

January 29, 2025

Ms. Suray Nathan  
Community Development Department  
Town of Los Gatos  
110 E. Main Street  
Los Gatos, CA 95031

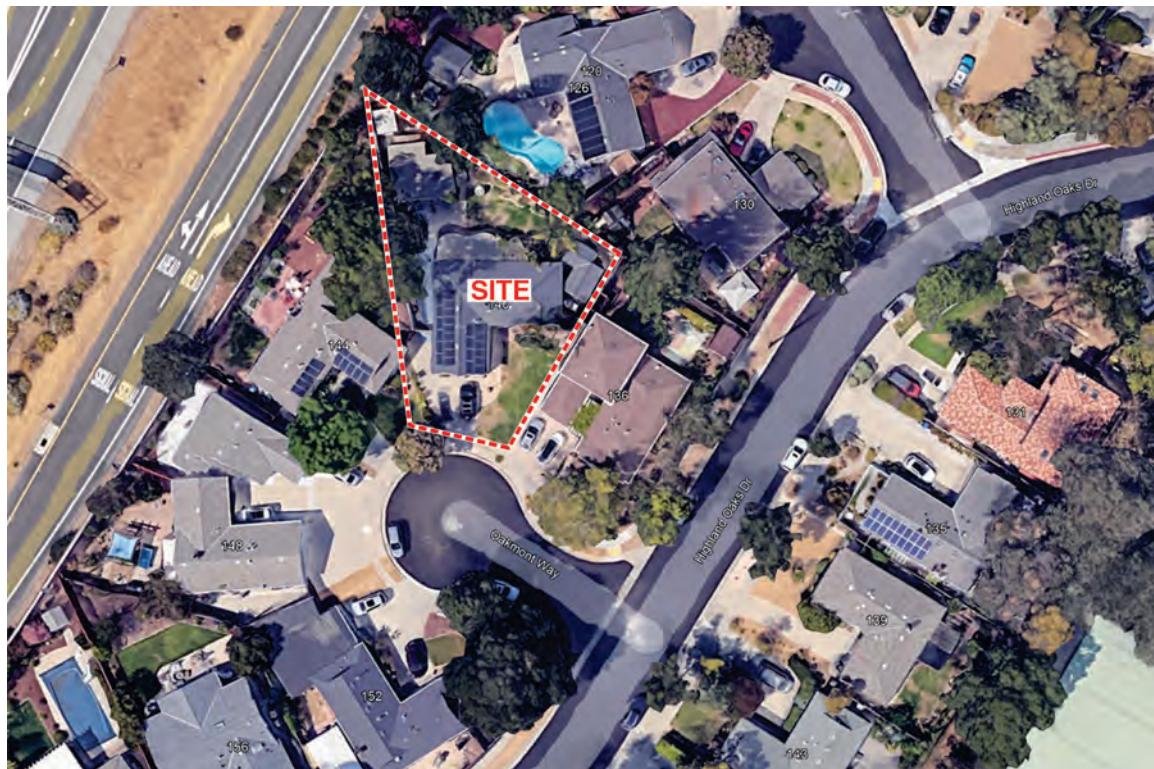
**RE: 140 Oakmont Way**

Dear Suray:

I reviewed the drawings and evaluated the neighborhood context. My comments and recommendations on the design are as follows:

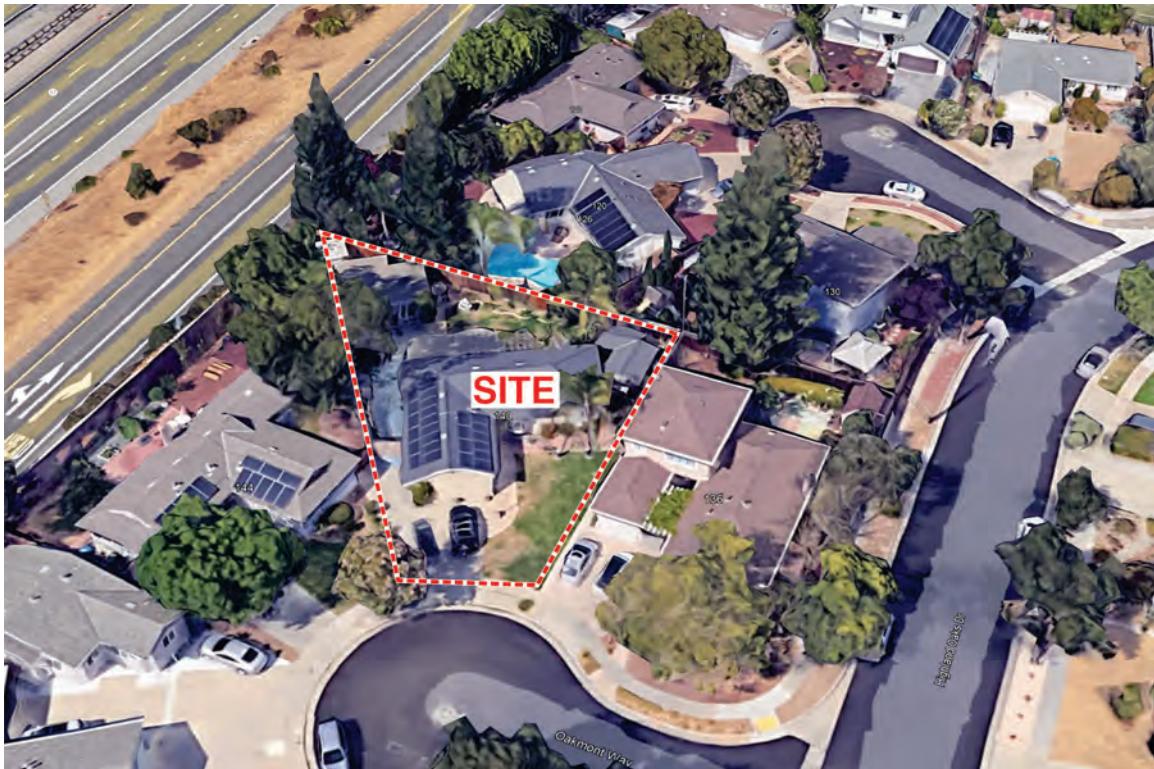
#### **NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT**

The site is located on a short cul-de-sac in an older neighborhood of traditional Ranch Style homes. Most nearby homes are one story in height but there are a couple of homes with partial second floors. Photos of the site and its surrounding neighborhood are shown on the following page.



6729 FAIRFIELD DRIVE  
SANTA ROSA, CA 95409

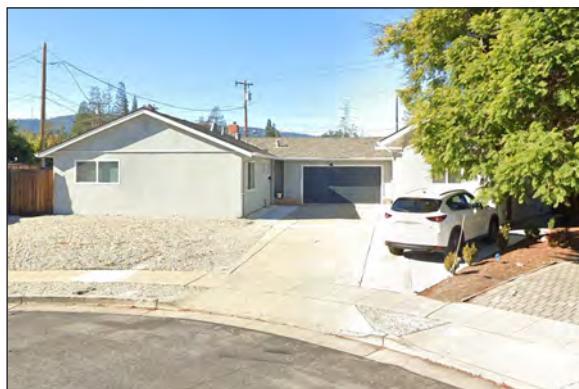
TEL: (707) 843-5747  
CDGPLAN@PACBELL.NET



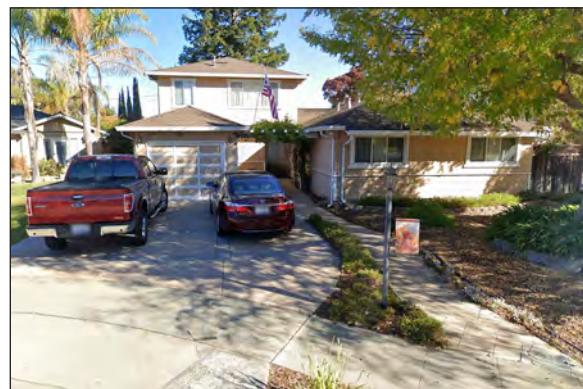
*The site and existing house*



*Nearby home across Oakmont Way*



*House immediately to the left*



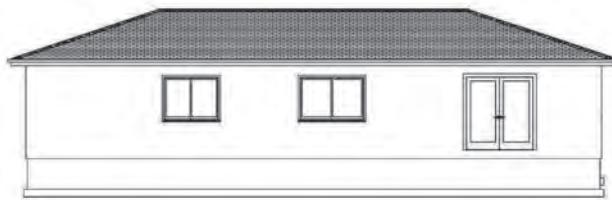
*House immediately to the right*

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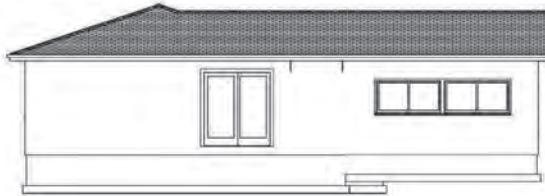
## EXISTING HOUSE



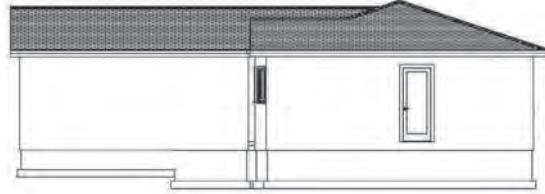
*Front Elevation*



*Rear Elevation*



*Left Side Elevation*



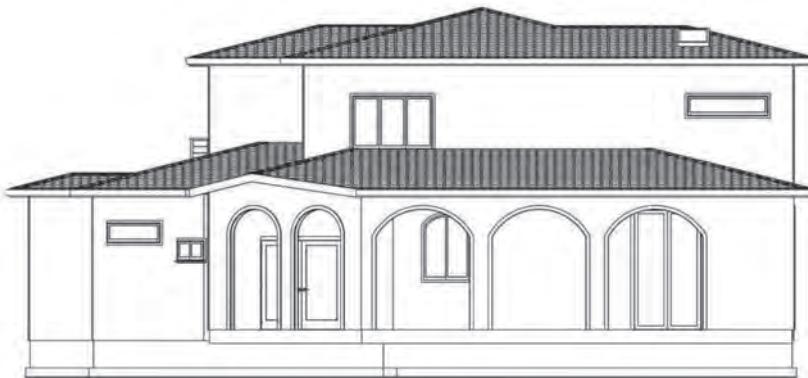
*Right Side Elevation*

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## PROPOSED PROJECT



*Front Elevation*



*Rear Elevation*



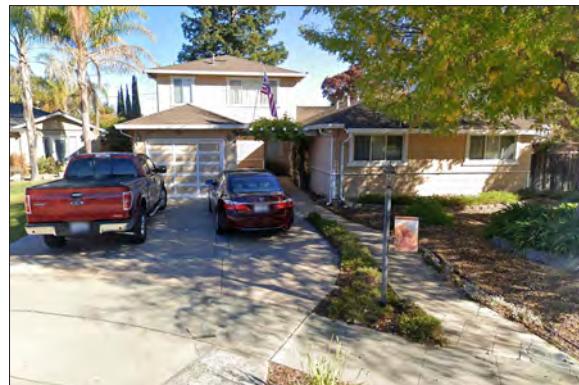
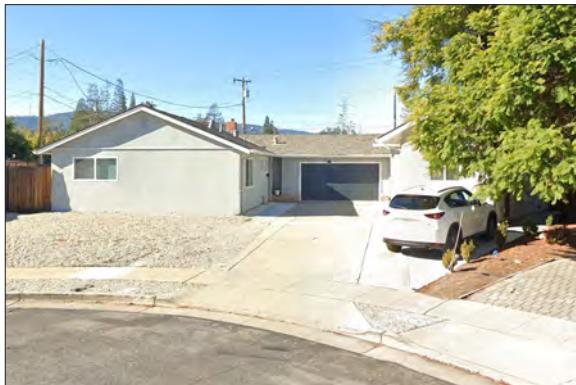
*Left Side Elevation*



*Right Side Elevation*

## ISSUES AND CONCERNS

As noted the vast majority of nearby homes are one story in height. The proposed additions to this home would substantially transform its scale and character to one quite foreign to not only its immediate neighborhood but the extended neighborhood around it. The proposed front facade illustration and neighborhood photos below show the proposed design in comparison with nearby neighborhood homes.



In evaluating this proposed project in the context of the town's Residential Design Guidelines, it would be difficult to conclude that it meets many of the adopted design guidelines.



Noted below are some of the guidelines where this proposed design appears to not be consistent with the Residential Design Guidelines.

#### 1.4 COMMUNITY EXPECTATIONS

- Homes will respect the scale and character of their immediate neighborhoods.*

#### GENERAL DESIGN PRINCIPLES

*The following principles have been used in the development of these guidelines, and will be used by the Town to evaluate plans and designs that are not covered by a specific design guideline.*

- Design to blend into the neighborhood rather than stand out*
- Reinforce prevailing neighborhood development patterns*
- Relate a structure's size and bulk to those in the immediate neighborhood*

#### 2.1 GENERAL NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN PRINCIPLES

*The following principles have been used as touchstones for the development of individual Neighborhood Pattern Guidelines. In the event that the specific guidelines do not clearly address a given condition, these principles, along with the General Design Principles ... should be consulted for direction. The following principles will be used by the deciding body when evaluating projects, and when considering the acceptability of unique proposals that vary from the specific guidelines.*

- Residential development shall be similar in mass, bulk and scale to the immediate neighborhood. Consideration will be given to the existing FAR's, residential square footages and lot size in the neighborhood.*

#### 2.3 FORM AND MASS

- 2.3.1 Design two story houses in predominantly one story neighborhoods to blend with the smaller homes.*
- 2.3.2 Avoid structures with height and bulk at front and side setback lines which are significantly greater than those of the adjacent homes.*

### **2.3.3 Design home entries that are sympathetic to others in the neighborhood**

- *Avoid very formal entries in neighborhoods that are more informal (e.g., Ranch Style) in character.*
- *Avoid tall entries unless that is the predominant entry type in the neighborhood.*

## **3.1 GENERAL BUILDING DESIGN PRINCIPLES**

*Selected architectural styles shall be compatible with the surrounding neighborhood, acknowledging that some neighborhoods have a variety of architectural styles and that diversity contributes to the Town's unique character.*

### **3.3.2 Height and bulk at front and side setbacks**

- *Two story houses may not be appropriate for every neighborhood. For neighborhoods dominated by one story homes, an effort should be made to limit the house to one story in height or to accommodate second floor space within the roof form as is common in the Craftsman Style.*
- *Avoid eave lines and roof ridge lines that are substantially taller than the adjacent houses.*
- *Give special attention to adapting to the height and massing of adjacent homes. Avoid tall, unbroken front facades when other nearby homes have more articulated front facades with horizontal wall plane changes.*
- *Avoid monumental scaled forms (e.g., towers or turrets) that contrast with the neighborhood architectural forms.*

### **3.6.3 Design entries with sensitivity to the surrounding neighborhood**

- *Avoid large and formal entries unless that is the norm for nearby houses. It is often best to start the design consideration with an entry type (e.g., projecting or under eave porch) that is similar to nearby homes.*

### **3.7.2 match window types and proportions to the architectural style and to the surrounding neighborhood**

#### **3.7.5 Special window shapes and styles should be used sparingly**

- *Avoid Estate Home Style windows (e.g., tall arched windows) in neighborhoods where the homes are more modest and informal in character.*

#### **3.7.4 Design the windows with attention to matching the traditional details of the architectural style**

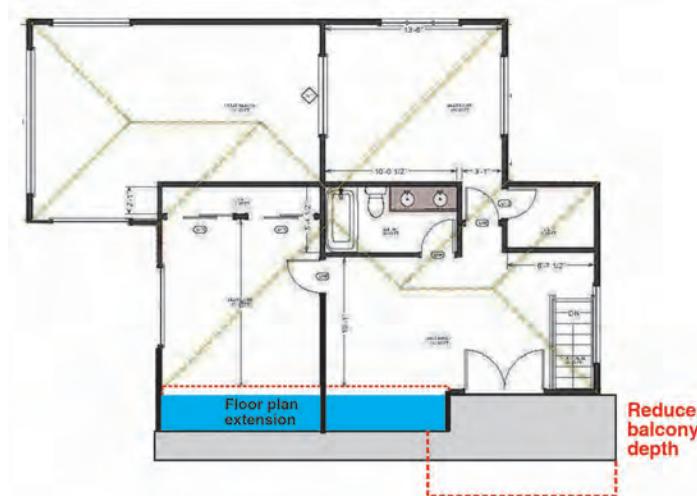
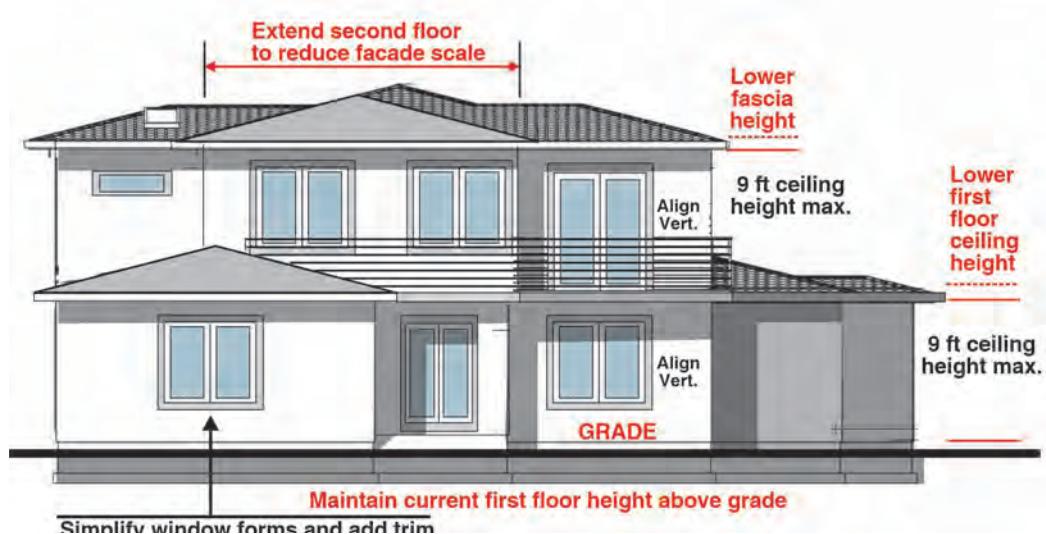
- *Most architectural styles - except Mission, Spanish Eclectic or Modern - should have wood trim around the windows. The trim width should be matched to the style, but in general, should not be less than 3 1/2 inches wide.*
- *Projecting window sills and heads are strongly encouraged unless the architectural style would not normally have those features.*
- *Wood trim is also encouraged on stucco houses unless the window frames are recessed at least 6 inches from the outside face of the wall. The use of stucco covered foam trim is strongly discouraged.*

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Building design refinements should focus on reducing the structure's scale and character to blend better with the other homes in its immediate neighborhood. Suggestions are shown below and include the following:



*Currently Proposed Front Facade*



1. Adjust the first floor elevation related to the site grade. The drawing shown with an elevated first floor may be inaccurate since the existing house is being retained.
2. Reduce interior ceiling heights to lower eave heights.
3. Add articulation to the second floor front facade to reduce the visual scale of the second floor addition.
4. Eliminate the entry tower in favor of an entry form more similar to the nearby ranch style homes.
5. Extend balcony to enhance the entry.
6. Simplify the windows and add trim.

These suggestions may need further study and refinement by the applicant and review by staff.

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

Sincerely,  
CANNON DESIGN GROUP



Larry L. Cannon

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