



**TOWN OF LOS GATOS  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
REPORT**

MEETING DATE: 04/08/2026

ITEM NO: 3

DATE: April 3, 2026  
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 16724 Chirco Drive.** APN 424-21-025. Architecture and Site Application S-25-002. Categorically Exempt Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15303: New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures. Property Owner/Applicant: Zahra Kassam. Project Planner: Erin M. Walters.

RECOMMENDATION:

Denial.

PROJECT DATA:

General Plan Designation: Low Density Residential  
Zoning Designation: R-1:8  
Applicable Plans & Standards: General Plan, Residential Design  
Parcel Size: 12,013 square feet  
Surrounding Area:

	Existing Land Use	General Plan	Zoning
North	Residential	Low Density Residential	R-1:8
East	Residential	Low Density Residential	R-1:8
South	Religious Observance Facility	Low Density Residential	R-1:8
West	Residential	Low Density Residential	R-1:8

PREPARED BY: Erin M. Walters  
Senior Planner

Reviewed by: Planning Manager and Community Development Director

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SUBJECT: 16724 Chirco Drive/S-25-002

DATE: April 3, 2026

CEQA:

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

FINDINGS:

- The project is Categorically Exempt pursuant to the adopted Guidelines for the Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act, Section 15303: New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures.
- The project meets the objective standards of Chapter 29 of the Town Code (Zoning Regulations).
- As required for compliance with the Residential Design Guidelines.

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 on the south side of Chirco Drive (Exhibit 1). The property is approximately 12,013 square feet and is developed with an existing 1,080-square foot, single-story residence with a 340-square foot attached garage.

The project is being considered by the Planning Commission due to concerns related to the project's consistency with the Residential Design Guidelines in terms of neighborhood compatibility.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

A. Location and Surrounding Neighborhood

The subject property is located on the south side of Chirco Drive, approximately 500 feet northwest of Los Gatos Boulevard (Exhibit 1). The property is developed with a single-family residence and attached garage. Single-family residential development abuts the property to the north, east, and west. A religious observance facility abuts the property to the south.

B. Project Summary

The applicant proposes to demolish the existing 1,080-square foot residence and construct a new 3,196-square foot, one-story single-family residence with an attached 445-square foot garage (Exhibit 13).

C. Zoning Compliance

A single-family residence is permitted in the R-1:8 zone. The proposed residence complies with the allowable floor area, building coverage, setbacks, parking, and height requirements for the property. No exceptions are requested.

DISCUSSION:

A. Architecture and Site Analysis

The applicant is proposing to demolish the existing one-story 1,080-square foot, traditional architecture style residence and 340-square foot attached garage.

The applicant proposes to construct a contemporary, modern style, one-story single-family home with 3,196-square foot of house floor area and a 445-square foot attached garage. The height of the proposed residence would be approximately 17 feet, 10 inches, where a maximum of 30 feet is allowed. The applicant provided a Project Description and a Letter of Justification summarizing the project (Exhibits 4 and 5). The proposed Development Plans are included in Exhibit 13.

B. Building Design

The proposed residence is a contemporary, modern style, taking strong inspiration from Eichler-style homes; having clean, simple lines, large windows for natural light, and an indoor-outdoor floor plan. The design proposes a pitched gable roof; composition asphalt shingles; vertical wood siding; concrete accent entry wall; solid wood front door to complement the vertical siding; folding glass aluminum nana wall doors with transom windows; dark metal windows and doors; and wood trellis' over the side and rear yard patios (Exhibit 9).

*Original Design*

The Town's Consulting Architect reviewed the applicant's first submittal of a proposed contemporary, modern style, one-story home on February 6, 2025 (Exhibit 7). The Town's Consulting Architect found that the proposed home was not consistent with the Town's Residential Design Guidelines or with the surrounding neighborhood. The design did not

match homes in the immediate neighborhood in terms of size, shape, roof style, materials, and overall appearance. The proposed project did not follow common neighborhood patterns for setbacks, front design, windows, or entry features. The Consulting Architect recommended the applicant redesign the home to be more consistent with the Residential Design Guidelines and more consistent with homes in the immediate neighborhood.

*Revised and Proposed Design*

In response, the applicants worked with staff and submitted revised plans (Exhibit 13). The applicants team provided a response letter, dated December 9, 2025, addressing the Town's Architect's issues and concerns with the initial design (Exhibit 8). The applicant made the following modifications:

- The roof was redesigned from a shed roof to a pitched gable roof to better match the neighborhood character, while retaining the modern/Eichler aesthetic;
- The front door height was reduced to align with adjacent homes, while maintaining transparency with sidelights and a transom;
- Window sizes and proportions were reduced to better match the wall-to-opening ratios of the immediate neighbors;
- The overall building form, scale, and design were revised to be more consistent with the homes in the immediate neighborhood;
- The proposed water feature was removed;
- Front yard paving was reduced to include a driveway and walkways;
- Landscaping was revised to include hedges and a lawn, consistent with the neighborhood character; and
- Exterior materials were updated, replacing burned wood with medium-tone redwood-brown siding.

The Town's Consulting Architect reviewed the revised plans on January 14, 2026, and noted that the applicant had made several changes in response to the previous recommendations contained in the review letter of last February (Exhibit 9). The Consulting Architect noted that the changes have been positive, but may not totally address the issue of neighborhood compatibility as set forth in the Town's Residential Design Guidelines. The proposed home is designed in a Contemporary Style. While a home in that general style might be designed to fit into its immediate neighborhood context, this specific design may be difficult to reconcile with several of the Town's Residential Design Guidelines.

The Town's Consulting Architect further stated that the applicant has expressed their intent to model the new home after the Eichler Style. While not common in Los Gatos, it is a significant style in some other nearby Peninsula cities. While diversity is acceptable and desirable, it does not relieve the project from meeting the intent and detail of the Residential Design Guidelines.

The Town's Consulting Architect provided seven recommendations, noting that the recommended changes represent the maximum extent to which the applicant's preferred design can be adapted to the immediate neighborhood's context (Exhibit 9). While the project would still not fully meet the Residential Design Guidelines, the changes would improve consistency with the traditional characteristics of the Eichler architectural style.

The applicant provided written responses to the recommendations of the Consulting Architect (Exhibit 10). The recommendations identified by the Consulting Architect are provided below, followed by the applicant's response in *italics*. The applicant met three of the recommendations.

**1. Unify all roofs with the same roof pitch and consider increasing the slope some to be more complementary to adjacent homes.**

*Applicant's Response: Left side slope has been increased slightly to complement the adjacent roofline. We would like to maintain the asymmetrical contrast as an important element of contemporary design.*

- Recommendation partially met.

**2. Substantially lower the eave height on the left side elevation from its currently proposed 11.5 feet.**

*Applicant's Response: Left side eave has been lowered from 11.5' to 10' top plate.*

- Recommendation met.

**3. Eliminate the vertical blade wall at the front elevation.**

*Applicant's Response: Respectfully, we decline to make the noted change. While not specifically an Eichler feature, blade walls are well-represented in other modern examples, and we find it to be an important piece for unifying the overall design.*

- Staff Response: Recommendation not met.

**4. Strongly consider the addition of a set back atrium with the same roof slope - typical of many Eichler Style homes.**

*Applicant's Response: Again, respectfully, we decline to make this addition. While open lighting is indeed important, we plan to provide this through high clerestory windows by using the asymmetrical roofs noted in #1 above.*

- Recommendation not met.

**5. Move the front wall of the Powder Room back to align with the adjacent garage wall.**

*Applicant's Response: Powder Room has been aligned as noted.*

- Recommendation met.

**6. Add wood trim to all windows, consistent with Residential Design Guideline 3.7.4 or recess the windows from the adjacent wall facade.**

*Applicant's Response: Windows are now noted as recessed by 2" with no trim.*

- Recommendation met.

**7. Reevaluate the proposed color for the home. Selecting a color or combination of colors related to other homes in the immediate neighborhood or to the traditional colors of Eichler Styles homes would be a better approach.**

*Applicant's Response: We prefer warmer tones over the cooler gray/white of Eichler examples. As such, the house color has been updated to a warm brown based on neighboring homes.*

- Recommendation partially met; however, color is not regulated by the Residential Design Guidelines.

The applicant further responded to the Consulting Architect's recommendations, stating:

*While our design takes strong inspiration from Eichler houses, we do not want to create an exact copy of this style. We believe our current design (plus the concessions noted below) balances the classic Eichler look with other modern features without sacrificing neighborhood compatibility (found in Exhibit 10).*

C. Neighborhood Compatibility

The immediate neighborhood contains primarily one-story residences, with two, two-story residences. Based on Town and County records, the residences in the immediate area range in size from 1,198 square feet to 3,928 square feet. The floor area ratios (FARs) range from 0.16 to 0.28. The proposed residence would be 3,196 square feet with a FAR of 0.27. Pursuant to Town Code, the maximum allowable square footage for the 12,013-square foot lot is 3,532 square feet with a maximum FAR of 0.29. The following table reflects the current conditions of the immediate neighborhood.

Address	Zoning	House SF	Garage SF	Total SF Site SF	Building FAR	Stories
16763 Chirco Drive	R-1:8	3,928	1,075	19,092	0.21	1
16755 Chirco Drive	R-1:8	2,840	987	17,624	0.16	1
16717 Chirco Drive	R-1:8	2,949	400	12,481	0.24	1
15625 Benedict Lane	R-1:8	1,198	480	13,907	0.09	1
15624 Benedict Lane	R-1:8	3,149	720	17,097	0.18	1
16700 Chirco Drive	R-1:8	3,327	747	12,000	0.28	1
16712 Chirco Drive	R-1:8	2,596	450	11,940	0.22	1
16736 Chirco Drive	R-1:8	3,067	377	11,929	0.26	2
16748 Chirco Drive	R-1:8	2,777	360	11,893	0.23	1
<b>16724 Chirco Drive (N)</b>	<b>R-1:8</b>	<b>3,196</b>	<b>445</b>	<b>12,013</b>	<b>0.27</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>16724 Chirco Drive (E)</b>	<b>R-1:8</b>	<b>1,080</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>12,013</b>	<b>0.09</b>	<b>1</b>

The proposed residence would comply with the maximum allowed floor area and height for the property and would not be the largest home in the immediate neighborhood in terms of square footage or FAR.

D. Tree Impacts

The Consulting Arborist reviewed the development plans, visited the property, and prepared a report for the project, noting that there are 13 protected trees on site (Exhibit 11). The proposed plan includes the removal of four exempt fruit trees and three protected trees, one of which is identified as dead. The Draft Conditions of Approval include a condition that all recommendations of the Town Arborist be implemented by the applicant prior to issuance of a Building Permit (Exhibit 3).

E. 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 or Conversion of Small Structures.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

The applicants have provided a summary of their neighborhood outreach (Exhibit 12).

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 for construction of a new 3,196-square foot, one-story single-family residence with an attached 445-square foot attached garage (Exhibit 13). The project complies with the objective standards of the Town Code related to allowable floor area, height, setbacks, lot coverage, and on-site parking requirements. The project was reviewed by the Town's Consulting Architect who provided recommendations for the revised project to refine the design to be more compatible with the immediate neighborhood and the Town's Residential Design Guidelines (Exhibit 9). In response to the recommendations of the Consulting Architect, the applicant responded to three of the issues identified in the report through revision of the proposed residence and provided justification for not making the additional recommended modifications (Exhibit 10).

B. Recommendation

Based on the analysis above, staff recommends denial of the Architecture and Site application based on concerns related to the project's compatibility with the immediate neighborhood and consistency with 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 or Conversion of Small Structures (Exhibit 2);
  - b. Make the finding that the project meets 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. Approve Architecture and Site application S-25-002 with the conditions contained in Exhibit 3 and the development plans in Exhibit 13.
2. Approve the application with additional and/or modified conditions; or
3. Continue the matter to a date certain with specific direction.

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EXHIBITS:

1. Location Map
2. Required Findings and Considerations
3. Recommended Conditions of Approval
4. Project Description
5. Letter of Justification
6. Photographs
7. Consulting Architect Report, February 6, 2025
8. Applicant Response to Consulting Architect, December 9, 2025
9. Consulting Architect Report, January 14, 2026
10. Applicant Response to Consulting Architect Report, January 23, 2026
11. Consulting Arborist Report
12. Applicant's Neighborhood Outreach
13. Development Plans

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