

## Beckstrom Architecture + Interiors

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TO:

**Los Gatos Planning/Building Dept**

Project: 102 Alta Heights Court, Los Gatos, 95030

APN: 532-29-045

Zoning: R:1-8

### **Construct New 2-story Residence in R:1-8 Zone**

#### Urban Planning Overview

102 Alta Heights Court is in a cul-de-sac which was formed in the 1950's, prior to the current zoning. This court sits just off Loma Alta, and is approximately .2 mile from Los Gatos Boulevard. The neighborhood is nestled between wooded hillsides, and Loma Alta serves as a neighborhood connector street. The neighborhood is marked by a wide variety of architectural styles, mixed street frontage and wall patterns. Many of the houses are built close to the street and sidewalk, which creates a friendly, gracious historic charm. The styles range from Victorian, Spanish, Tudor, Arts and Crafts, mid-century, and later to 70's and 80's, and finally to modern and transitional styles. Many houses have deep lots with outbuildings, others are tight and constrained by the hillside, while some have 3-story street frontage with garages below. The street tree pattern and sidewalks hold the neighborhood charm together. The close proximity of houses fosters supportive connections and close community.

#### Zoning/Setback Request

This proposed new single-family home with attached ADU (under a separate permit by code) and attached Garage entails deconstructing a dilapidated, 1950's 2 Bedroom/1 Bath single story home. The minimum lot size for R:1-8 zoning is 8,000 square feet. This is a substandard lot of 5,250 square feet, which is 35% under the minimum. The current house and lot existed before zoning setbacks. The Alta Heights Court and Loma Alta neighborhood houses all have varying setbacks due to the irregular lots, and most do not meet current zoning setbacks.

**We request to maintain the existing house footprint width and existing side setbacks as part of the existing neighborhood fabric. The front setback at will be 17'-6" per code 29.40.055 – "Where a lot adjoins only one (1) lot having a main building (within twenty-five (25) feet of its side lot lines) which lawfully projects into the required front yard, the front yard requirement on such lots may be the average of the front yard of the existing building and the required front yard." We request 5'-6" side setbacks on both the East and West.**

Background: Before purchasing the house in August, we provided existing conditions, site plans and 3D CAD views of the neighborhood to garner input from Los Gatos Planning regarding the setbacks. It was communicated that this would be possible as an administrative internal Planning decision due to the non-conforming lot. The Los Gatos Planning Department helped us to understand the possibilities with this lot and we sincerely appreciate their assistance.

The neighboring house at 175 Loma Alta also predates current zoning, and a second floor was added at a later date, presumably before zoning because it is an existing non-conforming layout. The 175 Loma Alta House setback on Alta Heights Court is approximately 10'-0" and approximately 16'-1/4" on Loma Alta. The 175 Loma Alta Garage setback on Alta Heights Court is approximately 4'-7 1/2" and the side setback is approximately 2'-7 1/2" along the property line as can be seen in the photos and plan. The property line side of the 175 Loma house is 22'-6" from the side property line next to 102 Alta Heights Court. As can be seen from the photos and 3D views, the massing of the 175 house looms very large with a strong '2-story street wall'. The effect is that the new design of 102 Alta Heights Court is virtually blocked when driving down Alta Heights Court and 102 is diminutive in scale in comparison to 175. The proposed 102 Alta Heights Court street frontage seen next to 175 is minimal in comparison, 175 Loma Alta seems twice as big and has a higher 2-story wall. The 102 Alta Heights Court garage is a flat roofed box within all setbacks and appears to predate zoning.

The other neighboring house at 104 Alta Heights Court is a new, modern design. The grade is approximately 4-5' higher than 102 Alta Heights Court. The other houses on Alta Heights Court also have grades from 5 - 14' higher. The result is that 102 has the lowest grade house on the court. The low grade and the existence of a very large oak and redwood on the west side property line cause the proposed 102 house design to look relatively small in scale.

We have attempted to create a handsome, classic, transitional 1920's 'Tudor inspired' design which is common in all 1920's urban cottage neighborhoods across the USA. The design of the house is meant to bring a 'friendly' face to the neighborhood. We have met the neighbors and given them copies of the renderings and site plan of the proposed house. We feel grateful that the response has been so supportive. We have raised 5 of our 6 children in the Saratoga/Los Gatos school system and feel grateful to be members of this community.

Please call or email with any follow up questions. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Eric A. Beckstrom  
President/Architect

