



December 13, 2023
Job No. 21-213

Erin Walters - Associate Planner
Town of Los Gatos - Planning Division
110 E. Main Street
Los Gatos, CA 95030

**Subject: Updated Letter of Justification
16660 Cypress Way
Architecture and Site Application S-21-024
Unpermitted Grading Remediation**

Dear Erin:

This historic residence is merely 24' wide but was built precariously across an existing slope of 42%. The upper driveway and residence width was approximately 66' and sat across 24' of vertical difference from elevation 820 to 796. The house does comply with HDS&G standards for terracing of three floor levels to match the existing terrain with orientation parallel to contours.

However, the owners witnessed horrific wildfires in Southern California and as a matter of self-preservation created a broad fire break of 24' width below and immediately north of the home. That flattened area is now paved with asphalt to double as parking and circulation for a length of 110'. An excessively high gravity retaining wall was installed at an average height of 8' for a run of 90'. This wall height and continuous length is not in compliance with the HDS&G which limits height to 5' and length to 50'. A new 4' planter wall will be installed to mask the lower half of the wall with a planter width of approximately 3' at a 3:1 slope to reduce the upper wall to a compliant 5' exposed height.

In addition to the remedial work for refinement of the unpermitted grading work and walls, there will be fire protection enhancements installed:

1) Emergency Evacuation Roadway

The primary site access road is a shared driveway named Yung See San Fong Court. It is typically 12' wide with a moderately steep uphill gradient from Cypress of 400' length at 12.5% grade to the main residence. All of this driveway is compliant with Town of Los Gatos Hillside Standards. It remains to be seen how Central Fire will respond given their continuing misinterpretation of PRC 4290.

The driveway is shared with the adjoining residences at 16664 & 16668 Cypress and is at

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Job No. 21-213
Page 2 of 2
December 13, 2023

high risk failure for evacuation due to the single lane operation. Consequently, the Defenbaughs desire to create a second means of evacuation from their residence to Cypress Way at 660' northeast to exit onto Cypress Way just 250' east of the intersection with Phillips Avenue. That intersection provides further escape to the east or west depending on fire conditions.

2) Fire Protection System Upgrades

We will construct a new fire truck turnout near the southeast corner of the house. The Fire Department requires a 55' setback for their equipment but needs to reach all combustible construction within 150' of the turnout. Two new water tanks of 10,000 gallon fire and 5,000 gallon domestic will be installed above the upper driveway retaining wall. This will assure positive flow to the new wharf hydrant. Having a new fire truck staging area, wharf hydrant, and 15,000 gallons of water will greatly enhance fire safety for this delicate historic residence. Note that the water system will be continuously recharged by a 1" fire service at some 200' higher than the site itself.

While it is ultimately unfortunate that no grading and retaining wall permits were sought for this work, we are doing our best to recover and retrofit the good work that was installed. Should you have any questions or concerns please contact me at (408) 316-2696 or terry@tscivil.com.

Sincerely,



TS/CIVIL ENGINEERING, INC.
Terence J. Szewczyk, P.E. C35527
Principal Engineer