Agenda Item No. 4a.

Staff Report

Date: August 18, 2020

To: Advisory Design Review Group

From: Matthew Weintraub, Planner

Subject: Sher Residence, 40 Upper Road

ROLE OF THE ADVISORY DESIGN REVIEW GROUP:
The Advisory Design Review (ADR) Group considers and makes formal recommendations to the Town Planner and Town Council on applications and matters affecting the design of buildings, structures, landscaping, and other site improvements consistent with the purpose of Ross Municipal Code (RMC) Chapter 18.41, Design Review. The ADR Group provides professional review of design-related issues, including site planning, building massing, setbacks, light/air, etc., as well as material selection in architectural and landscape design in the discretionary review process. The ADR Group makes non-binding advisory recommendations regarding consistency of applications with the Design Review criteria and standards per RMC Section 18.41.100.

Recommendation
That the ADR Group discuss the merits of the project and provide a formal recommendation to the Town Planner regarding the merits of the project consistent with the Design Review criteria and standards of RMC Section 18.41.100 (see **Attachment 1**). A majority vote of the ADR Group is necessary to provide a recommendation to the Town Planner.

Project Information

Owner:	Pamela Sher
Applicant:	Hsiaochien Chuang
Location:	40 Upper Road
Assessor Parcel No.:	073-071-08
Zoning:	R-1: B-A
General Plan:	VL (Very Low Density)
FEMA Flood Zone:	X (Minimal risk area outside the 1% and 0.2%-annual-chance floodplains)

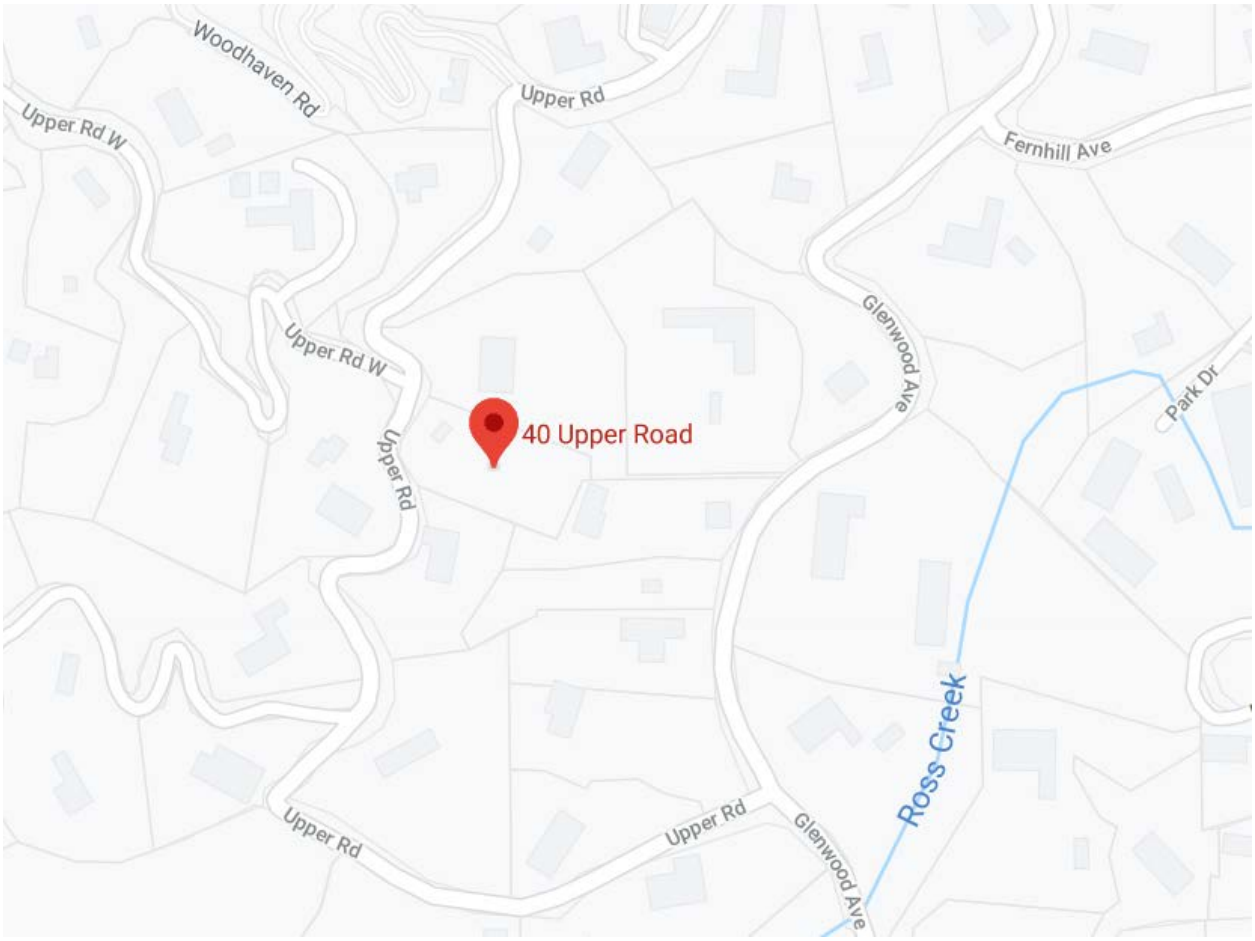


Figure 1. Location map. (Courtesy of Google Maps.)

Project Description

The applicant is requesting approval to replace the existing 6'-tall driveway entry gate and 7'-tall entry columns with a new gate and columns in the existing location along Upper Road. The new entry gate would be 6'-1-½" tall; the new columns would retain the existing 7' height. The exterior materials would include new wood cedar boards and cedar cladding painted brown, and decorative metal hardware salvaged from the existing gate. The existing backlit house address number on the northern gate post would be replaced by a downlit house address number on a timer. The new gate would swing inward and would operate automatically. The clear distance between gate posts would be increased from 15'-0" to 17'-11".

The proposed project is subject to the following permit approvals:

- **Design Review is required pursuant to RMC Section 18.41.020** to allow for a new gate greater than 48 inches in height in a yard adjacent to the street of right-of-way. Pursuant to RMC Section 18.41.090, the Town Planner may administratively approve, conditionally approve or deny without notice or a public hearing Design review of fences pursuant to the provisions of Section 18.41.070 and Section 18.41.080. Pursuant to Resolution No. 1990, Advisory Design Review is a process required for all applicants seeking discretionary land use permits, such as Design Review.

The project site is an 87,648-square-foot "flag" lot with an irregular shape. The lot has primary frontage on Upper Road and a "panhandle" extension to Glenwood Avenue. Driveway access occurs on Upper Road, which is the primary elevation of the property. The lot has an average slope of approximately 34%.

The applicant's Project Plans are included as **Attachment 2**. The applicant's Project Description is included as **Attachment 3**.

Discussion

The overall purpose of Design Review is to guide new development to preserve and enhance the special qualities of Ross and to sustain the beauty of the town's environment. Other specific purposes include: provide excellence of design consistent with the scale and quality of existing development; preserve and enhance the historical "small town," low-density character and identity that is unique to the Town of Ross; preserve lands which are unique environmental resources; enhance important community entryways, local travel corridors and the area in which the project is located; promote and implement the design goals, policies and criteria of the Ross general plan; discourage the development of individual buildings which dominate the townscape or attract attention through color, mass or inappropriate architectural expression; preserve buildings and areas with historic or aesthetic value; upgrade the appearance, quality and condition of existing improvements in conjunction with new development or remodeling of a site; and preserve natural hydrology and drainage patterns and reduce stormwater runoff associated with development. The Design Review criteria and standards per Ross Municipal Code (RMC) Section 18.41.100 are included as **Attachment 1**.

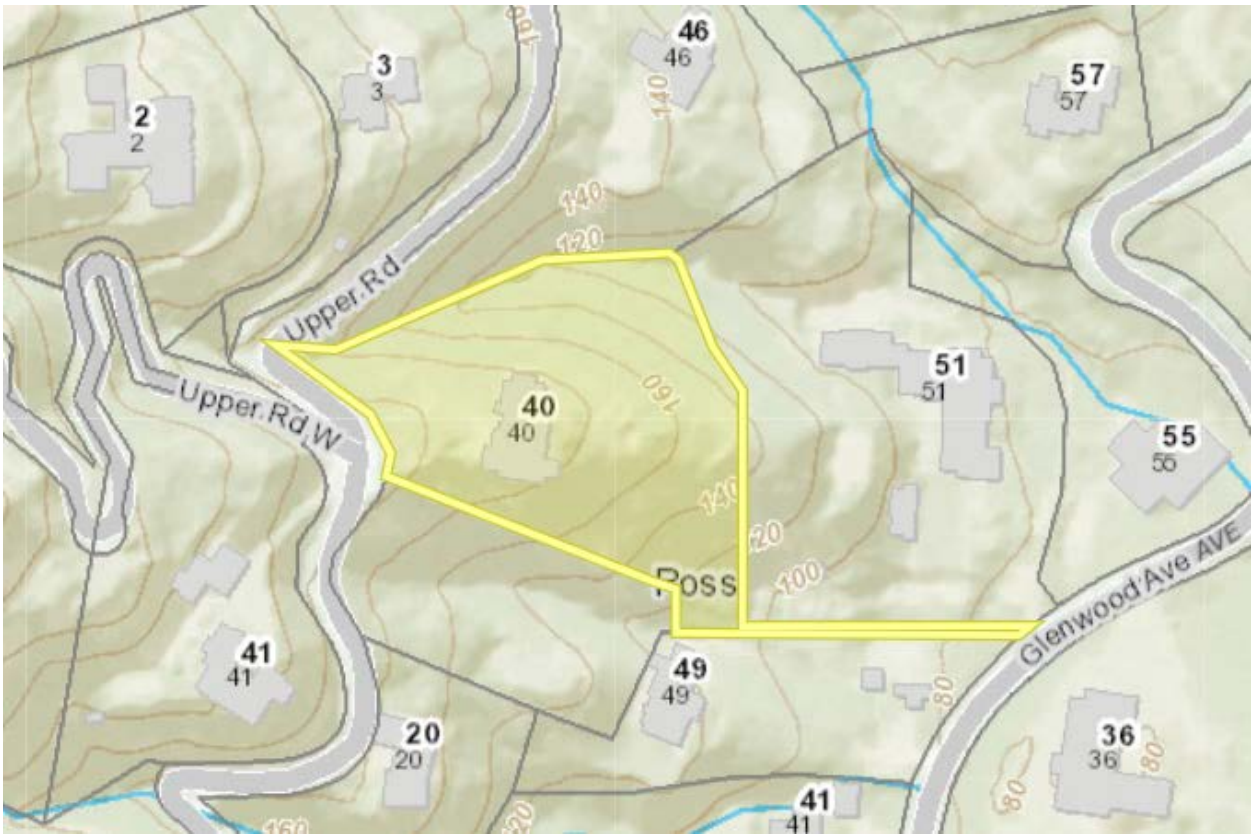


Figure 2. Vicinity Map. (Courtesy of MarinMap.)

Attachments

1. Design Review Criteria and Standards (Ross Municipal Code Section 18.41.100)
2. Project Plans
3. Project Description

ATTACHMENT 1

18.41.100 Design Review Criteria and Standards.

This section provides guidelines for development. Compliance is not mandatory but is strongly recommended. The Town Council may deny an application where there are substantial inconsistencies with one or more guidelines in a manner that is counter to any purpose of this ordinance.

(a) Preservation of Natural Areas and Existing Site Conditions.

(1) The existing landscape should be preserved in its natural state by keeping the removal of trees, vegetation, rocks and soil to a minimum. Development should minimize the amount of native vegetation clearing, grading, cutting and filling and maximize the retention and preservation of natural elevations, ridgelands and natural features, including lands too steep for development, geologically unstable areas, wooded canyons, areas containing significant native flora and fauna, rock outcroppings, view sites, watersheds and watercourses, considering zones of defensible space appropriate to prevent the spread of fire.

(2) Sites should be kept in harmony with the general appearance of neighboring landscape. All disturbed areas should be finished to a natural-appearing configuration and planted or seeded to prevent erosion.(3) Lot coverage and building footprints should be minimized where feasible, and development clustered, to minimize site disturbance area and preserve large areas of undisturbed space. Environmentally sensitive areas, such as areas along streams, forested areas, and steep slopes shall be a priority for preservation and open space.

(b) Relationship Between Structure and Site. There should be a balanced and harmonious relationship among structures on the site, between structures and the site itself, and between structures on the site and on neighboring properties. All new buildings or additions constructed on sloping land should be designed to relate to the natural land forms and step with the slope in order to minimize building mass, bulk and height and to integrate the structure with the site.

(c) Minimizing Bulk and Mass.

(1) New structures and additions should avoid monumental or excessively large size out of character with their setting or with other dwellings in the neighborhood. Buildings should be compatible with others in the neighborhood and not attract attention to themselves. When nonconforming floor area is proposed to be retained with site redevelopment, the Council may consider the volume and mass of the replacement floor area and limit the volume and mass where necessary to meet the intent of these standards.

(2) To avoid monotony or an impression of bulk, large expanses of any one material on a single plane should be avoided, and large single-plane retaining walls should be avoided. Vertical and horizontal elements should be used to add architectural variety and to break up building plans. The development of dwellings or dwelling groups should not create excessive mass, bulk or repetition of design features.

(d) Materials and Colors.

(1) Buildings should use materials and colors that minimize visual impacts, blend with the existing land forms and vegetative cover, are compatible with structures in the neighborhood and do not attract attention to the structures. Colors and materials should be compatible with those in the surrounding area. High-quality building materials should be used.

(2) Natural materials such as wood and stone are preferred, and manufactured materials such as concrete, stucco or metal should be used in moderation to avoid visual conflicts with the natural setting of the structure.

(3) Soft and muted colors in the earthtone and woodtone range are preferred and generally should predominate.

(e) Drives, Parking and Circulation.

(1) Good access, circulation and off-street parking should be provided consistent with the natural features of the site. Walkways, driveways, curb cuts and off-street parking should allow smooth traffic flow and provide for safe ingress and egress to a site.

(2) Access ways and parking areas should be in scale with the design of buildings and
structures on the site. They should be sited to minimize physical impacts on adjacent properties related to noise, light and emissions and be visually compatible with development on the site and on neighboring properties. Off-street parking should be screened from view. The area devoted to driveways, parking pads and parking facilities should be minimized through careful site
planning.

(3) Incorporate natural drainage ways and vegetated channels, rather than the standard concrete curb and gutter configuration to decrease flow velocity and allow for stormwater infiltration, percolation and absorption.

(f) Exterior Lighting. Exterior lighting should not create glare, hazard or annoyance to adjacent property owners or passersby. Lighting should be shielded and directed downward, with the location of lights coordinated with the approved landscape plan. Lamps should be low wattage and should be incandescent.

(g) Fences and Screening. Fences and walls should be designed and located to be architecturally compatible with the design of the building. They should be aesthetically attractive and not create a "walled-in" feeling or a harsh, solid expanse when viewed from adjacent vantage points. Front yard fences and walls should be set back sufficient distance from the property line to allow for installation of a landscape buffer to soften the visual appearance. Transparent front yard fences and gates over four feet tall may be permitted if the design and landscaping is compatible and consistent with the design, height and character of fences and landscaping in the neighborhood. Front yard vehicular gates should be transparent to let light and lines of sight through the gate.

Solid walls and fences over four feet in height are generally discouraged on property lines adjacent to a right-of-way but may be permitted for properties adjacent to Poplar Avenue and Sir Francis Drake Boulevard based on the quality of the design, materials, and landscaping proposed. Driveway gates should be automatic to encourage use of onsite parking. Pedestrian gates are encouraged for safety, egress, and to encourage multi-modal transportation and pedestrian-friendly neighborhood character.

(h) Views. Views of the hills and ridgelines from public streets and parks should be preserved where possible through appropriate siting of improvements and through selection of an appropriate building design including height, architectural style, roof pitch and number of
stories.

(i) Natural Environment.

(1) The high-quality and fragile natural environment should be preserved and maintained through protecting scenic resources (ridgelands, hillsides, trees and tree groves), vegetation and wildlife habitat, creeks, drainageways threatened and endangered species habitat, open space and areas necessary to protect community health and safety.

(2) Development in upland areas shall maintain a setback from creeks or drainageways.
The setback shall be maximized to protect the natural resource value of riparian areas and to protect residents from geologic and other hazards.

(3) Development in low-lying areas shall maintain a setback from creeks or drainageways consistent with the existing development pattern and intensity in the area and on the site, the riparian value along the site, geologic stability, and the development alternatives available on the site. The setback should be maximized to protect the natural resource value of the riparian area and to protect residents from geologic and flood hazards.

(4) The filling and development of land areas within the one-hundred-year flood plain is discouraged. Modification of natural channels of creeks is discouraged. Any modification shall retain and protect creekside vegetation in its natural state as much as possible. Reseeding or replanting with native plants of the habitat and removal of broom and other aggressive exotic plants should occur as soon as possible if vegetation removal or soil disturbance occurs.

(5) Safe and adequate drainage capacity should be provided for all watercourses.

(j) Landscaping.

(1) Attractive, fire-resistant, native species are preferred. Landscaping should be integrated into the architectural scheme to accent and enhance the appearance of the
development. Trees on the site, along public or private streets and within twenty feet of common property lines, should be protected and preserved in site planning.

Replacement trees should be provided for trees removed or affected by development. Native trees should be replaced with the same or similar species. Landscaping should include planting of additional street trees as necessary.

(2) Landscaping should include appropriate plantings to soften or screen the appearance of structures as seen from off-site locations and to screen architectural and mechanical elements such as foundations, retaining walls, condensers and transformers.

(3) Landscape plans should include appropriate plantings to repair, reseed and/or replant disturbed areas to prevent erosion.

(4) Landscape plans should create and maintain defensible spaces around buildings and structures as appropriate to prevent the spread of wildfire.

(5) Wherever possible, residential development should be designed to preserve, protect and restore native site vegetation and habitat. In addition, where possible and appropriate, invasive vegetation should be removed.

(k) Health and Safety. Project design should minimize the potential for loss of life, injury or damage to property due to natural and other hazards. New construction must, at a minimum, adhere to the fire safety standards in the Building and Fire Code and use measures such as fire-preventive site design, landscaping and building materials, and fire-suppression techniques and resources. Development on hillside areas should adhere to the wildland urban interface building standards in Chapter 7A of the California Building Code. New development in areas of geologic hazard must not be endangered by nor contribute to hazardous conditions on the site or on adjoining properties.

(l) Visual Focus.

(1) Where visibility exists from roadways and public vantage points, the primary residence should be the most prominent structure on a site. Accessory structures, including but not limited to garages, pool cabanas, accessory dwellings, parking pads, pools and tennis courts, should be sited to minimize their observed presence on the site, taking into consideration runoff impacts from driveways and impervious surfaces. Front yards and street side yards on corner lots should remain free of structures unless they can be sited where they will not visually detract from the public view of the residence.

(2) Accessory structures should generally be single-story units unless a clearly superior design results from a multilevel structure. Accessory structures should generally be small in floor area. The number of accessory structures should be minimized to avoid a feeling of overbuilding a site. Both the number and size of accessory structures may be regulated in order to minimize the overbuilding of existing lots and attain compliance with these criteria.

(m) Privacy. Building placement and window size and placement should be selected with consideration given to protecting the privacy of surrounding properties. Decks, balconies and other outdoor areas should be sited to minimize noise to protect the privacy and quietude of surrounding properties. Landscaping should be provided to protect privacy between properties. Where nonconformities are proposed to be retained, the proposed structures and landscaping should not impair the primary views or privacy of adjacent properties to a greater extent than the impairment created by the existing nonconforming structures.

(n) Consideration of Existing Nonconforming Situations. Proposed work should be evaluated in relationship to existing nonconforming situations, and where determined to be feasible and reasonable, consideration should be given to eliminating nonconforming situations.

(o) Relationship of Project to Entire Site.

(1) Development review should be a broad, overall site review, rather than with a narrow focus oriented only at the portion of the project specifically triggering design review. All information on site development submitted in support of an application constitutes the approved design review project and, once approved, may not be changed by current or future property owners without town approval.

(2) Proposed work should be viewed in relationship to existing on-site conditions Pre-existing site conditions should be brought into further compliance with the purpose and design criteria of this chapter as a condition of project approval whenever reasonable and feasible.

(p) Relationship to Development Standards in Zoning District. The town council may impose more restrictive development standards than the standards contained in the zoning district in which the project is located in order to meet these criteria. Where two or more contiguous parcels are merged into one legal parcel, the Town Council may consider the total floor area of the existing conforming and legal nonconforming structures and may reduce the permitted floor area to meet the purposes of these standards.

(q) Project Reducing Housing Stock. Projects reducing the number of housing units in the town, whether involving the demolition of a single unit with no replacement unit or the demolition of multiple units with fewer replacement units, are discouraged; nonetheless, such projects may be approved if the council makes findings that the project is consistent with the neighborhood and town character and that the project is consistent with the Ross general plan.

(r) Maximum Floor Area. Regardless of a residentially zoned parcel's lot area, a guideline maximum of ten thousand square feet of total floor area is recommended. Development above guideline floor area levels may be permitted if the town council finds that such development intensity is appropriate and consistent with this section, the Ross municipal Code and the Ross general plan. Factors which would support such a finding include, but are not limited to: excellence of design, site planning which

minimizes environmental impacts and compatibility with the character of the surrounding area.

(s) Setbacks. All development shall maintain a setback from creeks, waterways and drainageways. The setback shall be maximized to protect the natural resource value of riparian areas and to protect residents from geologic and other hazards. A minimum fifty-foot setback from the top of bank is recommended for all new buildings. At least twenty-five feet from the top of bank should be provided for all improvements, when feasible. The area along the top of bank of a creek or waterway should be maintained in a natural state or restored to a natural condition, when feasible.

(t) Low Impact Development for Stormwater Management. Development plans should strive to replicate natural, predevelopment hydrology. To the maximum extent possible, the post-development stormwater runoff rates from the site should be no greater than pre-project rates. Development should include plans to manage stormwater runoff to maintain the natural drainage patterns and infiltrate runoff to the maximum extent practical given the site's soil characteristics, slope, and other relevant factors. An applicant may be required to provide a full justification and demonstrate why the use of Low Impact Development (LID) design approaches is not possible before proposing to use conventional structural stormwater management measures which channel stormwater away from the development site.

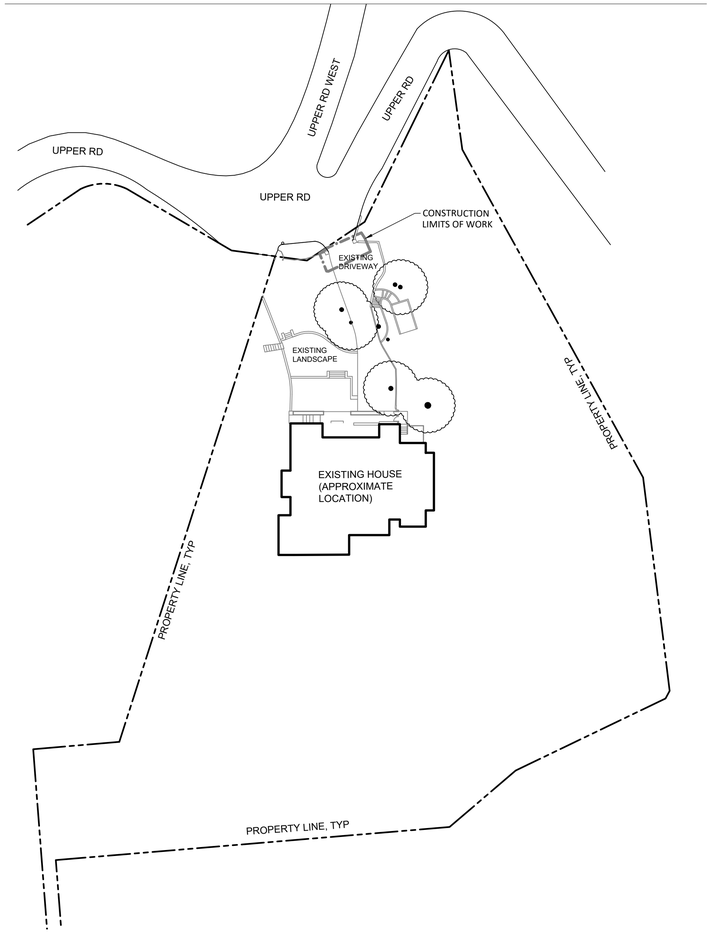
(1) Maximize Permeability and Reduce Impervious Surfaces. Use permeable materials for driveways, parking areas, patios and paths. Reduce building footprints by using more than one floor level. Pre-existing impervious surfaces should be reduced. The width and length of streets, turnaround areas, and driveways should be limited as much as possible, while conforming with traffic and safety concerns and requirements. Common driveways are encouraged. Projects should include appropriate subsurface conditions and plan for future maintenance to maintain the infiltration performance.

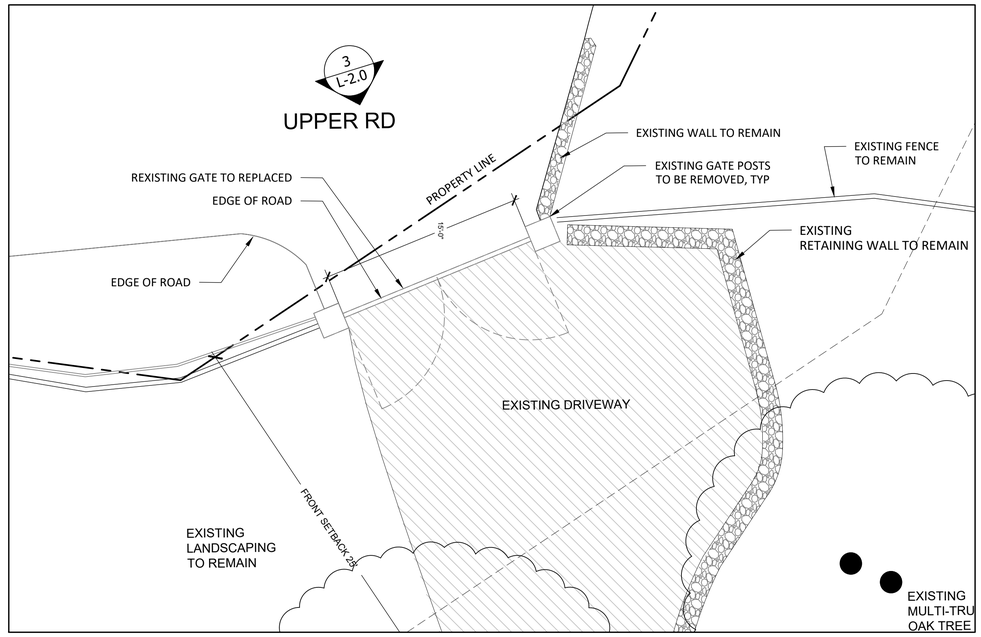
(2) Disperse Runoff On Site. Use drainage as a design element and design the landscaping to function as part of the stormwater management system. Discharge runoff from downspouts to landscaped areas. Include vegetative and landscaping controls, such as vegetated depressions, bioretention areas, or rain gardens, to decrease the velocity of runoff and allow for stormwater infiltration on-site. Avoid connecting impervious areas directly to the storm drain system.

(3) Include Small-Scale Stormwater Controls and Storage Facilities. As appropriate based on the scale of the development, projects should incorporate small-scale controls to store stormwater runoff for reuse or slow release, including vegetated swales, rooftop gardens or "green roofs", catch-basins retro-fitted with below-grade storage culverts, rain barrels, cisterns and dry wells. Such facilties may be necessary to meet minimum stormwater peak flow management standards, such as the no net increase standard. Facilities should be designed to minimize mosquito production. (Ord. 653 (part), 2014; Ord. 641 (part), 2013; Ord. 619 (part), 2010; Ord. 611 (part), 2008; Ord. 575 (part), 2003; Ord. 555, 2000; Ord. 543-1 (part), 1998; Ord. 514 §1 (part), 1993).

ATTACHMENT 2

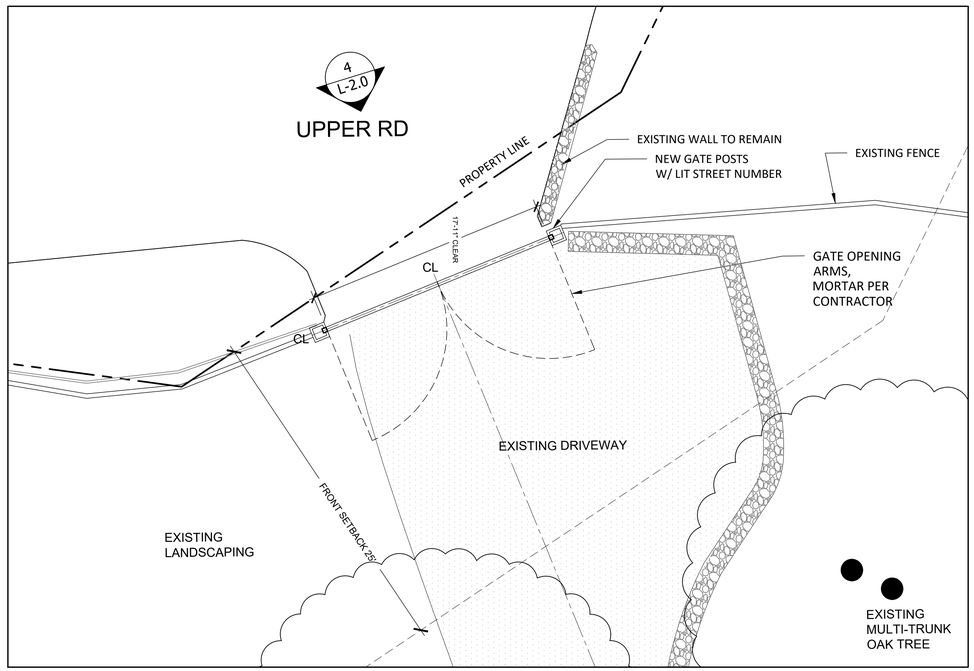
CONSTRUCTION WORK LIMITS (N.T.S.)





1 EXISTING DRIVEWAY AUTOGATE LAYOUT

3/16"=1'-0"



2 PROPOSED DRIVEWAY AUTOGATE LAYOUT

3/16"=1'-0"

3 PHOTO OF EXISTING AUTOGATE

n/a

STUDIO H2
landscape architecture
215 7TH AVENUE
SAN FRANCISCO CA 94118
415.412.7916

LICENSED LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT
HSIAOCHIEN CHUANG 5368
Signature
04/30/22
Renewal Date
07/31/20
Date
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

DRIVEWAY GATE

No.	Revisions / Issue	Date
	PLANNING REVIEW	07/31/20

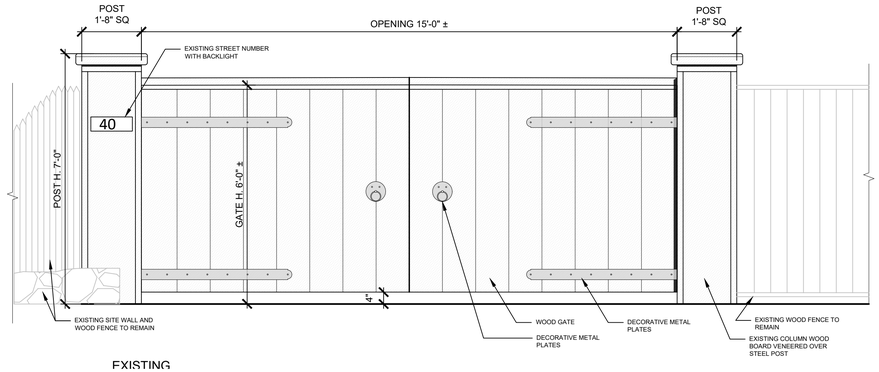
Sher Residence

40 Upper Road
Ross, CA 94957

APN: 073-071-08

Scale: As Noted
Date: 07.13.2020

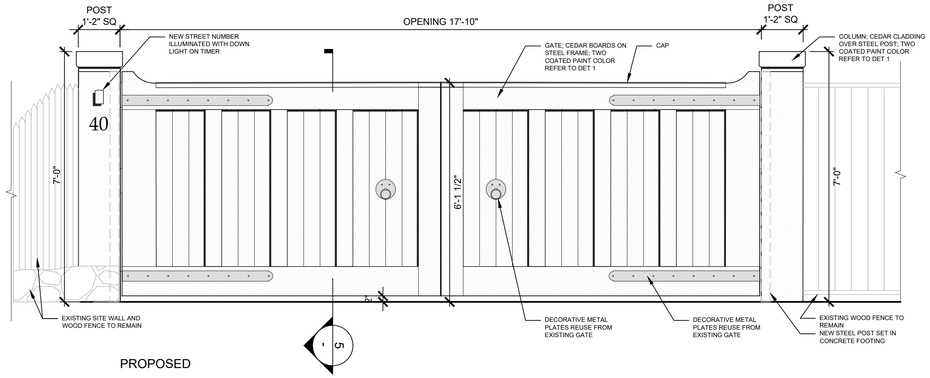
Sheet: L-1.0



EXISTING

3 Existing Gate Elevation

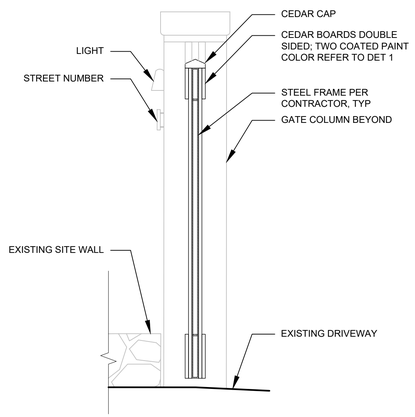
1/2"=1'-0"



PROPOSED

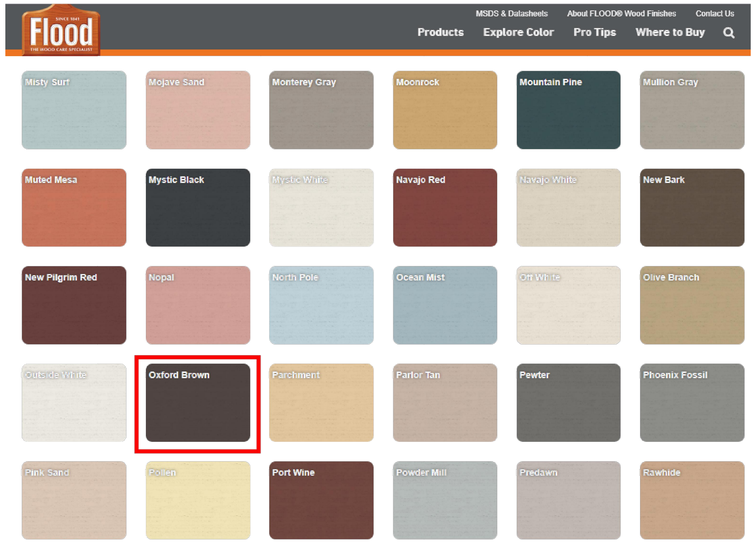
4 Proposed Gate Elevation

1/2"=1'-0"



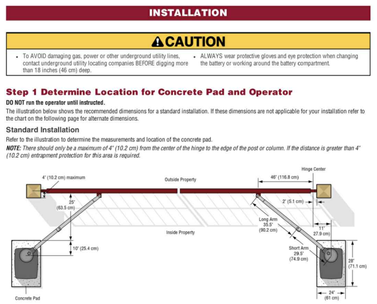
5 PROPOSED GATE SECTION

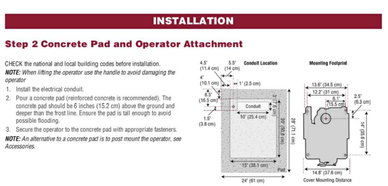
3/4"=1'-0"

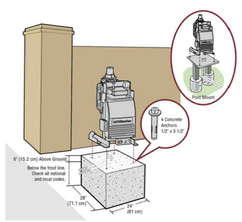


OXFORD BROWN BY FLOOD WOOD FINISHES

1 PROPOSED PAINT COLOR







2 GATE OPERATION SYSTEM

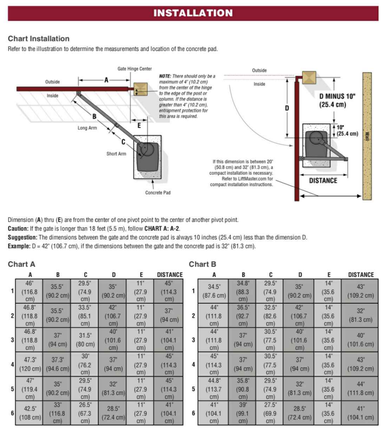


Chart A

	A	B	C	D	E	DISTANCE
1	40" (116.8 cm)	35.5" (90.2 cm)	29.5" (74.9 cm)	35" (90.2 cm)	11" (27.9 cm)	43" (114.3 cm)
2	46.5" (118.8 cm)	35.5" (90.2 cm)	33.5" (85.1 cm)	42" (106.7 cm)	11" (27.9 cm)	37" (94 cm)
3	46.5" (118.8 cm)	37" (94 cm)	31.5" (80 cm)	40" (101.6 cm)	11" (27.9 cm)	41" (104.1 cm)
4	47.3" (120 cm)	37.3" (94.6 cm)	30" (76.2 cm)	37" (94 cm)	11" (27.9 cm)	45" (114.3 cm)
5	47" (119.4 cm)	35" (90.2 cm)	29.5" (74.9 cm)	32" (81.3 cm)	11" (27.9 cm)	43" (114.3 cm)
6	42.5" (108 cm)	33" (116.8 cm)	26.5" (67.3 cm)	28.5" (72.4 cm)	11" (27.9 cm)	41" (104.1 cm)

Chart B

	A	B	C	D	E	DISTANCE
1	34.5" (87.6 cm)	34.8" (88.3 cm)	29.5" (74.9 cm)	35" (90.2 cm)	14" (35.6 cm)	43" (109.2 cm)
2	44" (111.8 cm)	36.3" (92.7 cm)	32.5" (82.6 cm)	42" (106.7 cm)	14" (35.6 cm)	32" (81.3 cm)
3	44" (111.8 cm)	37" (94 cm)	30.5" (77.5 cm)	40" (101.6 cm)	14" (35.6 cm)	40" (101.6 cm)
4	45" (114.3 cm)	37" (94 cm)	30.5" (77.5 cm)	37" (94 cm)	14" (35.6 cm)	43" (109.2 cm)
5	44.8" (113.7 cm)	35.8" (90.8 cm)	29.5" (74.9 cm)	32" (81.3 cm)	14" (35.6 cm)	44" (111.8 cm)
6	41" (104.1 cm)	39" (99.1 cm)	27.5" (69.9 cm)	28.5" (72.4 cm)	14" (35.6 cm)	41" (104.1 cm)

STUDIO H2
landscape architecture
215 7TH AVENUE
SAN FRANCISCO CA 94118
415.412.7916

LICENSED LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT
HSIAOCHIEN CHUANG LASA#
Signature
04/30/22
Renewal Date
07/31/20
Date
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

DRIVEWAY GATE DETAILS

No.	Revisions / Issue	Date
	PLANNING REVIEW	07/31/20

Sher Residence

40 Upper Road
Ross, CA 94957

APN: 073-071-08

Scale: As Noted
Date: 07.31.2020

Sheet: L-2.0

ATTACHMENT 3

Written Project Description – *may be attached***.**
A complete description of the proposed project, including all requested variances, is required. The description may be reviewed by those who have not had the benefit of meeting with the applicant, therefore, be thorough in the description. For design review applications, please provide a summary of how the project relates to the design review criteria in the Town zoning ordinance (RMC §18.41.100).

New auto gate and columns on existing driveway and demolish the existing gate and columns.

On one column to add new street number and a down light above.