



Los Gatos Planning Division
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December 23, 2025

PROJECT DESCRIPTION & LETTER OF JUSTIFICATION

193 Howes Drive – Minor Residential Application (MR-25-012)

Applicant: Seigo Designs | Owner: Neeraj Goel | APN: 527-43-021 | Zoning: R-1:8

Project Overview

The proposed project at 193 Howes Drive consists of a second-story addition to an existing single-story residence located within the R-1:8 zoning district.

The project retains the existing building footprint and legal nonconforming setbacks, with no horizontal expansion of the structure. All additional floor area is accommodated vertically to minimize site impacts, preserve neighborhood character, and comply with the intent of the Town's Residential Design Guidelines (RDG).

The design responds directly to site constraints, neighborhood context, and Town guidance, with particular attention to scale, privacy, and compatibility.

a. Floor Area Ratio (FAR) Relative to the Immediate Neighborhood

The proposed residence complies with the maximum FAR permitted under the R-1:8 zoning district. While the resulting FAR may be higher than some nearby homes, this condition reflects parcel-specific factors, including the comparatively smaller lot size and the absence of prior additions that are common among neighboring properties.

Importantly, the project does not exceed the allowable FAR and achieves its increase without expanding the existing building footprint. The additional floor area is accommodated entirely within the existing envelope, avoiding increased lot coverage, new setback encroachments, or expanded site disturbance.

Additionally, several nearby homes exhibit comparable or greater perceived scale and massing due to larger lot sizes, wider footprints, or deeper building depths, even where their FAR ratios may differ. As a result, the proposed home does not read as visually larger or out of character when evaluated in terms of overall neighborhood scale and appearance, which is consistent with the intent of the RDG.

b. Height Relative to the Immediate Neighborhood

The proposed structure complies with all applicable height limits and is comparable to other two-story residences within the surrounding neighborhood context. While many nearby homes are single-story, the proposed height is moderated through roof form, articulation, and placement of the second story away from adjacent properties.

The second story is centrally located on the site and is not positioned directly adjacent to neighboring residences, reducing perceived height and bulk when viewed from surrounding properties and the public right-of-way.



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c. Compliance with the Residential Design Guidelines (RDG)

The project is consistent with the RDG by:

- Retaining the existing building footprint and avoiding outward expansion.
- Preserving established setback patterns and neighborhood rhythm.
- Limiting bulk through compact second-story massing; and
- Utilizing simple residential forms and proportions appropriate to the neighborhood.

The design prioritizes compatibility and restraint rather than maximization of development potential, aligning with the RDG's intent to respect neighborhood character while allowing reasonable improvements.

d. Compatibility with the Immediate Neighborhood

Neighborhood compatibility is achieved through siting, massing, and context-sensitive design. The property is partially adjacent to a public play lot, providing greater separation than typical interior residential parcels and reducing potential impacts related to scale, privacy, and visibility.

The project maintains existing setbacks, does not introduce new encroachments, and remains consistent with the prevailing pattern of single-family residential development in the area. In addition, outreach to neighboring property owners resulted in no objections to the proposed design, further demonstrating neighborhood compatibility.

e. Privacy and Second-Story Window Design

Privacy considerations were a key factor in the design and placement of second-story windows. Windows have been oriented and located to minimize direct views into adjacent residences and private outdoor areas. Where windows face neighboring properties, they are limited in size, set back from property lines, or serve secondary spaces rather than primary living areas.

The adjacency to the public play lot further reduces privacy impacts, as the primary outlook from the second story is toward open space rather than neighboring yards. These measures are consistent with the privacy standards and guidelines of the RDG and ensure that the project does not create unreasonable privacy impacts.

Conclusion

The proposed project represents a thoughtful and context-sensitive improvement to the existing residence. By maintaining the existing footprint, complying with all applicable development standards, and carefully addressing scale, privacy, and neighborhood character, the project meets the intent of the Town's Residential Design Guidelines and zoning regulations. The design reflects a balanced approach that accommodates the homeowner's needs while respecting the surrounding neighborhood.

Thank you,
James Woodard, CID, NCIDQ
Principal Designer



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