

1. ATTACHMENT 3

After the previous city council meeting on November 12, we feel compelled to reiterate the reasons we feel second story additions to the rental properties on Marshall and Stevens Courts would be disastrous. Long time Los Altos realtor Soli Saatchi spoke at this meeting and voiced her opposition to this proposal. It turns out Soli Saatchi's rental property on Marshall Court and our single family home on Cynthia Way are adjacent to one another – she being directly behind and above us. We are **literally** on opposite sides of the fence except when it comes to this issue – on this, we are in complete agreement.

1. This neighborhood on Marshall Court and Stevens Place was **purposely built** to provide a low cost, affordable rental alternative with a single family home feel to the City of Los Altos. It still remains predominantly a rental neighborhood. As Applicant Paul Lovoi pointed out, going up is way too expensive. If an owner spends an enormous amount of money adding a second story to the structure, how do you think he/she plans to recoup that investment? Obviously, by jacking up the rents turning this into just another unaffordable neighborhood in Los Altos. And Realtor Soli Saatchi correctly pointed out, not only does a second story lessen the appeal of the structure making it more difficult to sell, some owners may not stop there. Besides turning this cozy neighborhood into just another densely packed, privacy deprived rental area, there is the very real temptation of an unscrupulous owner to turn the upper addition into an illegal third studio rental once the inspector has left. Why on earth would the City, who is under tremendous pressure to provide lower cost housing, want to open the door to these problems and face elimination of what is right now a low cost alternative in the City?
2. Let's talk semantics for a moment. While some people on the planning commission and city council try to bend the definition to suit their point of view, let's call these lots what they really are – **flag lots**. With the exception of a few structures on Fallen Leaf Lane, the overwhelming majority of these structures are built one directly behind the other with a shared driveway, a flag lot. And we know that Los Altos already has a policy regarding no second stories on flag lots. So doesn't that just settle the issue?
3. We feel compelled to set the record straight on a "fact" that Applicant Paul Lovoi has been pushing since the very first planning commission meeting. He has a slide which shows four homes in the vicinity with a second story and tries to imply the unfairness of forbidding second story additions when others in single family homes have already done it. I can't speak for all four of these structures, but one of them happens to be my next door neighbor Phyllis Hiura on Cynthia Way. She was present at the first meeting when he flashed this slide. She turned to me and said, "My house isn't a two story house!" and she's absolutely right. Her home is a single story completely level with the back yard and, because of the steep downhill slope, has a finished basement on the bottom. From the front it can be deceiving and appear to be a two story addition, but it is not. The builder purposely constructed the home this way 60 years ago to work with the slope of the terrain. It is disingenuous to imply that this is a remodeled two story home. In fact, our own home looks like one story from the front but is actually a split level inside because of the slope. Looks can be deceiving. In 60 years, no one on Cynthia Way has ever added a second story. Just as is the case with these duplexes, we all feel there is plenty of room

to enlarge the footprint slightly and modify the interior space and, in fact, several people have done just that. To change the feel of the neighborhood with an imposing, privacy stealing second story would be unthinkable – we love one another way too much to do that.

At one of the last planning commission meetings, Commissioner Alex Samek pointed out that at every meeting the overwhelming majority of attendees were those against the second story addition. The city council meetings have been the same – those of us against this policy continue to be the majority in attendance. Ed and I have had travel plans for over a year to be out of town December 10 and deeply regret that we cannot be there this time in support of this position. During our absence we will be emailing with neighbor Teri to be apprised of the situation, and we encourage you do the right thing.

Ed and Regina North

37 year residents of [REDACTED]