



City of Alameda • California

DESIGN REVIEW APPROVAL NOTICE

This notice is provided pursuant to Alameda Municipal Code (AMC) Section 30-36.3 to declare that on **September 17, 2026**, the City of Alameda approved Design Review Application No. **PLN26-0586** at **1336 St. Charles Street**. This determination has been made following a review for consistency with the City of Alameda's Zoning Ordinance and Design Review Manual.

This is not a Building Permit: This approval is for Design Review only, which allows the applicant to apply for a building permit. Separate application forms, plans, and fees are required for the building permit application process. Construction on the project shall not commence until issuance of a building permit.

This Decision May Be Appealed or Called for Review: An appeal of this decision may be made to the Planning Board within ten (10) calendar days from the date of the notice of decision. AMC Section 30-25 also allows the Planning Board or City Council to call a project for review, in which case the project will be scheduled for hearing at the next available Planning Board meeting. Therefore, this approval does not become final until ten days after its issuance without an appeal or a call for review.

Project Description: Design Review – The project consists of a 466 sq.ft. second floor addition over the existing first floor rear wing for a total floor area of 3,431 sq.ft. on three levels (including basement) without raising the overall building height or lot coverage or modifying existing setbacks/yards. The north wall has a legal non-conforming setback of 1'-5" where 5' is required. Extending the wall vertically, with no eave or windows, is allowed pursuant to AMC section 30-5.7.k and l.

General Plan: Low Density Residential.

Zoning: R-1 Residential District.

Conditions of Approval:

- (1) A copy of this Design Review Approval Notice shall be printed in the Building Permit plans.
- (2) This approval is valid for three years and will expire on September 17, 2029, unless substantial construction has commenced under valid permits pursuant to AMC Section 30-37.6. The approval may be extended to September 17, 2031, upon submittal of an extension request and the associated fee prior to expiration.
- (3) The plans submitted for building permit and construction shall be in substantial compliance with plans prepared by Joanna Bianchi, Architect, submitted on August 26, 2026, and on file in the office of the City of Alameda Planning, Building and Transportation Department, except as modified by the conditions listed in this approval.

- (4) This approval is limited to the scope of the project defined in the project description and does not represent a recognition and/or approval of any work completed without required City permits. Any additional exterior changes shall be submitted to the Planning Building and Transportation Department for review and approval prior to construction.
- (5) The final plans submitted for Building Permit shall incorporate the approved window schedule.
- (6) The final plans submitted for Building Permit approval shall conform to all applicable codes and guidelines.
- (7) New exterior lighting fixtures shall be low intensity, directed downward and shielded to minimize offsite glare.
- (8) A site inspection to determine compliance with this Design Review Approval is required prior to the final building inspection and/or to the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy. The applicant shall notify the Planning, Building and Transportation Department at least four days prior to the requested Planning Inspection dates.
- (9) Indemnification. To the maximum extent permitted by law, the applicant (or its successor in interest) shall defend (with counsel acceptable to the City), indemnify, and hold harmless the City of Alameda, its City Council, City Planning Board, officials, employees, agents and volunteers (collectively, "Indemnitees") from and against any and all claims, actions, or proceedings against Indemnitees to attack, set aside, void or annul an approval by Indemnitees relating to this project. This indemnification shall include, but is not limited to, all damages, losses, and expenses (including, without limitation, legal costs and attorney's fees) that may be awarded to the prevailing party arising out of or in connection with an approval by the Indemnitees relating to this project. The City shall promptly notify the applicant of any claim, action or proceeding and the City shall cooperate in the defense. The City may elect, in its sole discretion, to participate in the defense of said claim, action, or proceeding and the applicant (or its successor in interest) shall reimburse the City for its reasonable legal costs and attorneys' fees.

Environmental Determination:

Exempt per Class 1 – additions to existing facilities, including additions to existing structures provided that the addition will not result in an increase of more than 50 percent of the floor area of the structures before the addition, or 2,500 square feet, whichever is less. In this case, the addition is 466 sq.ft. where the existing residence has 2,965 sq.ft. of floor area including the habitable basement level, main floor and partial second floor, i.e. the addition is only 16% of the existing floor area.

As a separate and independent basis, because the Project only requires Design Review approval, it is not subject to further CEQA review pursuant to *McCorkle Eastside Neighborhood Group v. City of St. Helena* (2018) 31 Cal.App.5th 80. Under *McCorkle*, local design review does not require environmental review when it is the only discretionary aspect of a project, and the agency lacks authority to disprove the project or otherwise mitigate non design related environmental impacts. *McCorkle* applies when an agency's discretion over a project is limited to aesthetic and design issues such as orientation, bulk, materials, and colors. Here, the Project is located in the City's R-1 Residential District, and within the district, the proposed second story addition to a single-family home with a legal non-conforming side yard setback, allowable height and lot coverage, which is

permitted by right and not subject to discretionary review, except for Design Review, pursuant to AMC Sec. 30-4.1. Accordingly, no CEQA review is required because the City's review of the Project is limited to design issues.

Findings:

- (1) **The proposed design is consistent with the General Plan, Zoning Ordinance, and the City of Alameda Design Review Manual.** The proposed addition maintains the single-family use of the property and maintains the architectural character of the site and neighborhood and complies with the development standards of the R-1 district. The design uses materials including stucco, trim, windows, and eaves that reflect the existing home design, which includes a single-story rear addition that was approved in 2020 and constructed in 2022 over which the new addition will be constructed. A basement level was also constructed in 2023. The Project complies with all development standards of the R-1 zoning district (including pursuant to legal non-conforming provisions) and is consistent with the General Plan designation that focuses on retaining the character of existing neighborhoods. The proposed second story addition would align with the ground floor wing on the rear of the house. This wing, on the northern side of the lot, is 1'-5" from the northern property line and 69' from the rear property line, and 22' from the south property line. It encompasses about 26' x 16' (roughly 425 sq.ft.) of floor area and would be 27' tall at the ridge of the new roof, which is lower than the 30' roof of the remainder of the house. Findings related to the non-conforming side yard are provided below.
- (2) **The proposed design is appropriate for the site, is compatible with adjacent or neighboring buildings or surroundings, and promotes harmonious transitions in scale and character in areas between different designated land uses.** The project is compatible with the adjacent buildings and consistent with the original architecture of the home because it incorporates the same massing and rhythm of the existing building, which is also consistent with the character of the neighborhood because the properties along this side of the street are developed with similar two and three-story residences of similar scale and character, including rear wings extending from the main volume and minimal setbacks on one side with long side-yard driveways extending to the rear of the lot that provide a wider buffer on the southern side. Thus, the proposed design is appropriate in the context of its surroundings and will facilitate a harmonious transition between neighboring buildings.
- (3) **The proposed design of the structure and exterior materials and landscaping are visually compatible with the surrounding development, and design elements have been incorporated to ensure the compatibility of the structure with the character and uses of adjacent development.** The project is compatible with the adjacent buildings and consistent with the original architecture of the home because it incorporates the same exterior materials, window and trim styles, and overall rhythms of bays, doors, and windows in a traditional theme. An upper story Juliet balcony will provide a connection to the outdoors facing the large rear yard area, not directly facing any neighbors.
- (4) **No major adverse effects such as significant shading or significant view blockage will occur on adjoining properties relative to existing conditions and relative to an addition built with a conforming setback.** The project will increase the height of the wall along the northern property line with a setback of 1'-5" where 5' is normally required. This setback was established by the originally constructed two-story house and extended about 25 feet with the

one-story addition in 2020. The current project would now extend that wall vertically by about 9 feet. No windows are provided along the northern wall for fire safety reasons; this view is shielded from the neighbor to the north by a large hedge. Thus, no visual impact or privacy concerns would occur, and no additional shading compared to the shade of the hedge would occur.

Approved:

Signed by:

Jeff Bond

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Jeff Bond on behalf of

Abigal Thorne Lyman Acting Planning Building & Transportation Director

Date: September 17, 2026



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Accommodations Request

If you need accessibility accommodations in an alternative or translated format, please fill out our [ADA request form](#) or contact ada@alamedaca.gov.