



September 8, 2020

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

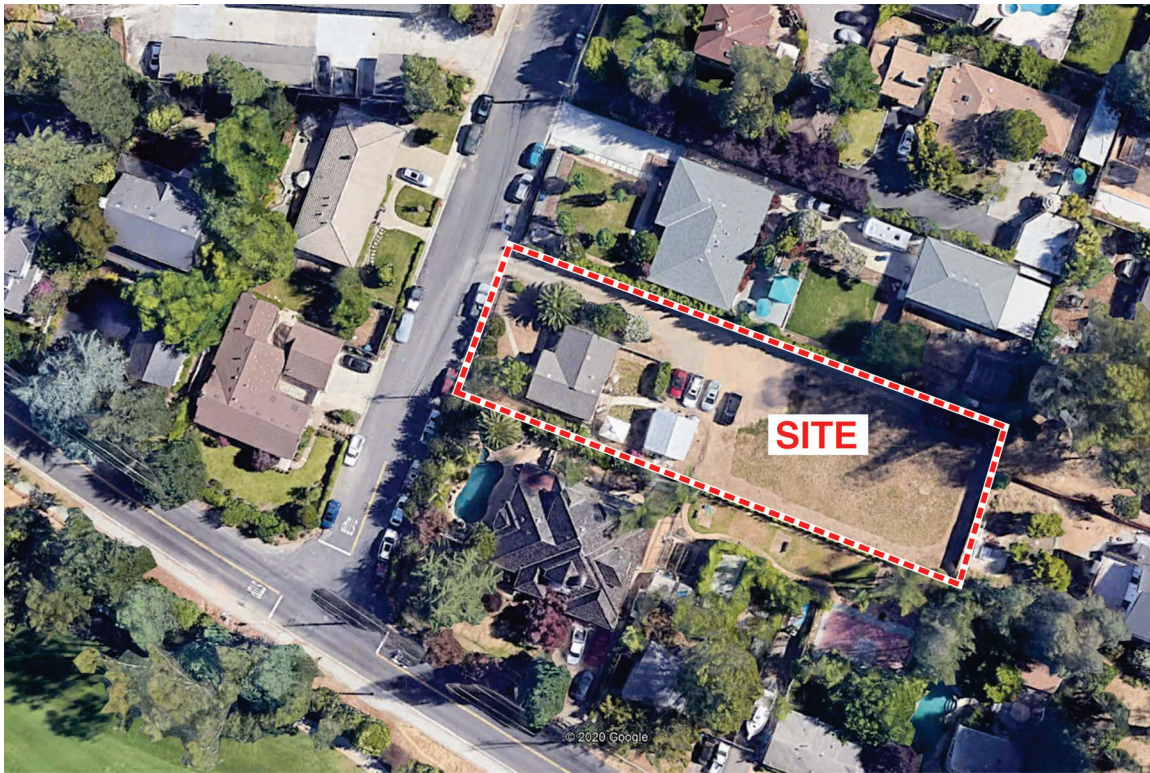
RE: 14300 Lora Drive

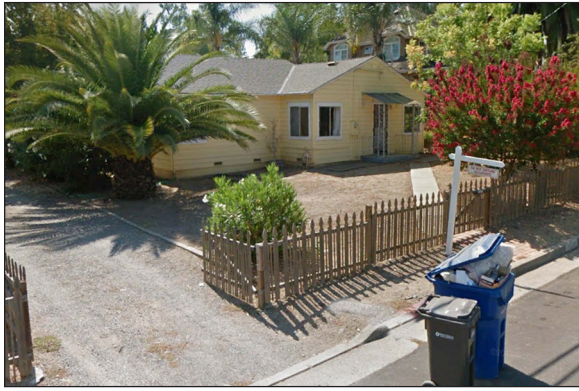
Dear Jocelyn:

I reviewed the drawings and evaluated the site context. I have previously reviewed one other house on this block. My comments and recommendations are as follows:

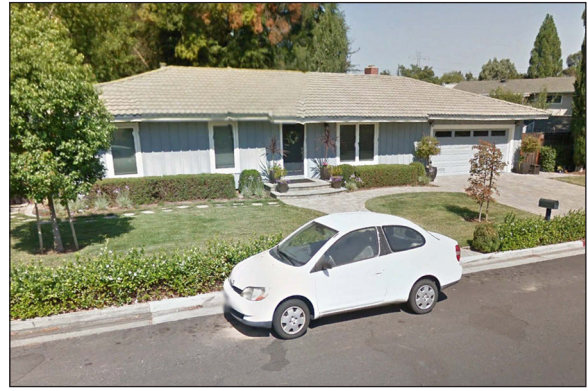
Neighborhood Context

The site is a deep lot located in an established neighborhood of largely one-story homes with a scattering of two-story homes. Photographs of the neighborhood are shown on the following page.





The Site and existing house



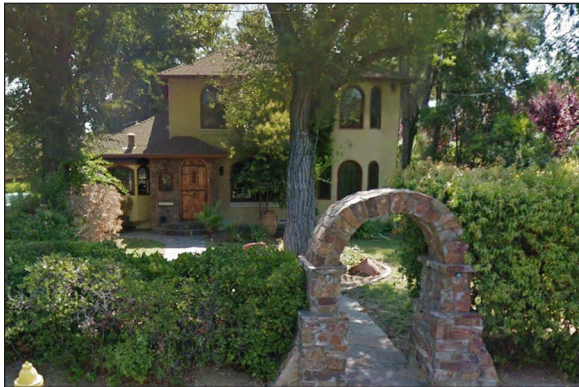
House immediately across Lora Drive



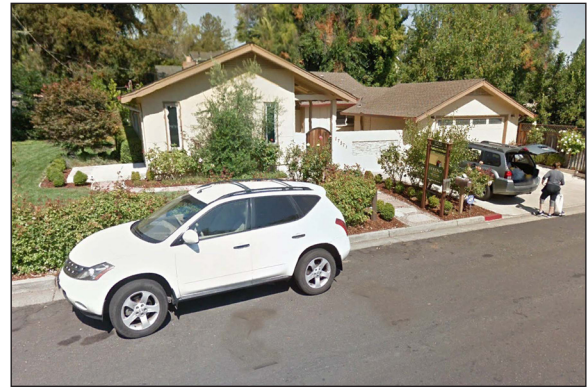
House to the immediate left



House to the immediate right



Nearby house to left



Nearby house across Lora Drive



Aerial Photo



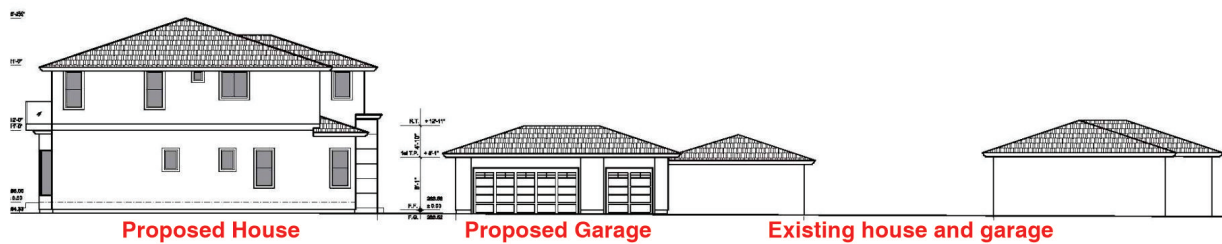
Nearby multifamily homes across Lora Drive

OVERVIEW

The proposed house is two-stories in height, and would be located behind an existing one-story home on the site which will remain. - See air photo with superimposed site plan below and the aerial photo on the previous page



The proposed house has a site footprint that is similar to others in the immediate neighborhood, but its mass is larger than others. The proposed two-story design has no clear architectural style, although I am assuming that it is intended to resemble a Mediterranean Style home - See proposed elevations and sketch below and on the following page.



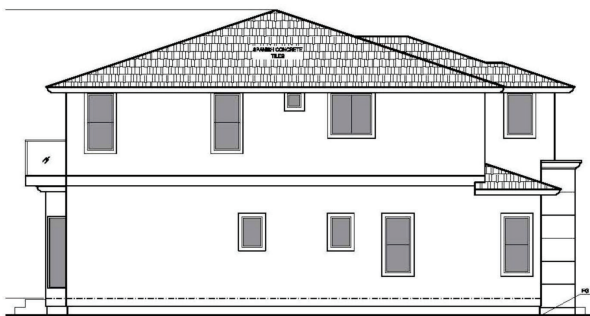
Lora Drive Context



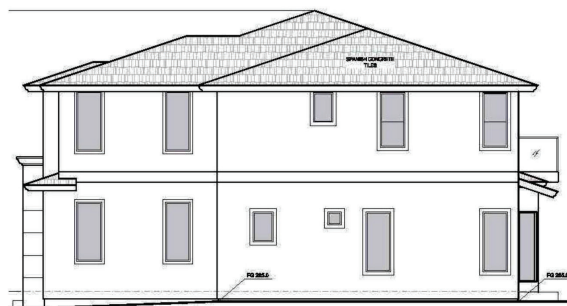
PROPOSED FRONT ELEVATION



PROPOSED REAR ELEVATION



PROPOSED LEFT SIDE ELEVATION



PROPOSED RIGHT SIDE ELEVATION

ISSUES AND CONCERNS

There are a number of issues with the proposed design, including the following:

1. As noted above, the design does not have a clearly identified architectural style, and the front and rear elevations have features that are not repeated on the side elevations which would not be consistent with Residential Design Guideline 3.2.2.

3.2.2 Design for architectural integrity

- *In general, it is best to select a clear and distinctive architectural style rather than utilizing generic design elements or mixing elements from different architectural styles.*
- *Carry wall materials, window types and architectural details around all sides of the house. Avoid side and rear elevations that are markedly different from the front elevation.*

2. The proposed design has an irregular profile, presumably in an attempt to break down the building mass and allow some first floor roofs which are often incorporated on homes designed in the Mediterranean Style. The resultant massing is not well organized, and adds little to the overall design. This would appear to not be consistent with Residential Design Guideline 3.3.1.

3.3.1 Develop the house plans and elevations together

- *Avoid complex floor plans that require complicated building mass and roof forms.*
- *Work within the traditional forms of the architectural style selected. Unless the architectural style selected clearly supports substantial complexity, generally keep building massing and roof forms simple as is the norm for traditional architecture.*

3. The side elevations are unbroken two-story walls with no additional detail or articulation which would not be consistent with Residential Design Guideline 3.3.3.

3.3.3 Provide visual relief for two story walls

4. No clear information is provided on the proposed windows, but they appear on the plans and elevations to include relatively narrow widow sashes and surrounding trim which would not be consistent with Residential Design Guidelines 3.7.3 and 3.7.4.

3.7.3 Match window materials to the architectural style and to the surrounding neighborhood

- *Wood windows are common in Los Gatos. Wood is still the desired choice for styles that traditionally used wood. However, today there are some window materials, such as vinyl clad wood windows that are not noticeably different from wood at a short distance. They may be used if their visual appearance matches wood.*
- *Generally, avoid metal windows. They may be considered acceptable for a Modern Style house, but would be strongly discouraged for all other styles.*

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. Head trim depth should be equal to or wider than the jamb casing, but not less than one-sixth of the opening width.*
- *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.*

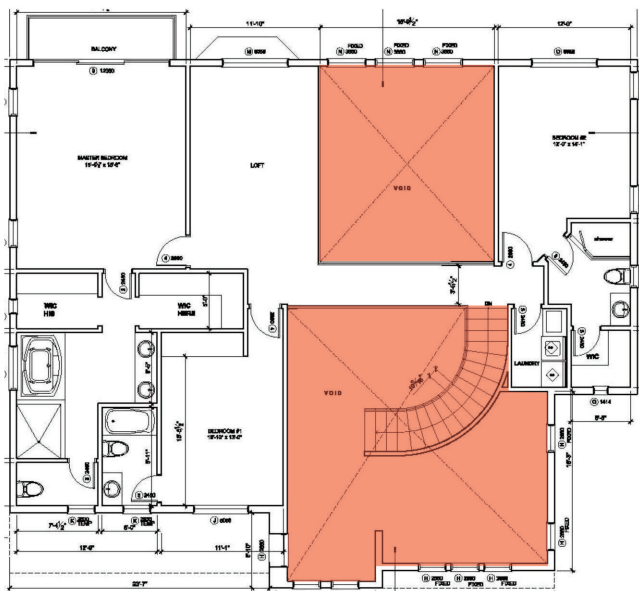
5. The proposed bay window on the rear elevation is quite awkward, and seems inconsistent with the rest of the design.
6. The second floor balcony on the rear of the house is not well integrated into the design, and would not be consistent with Residential Design Guideline 3.10.2.

3.10.2 Balconies

- Provide supporting brackets or beams that are large enough to clearly appear to provide structural support for the balcony.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The mass of the structure is likewise made larger by the inclusion of two two-story interior volumes - over the Living Room and Family Room - See illustration below.



There appear to me to be two approaches that might improve the design of this house. They are:

APPROACH 1:

Redesign the house to reduce the volume and second floor area to allow additional second floor setbacks and first floor roofs to be consistent with the version of the Mediterranean Style that emphasizes informality.

APPROACH 2:

Revise the design to simplify the building and roof forms to be consistent with the version of the Mediterranean Style that emphasizes more formality.

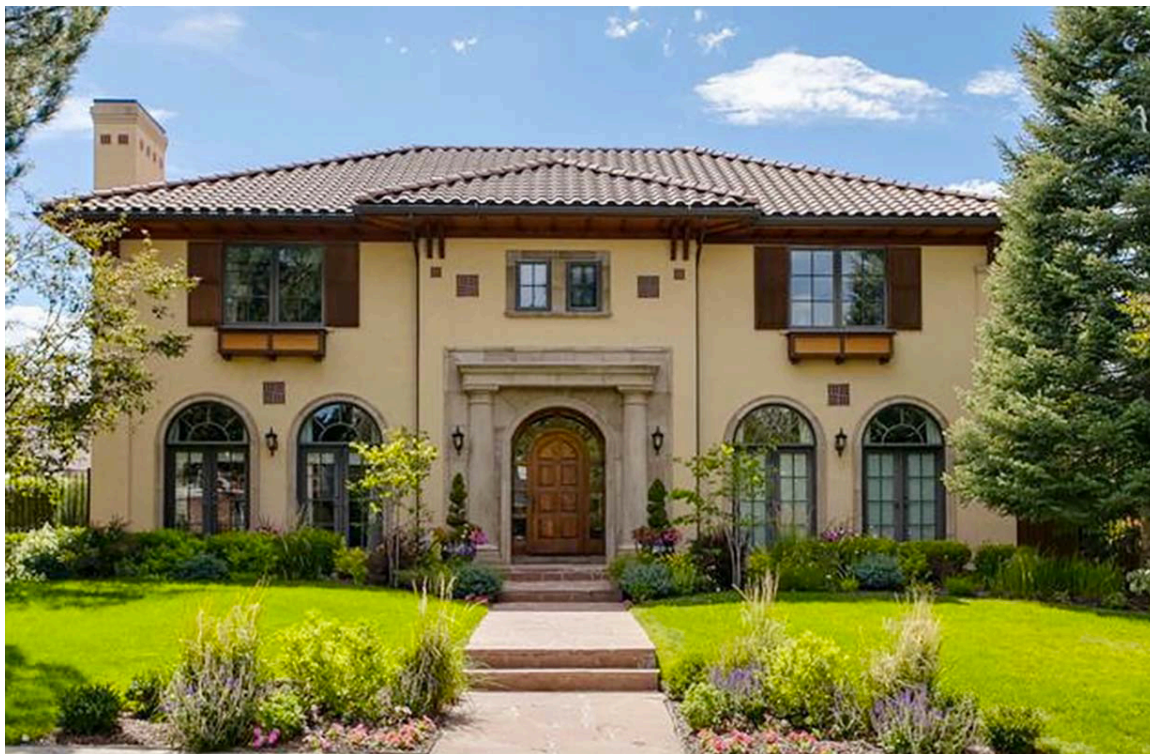
These two approaches are illustrated with photos of each on the following page.

Approach 1 is one that would best be undertaken by the applicant since it would involve many decisions on interior room sizes and floor plan relationships. The resulting design could potentially have a better visual relationship to the adjacent two-story home to the south where the second level is imbedded within the home's roof form.

Approach 2 could more easily be achieved with minimal changes to the currently proposed interior floor plans. While this more formal approach and larger massing would be dissimilar to other homes in the immediate neighborhood, the structure would be sheltered from street view by the existing house on the site, and from neighbors by new buffer landscaping.



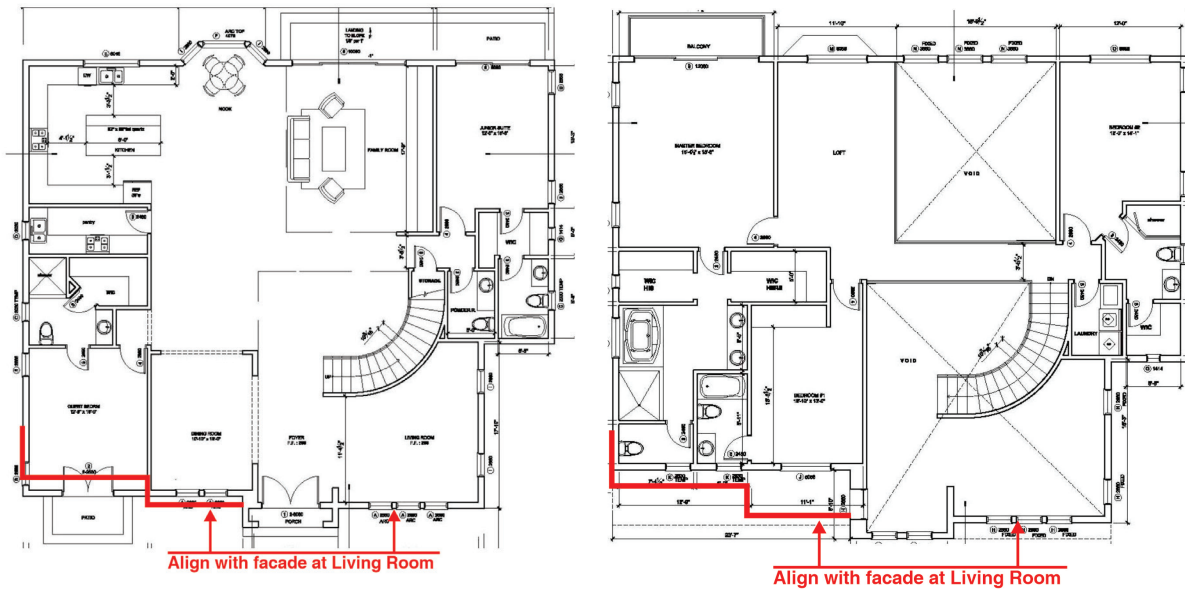
APPROACH 1: INFORMAL MEDITERRANEAN STYLE



APPROACH 2: FORMAL MEDITERRANEAN STYLE

The first approach, as noted above, should be left to the project applicant because of the extent of floor plan changes required to make it a successful design. Some potential changes in line with the second approach are shown below with some recommendations.

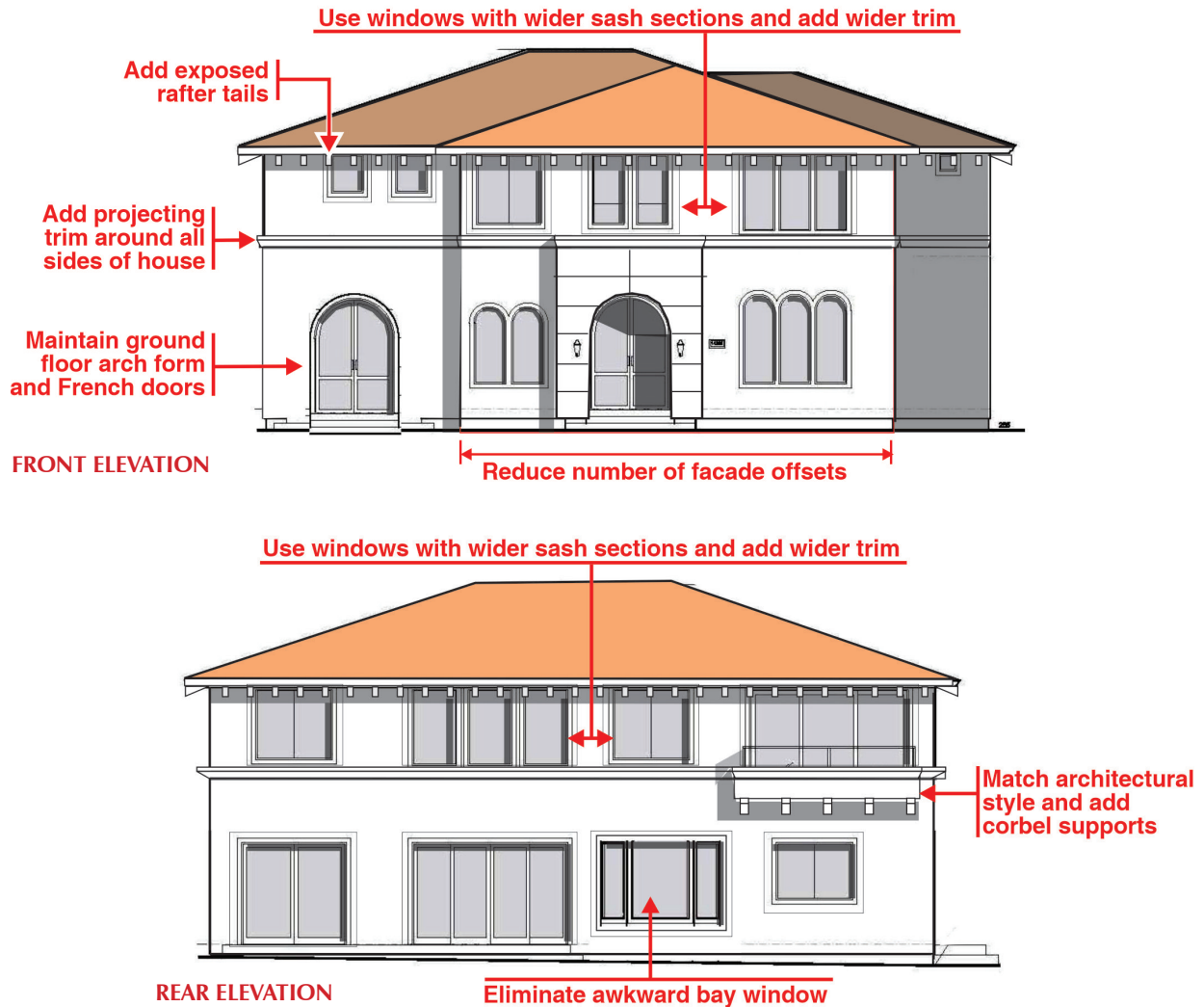
1. Simplify the front facade form to allow a building envelope more typical of the formal Mediterranean Style.



2. Select windows with substantial sash and wood or cast stone trim widths to match traditional windows appropriate to the style - See photo examples below.
3. Provide cast stone projecting trim below second floor windows on all four sides of the house - see example on the left side photo example below.



4. Use arched window forms on all front elevation first floor windows and doors.
5. Add exposed rafter tails at the roof eaves.
6. Eliminate the rear elevation bay window.
7. Revise the design and supports for the rear second floor balcony to better relate it to the overall house design.
8. Revise side elevation to match front and rear elevations.
9. Add additional architectural detail appropriate to the architectural style.
10. Add buffer landscaping in side and rear setbacks.



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

Sincerely,
CANNON DESIGN GROUP

Larry L. Cannon

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