



**TOWN OF LOS GATOS  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
REPORT**

MEETING DATE: 03/26/2025

ITEM NO: 3

**DATE:** March 21, 2025  
**TO:** Planning Commission  
**FROM:** Joel Paulson, Community Development Director  
**SUBJECT:** Consider a Request for Approval to Demolish an Existing Single-Family Residence and Construct a New Single-Family Residence on Property Zoned R-1:8. **Located at 14341 Browns Lane.** APN 409-14-035. Architecture and Site Application S-24-017. Categorically Exempt Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15303(a): New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures. Property Owners: Roberto E. Flamenco. Applicant: Gordon Wong. Project Planner: Suray Nathan.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Consider a request for approval to demolish an existing single-family residence and construct a new single-family residence on property zoned R-1:8, located at 14341 Browns Lane.

**PROJECT DATA:**

General Plan Designation: Low Density Residential  
Zoning Designation: R-1:8 – Single-Family Residential (8,000 square-foot minimum)  
Applicable Plans & Standards: General Plan, Residential Design Guidelines  
Parcel Size: 9,502 square feet  
Surrounding Area:

	<b>Existing Land Use</b>	<b>General Plan</b>	<b>Zoning</b>
North	Residential	Low Density Residential	R-1:8
South	Residential	Low Density Residential	R-1:8
East	Residential	Low Density Residential	R-1:8
West	Residential	Low Density Residential	R-1:8

**CEQA:**

The project is Categorically Exempt pursuant to the adopted Guidelines for the Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act, Section 15303(a): New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures.

**PREPARED BY:** Suray Nathan  
Assistant Planner

Reviewed by: Planning Manager and Community Development Director

FINDINGS:

- The project is Categorically Exempt pursuant to the adopted Guidelines for the Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act, Section 15303(a): New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures.
- As required by Section 29.10.09030 (e) of the Town Code for the demolition of an existing residence.
- The project meets the objective standards of Chapter 29 of the Town Code (Zoning Regulations).
- The project is in compliance with the Residential Design Guidelines for single-family residences not located in the hillside area.

CONSIDERATIONS:

- As required by Section 29.20.150 of the Town Code, the considerations in review of an Architecture and Site application were all made in reviewing this project.

ACTION:

The decision of the Planning Commission is final unless appealed within ten days.

BACKGROUND:

The subject property is located on the west side of Browns Lane, approximately 130 feet north of Wedgewood Avenue (Exhibit 1). The property is 9,502 square feet and developed with an existing 832-square foot single-story residence and a 240-square foot shed (Exhibit 12). Surrounding properties are developed with predominantly one-story single-family residences.

On June 4, 2024, the applicant applied for an Architecture and Site Application for a proposed 2,580-square foot two-story residence with an attached 507-square foot garage, and an attached 385-square foot Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU).

The proposed project meets the technical requirements of the Town Code for floor area, setbacks, building coverage, parking, and height. The project is being referred to the Planning Commission based on concerns related to neighborhood compatibility, as the proposed residence will be the largest in terms of floor area ratio (FAR) in the immediate neighborhood, and the applicant has not addressed all of the Consulting Architect's recommendations.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

A. Location and Surrounding Neighborhood

The subject property is located on the west side of Browns Lane, approximately 130 feet north of Wedgewood Avenue (Exhibit 1). All surrounding properties are zoned for single-family residential development.

B. Project Summary

The applicant is proposing to demolish the existing 832-square foot single-story residence and construct a new 2,580-square foot two-story residence with a 507-square foot attached garage and an attached 385-square foot ADU (Exhibit 12).

C. Zoning Compliance

A single-family residence is permitted in the R-1:8 zone. The project meets the objective standards of the zoning code for floor area, setbacks, building coverage, parking, and height.

DISCUSSION:

A. Architecture and Site Analysis

The applicant is proposing to demolish the existing residence and construct a new 2,580-square foot two-story single-family residence with a 507-square foot attached garage and a 385-square foot attached ADU. The site is a flat lot, and the proposed building is contained within the building envelope. The height of the proposed residence is 28 feet, seven inches, where a maximum of 30 feet is allowed. Consistent with state law, the proposed ADU is not the subject of this application and requires a ministerial building permit.

A summary of the floor area for the proposed residence is included in the table below.

<b>Floor Area Summary</b>		
	<b>Proposed SF</b>	<b>Maximum Allowed SF</b>
Second Floor	1,541	--
First Floor	1,039	--
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,580</b>	<b>2,946</b>
Garage	507	827
ADU	385	1,200

The applicant provided a Project Description and a Letter of Justification summarizing the project (Exhibits 4 and 5), a Materials and Color Board (Exhibit 6), and Development Plans (Exhibit 12).

B. Neighborhood Compatibility

The immediate neighborhood consists of predominantly one-story single-family residences. Based on Town and County records, the residences in the immediate area range in size from 704 square feet to 2,585 square feet. The FAR ranges from 0.09 to 0.19. The proposed residence would be 2,580 square feet with a FAR of 0.27. The proposed residence would be the largest home in the immediate neighborhood in terms of FAR and the second largest in terms of square footage. Pursuant to Town Code, the maximum allowable square footage

for the 9,502-square foot lot is 2,946 square feet with a maximum FAR of 0.31. The table below reflects the current conditions of the immediate neighborhood:

Address	Zoning	House Floor Area	Garage Floor Area	Total Floor Area	Lot Size	House FAR	No. of Stories
<b>14341 Browns Ln (E)</b>	R-1:8	832	0	832	9,502	0.09	1
<b>14341 Browns Ln (P)</b>	R-1:8	<b>2,580</b>	<b>507</b>	<b>3,087</b>	<b>9,502</b>	<b>0.27</b>	<b>2</b>
14331 Browns Ln	R-1:8	1,262	0	1,262	9,478	0.13	1
14340 Browns Ln	R-1:8	748	440	1,188	6,893	0.11	1
14330 Browns Ln	R-1:8	2,487	625	3,112	13,041	0.19	1
17311 Wedgewood Ave	R-1:8	1,649	345	1,994	8,576	0.19	1
17291 Wedgewood Ave	R-1:8	2,585	774	3,359	12,225	0.21	2
17275 Wedgewood Ave	R-1:8	704	418	1,122	7,800	0.09	1

The applicant's justification states that despite having the largest FAR, the proposed home will not be the largest in terms of square footage and the owners require greater space for their large family (Exhibit 5).

#### C. Building Design

The proposed residence is designed in a traditional architectural style, with white Hardie Board vertical cement siding, straight-edged shingles at the entryway and on the dormer window above the garage, ebony-colored fiberglass-clad wood double-hung windows with simulated divided lites, and a white cedar wood garage door at the front façade (Exhibit 6). The proposed gable roof is to be fitted with cinder black composite shingles. The design also proposes a 96-square foot second-floor balcony and 26-square foot first-floor covered porch at the rear elevation.

The Town's Consulting Architect initially reviewed the proposed residence on June 11, 2024, and was supportive of the design, stating that it was well designed in a traditional architectural style (Exhibit 7). The Consulting Architect recommended that the stone façade and divided lite windows introduced at the front façade be carried consistently on all façades to meet Residential Design Guidelines 3.2.2 and 3.7.4. The applicant removed the stone façade and applied simulated divided light windows throughout all sides to meet the recommendations of the Consulting Architect.

The Consulting Architect provided a second review on October 28, 2024, due to substantial changes to the initial design (Exhibit 8). The applicant stated the design changes were primarily precipitated by shifting the proposed garage 17 feet back to meet the Santa Clara County Fire Department turnaround standards (Exhibit 12, Sheet G000). However, the Consulting Architect noted in the report that the revised design conflicts with the previous design and other homes in its immediate neighborhood. The Consulting Architect made three recommendations to increase compatibility with the Residential Design Guidelines

and the immediate neighborhood. The Consulting Architect's issues and recommendations are provided below, followed by the applicant's response in *italics* (Exhibit 9).

1. Restore the previously proposed garage/bedroom wing roof slopes and match its ridge and first-floor eave heights to those of the main part of the house.

*We lowered the roof over the garage to the first-floor eave line and reduced the size of the second-floor gabled dormer. We are insistent on keeping the pitch of the shed dormer since this affects the waterproofing of the roof and the alignment of fascia boards/materials.*

2. Widen the roof dormer to provide more interior volume in the bedrooms.

*We have reduced the overall footprint of the second floor. This enabled us to bring back the gable over the garage to maintain the strong first-floor eave line.*

3. Match the dormer roofing material to the nearby main structure roofing.

*The overall height of the building has been reduced by one-foot, two and one-half inches. The roofing material remains consistent between the shed dormer for the bay over the garage and the shed dormer for the entrance to the main residence.*

The applicant implemented recommendation number three, but has not implemented recommendations one and two of the Town's Consulting Architect.

#### D. Tree Impacts

The Town's Consulting Arborist prepared a report for the site and made recommendations for the project (Exhibit 10). The subject property contains four protected trees: two Coast Redwoods; one Pecan; and one Plum tree. No trees are proposed for removal, and the Town's Consulting Arborist recommendations for tree protection have been included in the Conditions of Approval (Exhibit 3).

#### E. Parking

Pursuant to Section 29.10.150(c)(1) of the Town Code, a single-family residence requires two on-site parking spaces. The applicant has satisfied this requirement by including an attached two-car garage (Exhibit 12, Sheet A 101).

#### F. Neighbor Outreach

The applicant has been in communication with the surrounding neighbors regarding the proposed project. A summary of their outreach efforts is included as Exhibit 11. At the time of preparation of this report, no public comment has been received.

Aspects of the communication with a neighbor include concerns regarding privacy from the second-story windows and balcony placement at the rear of the house (Exhibit 12, Sheet G004). The applicant addressed the rear neighbors' privacy concerns by incorporating the following into the proposed design:

- Obscured/frosted glass on the second-story bedroom windows located at the rear elevation facing the neighbors at 14344 Rinconada Drive and 14330 Rinconada Drive; and
- Inset the proposed rear balcony by five feet, three inches from 26 feet, five inches to 31 feet, two inches from the property line, and increased the balcony railing height to 46 inches.

G. CEQA Determination

The project is Categorical Exempt pursuant to the adopted Guidelines for the Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act, Section 15303(a): New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Story poles are not required for this project pursuant to the Town's Story Pole Policy (Resolution 2024-017), and project signage was installed on the subject property prior to the mailing of notices for the public hearing. Written notice was sent to property owners and residents within 300 feet of the subject property. At the time of preparation of this report, no public comment has been received.

CONCLUSION:

A. Summary

The applicant is requesting approval of an Architecture and Site application to demolish an existing single-family residence and construct a new single-family residence on property zoned R-1:8. The project is consistent with the property's zoning and General Plan Land Use designation. The project complies with the objective standards of the Town Code related to allowable floor area, setbacks, building coverage, parking, and height. The proposed residence would be the largest home in the immediate neighborhood in terms of FAR and the second largest in terms of floor area.

The project was reviewed by the Town's Consulting Architect who provided three recommendations to increase the consistency of the project with the Residential Design Guidelines. The applicant responded to the Consulting Architect's feedback by implementing one of the three recommendations.

The project is being referred to the Planning Commission based on concerns related to neighborhood compatibility, as the proposed residence will be the largest in terms of FAR in

the immediate neighborhood, and the applicant has not addressed all of the Consulting Architect's recommendations.

B. Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission consider the request and, if merit is found with the proposed project, take the following steps to approve the Architecture and Site application:

1. Find that the proposed project is Categorically Exempt pursuant to the adopted Guidelines for the implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act, Section 15303(a): New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures (Exhibit 2);
2. Make the findings as required by Section 29.10.09030 (e) of the Town Code for the demolition of existing structures (Exhibit 2);
3. Make the finding that the project complies with the objective standards of Chapter 29 of the Town Code (Zoning Regulations) (Exhibit 2);
4. Make the finding required by the Town's Residential Design Guidelines that the project complies with the Residential Design Guidelines (Exhibit 2);
5. Make the considerations as required by Section 29.20.150 of the Town Code for granting approval of an Architecture and Site application (Exhibit 2); and
6. Approve Architecture and Site application S-24-017 with the conditions contained in Exhibit 3 and the development plans in Exhibit 12.

C. Alternatives

Alternatively, the Planning Commission can:

1. Continue the matter to a date certain with specific direction;
2. Approve the application with additional and/or modified conditions; or
3. Deny the application.

EXHIBITS:

1. Location Map
2. Required Findings
3. Recommended Conditions of Approval
4. Project Description
5. Letter of Justification
6. Materials and Color Board
7. Consulting Architect's Report, dated June 11, 2024
8. Consulting Architect's Report, dated October 28, 2024
9. Applicant's Response to the Consulting Architect's Report, dated February 20, 2025
10. Consulting Arborist's Report, dated July 17, 2024
11. Summary of Applicant's Neighborhood Outreach
12. Development Plans

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