

# PLATFORM

architecture / planning / research

July 27th, 2025

To: **Town of Los Gatos Planning Department**

c/o Erin Walters, Senior Planner

## **RESPONSE TO COMMENTS – Cannon Design Group Review**

Dear Erin:

Please see our response to the Cannon Design Group Review.

The Cannon Design Group (CDG) review has been reviewed, and we reviewed the following issues that they raised across the 12 proposed lots:

**Cannon Design Group comments are in red.**

### **Roof Pitch**

**There are three different roof slopes which would not be consistent with Residential Design Guideline 3.5.1.**

We are using multiple roof pitches on multiple designs, CDG recommends only two, but we provide the following explanation for the design.

#### Plan Type D (Lots 1,11,12)

This elevation has three different roof pitches. The two primary roof pitches are designed to diminish the massing of the two story home towards the front as you can see in the side elevation. The porch roof pitch on Lot 1 design is designed to meet the eave of the steeper upper story pitch and have a porch footprint that provides for a substantial covered entry area. Lots 11 and 12 are the same on the primary pitches and have shed roof pitches over the entry porch that are lower pitch in order to be under second floor lower eave.

#### Plan Type B (Lots 2,3)

This elevation type also has three different roof pitches. The two primary roof pitches are designed to diminish the massing of the two story home, the main ridge roof lower pitch only faces towards the side the side and therefore the two front facing gables are steeper pitched but not seen next to the lower pitch. The proportion of the front facing gable we think looks proportionally better as a steeper pitch. The lower pitch over the garage and rear additions are lower pitch so as to not block upper story window sills.

#### Plan Type C (Lots 4,5,6)

This elevation type also has three different roof pitches. The two primary roof pitches are designed to diminish the massing of the two story home. This design is primarily a one story home and has two pitches based on the higher vaulted roof over the great room and the lower pitch roof over the second story and the rear and front porch elements.

The lowest pitch roof is used for ‘appendages’ such as the garage. The lower pitch for these secondary elements reinforces the hierarchy of the massing.

### **Plan Type Variety**

Please see explanation at end of comment letter which explains how the different plan types are tailored to their position within the site. While there is repetition of types adjacent each other, we have provided variety by mirroring plan types and providing variations on the color and material palette (while staying within a common theme). Lots 7,8,9,10 are all substantially distances from each other and separated by landscape features.

### **Window Sash**

**Slim profile fiberglass windows would not be consistent with Residential Design Guideline 3.7.3.**

We are proposing fiberglass windows for the standard windows in all plan types, and believe that the flexibility in finish options and design is sufficient to complement the architecture of the surrounding area and is consistent with the spirit of the guidelines.

### **Window Trim**

**Windows without trim would not be consistent with Residential Design Guideline 3.7.4.**

When the material is stucco, we have opted to not have trim around the windows or rounded stucco that dies in window frame, or have minimalist stucco mold, which is a common trim detail for stucco. It is not common to California style Mediterranean architecture to have 4” exterior window trim.

When the material is wood siding, we also have opted for a minimalist look, which we believe looks appropriate in this setting. We think more traditional trim details are typical in the more traditional old smaller lot developments (craftsman, Victorian, etc) but these are large lots where the dominant context is the natural landscape. Also, our architectural character is for a contemporary interpretation of traditional styles, and having minimalist trim designs is part of that.

### **Exterior Materials – Stone Base, Shutters**

**Limiting the location of the stone base and shutters would not be consistent with Residential Design Guideline 3.2.2.**

We are generally using stone as a complementary material on all elevations. This is used either as a ‘water table’ design to blend the base with the landscape or it is used as an accent material on the porch/entry feature. We don’t agree that using it extensively on all elevations (side and front) would look better. We are using shutters on some of the garages because some of those windows should be features but may also need to be covered to screen inside.

### **Color Schemes**

**There is very limited variation in the proposed color palettes for the homes overall and within the four clusters which would produce a neighborhood quite different than most in Los Gatos which have greater variety and Sense of individual homes rather than a subdivision.**

We would be open to using more color schemes as a condition of approval, but prefer a consistent theme of colors that are consistent with the architectural design style, the LRV considerations, and appropriateness with the architectural character. Also, because our new development is a ‘culdesac’ new neighborhood not part of the surrounding neighborhood streets, we don’t think blending into the existing design of homes on Twin Oaks or other blocks is as relevant in our proposed neighborhood.

### **Two Story Downhill Facades**

**The majority of proposed homes would be developed on flat pads carved out of the sloping site topography which may not be consistent with the towns Hillside Development Standards and Guidelines.**

**Mitigation measures include a limited facade height of 25 feet on the downhill facades and the inclusion of some downhill facade balconies to break up the two story facades. Staff should review this issue in the**

### **context of past hillside properties policies and decisions.**

See description at end of letter for how we designed plan types in response to topography. Lots 1,2,3,4,5,6,11,12 are designed as flat pads. These lots are on existing slopes less than 15%. The steeper lots (lots 7,8,9,10) have been designed as 'terraced pads' in order to fit into the steeper topography better (20-25%), our plans show that. We are also following the HSDG requirements for 35' maximum height limit. None of our designs violate the 35' max height limit.

### **We are also including for reference a description of the architectural and 'masterplan' vision:**

Surrey Farms is a subdivision of 17.55 acres of land which includes sloped hillside towards the east and flatter portions of land at the toe of the slope towards the west (+/- 3 acres of <10% slope) and adjacent to R-1:10 residential neighborhood. The proposed neighborhood is served by a cul-de-sac road which aligns with the slope transition between the flatter western areas of the site and the eastern hillside.

Lots 2 and 3 are along the southern entry to the site and adjacent residential neighborhoods towards the south. They are located adjacent to a drainage easement at the lower elevations of the overall site. Their footprints are more compact than lots 4-10, and they are designed as two-story homes whose primary massing is broken down with several secondary roof forms.

Lots 1, 11 and 12 are also near the entry to the site and are proposed as affordable housing as further outlined in the application. They are adjacent existing residential properties to the north and west and are screened with existing trees to remain from off-site residences. They are designed as two story homes with garages facing the rear and accessed off a common driveway. The front of the homes facing the main private road have entry porches facing the road and feature a steeper roof pitch which scales the massing down towards the front of the home.

Lots 4,5 and 6 are adjacent residential development west of the site which is zoned R1:10 and the proposed homes on those lots are mostly one-story massing with a very limited second floor over one wing of the house and less than 20% of its overall footprint. The materials and colors palettes for these homes are carefully chosen to blend with the natural environment and be consistent with the 'California Ranch' and "mediterranean" styles that are prevalent in the neighborhood.

The proposed 'hillside' homes on Lots 7-10 are on slopes of +/-20%, and the homes are placed on 'terraced pads' approximately 40' wide stepping with the hillside and oriented parallel to the contours. This minimizes the impact on the hillside and allows the homes to fit into the topography. The homesites are placed away from exiting ridgelines, trees and natural features, a riparian corridor exists between lots 7 and 8. The design of the hillside homes terrace with the slope and have primary roof forms that parallel the contours. Stone is integrated into the lower level of the home providing a base that blends with the hill. Colors and materials were carefully chosen to be darker in tone and more natural patinas that blend with the surrounding natural landscape. Where retaining walls are necessary, they will be stepped according to the principles outlined in the Los Gatos Hillside Development Standards and Guidelines.

Best regards,

Chris Hall, Partner

**Platform**

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