

From: James Lyon <lyon.james.ward@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 10, 2020 5:57 PM
To: Jennifer Armer <JARmer@losgatosca.gov>
Cc: Joel Paulson <jpaulson@losgatosca.gov>; Sally Zarnowitz <SZarnowitz@losgatosca.gov>
Subject: 15 Loma Alta Ave

Hi Jennifer,

Thank you for the meeting information and the ability to attend/participate via Zoom. I hope the Town continues this post-pandemic, as it allows for easy public participation.

Regarding the project comments by the architect to my concerns, they have not addressed my concerns in any way.

In response to their comments below:

1. The proposed modern Victorian is not appropriate for the neighborhood and is in conflict with the **Residential Design Guidelines**. Unfortunately, it seems the Town Architect did not look at the project in context of the neighborhood and his comments did not go far enough to address the design beyond minor tweaks.

According to **Section 1.4 – Community Expectations**, the project as propose does not meet the following:

- Homes will respect the scale and character of their immediate neighborhoods.
- Structures will be designed with architectural integrity with design and material consistency on all facades.
- Attention will be given to architectural details consistent with the individual architectural style.
- Attention will be given to parcel landscaping that is sympathetic to the neighborhood.
- Homes will be designed with respect for the views, privacy and solar access of their neighbors.

According to **Section 2.1 - General Neighborhood Design Principles**, the project as propose does not meet the following:

- Residential development shall be similar in mass, bulk and scale to the immediate neighborhood. Consideration will be given to the existing FAR's, residential square footages and lot size in the neighborhood.

According to **Section 2.3.4 - Use roof forms and pitches that are similar to other houses in the neighborhood**. The adjacent houses are all low pitched bungalows – a steep pitch roofed Victorian is not in compliance with this section.

The applicant should look at alternative architecture to better fit the bungalow enclave. Recommendations are to take queues from the existing home – Spanish style bungalow – that would allow for low pitch and parapet roof structures to reduce the height, bulk and mass. Alternatively, a Greene & Greene inspired bungalow again with a low pitched roof would fit the setting (and allow for a varied wall materials – stucco on the lower floor, shingle on the upper).

2. The height of the structure is a major concern to the surrounding neighbors beyond the 19 Loma Alta neighbor. Is 19 Loma Alta an owner or renter? This makes a big difference in point of view.
3. As far as a two story design, I have no objection. BUT the design needs to be compatible with the neighborhood – what is proposed is NOT. 10 foot first floor and 9 foot second floor plate heights plus a steep pitched roof drive the overall height, mass and scale – this is due to the mistaken choice of Victorian massing. Many of the homes referenced by the applicant are story and a half, with lower 2nd floor plate heights to reduce bulk and mass. Again, a change in architectural style as noted above can address these issues.
4. The applicant has not implemented a Victorian design, as the detailing is not true to the style. According to **Section 3.2.2 - Design for architectural integrity:**
 - In general, it is best to select a clear and distinctive architectural style rather than utilizing generic design elements or mixing elements from different architectural styles. [as the applicant has displayed in pages 20-23 of their justification, their design is a jumble of different styles and elements]
 - Building massing, roof pitches, materials, window types and proportions, design features (e.g., roof dormers), and other architectural features should be consistent with the traditions of the selected style [applicant has selected material – stucco, aluminum windows, metal roof, not consistent with the traditions of the selected style].
 - Carry wall materials, window types and architectural details around all sides of the house. Avoid side and rear elevations that are markedly different from the front elevation [as the applicant has done with a change in fenestration at the rear of the property].
 - Develop floor plans that allow the location and size of windows to match the selected architectural style [as the applicant has NOT done as they have placed a “funny” window of the front door area]. For example, some styles emphasize the placement of windows in a symmetrical relationship to the entry.

The applicant has not met this threshold of a Victorian design. The design is confused and jumbled with varying windows and fenestration, unrelated design elements, and material selection.

Further, the applicant does not meet **Section 3.7.3 - Match window materials to the architectural style and to the surrounding neighborhood:**

- Wood windows are common in Los Gatos. Wood is still the desired choice for styles that traditionally used wood. However, today there are some window materials, such as vinyl clad wood windows that are not noticeably different from wood at a short distance. They may be used if their visual appearance matches wood.
 - Generally, avoid metal windows. They may be considered acceptable for a Modern Style house, **but would be strongly discouraged for all other styles.**
5. Showing a photo of a metal roof is NOT a justification. It is a photo of a metal roof. There is no explanation or justification. Accordingly, a metal roof is NOT appropriate for a Victorian unless it is an outback Australia.
 6. Backup requirement has been addressed by Staff as a Condition of Approval.

7. Not addressed by the application and would be mute with a redesign.
8. The applicant references Modern homes that are NOT in the same neighborhood context as their proposal. None of the references homes are next to a 1920's bungalow or adjacent to a Bell Ringer property. Modern is not appropriate for this location.

Overall, the application does not meet the Residential Design Guidelines and should undertake a complete redesign. Further I hope that applicant listened to the feedback and concerns of the immediate neighbors at the DRC and will make substantive changes prior to the next meeting.

Regards,

James Lyon

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