

June 30, 2023

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
Los Gatos, Ca. 95032  
[REDACTED]

Los Gatos Planning Commission  
110 E. Main Street  
Los Gatos, CA 95030

RE: Neighbor Response to Proposed 2-Story House Construction at 232 Danville Dr., Los Gatos, Ca. 95032.

Hello,

I am a long-time resident of Los Gatos and the property owner/occupant of [REDACTED] Los Gatos and.

It came to my attention this past weekend, when story poles went up, that my neighbor to the right rear of my property is proposing construction of a rather large 2-story house.

I've looked over the project documents captured on the Planning Commission's website, so have a reasonable understanding of the project.

In general, it's nice to see neighbors remodeling their properties, as many are weathered, and homes built in the 60's don't really meet the ideals of those today.

Since this week is my first time responding to this project, the below are my comments and issues.

My input, as an affected neighbor, from reviewing the proposed 'REDUCED - project plans':

- It appears the proposed house on an 8000 SF lot will be the largest mass by volume and floor space structure in the neighborhood, especially when considering all factors - the floor area, attached garage, 1<sup>st</sup> floor ADU, interior open space between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> floors, and structure height. The overall mass is at least 40% larger than almost every other residential property in the neighborhood. There is another home in the neighborhood ~3700 SF inclusive of garage, but is a 1-story located on a 17,000 SF lot. Several cities/counties put limits on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor area to 1<sup>st</sup> floor area ratio, with it being 60% for San Jose City, 66% for Santa Clara County, while other cities like Saratoga mandate an increased side and rear setback value for an the interior lot 2<sup>nd</sup>-story. Note: Other large 2-story homes in the Los Gatos community within a mile or so of this project are typically on larger lots or the lots positioned as to not cause such visual bulk affect or privacy issues.
- The FAR value appears to exceed the nominal limit. Is this acceptable given the general massing and visual bulk of the proposed structure? Note: Many cities (Saratoga, Santa Clara County (i.e. unincorporated Los Gatos), Los Altos and Los Altos Hills, Cupertino) will include a double count in the FAR calculation for any interior open space above the finished floor if that vertical space exceeds somewhere between 12' to 16', city code dependent, e.g. 1) Where the vertical distance between any floor and the ceiling above exceeds 15 feet, floor area shall be counted twice and 2) Interior building area above 16 feet from the finished floor to the top of the rafters is counted twice toward Floor Area. This would increase substantially the proposed structures FAR and is partial cause of the structure's large visual mass.
- The height of the structure is ~ 17% greater than the majority of other 2-story homes in the neighborhood, adding to privacy issues, difficulty in masking structure with and visual mass impact. Is it possible to bring it more inline?

- The general massing and visual bulk, as observed from properties to the rear, appears overpowering the area, given lots typically of 8000 SF and small rear setback, which makes the structure's size out of place for the neighborhood. Are there architectural changes that can improve this?
- The 2<sup>nd</sup> level rear facing windows of Master Bedroom and Master Bath present a two-way privacy issue given the proposed home's height, setback, and proximity to rear neighbor yards and houses. It's not clear exactly how high trees would need to be to provide privacy screening. My sideyard patio and firepit area is fully exposed along with partial exposure of backyard pool area/deck. My property's downstairs bedroom with sliding door to the pool area is exposed - I can see the proposed location of the 2<sup>nd</sup>-story master bedroom and master bathroom windows from the bed. Based on angle, I would be peering across the master bath's freestanding tub and into the master bath shower. At least glass that obscures the view (e.g. glass block) into the master bathroom should be used.

I'm requesting a few things:

1. Use a glass that obscures the view (e.g. glass block) into the master bathroom.
2. Because of the project's large structure and the height of 2<sup>nd</sup> story windows, landscaping should include evergreen privacy trees of reasonable initial maturity to soften the structure's visual affect and provide a level of privacy to all neighbors, not only the 2 on each side and 1 directly to the rear.
3. Do not exceed the FAR nominal value, given the other not included in FAR calculation bulk masses of the structure. Up to Los Gatos City to decide what is best for the neighborhood and city.
4. I have not checked the actual height of the rear facing master bath and master bedroom windows, but make sure the windowsills are at an appropriate height commensurate with those of the neighborhood 2-storys on 8000 SF lots with 20 to 24 ft setbacks from rear neighbors 8000 SF parcel to aid in for privacy concerns.



Fig 1. Evening picture taken from the street (Pinehurst Ave.) a block away over rear neighbor's house

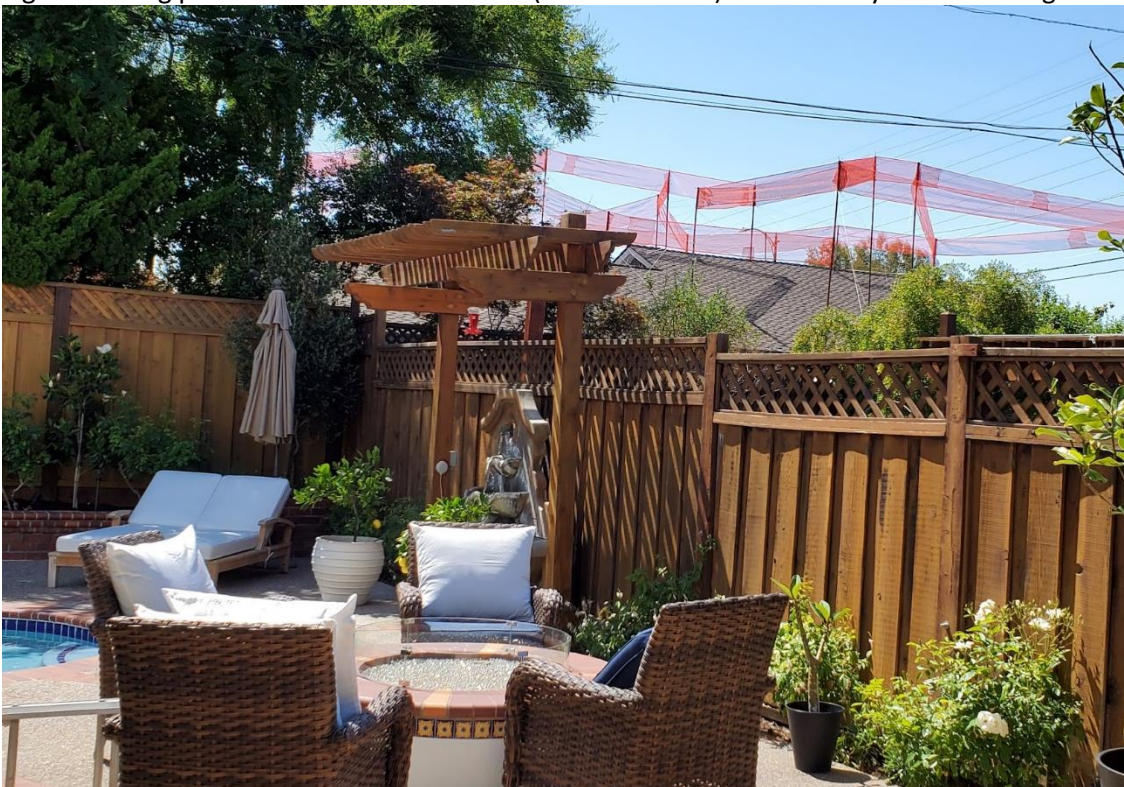


Fig 2. View from backyard of rear and side of proposed 2-story house



June 30, 2023

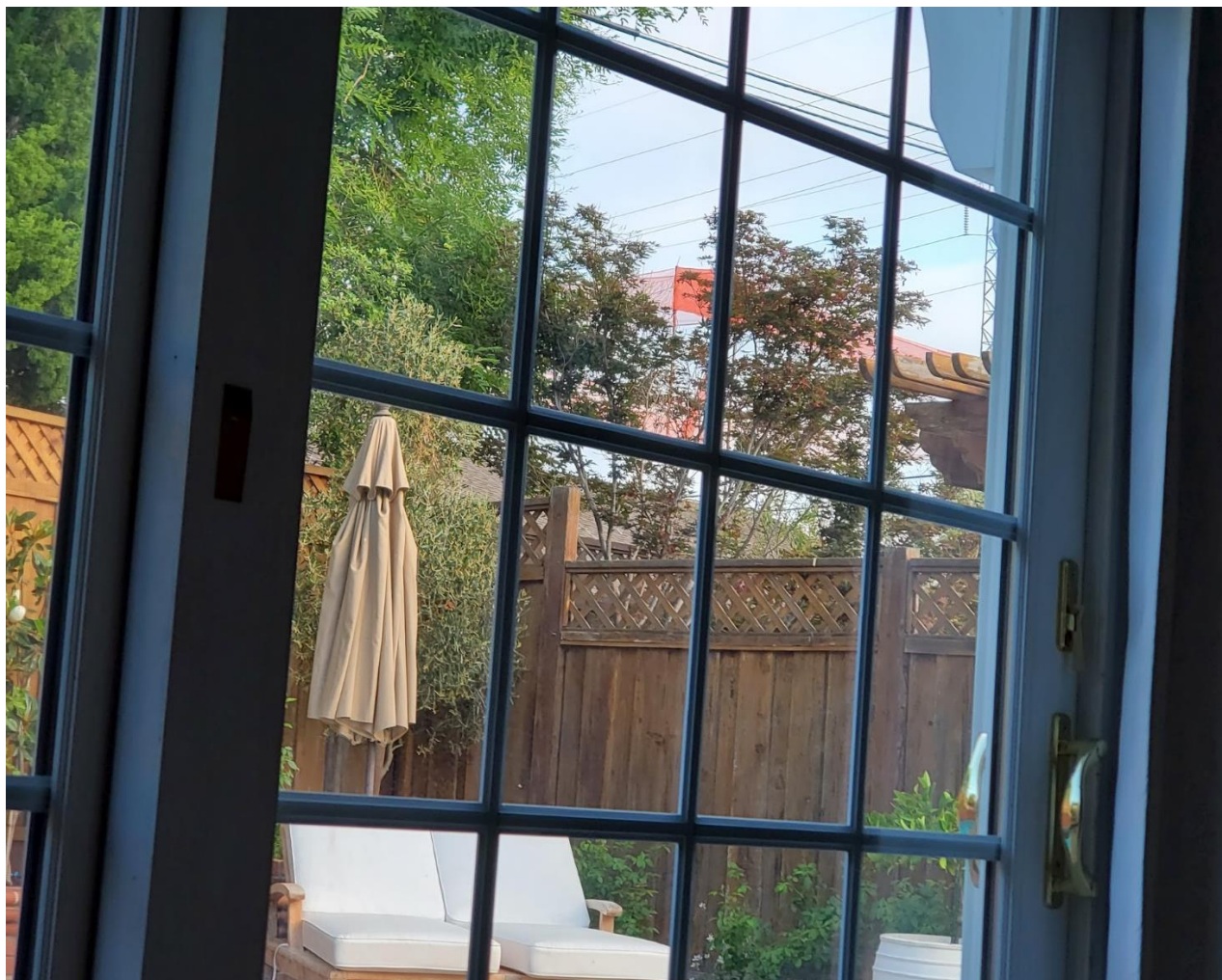


Figure 3. View from downstairs bedroom bed of rear and side of proposed 2-story house

Best regards,

Roger Eline