



**TOWN OF LOS GATOS  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
REPORT**

MEETING DATE: 10/28/2026

ITEM NO: 2

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DATE: October 23, 2026  
TO: Planning Commission  
FROM: Joel Paulson, Community Development Director  
SUBJECT: Consider a Request for Approval to Construct a New Single-Family Residence and Site Improvements Requiring a Grading Permit on Vacant Property Zoned R-1:8. **Located at 94 Hernandez Avenue.** APN 510-20-024. Architecture and Site Application S-22-029. Categorically Exempt Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15303: New Construction. Property Owner: Willie and Helen Cadiente. Applicant: Jaime Arafiles. Project Planner: Jocelyn Shoopman.

RECOMMENDATION:

Denial.

PROJECT DATA:

General Plan Designation: Low Density Residential  
Zoning Designation: R-1:8, Single-Family Residential (8,000 square feet minimum)  
Applicable Plans & Standards: General Plan; Residential Design Guidelines  
Parcel Size: 10,240 square feet  
Surrounding Area:

|       | Existing Land Use | General Plan            | Zoning |
|-------|-------------------|-------------------------|--------|
| North | Residential       | Low Density Residential | R-1:12 |
| South | Residential       | Low Density Residential | R-1:8  |
| East  | Residential       | Low Density Residential | R-1:12 |
| 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: New Construction.

PREPARED BY: Jocelyn Shoopman  
Senior Planner

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Reviewed by: Planning Manager, Community Development Director, and Town Attorney

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FINDINGS:

- As required, the project is Categorically Exempt pursuant to the adopted Guidelines for the Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act, Section 15303: New Construction.
- 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 for granting approval of an Architecture and Site application.

ACTION:

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

BACKGROUND:

The subject property is located at the intersection of Hernandez Avenue and Ellenwood Avenue (Exhibit 1). The property is approximately 10,240 square feet and currently developed with a 425-square foot accessory structure.

On September 8, 2020, the property owners entered into an agreement with the Town of Los Gatos to demolish the single-family residence. The Town determined that the single-family structure contained various municipal and state code violations, was uninhabitable, and was deteriorated to a point that it constituted a threat to public health and safety, warranting its demolition (Exhibit 5).

Section 6 of the agreement states that the “subsequent development of the property will require the submittal of a Development Review Application Package, and when the application is complete, it shall be forwarded to the Planning Commission for review and approval in accordance with the Town Code, the General Plan, and the Town’s Residential Design Guidelines, and said development shall be required to comply with Section 4.10 of the Town’s Residential Design Guidelines even though the subject property is not within a historical district.”

Section 4.10 of the Residential Design Guidelines provides guidelines for new houses constructed within one of the Town’s designated historic districts (Exhibit 6). The subject property is not located within one of the Town’s designated historic districts; however, the single-family home that was demolished was considered to be a historic structure due to its pre-1941 construction date.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

A. Location and Surrounding Neighborhood

The subject property is located at the intersection of Hernandez Avenue and Ellenwood Avenue (Exhibit 1). Single-family residential development surrounds the property on all sides.

B. Project Summary

The applicant proposes to construct a new 2,702-square foot, two-story single-family residence with an attached 607-square foot garage (Exhibit 11).

C. Zoning Compliance

A single-family residence is permitted in the R-1:8 zone. The proposed residence is in compliance with the zoning regulations for allowable floor area, height, setbacks, and on-site parking requirements for the property.

DISCUSSION:

A. Architecture and Site Analysis

Pursuant to Town Code Section 29.40.075, the maximum allowable square footage for the 10,240-square foot property is 3,154 square feet for a residence and 873 square feet for a garage. The applicant proposes construction of a new 2,702-square foot two-story residence with a 607-square foot attached garage. The proposed residence also includes 1,686 square feet of below grade square footage, of which 1,670 square feet would not count towards the allowable floor area; however, 16 square feet of below grade square footage would count towards the allowable floor area as it extends beyond the enclosed building footprint of the main building pursuant to Section 29.40.072 of the Town Code. The residence would be approximately 27 feet, five inches in height when the maximum height of the zone is 30 feet.

The applicant provided a Letter of Justification summarizing the project (Exhibit 4). The development plans show an existing accessory structure located to the rear of the property that is proposed to remain and be converted into an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU), which would be reviewed and processed under a separate ministerial permit. Pursuant to state law, the ADU is not being reviewed with this application. Similarly, the ADU floor area is not included in the 2,702-square foot total.

B. Building Design

The applicant proposes a traditional formal mediterranean style residence. Proposed exterior materials include: a concrete tile roof; smooth coat stucco; cast stone trim; and wrought iron flower boxes (Exhibit 11).

The Town's Consulting Architect reviewed the proposed residence and noted that the home is located in an older neighborhood with a mix of one- and two-story homes designed in traditional styles (Exhibit 7).

The Consulting Architect provided 13 recommendations for changes to better align the project with the immediate neighborhood and compliance with Section 4.10 of the Town's Residential Design Guidelines. These are detailed below, along with the applicant's responses (Exhibit 8).

1. Re-orient the Ellenwood Avenue façade walls and porte cochere consistent with the architectural style.

Applicant Response: *The façade walls and porte cochere along Ellenwood Avenue were re-oriented to be consistent with the mediterranean style of the building.*

2. Reduce corbel size and use consistently around all facades.

Applicant Response: *A reduction in the corbel size and its use consistently around all facades was incorporated into the revised design.*

3. Use taller ground floor windows - circular or segmented arches recommended.

Applicant Response: *Taller ground floor windows with segmented arched heads were incorporated into the revised design.*

4. Use cast stone around all windows in lieu of foam trim.

Applicant Response: *Cast stone around all windows was incorporated into the revised design.*

5. Use cast stone projecting belt molding and building base.

Applicant Response: *A cast stone projecting belt molding and building base was incorporated into the revised design.*

6. Simplify the porte cochere and refine details.

Applicant Response: *A simplified porte cochere and refined details were incorporated into the revised design.*

7. Simplify roof forms where possible.

Applicant Response: *A simplified roof form at the porte cochere was incorporated into the revised design.*

8. Add round columns and open railings and trellis at second floor deck. Revise interior floor plan, if possible to take better advantage of the deck.

Applicant Response: *Round columns with open railings and a trellis on the second-floor deck were incorporated into the revised design.*

9. Add trellises over garages consistent with Residential Design Guideline 3.4.1.

Applicant Response: *A trellis over the garage doors was incorporated into the revised design.*

10. Simplify rear façade by removing changes in the façade planes.

Applicant Response: *The removal of façade changes to the rear was incorporated into the revised design.*

11. Use casement windows rather than double hung windows.

Applicant Response: *Casement windows rather than double hung windows were incorporated into the revised design.*

12. Use aluminum or vinyl covered wood windows to provide sash sizes more appropriate to the style and scale of the house.

Applicant Response: *Vinyl covered wood windows with sash sizes that are appropriate to the style and scale of the house were incorporated into the revised design.*

13. Discuss the proposed removal of the mature trees on the site.

Applicant Response: *Existing on-site trees have since been removed with a Tree Removal Permit issued in 2020 and 2023.*

The Consulting Architect's report noted that even if the applicant were to incorporate all of the aforementioned recommendations, he believed that the proposal would still not be fully compliant with Section 4.10 of the Residential Design Guidelines, per the signed agreement. The Consulting Architect recommends an alternative approach that would

include the use of a more informal approach to the mediterranean style that has less formal and bulky forms, with a greater emphasis on the first-floor roof overhangs to better relate to the other homes in the immediate neighborhood (Exhibit 7).

C. Neighborhood Compatibility

The immediate neighborhood contains a mix of one- and two-story residences. Based on Town and County records, the residences in the immediate neighborhood range in size from 1,036 square feet to 3,816 square feet. The floor area ratios (FARs) range from 0.08 to 0.54. The proposed residence would be 2,702 square feet (including 16 square feet of countable below-grade square footage) with a FAR of 0.26. Pursuant to Town Code, the maximum allowable square footage for the 10,240-square foot lot is 3,154 square feet with a maximum FAR of 0.308. The following table reflects the current conditions of the immediate neighborhood.

| Address                        | Zoning       | House SF     | Garage SF  | Total SF      | Lot Size    | FAR      | No. of Stories |
|--------------------------------|--------------|--------------|------------|---------------|-------------|----------|----------------|
| 74 Ellenwood Avenue            | R-1:8        | 1,328        | 0          | 7,363         | 0.18        | 1        | R-1:8          |
| 70 Ellenwood Avenue            | R-1:12       | 1,843        | 450        | 12,154        | 0.15        | 1        | R-1:12         |
| 124 Hernandez Avenue           | R-1:12       | 3,564        | 1,934      | 43,168        | 0.08        | 2        | R-1:12         |
| 130 Hernandez Avenue           | R-1:12       | 3,111        | 0          | 33,250        | 0.09        | 2        | R-1:12         |
| 87 Ellenwood Avenue            | R-1:8        | 1,036        | 0          | 8,050         | 0.13        | 1        | R-1:8          |
| 85 Ellenwood Avenue            | R-1:8        | 2,681        | 576        | 13,000        | 0.21        | 2        | R-1:8          |
| 73 Ellenwood Avenue            | R-1:8        | 1,601        | 360        | 6,400         | 0.25        | 1        | R-1:8          |
| 45 Walnut Avenue               | R-1:8        | 2,677        | 441        | 8,332         | 0.32        | 2        | R-1:8          |
| 119 Walnut Avenue              | R-1:8        | 3,816        | 441        | 7,080         | 0.54        | 2        | R-1:8          |
| 69 Hernandez Avenue            | R-1:8        | 1,500        | 228        | 5,555         | 0.27        | 1        | R-1:8          |
| <b>94 Hernandez Avenue (P)</b> | <b>R-1:8</b> | <b>2,702</b> | <b>607</b> | <b>10,240</b> | <b>0.26</b> | <b>2</b> | <b>R-1:8</b>   |

D. Grading

The project includes site improvements with grading quantities exceeding 50 cubic yards, which requires approval of a Grading Permit. The Town's Parks and Public Works Engineering staff have included a condition of approval requiring submittal and evaluation of a Grading Permit in parallel with the required Building Permits (Exhibit 3).

E. Tree Impacts

The development plans were reviewed by the Town's Consulting Arborist who inventoried no protected trees on-site, but inventoried eight protected trees adjacent to the project area (Exhibit 9). Modifications to the developments plan were made by the applicant in response to recommendations provided by the Consulting Arborist with respect to the trees overhanging the project site along the northwestern portion of the property (Exhibit 10). The Landscape Plans indicate that eight, 24-inch box trees will be planted on site.

F. CEQA Determination

The project is Categorically Exempt pursuant to the adopted Guidelines for the Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act, Section 15303: New Construction.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Written notice of the Planning Commission hearing was sent to property owners and tenants within 300 feet of the subject property. At the time of this report's preparation, the Town has not received any public comment.

CONCLUSION:

A. Summary

The applicant is requesting approval of an Architecture and Site application to construct a new 2,702-square foot, two-story single-family residence with an attached 607-square foot attached garage, and site work requiring a Grading Permit (Exhibit 11). The project complies with the objective standards of the Town Code relating to the allowable floor area, height, setbacks, lot coverage, and on-site parking. The project was reviewed by the Town's Consulting Architect who provided recommendations for the project to refine the design to be more compatible with the immediate neighborhood and Section 4.10 of the Town's Residential Design Guidelines (Exhibit 7). In response to the recommendations of the Consulting Architect, the applicant addressed the issues identified in the report through revisions to the proposed residence (Exhibit 8). The Consulting Architect also noted that even if the applicant were to incorporate all of the recommended modifications, the proposal would still not be fully compliant with Section 4.10 of the Residential Design Guidelines. The Consulting Architect recommends an alternative approach that would include the use of a more informal approach to the mediterranean style that has less formal and bulky forms, with a greater emphasis on the first-floor roof overhangs to better relate to the other homes in the immediate neighborhood.

B. Recommendation

Based on the analysis above, staff recommend denial of the Architecture and Site application based on concerns related to the project's compliance with Section 4.10 of the Residential Design Guidelines, as discussed in this report.

C. Alternatives

Alternatively, the Commission can:

1. Approve the application by taking the following actions:
  - a. Make the finding that the proposed project is Categorically Exempt, pursuant to the adopted Guidelines for the implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act, Section 15303: New Construction (Exhibit 2);
  - b. Make the finding that the project complies with the objective standards of Chapter 29 of the Town Code (Zoning Regulations) (Exhibit 2);
  - c. Make the finding that the project complies with the Town's Residential Design Guidelines (Exhibit 2); and
  - d. 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
  - e. Approve Architecture and Site Application S-22-029 with the conditions contained in Exhibit 3 and the development plans in Exhibit 11.
2. Approve the application with additional and/or modified conditions; or
3. Continue the matter to a date certain with specific direction.

EXHIBITS:

1. Location Map
2. Required Findings and Considerations
3. Recommended Conditions of Approval
4. Letter of Justification
5. Agreement between the Town of Los Gatos and 94 Hernandez Property Owners
6. Section 4.10 of the Residential Design Guidelines
7. Consulting Architect's Report
8. Applicant's Response to Consulting Architect's Report
9. Consulting Arborist's Report
10. Applicant's Response to Consulting Arborist's Report
11. Development Plans