

Date: 27 May 2025

To: The City of Santa Clara, Historical and landmarks Commission

Subject: Renovating our personal property located at 642 Park Ct by maintaining the authenticity of the historic neighborhood and addressing the concerns of the neighbors.

Background: We Chandu/Adivi Family bought property located at 642 Park Ct Santa Clara CA 95050 on Jan 28,2025 to accommodate our growing family requirements which comprises 2 parents,2 kids (9- and 3-year-old) and mother-in-law (arthritis patient) and occasionally visiting parents(once every 2 years). In addition, this location was chosen as this property is relatively close to one of our workplaces(Microsoft) and our workplace has mandated us to come to office more than 50% of the time from mid this year. Currently we live close to 50 miles away in East bay (we moved during Covid time) and it's getting difficult with all the long commute.

We are renovating our property and adding sqft to the existing house **as per our family's needs and strictly as per the city's legal guidelines**. In addition, as the property is in a historic neighborhood (**property is not historic as per city records**), **we took every measure to maintain the sanctity of the historic neighborhood and we are retaining the existing house and adding the sqft behind the house as per city's suggestions and under the city staff's guidance** (details further down in the document).

Addressing the concerns of the neighbors:

Few of the neighbors have reached out either informally or through the city's public review forum regarding the concerns they have with regards to the updates we are planning **on our personal property**. We would like to respond to a few of the core concerns raised by our neighbors.

1. **Multi-Tenant Rental:** Neighbors **assumed** that this is being accommodated as a multi-family rental or for student housing who may be studying in Santa Clara university.
 - a. **Our Answer:** Absolutely No! We are not making the changes to rent out the property. If this was the case the property would have been rented by now to maximize the rental investment, but currently it is unoccupied. **This will be 100% used only as our single-family residence.**
 - b. **Floor plan was designed to accommodate a mother-in-law suite on the ground floor, working couples both of whom can work-from-home for most of the time with their own personal home offices and 2 kids with their individual rooms once they come to middle school.**
 - c. This is designed for our **growing American family** and for their day-to-day **needs of 2025 and beyond**.
2. **Privacy of immediate neighbors:**
 - a. **Our Answer:** **We are and will be respectful of neighbors privacy.** We will add strategic tall plants near windows to make for a better view out our window than whatever is going on next door. This kind of landscaping will fix both ours and our

neighbors' privacy. Just part of living in a dense single-family neighborhood. **We welcome our neighbors to suggest any plants they have in mind.**

- b. **564 Park Ct** – As an example, this is a 2-story immediate house to us which was recently renovated which currently overlooks our backyard directly.

- i. This house's 2nd-story rooms directly overlook the backyards of multiple neighboring houses and our backyard also. We plan to add tall plants for our privacy which protects both our privacy and the neighbor's privacy.

3. Historic neighborhood and protecting its authenticity:

- a. **Our Answer:** Yes. We were aware that this is a historic neighborhood before even buying the property, so we did our background check with the city's staff, if a 2-story house of given sqft can be built during Dec 2024 and we are in constant touch with city staff till today (and going forward also). The city was supportive and suggested that if our designs are in-line with the neighborhood and as per city's guidelines retaining most of the existing house, then we can do the renovation as per our daily needs with support from HLC.

- b. As city staff will present in the next HLC review meeting, an initial design which is totally different from what was sent to neighbors(formally/informally) was presented to city staff. But the city suggested we change the design to retain most of the existing house to maintain the historic neighborhood vibe. **So, we have changed the design to retain the existing house, and addition is happening at the back of the house to maintain the same look and feel of the neighborhood and to protect the existing house.** This design change already cost us an **extra \$25000 in terms of architect fees, delays** and by the time the construction completes with new design that is respectful of the neighborhood and retaining the existing house, **it will cost us up to \$75,000 more** (larger foundation, roof and many more). **But to protect the neighborhood's current and future historic status of neighborhood, we are bearing the additional cost to retain the existing house and expand the house only in the back of the existing house. This shows our commitment to protect the Park Ct's historic neighborhood status.**

- c. **In our background check we identified there are multiple 2-story house in the neighborhood, so we took proper precautions and followed city's guidelines while designing this house for our family.** Following are the existing 2-story houses in the park ct neighborhood.

- i. 564 Park Ct
 - ii. 540 Park Ct
 - iii. 550 Park Ct

- d. **Increasing the value of the neighborhood and making the neighborhood safer:** As evident from the proposed design, this project represents a high-quality and thoughtful upgrade to the existing home, which currently faces significant foundation, drainage, and structural challenges. We are making a substantial financial investment to address these issues by restoring the home's integrity — including improvements to the foundation, drainage systems, and comprehensive upgrades to mechanical, electrical, plumbing, and fire safety systems. Our goal is

to enhance both the safety and longevity of the property, contribute positively to the overall value of the neighborhood, and preserve the historic character that makes this community unique.

4. Few other suggestions/concerns from neighbors and our responses and final notes:

- i. Some neighbors have respectfully suggested that if we wish to have a larger home or additional bedrooms — even while fully adhering to the city's guidelines — we should consider relocating to a different neighborhood. While we understand that everyone has their own perspective, such comments can feel discouraging, especially when we are simply **trying to make thoughtful improvements to our home within the permitted regulations which our family can live for a long time.**
- ii. This design has been carefully developed in strict accordance with the city's legal guidelines — including regulations related to height, front and side setbacks, and lot coverage. Additionally, **we have made every effort to ensure that the design is respectful of the character and historic charm of the neighborhood, while also accommodating our family's evolving needs**
- iii. **We have taken, and will continue to take, every possible measure to protect our neighbors' privacy and to show the utmost respect for the historic character of the neighborhood in our design. For instance, the inclusion of tall plants near windows is intended to safeguard neighbors' privacy while also meeting our family's needs. This represents an additional expense that we are willingly absorbing beyond the costs associated with the design changes.**
- iv. **We sincerely hope that all neighbors will support a positive and respectful environment as we move forward with our expansion plans.**

Owners:

Geetha Chandu

Sai Adivi