projects in the neighborhood.
- The building forms, scale, architectural style, and roof styles of the homes are traditional in style, and should be compatible with other houses in the immediate neighborhood.
- Window scale, proportions and details are consistent with the architectural style.

I saw only a couple of minor issues that staff may wish to discuss with the applicant.

1. Landscape plans and sections were not included in the drawings that I received, so it is not possible to comment in detail on the landscaping and fencing. However, there are two items that I think will be important:
 - Paving appears to run up to the fence line at the visual terminus of the two auto courts.

Landscaped lattice/trellis would be desirable at drive visual terminus



Recommendation: Add landscaping at the terminus of the auto courts. Lattices and trellises would be desirable.

- Fencing details are not shown. Given the corner location and architectural style of these homes, it would be desirable to use high quality fencing in any locations where it may be seen.

Recommendation: Utilize fencing with finish and detail equal to the houses. An example is shown in the photo below.

Recommendation: Clarify the height of the front fencing at Unit #8.



- The materials board call out “5/8” flat grids” for the windows and outside doors. This is a relative low quality approach to window grids - especially for homes that are designed in the Craftsman Style.

Recommendation: Utilize true divided lite or simulated divided lite windows with substantial depth to the window pane dividers. Examples are shown below.



True Divided Lite Window



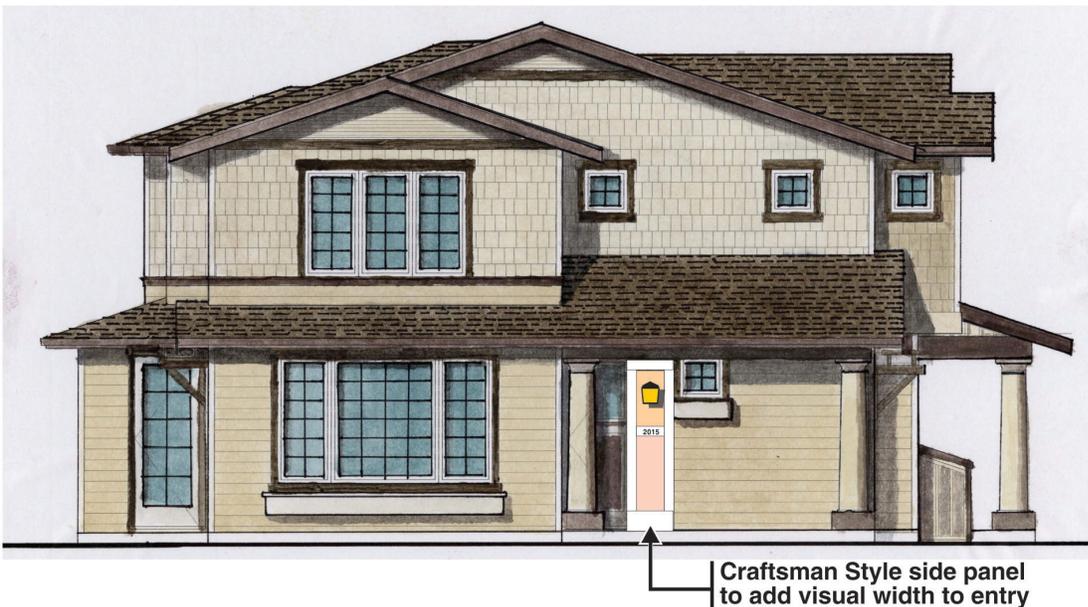
Simulated Divided Lite Window

I have no other recommendations for changes to the proposed design. I do, however, have one caution. The garages which face the street have individual doors for the two parking spaces rather than a single wide door. This approach is good, and sensitive the scale of garages in the neighborhood. Staff should ensure that, as this project moves forward through the building permit stage, this is not modified to be a single two car wide garage door though a specific condition of approval requiring this.

One other item. I know that staff is concerned about the location of the entry doors facing Gum Street because when seen in straight elevation, the porch columns block the view to the entry doors. Relocating the entry doors to a more central location on the porch facade could only be achieved, I believe, through some rather substantial floor plan changes. Short of that change, one might consider embellishments to the entry doors that would extend their visual entry identity width. This approach is common in the Craftsman Style. One example is shown on the photo below.



The extent of this increase in visual entry width would depend on the flexibility of the location of the small porch windows at the stairs to the second floor. The illustration below shows that approach with the stair window in its current proposed location



Christy, please let me know if you have any questions, or if there are other issues that I did not address.

Sincerely,
CANNON DESIGN GROUP

Larry L. Cannon