

July 16, 2026

Dear Planning Commissioners:

This is in response to the Drumms' appeal of the proposed addition to our existing two-story home-Project PRE25-01176.

We ask that the appeal be denied and that we be allowed to continue the project. We have complied with the Town of Los Gatos Residential Guidelines. We comply in all maximum lot / site coverages and are not requesting any variances for this project. This project has satisfactorily answered the Town's privacy concerns and all comments from the Town architect, who made no comments regarding the "flat stucco wall" facing the Drumms' house, to which the appellants object.

We have worked with our neighbors and have made many modifications to address all their concerns. They are listed below.

Initially, both the Town, in their first comment letter, and our neighbors, in their letter of 3/16/26, raised the privacy concern. Our neighbors did not want our new addition to have, in their words, "a major impact on our privacy" or "directly overlook our pool, backyard area."

We respect their privacy, so we contacted the Planning Department. On 3/26, we met with our neighbors at our house, discussed options and concerns, which we heard. They asked to see the revised plans, which we gave them when ready (May 15).

To address the privacy concerns:

1. We removed the entire set of exterior stairs from the balcony to the ground that were adjacent to their property.
2. We shortened the rear balcony by 4 feet on both sides of the house, decreasing the overall length and moving it away from their yard. We picked the largest distance/footage possible to keep it architecturally symmetrical and harmonious. This puts the balcony just over 21 feet from the setback on their side.
3. We have put in a privacy lattice on the end side of the balcony facing their property so we cannot look down into their back yard.
4. We reduced the width of the rear-facing window closest to them (which does not look toward them) by 2 feet so it is now on our side of the privacy lattice.
5. We made the windows on the south side facing them smaller, raising them to be above head and eye level so we would not overlook their property, but still have light and cross-breeze.

In further text conversations, we discussed trees as options, and at their request (a text to us and written in their letter of 6/11), we have done the following:

6. We put on the plans that we would keep the existing bottle brush tree. We also added the other existing yucca tree to the plans.

In the letter of 6/11/26, they iterated a point they had previously asked us to do:

...that a new tree be planted in the area between the fence and new first floor game room and not put directly against the fence but more toward the new addition.”

Unfortunately, we cannot fulfill this request to plant a tree on our property away from the fence so that leaves will not drop into their pool.

- We contacted the Town arborist, Jeremy Cawn, who told us we could not plant a tree there:
 - The roots would damage the drainage system that is there to prevent our house from flooding.
 - The planting area is too small. (See arborist letter at bottom.)

Per our conversations with the Planning Department, and pro-actively addressing the concerns of the neighbor, Mr. Drumm, in this way has satisfied the Community Development and the individuals in the Planning Department enough to give us pending approval.

However, looking at “a flat stucco wall” is enough for them to appeal and to delay our project, which has already been significantly delayed. Their complaint is a complaint of preference, which is subjective. They want us to push back the second story and reduce square footage that is within the maximum allowed so that they can look at a slanting roof line. To address their concerns:

- We decided to put trellises above the first story windows and sliding glass doors because:
 - They are recommended on the Town’s Residential Guideline website as a way to break up a flat wall;
 - Our neighbors can see the trellises over the fence line;
 - The trellises break up the flat look.
- The steps we took to address the Drumms’ “flat wall” concern are listed after the arborist’s letter.

In addition:

- Our proposed addition conforms to Residential Guidelines.
- The Town architect made no comments regarding the style choice or ask us to change it.

- The architectural style fits in with the neighborhood and our existing house.
- Many houses on our street and in our neighborhood have two-story flat walls with windows.
- We are extending the addition so that we can use the existing structure.
- We believe simplicity has elegance.

Nevertheless, to address our neighbors' concerns, we spent valuable time researching ideas and having our designer, Michael Radu, change the design to be similar to one Mr. Drumm had drawn and given us, only to realize it wouldn't work. Without the urging of the Town, we added trellises so that it is not a flat stucco wall. This did not satisfy Mr. Drumm.

Instead, our neighbors are insisting we conform to their concept of what they want to view. The appellants have cited Residential Guidelines 3.3.2, 2.3.1, 2.3.6, 2.5.2, 1.4. Here are our responses:

3.3.2 Height and bulk at front and side setbacks (avoiding windows)

- The addition does not exceed our current height.
- Our neighbors' house on our other side, 693 Bicknell, is both larger in square footage and taller than ours. Even with the addition, our house including the proposed addition is within the range of square footage in the neighborhood.
- Our home, including the proposed addition, is still 17 feet 7 inches to 20 feet away from the side property line, approximately 3 feet more than the setback. (Our designer corrected this on the site plans after we had a survey done after the first letters.)
- The proposed addition of our house does not look bulky at all from the street side/front, as it is set back in an architecturally aesthetic way.
- Regarding the side wall, we have a bottle brush tree, a yucca tree, a chimney, and trellises that help minimize a sense of "bulk" and also break up the line. We are willing to plant vines in the one open area where we can't plant a tree.
- The side-facing windows are for breeze and light only as they are above eye/head level.

8;9;7.Design.two.story.houses.in.primarily.one.story.neighborhoods.to.blend.with.the.smaller.homes

We are predominately a two-story neighborhood.

- There are five two-story houses in a row just on our side of the street—100 Smith Creek that shares a driveway with 697 Bicknell; 697 Bicknell (the appellants); our house; 693 Bicknell (our other neighbors); 691 Bicknell.
- There are several more two-story homes on our street and in our neighborhood.

8;9;2.Locate.second.floor.mass.to.minimize.impacts.on.the.streetscape.and.
adjacent.neighbors

Our proposed second story addition is set back from the front of the house behind the ridge line, further back than our existing second story, so there are three parallel layers going back.

- We are using an inner wall behind the ridgeline to build the second story for structural purposes.
- This also helps minimize the impact from the front, as well as maintains the character and design of our current architecture.
- It harmonizes with the rest of the home and provides levels of architectural interest.

Regarding adjacent neighbors: the new second story is an extension of our existing second story portion of our house; and even though the second story does come closer to the property line:

- It is still more than 2.5 feet further away from property lines than the 15-foot setback; 17 feet, 7 inches at the end corner away from the side setback.
- Most of the addition is greater than 18 feet away from the side setback.

8;18;.Design.with.sensitivity.to.adjacent.neighbors;. Existing.views.are.not.protected.as.a.right.(• .views?sky.exposure?sun.access? privacy);

We have designed and amended our design with sensitivity to our neighbors. Our addition does not change any views, as the proposed second story maintains the exact same lines as the existing second story portion of our home, keeping the same sightlines and views. It also keeps the same single-story lines. We are not compromising their views. Furthermore, we have changed our design to maintain privacy (listed above).

7;0.Community.expectations.

We believe we are doing all of this, giving a friendly and aesthetically pleasing presence to the neighborhood and maintaining architectural integrity.

Throughout the process, we have done our best to listen to and respond our neighbors. We have also talked with the Planning Department to make sure we are doing everything we can to hear and address the concerns of the Town and meet Residential Guidelines. We feel we have gone above and beyond in outreach and in listening and respecting our neighborhood.

In the appeal letter, the Drumms wrote: No one seems to care about what the adjacent homeowner has to see, therefore we are appealing.”

We are sorry that they feel that way. We do care, as the evidence stated in the letter above shows with respect to everything we have done. We love our privacy and we respect theirs, but we do not agree on what looks good. We have different opinions. We are adding on to our home in a way that not only conforms to the Residential Guidelines but respects the intent and spirit of the Guidelines as well. We believe we have done so in a way that beautifies our property, the streetscape, and the neighborhood.

Please deny the appeal and allow us to continue to add on to our home with the proposed plans.

Respectfully submitted,
The Eddingtons

Additional Information

Arborist email of June 24:

I reviewed the project submittals and the documents we provided to the town, including our comments. I can't find any comments from us that require planting a replacement tree on the property. Given the small size of the planting space between the fence and the patio wall, the drain pipe, and the nearby tree cover, I would recommend not installing a tree in the area shown in the pictures you submitted.

Thank you,

Jeremy Cawn

Fire Protection Planner V



Prior to the decision to add trellises, Mr. Drumm sent us a design of what he would like to see after their first comment letter. So, to address this issue:

- On June 3, we met with Mr. Drumm again in our backyard, who said if we would not set back the second story wall as he wanted, then we should continue the existing first story roof line as an attachment so that there would be a downward slant, and then a straight roof line going across and over the sliding door.
- Our designer spent additional time adjusting the plans and drew out a design similar to the one provided by Mr. Drumm because we initially thought this was possible.

- We showed the new design to our contractor and found out that this concept was simply not going to work.
- We let the neighbors know that we had tried.
- We offered to put Juliet balconies for the second story under the elevated windows and sent over example pictures. The neighbors did not want to consider them.
- We looked at other houses and talked with the Planning Department.

The letter of 3/16 also raised the issue of setbacks, as did the Town:

- We hired a survey company: the survey showed our setback is within the Residential Guide standards with a 15-foot side setback; we do not encroach on the setback.
- With the addition extending in a straight line from the first floor of the existing house, the home is 17 feet 7 inches to 20 feet away from the side property line.
- Our designer, Michael Radu, corrected the site plans.
- This delayed our project, and we were not able to get new plans until May 15.

A brief note:

We have had these plans in the making since 2013, right after we bought the house in Dec. 2012, and we had different neighbors then. Life happens, and we did not have the funds to support this addition until 2022, at which point the engineer took 3 1/2 years to finish the drawings. While we were urged to sue, that is not an action that makes us feel comfortable. (We have a new engineer now.) Our dream and design, while it has gone through a few internal iterations, has not really changed over the course of the decade plus. Yet, since the Drumms first made a public comment, we have made many compromises to help satisfy their requests to the best of our ability while still keeping our dream intact.