



February 25, 2020

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

**RE: 15 Loma Alta Avenue**

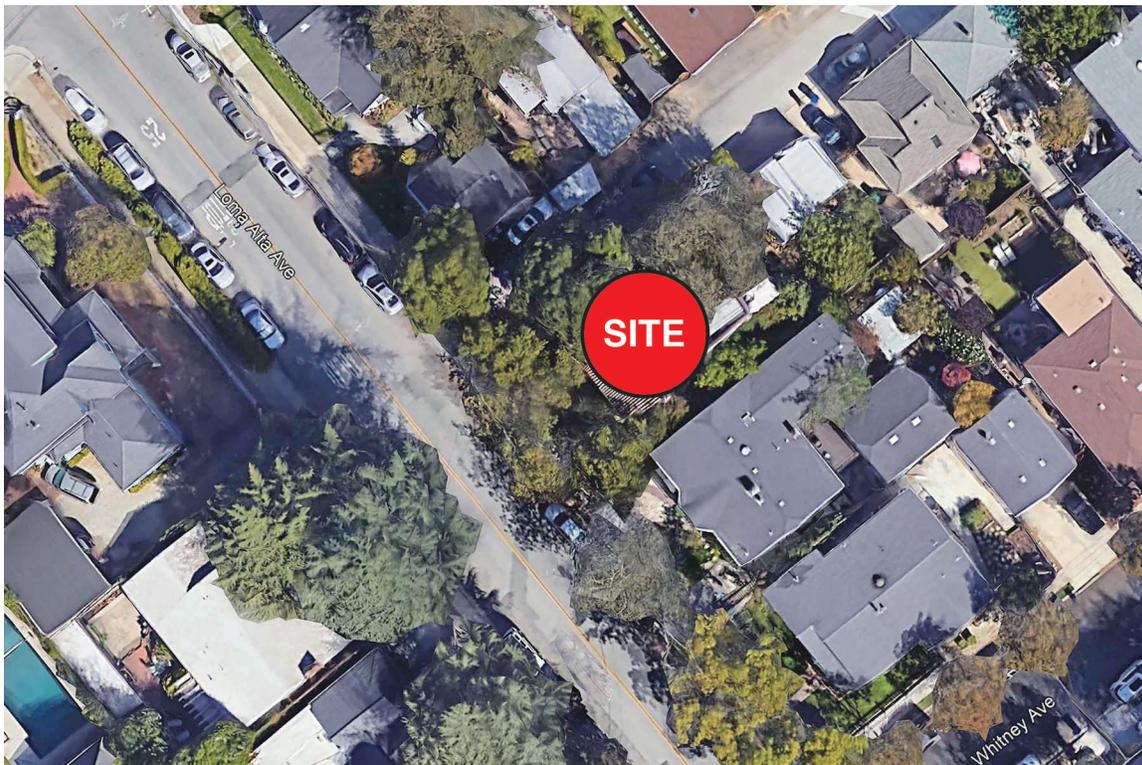
Dear Jennifer:

I previously reviewed this project last May, and prepared a review letter with recommendations. I have reviewed the applicant's response to the comments in that letter and their new drawings. In that response letter the applicant drew upon a house in the 200 block of Loma Alta as an example for a design justification. I would remind them that the Town's Residential Design Guidelines clearly define the immediate neighborhood for the primary context within which a project will be evaluated, and explicitly notes that examples at some distance from the site will not be considered.

My comments and recommendations are as follows:

**Neighborhood Context**

The site is narrow and very deep compared to its street frontage. It is a corner lot by virtue of the adjacent alley. Neighboring homes are a variety of one and two-stories in height. All are traditional in architectural style, form and details. The site is shown on the aerial photo below, and photos of the site and its surroundings are on the following page.





*The Site and Existing Building*



*House immediately across Loma Alta Avenue*



*House to the immediate Left across Panighetti Place*



*House to the immediate Right*



*Nearby House to the Right*



*Nearby House to the Right*



*Nearby House across Loma Alta Avenue*



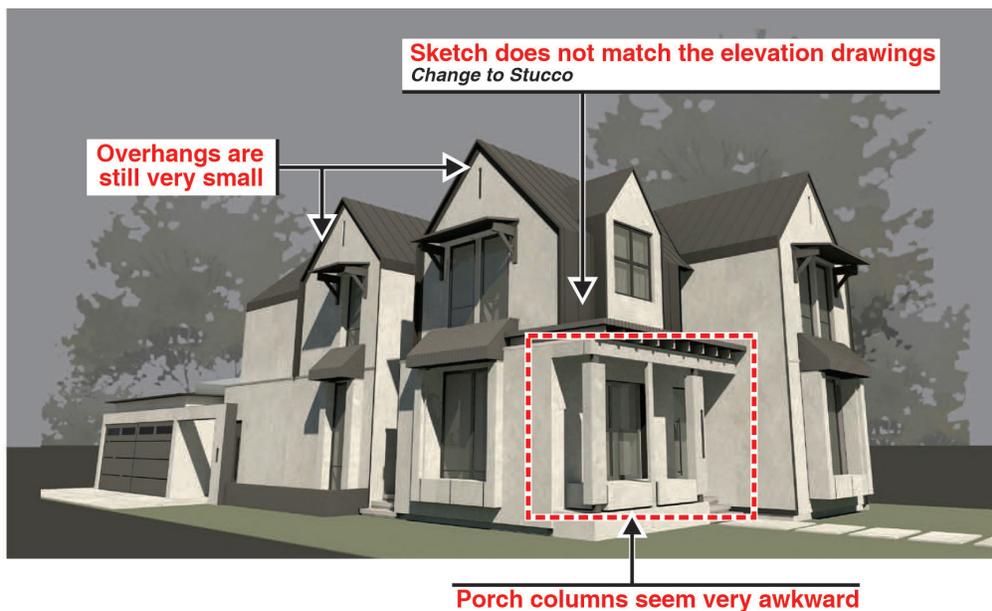
*Nearby House across Loma Alta Avenue*

## Issues and Concerns

In the May review letter, I noted that the proposed house is modest in size, and consistent with the scale of other nearby homes in the area, but there were several issues relating to the Town's Residential Design Guidelines regarding compatibility with the immediate neighborhood. Concerns identified in the review letter included the following:

- *The proposed house would have a substantial amount of its taller masses composed of continuous metal wall and roof panels. Reconciling this roof and wall material approach with the Town's Residential Design Guidelines would be difficult given the strongly traditional forms, styles and details of nearby homes and the Town's strong emphasis on neighborhood compatibility.*
- *The flat roof element at the Living Room was not well integrated with the remainder of the house which had sloped roofs and was more similar in form to nearby homes.*
- *The tall walls on the right side elevation would not be consistent with Residential Design Guideline 3.3.3.  
3.3.3 Provide visual relief for two story walls*
- *Asymmetrical eave lines on the left side elevations might be an issue.*
- *The projecting second floor windows on the front elevation might be a problem, and needed further study as the design progresses. While they might seem acceptable for the proposed metal wall and roof elements, they might not work with more traditional design and single family detailing.*
- *The supports for the awnings seemed too large for the house.*
- *The tall glass wall in the flat-topped building form might create some light spill problem.*
- *The large amount of paving in the setback along Panighetti Place would not be consistent with Residential Design Guideline 2.4.5.  
2.4.5 Mitigate the impact of driveways on the streetscape*

The applicant has made some changes to improve the design - the major one being the removal of the metal wall siding in favor of more traditional stucco. There are, however, several remaining issues that staff may wish to consider.



1. The perspective sketch still shows metal panelling on the walls.
2. The roof eave and gable overhangs are still very small.
3. The porch columns are very awkward.

**Wall material does not match the B & W elevation drawings**

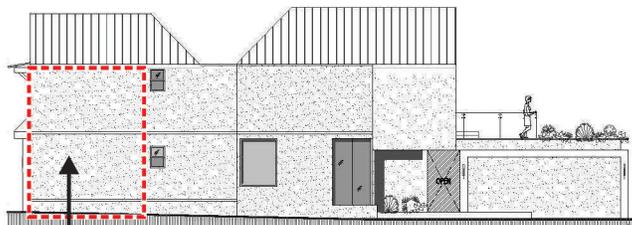
*Change to Stucco*



**Bellybands are too weak to make a difference in apparent wall height**

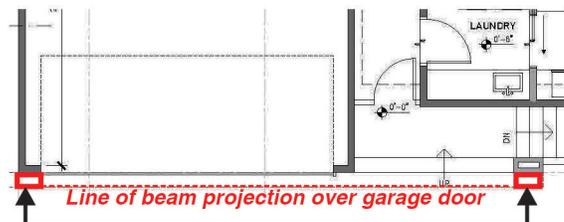
**Unclear why metal runs down facade and the extent does not match the black and white elevations**

4. It is unclear why a metal strip appears to be run down the corners of some walls. In any event, there are conflicts among the drawings as to the extent of the metal strips.
5. Bellybands have been added to break up tall walls, but they are too weak to make a visual difference in the apparent wall height, and are not robust enough to satisfy the intent of the Residential Design Guidelines.
6. The tall two-story wall on the right side elevation is very blank, and the front portion will be seen from the street and sidewalk.



**This blank two-story wall will be visible from street and sidewalk**

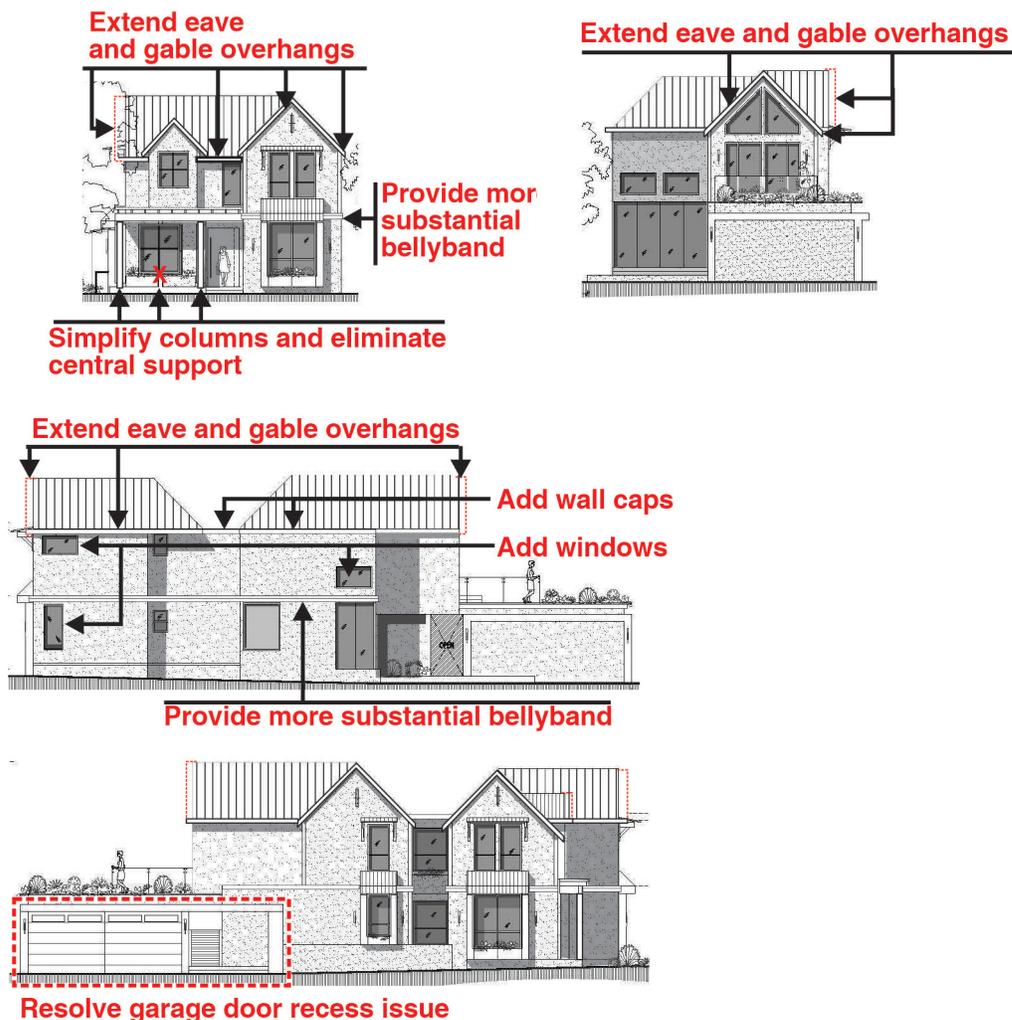
7. The applicant stated in their response letter that the garage door had been recessed by one foot, but the drawings do not clearly show that - see illustration below. The general solution of a projecting frame at the edges and over the garage door shown on the perspective sketch could work, but would require additional encroachment into the side setback or moving the garage back from the side street.



**Surround supports would need to be here to satisfy garage inset recommendation**  
*This would require more encroachment into the setback*

## Recommendations

1. Update and coordinate the drawings to show stucco rather than metal panels on all walls of the house.
2. Extend eave and gable overhangs more, and add wall caps at the flat roof portions of the house.
3. Simplify the porch columns and eliminate the center support.
4. Resolve the issue of the metal strips shown at some building corners. Smooth stucco corners would be the preferred solution.
5. Provide more substantial bellybands.
6. Add windows to the tall walls on the right side elevation.
7. Resolve the issue of recessing the garage door.



Jennifer, 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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