

From: Eric Rafia <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, July 7, 2023 5:54 PM
To: Planning <Planning@losgatosca.gov>
Subject: 212 Thurston St, Los Gatos

[EXTERNAL SENDER]

As the owner of the adjacent property at [REDACTED], I am writing to you regarding the proposed development at 212 Thurston Street. I have been informed by the current owners of their intent to construct a new residence on this site. I would greatly appreciate any information regarding a public comment period, including its potential timeline.

My primary concern is the dilapidated garage, which is situated very close to or on the shared boundary line. To better illustrate the situation, I have included photographs demonstrating the disrepair and unsightly nature of this structure. Its location, infringing upon the setback area, is a pressing issue, especially if substantial development is being proposed.

I am categorically opposed to the garage remaining in its current location if that is part of their proposal. I urge that all necessary setback codes for this prospective development be strictly followed.

Furthermore, I have witnessed friends, property owners on Olive Street, face considerable resistance from their neighbors when proposing a second story for their similarly sized lot, resulting in a single-story construction. Although I am uncertain about the plans for 212 Thurston Street, if a second story is proposed, I believe the potential impact on second-story sightlines needs serious consideration. Should these sightlines significantly affect the privacy of adjacent properties, I suggest restrictions be placed on constructing a second story.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration. I wish you a pleasant weekend.

Best regards,

Eric Rafia











From: Eric Rafia [REDACTED] >
Sent: Wednesday, July 12, 2023 8:52 AM
To: Maria Chavarin <MChavarin@losgatosca.gov>
Cc: Sean Mullin <SMullin@losgatosca.gov>
Subject: RE: 212 Thurston St, Los Gatos

[EXTERNAL SENDER]

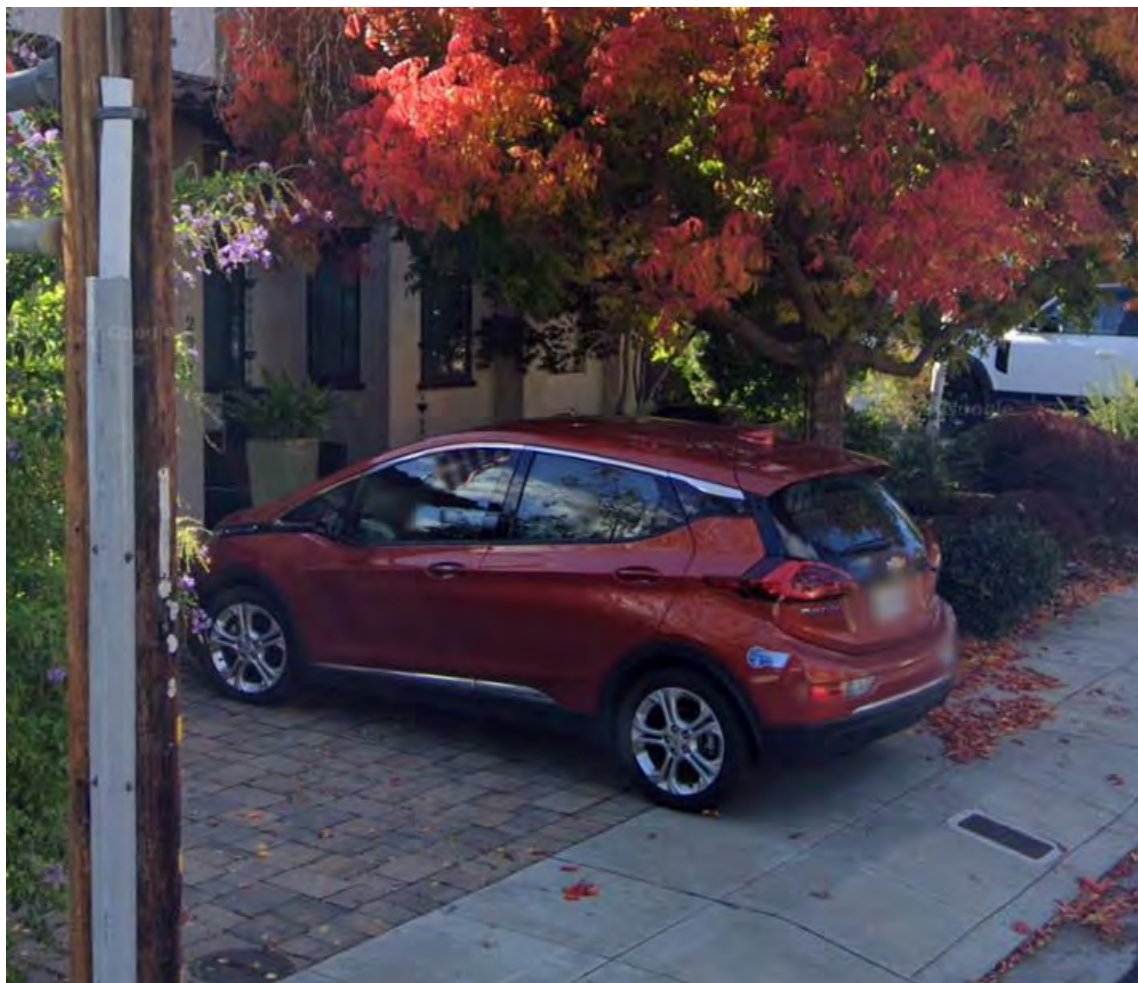
Thank you for sending this along. I reviewed the documents.

I see they in-fact do want to maintain the existing garage in its current place. This is not acceptable. There is currently a single-car garage, and it appears they have room to construct a new single-car garage in connection with their new house, within what is likely the required setback area, effectively netting them the same benefit. They were additionally aware of setback requirements when they acquired the property, so the encroachment into the setback requirements needs to end.

In addition, I noticed they have hired an architect which has done a lot of work in the Town and has a reputation for being well-connected. There is certainly nothing wrong with that, and I would argue it is smart, however I do note that the letter of justification cites that other properties nearby have reduced front yard setbacks, and thus somehow that justifies the same here. I think this is a stretch. 590 Monterey is a side yard setback for fairly new construction, so its an apples-to-oranges comparison. Furthermore, the adjacent property that encroaches into the right of way should in no way be used as justification for reducing setback requirements as that is in no way a benchmark which should be used. Looking up the street in the opposite direction, you will see that setbacks actually are fairly harmonious and that is the metric by which these plans should be reviewed and commented on.

Lastly, I would recommend that the garage be placed in such a manner that would yield a driveway that would completely accommodate a **large** vehicle or SUV/Truck. There are kids that play on that street, and pedestrian traffic should not be forced to navigate around the tail end of a vehicle parked in a driveway. An example of this on the street is below, at 239 Thurston Street – where you can see the driveway can't even accommodate a compact vehicle.

If that means there is a slightly reduced rear yard (but not the side yard) setback for the garage only to accommodate this, I would support some leniency there.



Thanks!

Eric

William Hopps




November 17, 2023

Maria Chavarin
Project Planner
Town of Los Gatos
Via Email: MChavarin@losgatoca.gov

RE: Site Application S-23-009

Dear Maria,

I am writing to voice my concerns about the pending development application for 212 Thurston Street. My property at  is behind and to the east of 212 Thurston. Our first knowledge of this planned construction was November 1st when the story poles were erected.

The proposed development is not keeping with the existing character of the neighborhood. The height and bulk of the property is considerably greater than the surrounding sites.

- The overall bulk of the building with the reduced rear setback exacerbates privacy issues for the properties behind the proposed development. The upstairs bedrooms in the proposed development have a clear line-of-sight into our home and outdoor living space. This loss of privacy is invasive.
- A loss of privacy at our property is particularly impactful since our homes are smaller in square footage, and therefore rely on the outdoor living space. Intruding on this space reduces the livability and desirability of our property.
- The proposed two-story structure eliminates sightlines of the surrounding hills and blocks sunlight from our property.

Your consulting architect raised many of these issues and noted the design was not consistent with your Residential Design Guidelines. These issues were not fully addressed in the revised application.

As a long-term resident that has raised a family in Los Gatos, I strive to be a thoughtful and considerate neighbor that is open to change. However, I am concerned that we are sacrificing the character of this neighborhood. If this project is approved, it is reasonable to expect that the neighboring properties will have larger structures approved for development, further eroding the charm and character of our Town.

Please advise me on next steps in the project's application process and how I can ensure my concerns are heard and addressed. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,



William Hopps

Carolyn M. Bechtel



November 20, 2023

Attention: Maria Chavarin, Planning Technician
Los Gatos

Re: 212 Thurston, Los Gatos
S-23-009

Dear Ms. Chavarin,

I reside at [REDACTED] (home owned by my daughter, Carly Bechtel Sereni). Several weeks ago I was alerted to an upcoming change in our neighborhood—specifically over the fence of my backyard—with the placement of story poles at 212 Thurston, indicating planned renovation of the property. This was quite a shock as I had not heard of any plans from the owners, and the story poles clearly show the effect it will directly have on my backyard and the rear of my home.

The beautiful Los Gatos mountain ridgeline and colorful trees I have enjoyed for so many years, as well as the natural light I will sorely miss. Even more problematic is the issue of privacy, as the owners must know their proposed second story windows will look directly into my bedroom windows.

I am not familiar with the process of planning and renovation in our neighborhoods, but did want to submit in writing my concerns about this proposed project and its effect on Olive Street neighbors.

Thank you,

Carolyn Bechtel

Christopher Marselli & Marta Iglesias-Xamani



December 4, 2023

Attention: Maria Chavarin, Los Gatos Assistant Planner

Re: 212 Thurston Street
Site Application S-23-009

Dear Ms. Chavarin,

We reside and are owners of the property at [REDACTED] Our yard borders the property at 212 Thurston St. Specifically, the existing garage in that property is right on our property line.

We are writing to communicate our concerns about the constructions taking place in that property:

We understand that there is no plan to make modifications to the existing garage. This garage does not comply with current setback codes- it's right on our property line, and it is in poor condition: there is cement missing between the cinderblocks and some of these cinderblocks are cracked and missing small pieces. In addition, its roof tiles have been coming detached and falling on our yard. Since there is major construction planned for this property and its garage infringes on our property, we would like to request the lack of code compliance and poor condition of this garage be addressed.

Besides this, the story pole placements and proposed building plans show a major impact to us. In addition to limiting our views and light, from what we understand, the windows in the back of the top story will look into both our daughter's and our son's bedrooms. These windows will also have a full view of our yard. We have a small house and we (and particularly our children) use our yard regularly. We would like our privacy concerns to be taken into consideration and learn what modifications can be made to the building plans to mitigate the effect to us and other neighbors on Olive St.

We also want to draw attention to the fact that there is a sign on the Thurston St. property that shows that a hearing will be scheduled but the date and time are blank. We learned from a neighbor that it would be on Dec. 13th, but other neighbors might not have advance notice of the time of this meeting, and therefore might not be able to participate and share their concerns.

Thanks in advance for your consideration,

Christopher Marselli and Marta Iglesias-Xamani

From: [REDACTED] >
Sent: Friday, January 5, 2024 9:38 AM
To: MChavarin@losgatoca.gov
Cc: Sean Mullin <SMullin@losgatosca.gov>
Subject: 212 Thurston st. S-23-009

[EXTERNAL SENDER]

Good morning. [REDACTED] here. As a resident of the neighborhood, I just wanted to make a couple comments on the proposed new home.

1. Overall, it looks like a nice home design that will be a great improvement from the current structure.
2. It looks like the applicant is asking for a reduced front setback from the usual 15ft. Given the reduced setback and the front sidewalk being so close, the 2 story front facade with a gable ridge/roof seems a bit overpowering and tall.
3. If you look at the rest of the street, there are no 2 story homes that have a gable roofline. It might be a better idea to implement a hip roof and give the look of a shorter 2 story wall plane at the reduced front setback.
4. I have attached a photo for your reference of a nearby home that is comparable in size and uses a hip roof, to lower the look while maintaining the same ridge height..

Just wanted to pass along a few possible ideas to what I think will be a nice home.
Thank you..





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