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DATE: AUGUST 2, 2021

**TO: LOS GATOS BUILDING DEPARTMENT**

**PROJECT OWNER/ADDRESS:**

Daniel Barragan  
140 Prospect Ave  
Los Gatos, CA 95030

#### Written Description of Proposed Project/ Letter of Justification

##### Garage:

This project has an existing 2 story 4,628 SF residence with a 608 SF detached garage. We are asking to:

1. Enlarge the existing 608 SF garage to a 956 SF building. It will be 866 SF garage with 90 SF bathroom counted toward main residence square foot. The enlarged garage will also have a basement below with a lightwell that opens to the existing sloping rear yard. This will make a 4,718 SF residence with a 866 SF garage. The max allowed is 4,900 SF residence with a 400 SF garage. This increase in FAR by 284 SF will require additional approval.
2. A sports court is also being proposed. For the sports court, we are asking for fencing that is taller than allowed by HDS&G. The fence height will require addition approval.
3. Grading will be required for the proposed pool, gazebo and front patio extension. The grading for these are within HDS&G requirements. We will also have grading for the basement lightwell which will require additional approval.
4. We will be adding retaining walls in specific locations to help create these areas on site and would like to address how these walls are consistent with the objectives of the HDS&G.
5. The garage and ADU will be designed to have similar architectural features to the existing residence. Please note the ADU is not a part of this approval, but it's design does impact architectural design of the garage.
6. We will be removing a heritage tree in poor condition and adding visual screen landscaping.
7. During this process we have reached out to neighbors and made adjustments to the plans to appease all parties.

##### **Increase in FAR and neighborhood compatibility.**

Per planning, the max FAR for this lot is 4,900 residence with 400 SF garage and 1,200 SF ADU on this 30,090 SF lot. We are asking for a 4,718 SF residence (90 SF increase as the bathroom in the garage is counted toward living space) and an 866 SF garage.

The Existing residence and detached garage sit atop a hill with a narrow driveway. Prospect Avenue has very little street parking and there is very little room for vehicles on this property. The proposal increases the garage size to help accommodate parking on this lot. Out of the twelve neighbors in the house size comparison chart, the average garage size is 768 SF and there are three residences with garages larger than 866 SF, on smaller lots. If you do a comparison of house size to garage size, 140 Prospect appears to have quite a small garage and enlarging it fits with the house to garage size comparison.

We are asking for exceptions of the maximum floor area and are following the requirements in the Hillside-Standards:

1. The developed area will not be visible from any of the established viewing areas.
2. There will be no significant impacts on protected trees, wildlife habitat or movement corridors. The main tree that is being removed near the addition is due to its condition per the arborist. (see arborist report)
3. All grading for the building extension is minimal.
4. All standards and guidelines are being met.
5. Since this is a garage, we will not need to be compliant with Title-24, but the living areas of basement and ADU will comply with Title-24. Please note the ADU is not a part of this application
6. The ADU roof will be pre-wired for future photovoltaic installation. Please note the ADU is not a part of this application
7. Over 25% of new hardscape material will be permeable.
8. A below grade square footage element is included in the design.
9. The visual impact to the neighbors will be minimal.

10. Other – also the size of the house is similar to all the neighboring properties, although there are 3 neighbors that have 3 car garages and that's what we are looking to have also – 150 Prospect Ave, 120 Sisters Ct and 110 Sisters Ct. all have 3 car garages.

#### **Fencing.**

The front yard we are proposing to extend the existing front patio with a new stairway going down to a landscape area. Past this lawn/landscape area is a proposed sports court (half a basketball court). The court is located adjacent to the neighbor's outdoor activity area. The sports court is proposing two types of fencing over 6 ft in height. The first is the 8ft tall redwood fence on the driveway side of the sports court. This is to provide protection from the shared driveway and traffic there and to keep the sports court balls within the court. Also, please note the fence elevations sheet A0.2. as the tallest portion of the fence is 8'-0" at the high side, the fence is under 6ft. This special privacy concern between the driveway and sports court cannot be practically addressed by additional landscaping or tree screening. The other three sides of the court we are proposing 12 ft tall black mesh (see through) fencing. This is to keep the sports court balls out of the neighboring property. The proposed see-through black mesh is also proposed to provide a view through the sports court to the landscaping and residence beyond. Again, this 12 ft black see-through mesh fencing is to accommodate special privacy concerns. There is little parking on site or in the cul-de-sac, so we are proposing permeable paver parking past the sports court.

#### **Grading Depth Exceptions.**

This project will have a new basement built under the proposed garage. There are no other basements on this site. Basements and pools are excluded from the maximum graded cuts and fills per HDS&G. The proposed detached garage basement with lightwell, while required for fire life and safety are not excluded. The rear of the property has a gradual slope downhill and we positioned the basement and lightwell within this sloping area to reduce any visual impact it may and retain the existing natural slope of the property. The excavation itself, will not be overly impactful to the site. Planning has asked for justification of the size of the lightwell. The initial SF of the lightwell was 274 SF and this included an outdoor seating and bbq area. The minimum area for a lightwell per fire life and safety for this basement would be 88 SF. This would be a 3ft clear space directly outside the basement for egress. We would like a little more space than the minimum so it is not so cramped and have updated the light well to be 175 SF. This will reduce the impact of grading and allow for a clear space outside of the basement.

#### **Retaining walls.**

There are many areas of this project that require grading and to reduce the overall grading and its potential impact to the site we are recommending adding retaining walls. The retaining wall height are consistent with the objectives of the HDS&G. The main areas for these retaining walls are the rear pool/gazebo area, front patio extension and sports court/parking area. The rear yard has a flat area that can have construction based on LRDA. We are proposing a pool and 180 SF Gazebo in this area. We are proposing a 5ft tall retaining wall in this LRDA area to flatten the area for these improvements. Pool and Gazebo location will have little to no impact on adjacent properties. Grading will be minimal as our proposed location for the pool and gazebo are a naturally flat area of the rear yard. The retaining wall in this location will also provide slope stability for the pool and gazebo.

The front patio extension and sports court will need to two 3 foot retaining walls and one 5 foot retaining wall (to match the existing retaining wall height on the driveway. These retaining walls will follow the existing topography of the site and keep the visual aesthetics of the natural grade. They will also reduce the grading required to add these elements

#### **Garage Architectural Features.**

We are proposing a 10-foot garage level ceiling and an 8-foot ADU ceiling above. The request for 10 ft ceiling is to fit a car lift. The existing garage is below average size with no driveway parking. Optimal car lift height is 11 – 12 feet tall but we can fit a lift in a 10-foot-tall ceiling, giving more room for parking. Although the ADU is not a part of this application, it's ceiling height has a direct effect on the overall height and mass of this design.

The existing residence has a 9-foot 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. As the 10-foot garage level ceiling has concerned planning regarding bulk of the building, we have broken down the façade of all sides of the building to reduce the image of prominently visible mass of building. The front and rear of the building have porches to break up the façade, while the right side has a pop out with wood material instead of the main stucco material to help with bulk and the left side has a single-story roof from the garage below to alleviate the feeling of bulk. We have also proposed an 8ft ADU ceiling to maintain the similar height as the residence.

**Landscaping.**

The rear yard consists of a large oak tree that is in poor condition per our Arborist Report from Kevin Kielty, Certified Arborist #WE0476A. We are now proposing to remove this Oak tree and two other smaller Oak trees that are in the way of our proposed pool area.

We are also proposing 3 large, 48 inch box mature Black Oak trees to be planted between the garage and fence shared by the neighbor to provide a visual screen.

**Neighborhood Outreach.**

On March 23, 2021 we mailed out a letter to the following neighbors along with a set of plans. This letter and plans was provided to the planning department. 87, 100, 110, 120, 130, 150, 160 Prospect Ave & 110, 120, 130 Sisters Ct. We received comments back from Robert Khalipa at first who is the father of the owner Jason Khalipa at 130 Prospect. He had concerns about the ADU on top of the garage (which is not a part of this review). We had a conversation with Jason the owner of 130 Prospect and he had concerns about the roof top deck on top of the ADU. At that point we decided to remove that element from the plans and add mature privacy trees between the garage/ADU and 130 Prospect to create a visual screen.

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