

Justification Letter

15977 Shannon Road
Los Gatos CA 95030

The Owners purchased this site because of the solar access, wonderful views and the privacy that it affords being at the end of a long private road. The owner's principal objectives were to provide a modest sized, two-story home with a larger usable yard space that includes a swimming pool and sunny patio areas. The home is to be a high quality, modern and environmentally responsible design. The home was to be designed to take advantage of spectacular views of the western hillside. The owner's wanted a home that personifies their healthy lifestyle where outdoor recreation and living is incorporated within the design of the residence and the site.

The existing residence does not meet the owner's requirements in several ways. Largely, the floor plan layout for all levels would require so many modifications to meet the owner's principal objectives that this residence would be deemed a technical demolition anyway. The main living space, located on the second floor, is surrounded with a large unprotected deck area that poses a fire danger and is disconnected from the yard space. The existing residence is essentially a two-story residence constructed on top of a Garage.

As it turns out, the existing three-level home is visible from the viewing platform located at the corner of Blossom Hill Road and Los Gatos Boulevard; therefore it does not align with the vision of the HDS&G. Access to the site is constricted by an existing driveway that exceeds 20% slope and has tight turning radius. While the turnaround is ample in size, the slope exceeds 5%. The idea of retaining this residence and remodeling it for the purpose of meeting the owner's objectives as well as meeting the vision of the HDS&G is quickly fraught with conflict and becomes an impracticable task.

Because the proposed residence was to not exceed 18 feet in height, the building's footprint necessary to meet the owner's spatial requirements could no longer be condensed on three levels. Instead a single level floor plan would need to be created. The proposed floor levels were designed to follow the natural topographic contours of site; stepping in cadence with the hillside. Additionally the massing of the proposed residence has been sited and designed to minimize the appearance of mass and bulk as viewed from any of the surrounding locations. This was achieved by siting the residence as far back from the edge of the existing building pad as possible and shifting the building's massing toward the south and behind the existing vegetation to further diminish and improve the visual impact.

The location of the proposed residence juxtaposed to the current residence presents the best location to diminish visual impacts from being viewed from the valley's floor. Whereas an inconsequential corner of the garage is cut into an area of the site with a grade greater than 30%, the ramifications are nonexistent. The structure is not constructed over the steeper slope

but rather tucked into hillside; diminishing the visual impact of the wall height while improving the stability of the structure. Conversely by jogging the corner of the Garage would remove a needed parking stall; moving the building dramatically increases the visual impact from the viewing platform.

Site elements such as retaining walls follow the natural contours of the site and will merge naturally into the site; creating a natural boundary between the paved surfaces and natural hillside. This is achieved by terracing shorter stone faced walls to create planting areas that will promote plants to spill over the face of the walls resulting in a natural form and appearance.

The driveway will be redesigned to bring the grade lower (below 20%) remove the tight turning radius and widen stabilize the edges throughout. Additionally the turnaround area will be graded to meet a maximum slope of 5%. Whereas the goal was to adjust the driveways slope to be 15%, this was not a possibility without exceeding a maximum allowable grade cut of 4 feet. Driveway slopes that exceed 20% are permitted thus the new design is improving the existing non-compliant conditions.

Whereas this site was currently developed with a residence constructed prior to the implementation of the HDS&G, it has a long list of elements that do not meet the vision, goals and objectives of the HDS&G. The proposed residence that replaces it however, personifies the HDS&G vision. This is achieved with a new development that removes the deformity of the existing conditions and restores the hillside back to its original character.

The owner's insisted that their The owner's goal was to have a residence that provides the greatest amount of outdoor recreation area between the western hillside views and the main living spaces. This was achieved by benching the easterly side of the residence into the hillside. Privacy for this recreation area / rear yard was achieved by placing the Master Bedroom Suite between the outdoor space and the driveway.