



March 30, 2026

Planning Department
Community Development Department, Town of Los Gatos
110 E. Main Street
Los Gatos, CA 95030

**Re: The Forrester Residence, 233 Forrester Road (formerly)
Project Description/ Letter of Justification**

To Whom it May Concern:

On behalf of Hilow Road LLC, I am pleased to present this new project to the Town of Los Gatos. The proposed project is a new two-story single family residence with an attached three car garage. A detached accessory dwelling unit is also proposed. This letter accompanies the submitted building plans and additional exhibits for the above referenced project, and contains descriptions of the property, the neighborhood, and how it complies with the Hillside Development Standards and Guidelines.

EXISTING PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

The property is located at the end of Forrester Road in a neighborhood of very large estate type properties with varying architectural styles, but many are quite formal and traditional. The neighborhood is zoned hillside, but Forrester Road is the basin of a natural valley. All the homes are not visible from anywhere other than the street.

This property was created by a recent SB-9 lot split, and is undeveloped. The property used to be a part of the parcel uphill and to the north. The remaining lot is just under 2 acres. The net site area is 1.79 acres after the ingress/egress easements are subtracted. It is a corner lot with Forrester Road frontage on both the south and east sides of the lot. Forrester Road becomes a private road at the western edge of the property and it continues up hill to serve three properties.

Much of this lot has a slope at or greater than 30%, with the exception of a 50 foot wide flatter area about 15 feet above the road and running east to west going from one side of the property to the other. This area contains a drainage pond that will be filled in. Drainage will be rerouted off property as a condition of the sale.

There are only three trees on the lot, all of which will be removed. None are of high value as they are split at the base and leaning heavily.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION

The proposed home is 5,973 SF and includes 5 bedroom suites, an office, a covered loggia, a covered veranda, and a 3-car garage. The home presents itself to the street on the south facing side, as that is the predominate viewing angle and aligns with the other homes on the street. The front facade is mostly symmetrical with a covered porch in the center. The garage is on the east side of the home along with the firetruck turnaround, while the living room, dining room and family rooms face the west where there is room for outdoor activities on the remaining flat area of the lot.

At the rear of the house, there is a site retaining wall holding back the hill for access around the house.

The home is designed in a traditional Mediterranean style. This includes a predominantly stucco facade with natural stone accent walls, and cast limestone lintels, sills, and trim. Materials also include exposed stained wood, shaped rafter tails, copper half round gutters and a two-piece clay tile, barrel roof. Wrought iron handrails and guards, and recessed, dark metal framed windows and doors complete the look. (See color samples on the Exterior Elevation sheets for specifics)

GRADING

The proposed home sits centered on the flattest area of the lot. There are two other factors that contributed to its final location. Although there is road frontage on two sides, only the eastern side is at an elevation that allows realistic vehicular access. The slopes on the south side are much too steep to traverse by car to reach the existing pad. The other factor is that there is no legal firetruck turnaround on Forrester road. A turnaround has to be placed onsite and the garage has been placed directly adjacent to it for efficiency. Other than the filling of the drainage pond, only minor grading is required for the driveway and turnaround.

The tallest site walls (5 feet tall) are located at the rear of the residence. These walls are placed to allow minimum access around the house and ADU. Additional site walls that are on average much less than 5', are adjacent to proposed street parking. There is no room for parking at the main level near the turnaround. Some additional grading is proposed below the pool and ADU, and is within the grading guideline limitations.

Preliminary Grading and Drainage plans prepared by the civil engineer details the cuts, fills, retaining walls and earthwork quantities.

LANDSCAPING

A preliminary landscape plan is included with the application. A pool is proposed between the house and ADU, all within the LRDA. The site is almost 100% void of any vegetation other than a couple scrub oaks, and native grasses. Dozens of new oak trees and olive trees are proposed around the perimeter of the development, and several specimen crape myrtles, pistache and arbutus marina punctuate the landscape design. A majority of the proposed plantings are California natives indigenous to the immediate area and are from the Town's plant list for Hillside areas. The landscaping is relatively minimal and encompasses a 30-40 foot radius from the house, leaving the hillside in native grasses and meadow flowers.

EXCEPTIONS JUSTIFICATION

Residence Outside the LRDA:

A somewhat narrow swath of LRDA is identified onsite as described above and is almost certainly man made in part to create the drainage pond. 95% of the house is within this LRDA with only a small sliver of the residence along the rear outside of it. The footprint of the home in large part matches the LRDA area and we humbly request this small exception. The proposed home is in keeping with all the homes in the area both in floor area and massing.

Site Walls Longer than 50 feet:

There is only one wall that is longer than 50 feet. The proposed site wall is located along the rear of the development behind the house more than 100 feet from the property line. This wall is completely hidden from offsite as it is just 5 feet from the house. This wall is required to keep the

hillside from being directly retained by the house, which would be much more challenging structurally and for site drainage.

Grading: Exceedance of Grading Limitations

The requested vertical cut of 8 feet is required to accommodate the firetruck turnaround. Of all the templates provided by the fire department, the proposed template requires the least amount of grading. As shown on the grading exceptions diagram, there is only a small portion of the turnaround that exceeds the grading guidelines limits.

At the uphill side of the home, some small areas of cut is being requested for access around the house and ADU. These areas have been kept to the bare minimum to gain access around the house. This is also necessary to provide good structural separation between the house and the retaining of the hill above. It also provides better site drainage.

COMPLIANCE WITH HILLSIDE DESIGN STANDARDS & GUIDELINES

The proposed home specifically addresses the Hillside Design Standards & Guidelines as follows:

II. CONSTRAINTS ANALYSIS:

- The proposed home preserves views and sits well below any visibility from viewing platforms.
- The proposed home is sited almost entirely within the LRDA, with a minor exception.

III. SITE PLANNING:

- Even though the average slope of the property is almost 33%, the proposed home is placed such that very little grading is required to reach it for both vehicles and pedestrian access.
- Proposed activity areas are also proposed on the flattest areas of the lot and completely in the LRDA.

IV. DEVELOPMENT INTENSITY:

- The proposed home floor area is very much in keeping with the neighborhood in both floor area and massing.

V. ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN:

- The traditional mediterranean style is both in keeping with the hillside setting as well as the formal estates character of the neighborhood.
- The materials proposed are integral color smooth stucco, natural stone veneer, and stained wood accents, all earth toned and will blend into the hillside. All meet stringent WUI classified fire resistant materials.
- An average LRV for all exterior surfaces has been calculated to meet the 30 LRV requirement.

VI. SITE ELEMENTS:

- Site walls are finished in natural earth tones to blend with the hillside and also match the house. All site walls are kept to 5' tall or less.

VII. LANDSCAPE DESIGN:

- All proposed plantings are California natives and/or drought tolerant.
- Proposed trees and shrubs are located in a natural and irregular pattern to blend with the natural landscape.

CONCLUSION

This house has been conceived from the beginning to be compatible with both the neighborhood and the site. The size, mass, color and exterior style are in keeping with the surrounding properties and will enhance the neighborhood. It complies with the 25 foot height limit and requires very minimal exceptions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Gary Kohlsaatt", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Gary Kohlsaatt
Architect C19245