

# A R C A N U M

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## 11.18.20

Sean Mullin  
Town Planner  
Town of Los Gatos  
110 E. Main Street  
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### **RE: Recent Revision to Design for 62 Ellenwood Avenue Architecture and Site Application S-20-008 with Summary of Neighborhood Involvement of Design**

Sean Mullin-

The owners of 62 Ellenwood and Arcanum have been committed to work with the community to design a home that would fit within the context of the community as best as possible. In Spring of 2019, Arcanum submitted a package as required for review by the HPC requesting the potential removal of the existing home. As part of the HPC process, we were asked to provide a general concept of the new home location for the board members to review. Our initial design had the home positioned close to the street in the current front yard of the property preserving the existing oaks at the top of the hill. The HPC approved the removal of the existing residence (but as neighbors in the community) recommended the house be positioned close to the current location of the existing home. The feedback we received was that tree removal of any large oaks is not desired in Los Gatos, however in this case the alternative location of a new house was deemed too impactful to the neighborhood massing. The front yard open space should be maintained to provide a visual open space for the neighbors.

Arcanum worked with the Town Planning Department and Town Arborist on the design adhering to this design directive. The new house was positioned as close to the location of the existing house as possible with sacrificing only one oak tree- Oak Tree #924. The removal of the one oak tree allowed us to move the proposed house farther away from the remaining oak trees in an effort to hopefully increase the other trees life expectancy as the current house was built right on top of Oak Tree #925.

On July 21<sup>st</sup>, 2020, The owners of the property hosted a meeting to show the project to the neighbors. See attached letter for a list of attendees. The neighbors at 66 Ellenwood and 67 Ellenwood expressed concerns about the potential change from views from their property. Arcanum reached out to both neighbors and had a site visit with 66 Ellenwood on August 14<sup>th</sup>, 2020 at their house to understand and itemize their privacy and view concerns. We informed them that once the story poles were erected, we would return to meet with them and bring the landscape architect to evaluate together.

We received permission from the Town Planning Department in late October to install the story poles. Story poles were installed on October 21<sup>st</sup> of 2020 depicting the heights and layout of the house corresponded with the drawings dated August 18<sup>th</sup> Technical Review Resubmittal. Upon installation completion, some neighbors expressed concern about the height of the story poles. The owners and Arcanum agreed the design needed some tweaking so we requested the Planning Commission Hearing be delayed until December to allow for additional time to evaluate with neighbors and adjust design.

Arcanum returned to the neighborhood with the landscape architect Studio Green on November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020. We met with the neighbors at 66, 67 and 69 Ellenwood to evaluate the story poles. New

renderings and some story pole tweaks were reviewed together to discuss solutions to address their concerns. The landscape architect agreed to adjust landscape screening to minimize the impact as much as possible. It was disclosed at the meeting the story poles didn't reflect all the changes being discussed, but we wanted to get their feedback before finalizing the design and submitting to town (work in progress). The general concern was the height of the second story and the neighbor at 66 Ellenwood had specific concerns about the views from their second floor over the roof of the proposed garage.

In an effort to address the concerns brought to our attention, we've made multiple adjustments to the design of the house:

- The gables at the second-floor were replaced with hip roofs (less building mass facing street) and the plate height lowered 6"
- The slope of all roofs was reduced to lower the ridge heights. The changes decreased the total height of the house by 27" at the highest point.
- The garage ridge has an impact for the neighbor at 66 Ellenwood and it has been reduced a total of 36" and we also eliminated the flue enclosure along its ridge.
- The color palette of the house was darkened and wood siding and some wood details have been added to all second story exterior walls. We believe these changes will provide more texture, break up the massing of the house and reduce its visual impact.

In conclusion, we understand that the town has received some letters of concern from some of the neighbors after the original story poles were erected. The owners and Arcanum have done our best to be proactive and address the concerns expressed by the neighbors in our revision submitted on November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020. We also understand, the neighbors have raised question about removing Oak tree #924. Obviously, they are most likely unaware of the effort we have made working with the town to try to negotiate the location of the house over the past year and a half, the health of the trees on the property and the careful steps the design team has made to integrate a new house on this property. We hope our latest revision will reflect our dedication to address all concerns.

Please contact me if any additional information is required.

Sincerely,  
Lisa Nichols

**Enclosures:**

- I. Neighborhood Outreach Letter