

Neighborhood Outreach Document

Minor Residential Development Application: **MR-22-002**
Property Owners: Rada and Mihailo Despotovic
280 Carlton Avenue, APN 424 16 067

Summary

- Total neighbors contacted: 9 of 9
- No concern received: 8 of 9 (6 explicit + 2 implicit)
 - No email reply after reasonable time, assumed no concerns: 1
 - No USPS mail reply after reasonable time, assumed no concerns: 1
- Have a concern: 1 of 9

Neighbors with no concerns

We spoke directly to these neighbors and gave them printed images of the suggested remodeled house exterior, as well as our contact information (full name and address, email, mail and phone):

On 1/31/22:

- Shkolnik Boris & Sasha, [REDACTED] Carlester Dr, LOS GATOS, CA 95032
- Li Fiona H, [REDACTED] Carlester Dr, LOS GATOS, CA 95032
- Taylor Michael B, [REDACTED] Carlton Av, LOS GATOS, CA 95032
- Paulding Larry D & Marsha J Trustee, [REDACTED] Carlton Wy, LOS GATOS, CA 95032
- Occupant, [REDACTED] Carlton Wy, LOS GATOS, CA 95032

On 2/1/22:

- Occupant, [REDACTED] Carlton Av, LOS GATOS, CA 95032

Email sent on 1/31/22:

- Jarugula Sarath & Nalamothu Vamsee Trustee, [REDACTED] Townsend St Unit 325, SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94107
 - We knew these neighbors before they moved to San Francisco. We once did a project together (replacement of fence between our properties). They haven't replied with any concerns.

USPS mail sent on 1/31/22:

- Zhong Jian & Zhang Lan, [REDACTED] Innes Rd, SCARSDALE, NY 10583
 - We don't know these neighbors/owners. We sent our information package to them via USPS. Haven't received a reply so we assume no concerns.

Neighbors with concerns

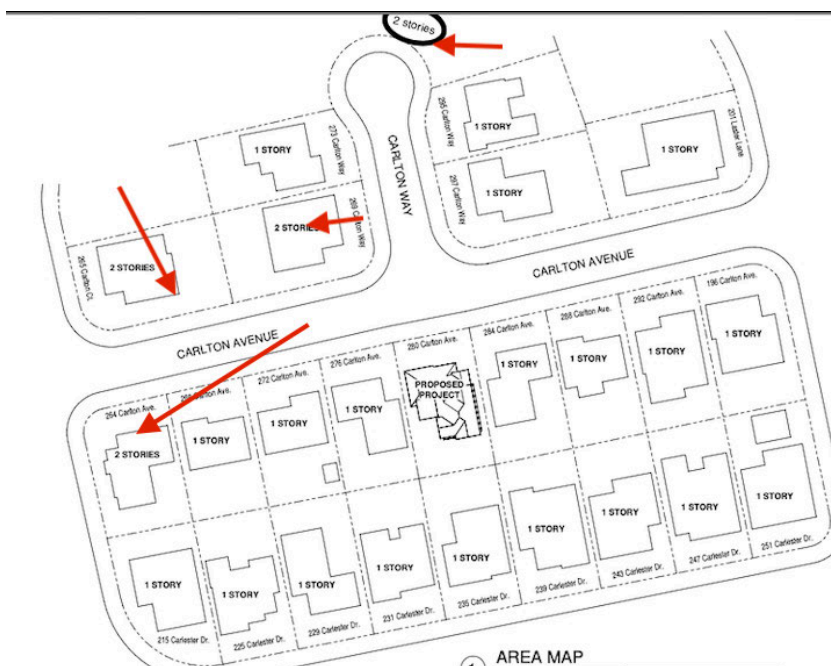
On 1/31/22, we talked in person to the following neighbor with a general and non-specific concern about 2nd floor proposals. They did not want any additional information nor further discussions with us:

- Wong Becky Trustee, [REDACTED] Carlester Dr, LOS GATOS, CA 95032

Potential concerns mitigation / addressing

General steps taken to address general concerns from any and all neighbors

- We worked very hard on the design and we believe it would be a good conceptual and cosmetic fit for the whole neighborhood
- We are very excited about the prospect of additional indoor space for our 5th grade twin boys that currently go Blossom Hill Elementary in Los Gatos. We'd like to retain our existing backyard space, play areas, and landscaping
- We did anticipate that a partial 2nd floor addition could be a sensitive issue and we already took many measures during planning to proactively address bulk, mass, and privacy. In particular, please note the following in our plan:
 - We didn't make the 2nd story as tall or massive as we could have or is allowed; it's only a partial 2nd floor, a minimum possible for 2 rooms for our kids, plus a bathroom for them
 - We kept the plate heights for both floors at 8 feet only. As a result, the highest ridge is just at 22 feet above floor (roughly 23'-6" above grade), more than 6 feet lower than the maximum allowable height
 - Facing the street, the 2nd floor is mostly buried under the extension of the existing roof, with just a couple of dormers indicating it. This makes the house smaller than it actually is and reduces the bulk. (That is consistent with the 2nd floor design at the nearby 264 Carlton Avenue, 4 houses to the west in the same block.)
 - Despite being allowed per city code, we did not extend the existing non-conforming wall to the 2nd floor along the east side of the property. Instead, we pushed it back to comply with the current setback. Furthermore, all 2nd floor windows along the east side have a 50" sill height, to respect the neighbor's privacy
- Our property lot is sub-standard to R-1:8 (being only 6,425 SF), and as mentioned above, the only way to add the necessary space without compromising the already-small backyard, was to add a second floor
- As per area map, there are already four (4) two-story houses in our immediate neighborhood, including 269 Carlton Wy that is part of this outreach document:



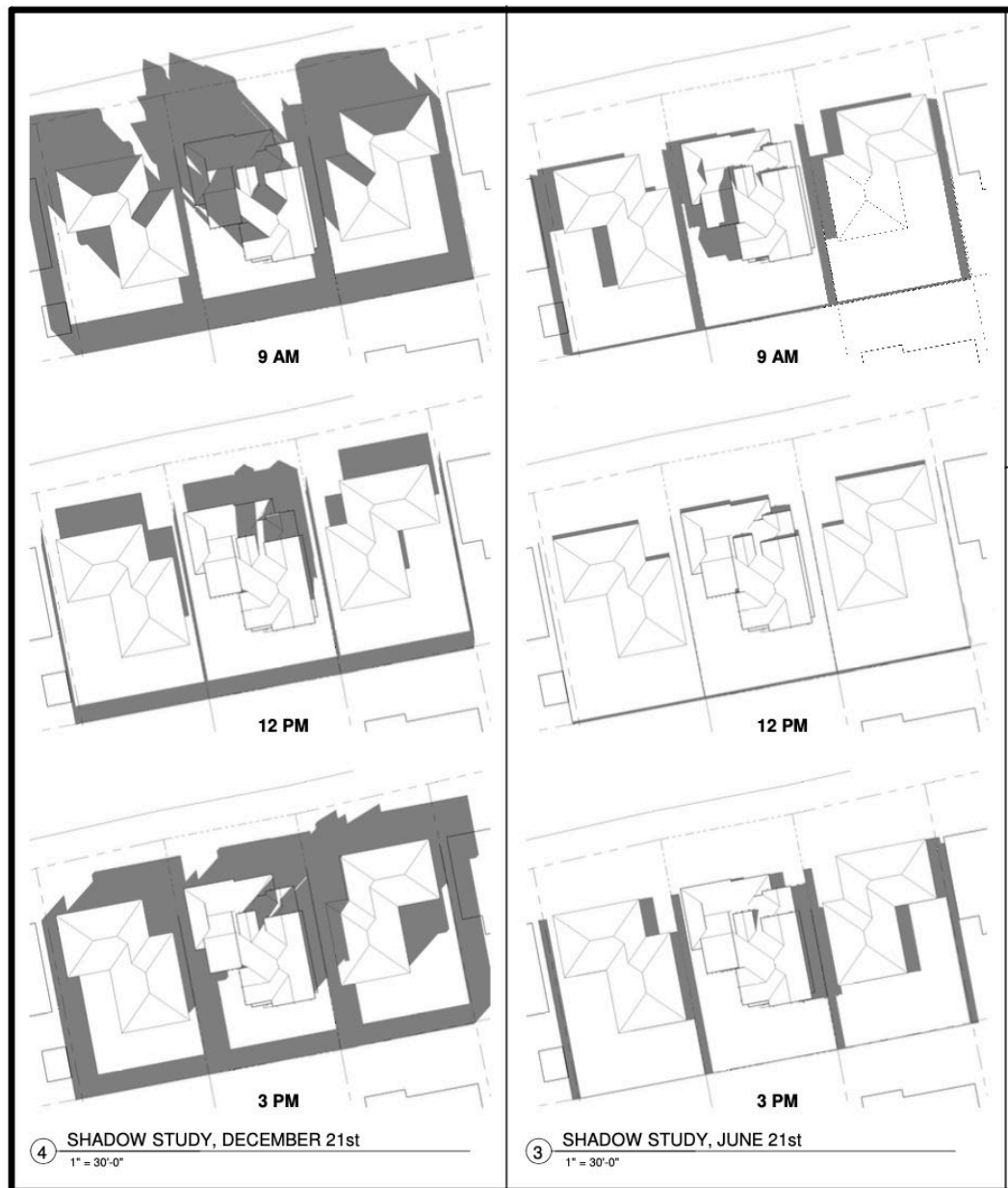
Specific steps related to potential specific concerns from 239 Carlester

We don't know the specifics of the concern(s), except a broad "don't like 2nd floors". They did not want to see the pictures nor discuss our plan details. However, we can envision two groups of concerns:

- Sun-blocking concerns
- Privacy concerns

Sun-blocking mitigation:

We don't believe this would be a valid concern because the surveyor's shadow study calculations show that the proposed design will never obstruct any part of the 239 Carlester house. Please see "AREA MAP, STREETSCAPES AND SHADOW STUDY" (A0.2 part of the plan) for details and the following picture:



Privacy mitigation:

- We could have put more windows in the back and on the side but we limited their number and size due to potential privacy concerns
- The only larger upstairs window toward 239 Carlester is a bedroom window. Our kids are in school and enrichment programs most of the day, so that room will be used primarily for sleeping. All larger 2nd floor windows will have privacy blinds
- Depending on the appeal(s) and potential commission suggestions resulting from it we are open to accommodate additional reasonable requests such as:
 - planting more trees in the backyard to increase privacy
 - increasing the fence height on certain segments to increase privacy

We hope this document will be helpful while making a decision on our application.

Thank you for your consideration.

Rada Despotovic



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(408) 348-3730

Mihailo Despotovic



mihailod@me.com
(408) 348-2442

Neighborhood Outreach Document **PART II (Responses to Complaints)**

Minor Residential Development Application: **MR-22-002**
Property Owners: Rada and Mihailo Despotovic
280 Carlton Avenue, APN 424 16 067
3/16/2022

Summary

- Neighbors that complained:
 - [REDACTED] Carlester Dr, LOS GATOS, CA 95032
 - [REDACTED] Carlester Dr, LOS GATOS, CA 95032

We would like to re-emphasize that during the design we already paid particular attention to all neighbors' privacy as clearly documented in the design plan, and more specifically in our architect's answers to the city consultant architect's remarks (part of our file).

We had an initial walk around the neighborhood and talked in person to 7 neighbors, of which 6 initially did not have any complaint. We also contacted 2 remote neighbors: one replied to our email saying no concerns and the other did not respond to our mail (they are located in New York; their tenant had no complaints). This has been already documented in the previous Neighborhood Outreach Document — also part of our file.

In addition to those preemptive efforts, we welcomed the feedbacks from two above mentioned neighbors and immediately had several additional meetings and conversations with the city officials (Savannah and Ryan), the city arborist who visited our residence (Rob), our architect, and our builders.

Based on those meetings to further address these privacy concerns, we created a custom letter for each of the two neighbors, with specific steps that we are willing to take.

[REDACTED] case ([REDACTED] Carlester)

Please see the [REDACTED] pdf letter which is enclosed in our file (uploaded by Savannah on 3/16/2022 per her email, also on page 3 of this document) which explains in details how we intend to address their concerns.

We attempted to deliver a paper copy of that letter in person on:

- **3/16/2022 @ 10AM** — nobody appeared to be at home
- **3/16/2022 @ 3:40PM** — nobody appeared to be at home

Then:

- **3/16/2022 @ 6:50PM** — [REDACTED] husband) opened the door and we had a good conversation. We explained how we want to address their concerns and left the letter with him. He said he understood our approach and that they will think about it. We encouraged him to talk directly to us or to the city in case they have any further remarks. We hope we reduced the probability of them filing a formal complaint.

[REDACTED] case ([REDACTED] Carlester)

Please see the [REDACTED].pdf letter which is enclosed in our file (uploaded by Savannah on 3/16/2022 per her email, also on pages 4 and 5 of this document) which explains in detail how we intend to address their concerns.

We attempted to deliver a paper copy of that letter in person on:

- **3/16/2022 @ 10:40AM** — we rang once and heard steps inside the house but no answer. We rang again and someone shut the blinds on one of the windows. We then decided to leave and try later.
- **3/16/2022 @ 3:40PM** — we rang once and again heard steps inside and a dog barking. We waited and then rang the 2nd time and heard the sound of someone approaching the entrance door and locking it from inside. We waited a bit more and nobody showed up. At that point we decided to call Savannah and to let her know that we don't feel comfortable going the 3rd time. We left the letter in the mailbox.
- At this point, unfortunately, we can only wait and see if they file a formal complaint and then go from there.

We hope this document will be helpful while making the final decision on our application.

Thank you for your consideration.

Rada Despotovic



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Mihailo Despotovic



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RE: 280 Carlton Ave MR-22-002 Neighbor Comments March 15, 2022

To: [REDACTED], [REDACTED] Carlester Dr

Wednesday, March 16th 2022

Original concern(s):

[...] the current plan shows a huge window that is direct across from our two windows. One of them is the master bedroom, another one - is my son's bedroom (8th grader). This is a huge concern to our privacy. [...] I would politely ask to either relocate that window so it does not overlook directly into our bedrooms or to make it into the narrow top window above average person height.

Response:

During design, we paid particular attention to neighbors' privacy as documented in the design plan, and more specifically in our answers to the city consultant architect's remarks (all available publicly on the city website).

In addition to those, we welcomed your feedback and immediately had several additional meetings with city officials (Savannah and Ryan), the city arborist on site (Rob), our architect and our builders.

Based on those meetings and to further address your privacy concerns, we offer the following:

- Plant several screening evergreen trees (Rob recommended Italian Cypress). We already have a 3 feet head start (due to elevated landscaping near the fence) and the initial trees will be ~6 feet tall so that yields instant ~9 feet of privacy. Per Rob, they grow 2-3 feet every year so by the time our kids are in high school we will have almost 20 feet of height there. Planting these trees is a standard procedure and a go-to privacy solution in Bay Area.
- Increase the height of the fence between our properties by 1 foot lattice (per city recommendation)

Please also note that relocating or resizing of the window is not an option because it is the (legally required) fire escape ("egress") window for that room.

We sincerely hope that all this helps with your concerns. If not, please feel free to contact us directly.

Regards,

Mihailo Despotovic

Rada Despotovic

RE: 280 Carlton Ave MR-22-002 Neighbor Comments March 15, 2022

To: [REDACTED], [REDACTED] Carlester Dr

Wednesday, March 16th 2022

Concern:

Privacy – The second story can cause privacy impacts for adjacent and nearby homes by creating unwanted view points from windows that would allow someone to look into the yards and private spaces of the neighbors. [...]

Response:

During design, we paid particular attention to neighbors' privacy as documented in the design plan, and more specifically in our answers to the city consultant architect's remarks (all available publicly on the city website).

In addition to those, we welcomed your feedback and immediately had several additional meetings with city officials (Savannah and Ryan), the city arborist who came on site (Rob), our architect and our builders.

Based on those meetings and to further address your privacy concerns related to the big backyard window, we offer the following:

- Plant several screening evergreen trees between us and 235 Carlester (Rob recommended Italian Cypress). We already have a 3 feet head start (due to elevated landscaping near the fence) and the initial trees will be ~6 feet tall so that yields instant ~9 feet of privacy. Per Rob, they grow 2-3 feet every year so by the time our kids are in high school we will have almost 20 feet of height there. Planting these trees is a standard procedure and a go-to privacy solution in Bay Area.
- Increase the height of the fence between our property and 235 Carlester by 1 foot lattice (per city recommendation)
- As we don't share any fence with you, we can also offer to increase the fence between us and 284 Carlton by 1 foot lattice

Please note that (per Rob) we cannot plant any trees between us and 284 Carlton due to the power pole and power lines configuration in that area.

Please also note that relocating or resizing of the backyard window is not an option because it is the (legally required) fire escape ("egress") window for that room.

The other side window in that room is small and already elevated (it will be above our kid's writing desk).

Concern:

Neighborhood Pattern - I live in a neighborhood that consists of predominantly one-story homes - eight out of nine homes on Carlton Avenue are one-story and eighteen out of eighteen homes on Carlester Drive are one-story. Currently, the only two-story home on Carlton is on a corner lot. The second-story addition will change the appearance and characters of the homes on Carlton and Carlester neighborhood.

Response:

Per consulting architect's feedback document, the "NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT" chapter, there are multiple 2-story houses in the relevant area (which is wider than quoted in the concern) and there were no compliance violations found by the consulting architect nor the city.

Concern:

Sunlight and shade – [...]

Response:

Per extensive Shadow Study, plan document, page A0.2, there is no sunlight and shade impact to 239 Carlester.

We sincerely hope that all this helps with your concerns. If not, please feel free to contact us directly.

Regards,

Mihailo Despotovic

Rada Despotovic

Neighborhood Outreach Document

PART III (Summary Outreach)

Minor Residential Development Application: **MR-22-002**
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3/22/2022

Summary

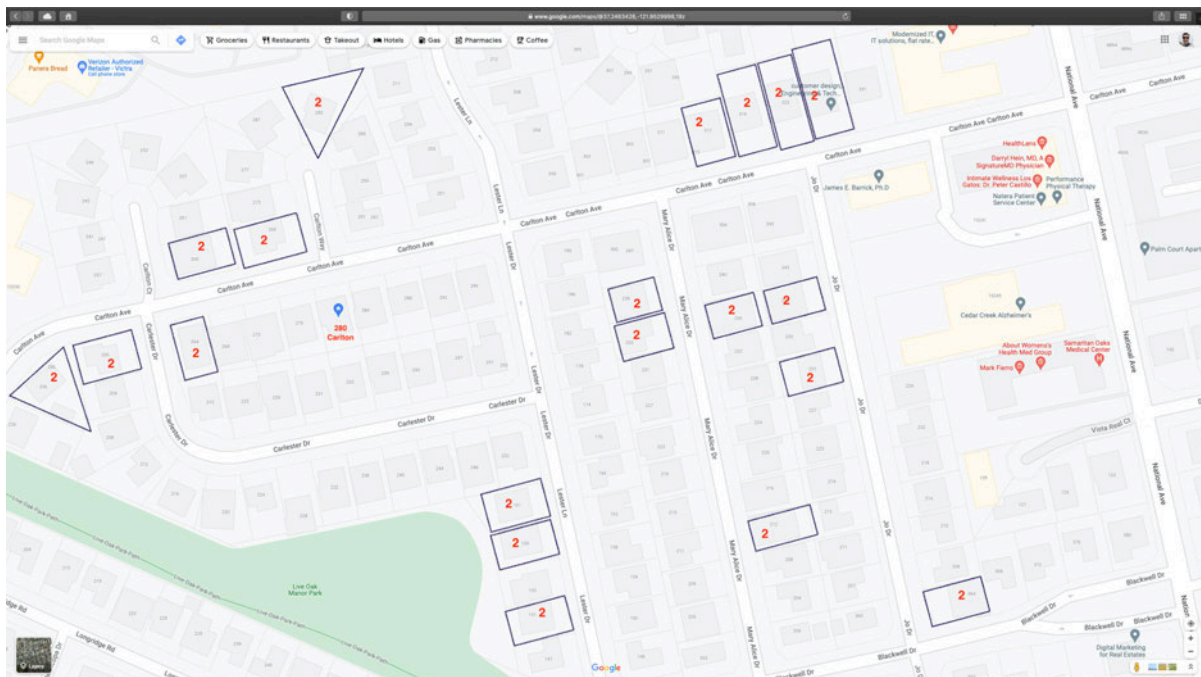
- One additional neighbor (name and address withheld) complained
- 235 Carlester neighbors rejected our idea of planting the trees and elevating the fence and also had additional privacy comments on our windows

An anonymous neighbor case – NEW CASE

- > **1. A one-story community**
- > **Carlton, Carlester and neighboring streets predominantly**
- > **have one-story homes. [...]**

As documented previously, and as per the consulting architect report, the close neighborhood we are in already has two 2-story houses (one just across the street and another one just three houses away on the same street). On top of that, we did a survey of a slightly wider neighborhood and documented twenty 2-story houses around us. This survey (in a form of a Google maps view with annotated 2-story houses) was sent via email to Savannah and she included it into our case file.

For convenience, here is a smaller version of that picture:



> Although there are 2-story houses in the neighborhood, they blend in as corner > properties or in a cul de sac.

Today we confirmed with Ryan and Savannah that there are no zoning laws against non-corner and/or non-cul-de-sac houses having 2nd story in our neighborhood. Also, the survey of the wider neighborhood shows many 2-story houses which are not on a corner lot or in cul-de-sac. The closest one would be on 239 Mary Alice Dr, mere 150 yards from our house.

For reference, this is what the back of 239 Mary Alice Dr looks like (this is not a corner house):



And this is what the back of 264 Carlton looks like (this is a corner house):



> 2. Privacy

Since this is essentially the same complaint as the existing complaints from [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] Carlester, please see the [REDACTED] case below for how we plan to approach this.

**> I have never thought of building a second story on my property
> out of respect and courtesy to my friendly neighbors.**

We sincerely hope that the commission will focus on facts, codes, and zoning laws and not statements that are personal, biased, and/or cannot be proven. People don't build 2nd stories for many reasons, the top two being cost and inconvenience (one has to live outside the house for many months while it is being built).

██████████ case (██████████ Carlester) – OUR REPLY TO THEIR REPLY

██████████ family rejected our proposal to plant trees and increase the fence size.

I am sure we can find another solution. In specific, their response was:

**> Upon further inspection of the plans for the proposed second story,
> we saw that both second-story bedrooms have windows on the sides - those
> windows address the egress requirements. Therefore, the windows that
> face ██████████ Carlester Dr are not required per city code.**

We think this pertains to the statement we made in the previous letter saying: *“Please also note that relocating or resizing of the window is not an option because it is the (legally required) fire escape (“egress”) window for that room.”*

Upon further consultations with our architect and also Savannah and Ryan, the ██████████ are indeed correct here and we are open to accommodating the plan changes to position the egress windows on the sides and change the nature of the backyard windows.

At this point, and as per agreement with Ryan and Savannah and since every plan change incurs additional cost and we are not sure what change(s) exactly to implement (we need the commission to advise us on that), we will make this generic statement which should apply to all current and potential future privacy concerns:

We are open to reasonable plan change(s) the commission decides as appropriate here, as long as we can legally call and use the 2nd floor rooms as our children's bedrooms. We know that some neighbors proposed some solutions and we also proposed some on earlier meetings as well (moving windows, reducing windows, partial frosting). We are looking forward to the commission hearing to see which of those solution(s) would be acceptable to all parties involved.

We again hope this document will be helpful while making the final decision on our application.

Thank you for your consideration.

Rada Despotovic

Handwritten signature of Rada Despotovic in black ink.

radadespotovic@me.com
(408) 348-3730

Mihailo Despotovic

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