

From: James Lyon <lyon.james.ward@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 12, 2019 5:28 PM
To: Jennifer Armer <JARmer@losgatosca.gov>
Subject: 15 Loma Alta Avenue

Hello Jennifer,

I was browsing the pending planning projects and ran across the 15 Loma Alta Ave Project. As a nearby neighbor living in Johnson Ave, former Planning Commissioner and former member of the Historic Preservation Commission, I have concerns about the proposal.

My concerns are related to design - the design as proposed does not fit the fabric and context the lower Loma Alta Avenue. The section of the street is characterized by small bungalow houses with low pitch roofs and simple designs.

The proposal does not fit this context. Steep pitched metal roofing, modern plexiglass rails, etc are not in keeping with the historic character of the block. Yes, there are larger two story homes across the street and up Loma Alta, but the applicant is trying to squeeze too much home into too small a lot.

Thank you for your consideration.

Regards,

James Lyon
239 Johnson Ave.

From: James Lyon <lyon.james.ward@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, May 26, 2020 5:55 PM
To: Jennifer Armer <JARmer@losgatosca.gov>
Subject: Re: 15 Loma Alta Avenue

Hello Jennifer,

I see the story poles are up for the aforementioned project. I would like to reiterate my objections to this project as designed.

1. The design does not fit the fabric and streetscape of lower Loma Alta. The immediate neighborhood is characterized by small bungalow houses with low pitched roofs – all single story from Los Gatos Boulevard to Whitney Avenue. There are a few 1 ½ story houses up the block between Whitney and Cross, but nothing at 27' high. Did the applicant review and understand the Town's Residential Design Guidelines which are very clear on how to read a neighborhood?
2. The overall architectural style is not compatible with the neighborhood. The front façade (as well as every other elevation) is too vertical, with limited articulation and no attempt to set the second story back. It is an "in your face" design that is not in keeping with the historic nature of the block. Introducing steep pitch metal roofing, modern plexiglass railings is not compatible with the fabric of the streetscape. I would have privacy concerns if I lived next door due to the massive terrace extending over the garage roof.
3. The FAR requested is too large for the lot – the applicant is requesting almost 400 sqft more than allowed – this is 20% over the FAR. Totally unheard of! In addition, they have included a basement ADU. If they want the square footage for the primary house, lose the ADU and use the basement as primary residence living space reducing the above grade area to meet the FAR requirements. But I suspect it is the applicant's intent to use the ADU as primary living space, given the door between ADU and primary residence.
4. Why not preserve and renovate the existing home to maintain the neighborhood fabric and streetscape? Look to 268 Los Gatos Boulevard/10 Charles Street as an example of what can be done with a pre-1941 house in need of renovation though there are significant structural issues.

As a nearby neighbor living in Johnson Ave, former Planning Commissioner and former member of the Historic Preservation Commission, this project should be outrightly denied and sent back for a complete redesign by an architect who understands the Town's Residential Design Guidelines and how to design sympathetically to fit into a historic neighborhood.

Thank you for your consideration.

Regards,

James Lyon
239 Johnson Ave.

From: Rick Rutter

Sent: Saturday, May 30, 2020 4:49:05 PM (UTC-08:00) Pacific Time (US & Canada)

To: Planning

Subject: 15 Loma Alta

Hi, I'm the owner at 23 Loma Alta Avenue. I'm very concerned with the plans I've seen for 15 Loma Alta Ave. I noticed the house square footage is almost 50% over the allowed amount, which seems excessive. Is this seriously being considered? Have there been exceptions made to the allowed amount in the past? If so, what is the maximum overage that you allowed? When is the hearing scheduled?

Thanks,
Rick Rutter

Dear Los Gatos planning commission,

My name is Julian Goodstein, I live at 19 Loma Alta, adjacent to the proposed project at 15 Loma Alta.

I've been involved as a concerned neighbor in discussion and review of the plans with the Utopia team, Bahar and Babak. They've been attentive and responsive to my questions & concerns from the beginning and have made all efforts to be communicative and responsive. I'm extremely supportive of this project for the following reasons:

-The design has the concept and elements of a Victorian house which blends well into the neighborhood and enhances the property value, a stark contrast from an old and dilapidated structure.

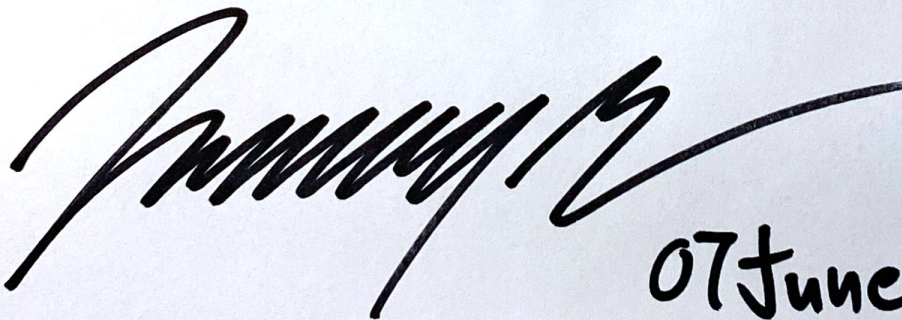
-I'm comfortable with the proposed setback, height and square footage.

-I have zero concern about the shadow coverage. Based on utopia shadow and day light plane study there is no light or shadow issue towards my house.

I'm supportive of the project as proposed, and hope the planning department will support the proposal as well. I look forward to the commencement of construction to breathe new vibrancy to our neighborhood.

Very best regards,

Julian Goodstein
19 Loma Alta Ave.



07 June 2020

From: James Lyon <lyon.james.ward@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 18, 2020 1:11 PM
To: Jennifer Armer <JARmer@losgatosca.gov>
Subject: Re: 15 Loma Alta Avenue

Hello Jennifer,

I have seen that the above project will have a public hearing on Sept 8th. I will try to attend in person, but in the event I cannot, I have outlined my continued objection to the project.

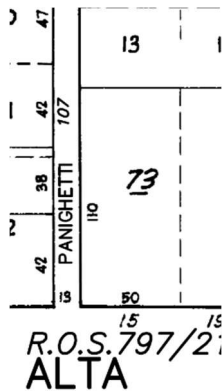
While the project proposal has scaled down its ambitions, the proposed residence still does not fit this SINGLE STORY neighborhood and should be rejected. Let me details my objections in the event the project moves forward in any way:

1. The proposed ultra-modern take on a Victorian is not in fitting with the bungalow neighborhood of lower Loma Alta. The houses in the Loma Alta cluster are all small single story bungalows with low pitched roofs. Any replacement should be taken in that direction – a simple bungalow style that fits the context of the block.
2. The house is far too tall compared to its adjacent neighbors. The house towers over 19 Loma Alta – two times the overall height. The proposal does not address the overall height by reducing plate heights and tucking the second story into the roof mass – instead, the design has full 9' plate heights and a steep pitched roof – reaching almost to the residential height limits.



3. The applicant tries to justify a 2 story design by referencing houses that are NOT in the immediate neighborhood. Further, examples sighted at basically 1 ½ story houses with low plate lines on the second story.
4. The applicant's Reading of Our Neighborhood – examples compared to 15 Loma Alta:
 - a. 205 Loma Alta – story and a half example of how to tuck mass and bulk under the roof mass. The applicant missed the read.
 - b. 54 Whitney – story and a half Victorian with bay window with shed roof. Applicant compares to the massive two story façade with a faux bay window of their design – again missing the read.
 - c. 128 Loma Alta – traditional Victorian design with low plate line on the second story gable end. Again, missed the read.

5. Finishes and fenestration are not compatible with the design and the neighborhood. The massive scale metal roof is not appropriate. The mix of windows (double-hung, sliders, fixed glass) with “confused” lighting does not fit the Victorian style (note that fenestration details are NOT called out). By the way, what is that window tucked in the corner over the front door? Far from Victorian!
6. The site plan has problems. There is not adequate back up space from the garage – by Town code, 25’ back up is required and the alley can be used. But Panighetti Place is only 13’ wide plus an 8’ setback to the garage door does not allow adequate space. The reference to 14 Cross Way misses the point that ReadHead Lane is 20’ and the garage has a 5’ setback, meeting Town code.



7. The use of the “modernized” interpretation is not appropriate for the traditional neighborhood. The bulk around the windows to try to create bays does not work – adopt a traditional approach and make the windows truly a bay window.
8. The “modern” justification examples are NOT in the same context of a well preserved historic neighborhood. Alta Heights Court is a cul-de-sac of mid-century ranch homes. 380 Los Gatos Blvd is NOT in a historic neighborhood. 26 Alpine is barely visible from the street due to lot topography. The applicant’s use of modern flat roof structures (garage) is not appropriate for a traditional streetscape of Loma Alta.

The design is not harmonious with the neighborhood and continues to be an “in your face” design. I again refer the applicant to 268 Los Gatos Boulevard/10 Charles Street as an example of what can be done with a pre-1941 house in need of renovation though there are significant structural issues. That final product will be appropriate for the Boulevard. The applications proposal is NOT appropriate for Loma Alta Avenue.

Regards,

James Lyon
239 Johnson Ave.

From: Constance Christodulis <constance_christodulis@yahoo.com>

Sent: Wednesday, September 2, 2020 1:01 PM

To: Planning Comment <PlanningComment@losgatosca.gov>

Subject: planned house at 15 Loma Alta Ave

Hello, I'm the owner and occupant of the house just next to 15 Loma Alta (at 100 Los Gatos Blvd). I've reviewed the plans on line. I believe that the house is too large for the size of the lot, is too tall, and has a style inconsistent with the neighborhood. If the house is built per plans available on the website, then my view of the mountains will be blocked and I will have shade on my home in December. I would like to see a smaller, shorter home which has a more traditional style built on this small lot.

Constance Christodulis

From: Jeffrey Cristina <jeffreycristina@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 2, 2020 9:41 PM
To: Planning Comment <PlanningComment@losgatosca.gov>
Subject: 15 Loma Alta

I request this correspondence is attached to the planning commission packet. My name is Jeff Cristina and I live on Los Gatos Blvd. This project will be a great addition to the community and I am in full support of it. This will beautify the neighborhood and any impact from the development toward traffic or parking will not be noticeable. They own the land and should be allowed to build as requested. This will have a direct impact on my land impacting my view. As 15 Loma Alta goes up, I hope they can enjoy the view of the mountains that I currently do.

I request that you please pass this proposal with no or minimal conditions and allow our neighborhood to grow.

The Town of Los Gatos needs to allow for landowners to use their land as they see fit, within the current laws, and not limit development. I would like to hear that this project and many others are passed and move along quickly. As a community we need to ensure land owners have rights to their land and a neighbor or the town are not taking those rights away.

Thank you,

Jeff Cristina