

Calandra Niday

From: Planning Division (FAX)
Sent: Wednesday, October 2, 2019 2:40 PM
To: Calandra Niday
Subject: FW: Proposed huge house on Mt. Hamilton

Importance: High

From: Abhambly <abhambly@aol.com>
Sent: Wednesday, October 02, 2019 1:04 PM
To: Planning Service <planning@losaltosca.gov>
Subject: Fwd: Proposed huge house on Mt. Hamilton

In a message dated 10/2/2019 10:54:33 AM Pacific Standard Time, msmaaloo@gmail.com writes:

Attn: planning commission

Because we are unable to attend meeting this evening, We are writing to express our serious concerns re: 7 bedroom, 7 1/2 bathroom house up for review this evening.

A house of this nature does not fit in with our single family dwelling community. It is too big and bulky for the lot, will likely become a rental or multi-family dwelling, which often ends up with cars parked and cluttering our neighborhood street. Mt. Hamilton is already a dangerous street to walk, bicycle or drive on due to the many cars that use it as a short cut to avoid traffic and lights as drivers rush to get to San Antonio Road (Demartini, Los Altos high school, Almond, El Camino, etc) Foothill Expressway and Los Altos Hills. Too many cars rushing through. ! Adding more parked cars and long term construction for a huge house will create a serious safety hazard not to mention a major inconvenience.

Our neighborhood is not a rental or multiple family occupancy neighborhood.

We value our neighborhood and do not want oversized bulky homes filled with multiple family units built on small lots.

Too much!! Please limit the size and bulk of proposed new home and protect our neighborhood!

Thank you!

Maryann & Robert Alloo

Sent from my iPhone

Calandra Niday

From: Planning Division (FAX)
Sent: Wednesday, October 2, 2019 2:41 PM
To: Calandra Niday
Subject: FW: Objection to Proposal for 126 Mt Hamilton Ave

Importance: High

From: Brian Korek <brian@korek.com>
Sent: Tuesday, October 01, 2019 9:52 AM
To: Planning Service <planning@losaltosca.gov>
Subject: Objection to Proposal for 126 Mt Hamilton Ave

Dear Los Altos Design Review Committee,

As a resident since 1970, please note my objection to the proposal for a mega-home totaling 6650 sq ft (7 bedrooms, 7 1/2 baths) to be built at 126 Mt Hamilton Ave.

It is far too large for the size of this lot, for the amount of street frontage provided to this lot, and for all our neighboring homes. It is an exception to the broad neighborhood that is almost entirely made up of single story ranches; many of which have been recently remodeled to fit with the feel of the neighborhood – including my home. This doesn't fit with the feel of the neighborhood, as it would be another out-of-place monster like 218 Mt Hamilton Ave.

I ask that you please reduce the massiveness of this project by disallowing the 2nd story. Not only is this house design out of character for our neighborhood, the duration and extent of construction mess will be borne significantly by us, the surrounding neighbors as their amount of street frontage is minimal. The time and disruption to dig a basement larger than the entire footprint of my home is significant - and that is just the basement!

Thank you for your consideration.

Brian Korek
132 Hamilton Ct

Calandra Niday

From: Eugene Hyman <eugenemhyman@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 26, 2019 4:57 PM
To: Calandra Niday
Subject: Re: Design Review Commission Project Location 126 Mount Hamilton Avenue Meeting October 2

Thank you for your reply which is appreciated.

Kind regards,

Eugene

Sent from my iPad

On Sep 26, 2019, at 4:41 PM, Calandra Niday <cniday@losaltosca.gov> wrote:

Hello Eugene,

Thank you for your email. According to the Los Altos Municipal Code, Section 14.06.110 - Basements (R1-10), basements shall not extend beyond the floor area of the first floor of the main home.

The soils report for the project can be found here:

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/nk0g8uqcjf51n1r/Chien-On%204425-1%20GI%20Report.pdf?dl=0>

If you have any specific geotechnical concerns, feel free to send them to me via email and I can forward them to the applicant for the soils engineer to respond.

It is unknown when construction would begin since the project has not been approved yet.

If you have any questions or would like to further discuss, please let me know.

Thank you,
Callie

From: Eugene M Hyman <eugenemhyman@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 26, 2019 2:28 PM
To: Calandra Niday <cniday@losaltosca.gov>
Subject: Design Review Commission Project Location 126 Mount Hamilton Avenue Meeting October 2

Dear Ms. Niday,

I live next door at 142 Mount Hamilton Ave.

I am unable to attend the meeting as I will be out of the country.

I have a couple of concerns.

The basement is extremely large, larger than my home at 1832 sq. feet. I am concerned about the possibility of damage to my foundation as a result of the construction of a basement of that size.

I know that a soil bore was taken at the construction site. Has a soil report been filed with the city? If there is one, is it available for review by the public?

The fact that there is a second story is also a concern as there aren't other second homes in the immediate area of Mount Hamilton.

Do you have any idea when construction might begin?

Would you please let me know about the soil report at your earliest convenience.

Kind regards,

Eugene M. Hyman

Calandra Niday

From: Abhambly <abhambly@aol.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 26, 2019 11:53 AM
To: Calandra Niday
Subject: 126 Mt. Hamilton

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Completed

Callie,

I will try to attend the meeting on Oct. 2. Can you tell me about what time this project will come up on the agenda? It hasn't been posted yet. I am unable to find the staff report and plans for this project.

We live next door at 100 Mt. Hamilton. We have resided there since 1986. I am concerned about the mass of this project: 3946 sq. ft. 2 story home above ground and an additional 2704 sq. ft. below ground. This home will be situated in between one story homes on a block with 6 other homes, all one story. Across the street, there are 4 single family homes from Bridgton ct. to Garland Way. Hamilton Ct. which runs into 126 Mt. Hamilton only has one 2 story home. Even Bridgton Ct. which was a brand new development in the 90's has no 2 story homes. Many have basements instead.

I realize that directly behind 126 Mt. Hamilton is a 2 story home. That home was the original farm house in the neighborhood. It resides on more than a 1/2 acre. The neighborhood was built around it in the mid 50's. This home will definitely be out of character on our block. Most of the other homes have a footprint of less square footage than the basement of this proposed home. Many homes have been remodeled over the years, but have stayed with one story. It seems to me that this home can be sufficient without the 1206 sq. ft. 2nd story.

These are my concerns. I would appreciate it if you could pass this along to the commission as it reviews this project.

Thank you,
Anne Hambly

In a message dated 9/12/2019 10:19:33 AM Pacific Standard Time, cniday@losaltosca.gov writes:

Thank you for bringing this to our attention. I believe a new notice has been sent out.

The new on-site posting will be up by September 22, 2019 which is 10 days in advance of the new Design Review Commission meeting.

Feel free to come look at the plans at City Hall if you are interested.

Callie

From: Abhambly <abhambly@aol.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 12, 2019 9:23 AM
To: Calandra Niday <cniday@losaltosca.gov>
Subject: Re: 126 Mt. Hamilton

Thank you for clarifying. Hopefully, you can get the word out about the meeting change. The notice from the city dated Sept. 4 about the Sept. 18 meeting arrived in the mail yesterday.

Anne

In a message dated 9/12/2019 8:59:35 AM Pacific Standard Time, cniday@losaltosca.gov writes:

Hello Anne,

The project has been re-scheduled for October 2, 2019.

The Design Review Commission meeting of September 18, 2019 has been cancelled. A new posting should be put up shortly.

Thank you,

Callie

From: Abhambly <abhambly@aol.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 12, 2019 8:54 AM
To: Calandra Niday <cniday@losaltosca.gov>
Subject: 126 Mt. Hamilton

I am having trouble locating the report and project plans for 126 Mt. Hamilton. Are they supposed to be online today? I am a next door neighbor.

Anne Hambly

Calandra Niday

From: Tom Shoup <tom_shoup@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, September 30, 2019 9:48 PM
To: Planning Service; Calandra Niday
Subject: 126 Mt. Hamilton design review
Attachments: 72 View.JPG; 100 Mt Ham.JPG; 115 Mt Ham.JPG; 126 Mt. Ham.JPG; 142 Mt. Ham.JPG; 145 Mt Ham.JPG; 160 Mt Ham.JPG; 174 Mt Ham.JPG; 190 Mt Ham.JPG

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Completed

Dear Design Review Committee,

I am writing to you with respect to the proposed residential construction at 126 Mt. Hamilton, which is within 225 feet of my property. I believe there is missing information in the planning documents submitted and misleading information in the review application document #SC19-0010 prepared by Calandra Niday, Assistant Planner for the City of Los Altos. Commission review of this application #SC19-0010 ("application") is agenda item #4 at the meeting on October 2, 2019.

The application states that the subject neighborhood along Mt. Hamilton is considered a Consistent Character Neighborhood as defined in the City's Residential Design Guidelines ("guidelines"). Based on the elevations of all houses abutting the south side of Mt. Hamilton from 77 View through 190 Mt Hamilton, as well as the houses on the north side of Mt. Hamilton at #115 and #145 (directly opposite #126), all houses are single-story ranch houses with a single ridge line height; this is what someone walking or driving along this block of Mt. Hamilton would see. According to the city's Residential Design Guidelines for Consistent Character Neighborhoods (p. 9), approval of an inconsistent design should align the eave line of the inconsistent design with the ridge lines of neighborhood houses. The planning documents (pp. A3.0a, ff) available at Los Altos Public Library do not show any information to verify that this design technique, or any other mitigating design measures mentioned in the guidelines, will be followed. I request that the applicant provide sufficient information as to what design mitigations will be implemented before the commission approves this application.

Some of the information included in the application is misleading. In the Neighborhood Compatibility Worksheet ("worksheet") included with the application, which begins on page 8 of the application, the typical neighborhood lot size is listed as 110' in length by 140' in width. This seems to convey that the street frontage is 140', i.e., the width of the lot. In fact, the lots are 110' wide along the street frontage, as shown on the notification map (p. 15). Thus if the commission is trying to picture the elevation of the house as seen from the street, they should realize that the frontage is narrower than listed in this application.

Item #4 of the worksheet states that 30% (3 of 10) of the neighborhood houses are two stories. These numbers appear to come from the summary table in the application (p.13) which states that the houses at 72 View, 111 Bridgeton Ct., and 95 Mt. Hamilton are two stories. It is misleading to include 111 Bridgeton Ct. in this summary because it fronts on Bridgeton Ct. and has essentially no visible view from Mt. Hamilton because it is fully screened by giant timber bamboo. To view the front of 111 Birdgeton Ct. one would be 400' or more from 126 Mt. Hamilton and entering the newer neighborhood of Bridgeton Ct. Also, the house at 95 Mt. Hamilton is a one-story house. I know this because it is next to my house and I watched it being built. It has 2 small dormer windows seen in the front elevation, but those are false dormers; that house is one story. A more accurate interpretation of the houses listed is that only 1 of 9 is two story, 72 View St., which is much older than the rest of the neighborhood, has a large set back, and is screened by a very tall hedge.

Item #5 claims that roof forms appear complex. I believe this is factually inaccurate given that the worksheet also states that there are mostly gable style roofs. Along this block of Mt. Hamilton the houses usually have a hip roof on the house and a gable roof on the garage or other extension when those planes face the street as shown on p. C-4 of the Guidelines. This item also claims that houses do not generally share the same eave height. The front elevations (photos) of neighboring houses provided in the planning documents and attached to this e-mail show fairly uniform ridge and eave height, so this is not an accurate claim.

Item #7 claims that the neighborhood does not have a consistent identifiable architectural style. Of the 10 houses listed in the summary table, 7 houses are clearly ranch houses which should be enough to establish a consistent architectural style. Of the other 3, 111 Bridgeton Ct. should be ignored because it is not visible from Mt. Hamilton, 72 View is a much older house and likely one of the original farmhouses from the early 1900s, and 95 Mt. Hamilton has more of a cottage appearance due to its slate roof and whimsical brick veneer.

The General Study portion of the worksheet in item B states that most (~80%) of the homes were not originally built at the same time. All the house on the south side of Mt. Hamilton between View and Oak were built between 1951 and 1955. The nearby homes at 77 View, 115 Mt. Hamilton, 145 Mt. Hamilton, and 112 Garland Way (all listed in the summary table) were also build in between 1951 and 1958. How could the answer to this question be "No"?

Item D of the General Study portion of the worksheet asks if the lot widths appear to be consistent in the neighborhood and it was answered "No." The lot widths of the full block of Mt. Hamilton between View and Oak are uniformly 110' wide at the street. The two house across from 126 Mt. Hamilton have larger frontage on Mt. Hamilton, but they are corner lots leading into Hamilton Ct. It is misleading to claim that the lot widths are not consistent in this neighborhood.

Item G of the General Study portion of the worksheet asks if houses appear to be of similar size as viewed from the street and was answered "No." Given that all the houses identified in the notification map are single-story ranch houses built out to the side setbacks, except the old house at 72 View and the new house at 95 Mt. Hamilton, as well as all others on the south side of this block of Mt. Hamilton, and are on similar sized lots with 110' frontage, how could they not appear to be of similar size viewed from the street? An examination of the photos in the planning documents, the attached photos, or a walk down Mt. Hamilton will confirm this.

Item H of the General Study portion of the worksheet asks if the proposed construction relates in most ways to the prevailing style in the neighborhood and was answered "Yes." Since the applicant claimed in item #7 (see above) that there is no consistent identifiable style, how can they claim that the proposed construction relates to a prevailing style in this item H? I believe in my rebuttals above that I have established that this neighborhood has a consistent architectural style of ranch houses as defined in the guidelines. The proposed two-story house with at least 4 different roof lines viewed from the street as well as elevation planes with various setbacks from the front plane of the house does not begin to relate to a ranch house. The answer to this item should be "no."

I encourage the commission to look at the images of the houses in this block of Mt. Hamilton included in the planning documents as well as in this message and see for themselves that this is a neighborhood with a consistent style of ranch house and that the proposed construction does not comply with this style of house. Better yet, walk down this block of Mt. Hamilton and see it with your own eyes. I also encourage the commission to review the plans as submitted and verify that no mitigating design measures to lessen the neighborhood impact are included. I suggest that reducing the size of the house to less than 4,000 sq. ft. and bringing the roof line into alignment with neighboring houses would be worthwhile mitigations.

Very truly yours,

Tom Shoup
112 Garland Way
Los Altos, CA

Calandra Niday

From: Jon Biggs
Sent: Tuesday, October 1, 2019 7:00 AM
To: Calandra Niday
Subject: FW: Proposal for 126 Mt. Hamilton

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Completed

From: Jon Biggs **On Behalf Of** Zach Dahl
Sent: Tuesday, October 01, 2019 6:59 AM
To: Calandra Niday <cniday@losaltosca.gov>
Subject: FW: Proposal for 126 Mt. Hamilton

Hi Callie –

Here's an email sent to Zach regarding the project at 126 Mt. Hamilton – not sure if you received these comments already so I'm passing along.

Jon

From: Elizabeth (Katz) Czaja <elizabethczaja@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, September 30, 2019 4:58 PM
To: Zach Dahl <ZDahl@losaltosca.gov>
Subject: Proposal for 126 Mt. Hamilton

Dear Design Review Committee,

I am writing to you regarding the new home to be built at 126 Mt. Hamilton, two houses from our home. The proposal is for a mega-home: a basement of 2704 square feet, a first story of 2740 sq. ft. and a 2nd story of 1206 sq. ft., totaling 6650 sq ft with 3946 sq ft above ground. The home will have 7 bedrooms and 7 1/2 baths.

I plan to attend your meeting on Oct. 2, 7:00 however I wanted to note my objection to this project in advance. In my opinion, this project is far too large for the size of the lot and for the amount of street frontage provided to this lot. In addition, it is an exception to the broad neighborhood that is almost entirely made up of single story ranches; many of which have been remodeled to fit with the feel of the neighborhood. If this project is approved, it sets a precedent for what will happen as future homes turn over in this classically Los Altos neighborhood filled with many many original ranches.

I would ask that you please lessen the mass of this project by disallowing the 2nd story or at least, make the setbacks deeper. Not only is this house design out of character in our neighborhood, the duration and extent of construction mess will be borne significantly by the surrounding neighbors as their amount of street frontage is minimal. The time and disruption to dig a basement larger than the entire footprint of my ranch home is significant - and that is just the basement.

Thank you for considering my opinion.

Liz & Jon Czaja
77 View St
(415) 990-2095
elizabethczaja@gmail.com

Calandra Niday

From: Planning Division (FAX)
Sent: Thursday, October 3, 2019 9:32 AM
To: Calandra Niday
Subject: FW: 126 Mt. Hamilton - Design Review Comments

Importance: High

From: Ellen Barker <ellen.barker@pacbell.net>
Sent: Thursday, October 03, 2019 9:31 AM
To: Planning Service <planning@losaltosca.gov>
Subject: Fwd: 126 Mt. Hamilton - Design Review Comments

Hello, I have just reviewed the documents on your web site regarding the project at 126 Mt. Hamilton. Many faxes and emails from other neighbors are included there but mine (below) is not. Please verify that you received it, or let me know if it was excluded.

Thank you.
Ellen Barker

Begin forwarded message:

From: Ellen Barker <ellen.barker@pacbell.net>
Date: September 30, 2019 at 8:29:45 PM PDT
To: planning@losaltosca.gov
Subject: 126 Mt. Hamilton - Design Review Comments

To: Los Altos Design Review Commission

Re: Proposed house at 126 Mt. Hamilton Avenue

I live three houses away from the property at 126 Mt. Hamilton, on the corner of Mt. Hamilton and Garland Way. Months ago, the owner of the property sent us a letter saying that she was applying for a permit to build a new house and asked for our support in her effort. I was sorry to see this, since it's one of the few remaining "redwood ranch" style homes still standing, but I understand that the new owners may want something different. The reason stated in the letter was that she wanted a safe place to raise her daughter. She mentioned lead and asbestos. This seemed odd at the time, since the home was rented to a family with children. If it was not safe enough for her child, why did she consider it to be safe for her tenants' children? It seemed disingenuous.

When the notice went up announcing a 6,600-square-foot building, I was shocked and dismayed. Her letter didn't mention anything about needing 7 bedrooms and 7.5 baths to raise her child. Why would she try to squeeze a monster like that into a neighborhood

of small houses on small lots? It seems like she should find a larger site if she needs 6,600 square feet – and maybe she does need all that space, plus a pool; that's her business, not mine.

Homes of any size take a long time to build in Los Altos – as you probably know, it took eons to build the house at 47 View and multiple years to “remodel” the house on Mt. Hamilton at Oak. The noise, the dust, the litter, and the disruption to the school commute and the daily high-school runners down Mt. Hamilton are all magnified in a very large house, where no room is available to park and store material on the site.

Please think carefully before you inflict this project on our neighborhood.

Ellen Barker
112 Garland Way
ellen.barker@pacbell.net

Calandra Niday

From: Planning Division (FAX)
Sent: Thursday, October 3, 2019 9:32 AM
To: Calandra Niday
Subject: FW: Design Review Commission - 126 Mt Hamilton Ave

Importance: High

From: Alyce Boster <alyceboster@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, October 02, 2019 5:40 PM
To: Zach Dahl <ZDahl@losaltosca.gov>; Planning Service <planning@losaltosca.gov>
Subject: Design Review Commission - 126 Mt Hamilton Ave

Dear Commissioners:

My husband and I have lived on Hamilton Ct since 1991 and have been pleased to see the neighborhood maintain a good balance of stability and vibrancy as properties were bought and sold and people moved into and out of the neighborhood over the years. I will be attending the design commission review meeting this evening re plans submitted for a new two-story home at 126 Mt Hamilton Avenue and am writing to share my primary concerns re the proposed project.

-- The proposed home will be of a size and style unlike others in its neighborhood and appears to be in violation of the guidelines for building in a Consistent Character Neighborhood. The consistent character analysis contains several factual errors, possibly the worst stating that 30% of the immediate neighborhood homes are two story. In fact, there is only one two-story home in the immediate neighborhood (10%), and it is at the rear of the property with a considerable setback from View Street.

There are no two-story homes fronting onto Mt Hamilton Ave within a block of the project, and there are only three 2-story homes along the entire length of Mt Hamilton Ave, all on much larger corner lots, two of which abut major thoroughfares (Los Altos Ave and San Antonio Rd). Almost all of the houses in the immediate neighborhood were built within a 10-year period starting in the 1950's, and subsequent construction, both new and remodeled, conforms to the same generally understated single story style. Not only would the proposed home *appear* to be much larger than others in the neighborhood, the square footage would be about double that of neighboring homes, and the lot coverage of the home and pool would be far greater than others. As the largest home on one of the smallest lots, the new home would stand out like a sore thumb on the street.

-- In addition to the overall bulk of the project, I am also concerned about the size of the basement and wonder how the large excavation would affect surrounding properties and drainage patterns. Basements have become more common in new construction, and the long-term consequences have yet to be determined. I know the extensive use of basements in the development of Bridgton Ct has had negative impacts on adjacent properties over time.

Before I wrote this letter, I walked the larger neighborhood this morning (Hamilton Ct, Mt Hamilton, Garland, View, and Oak streets), and I was struck by how cohesive this larger neighborhood appeared despite many construction projects over the years. There are very few two-story homes, and almost all of those are either partial two-story or located on large set-back lots with no street view. The few very large homes are appropriately sited and not disruptive.

I'm not opposed to growth and change, but I worry about precedents being set one project at a time. I would like to see the Design Review Commission, the City Council, and the larger community recognize the longer-term impact of one-at-a-time decisions and begin to think seriously about how we want our community to continue to develop. As our land values climb higher and higher, are we going to become a community of mega mansions with no room for housing or population diversity? Will there be any options for housing families with young children who are the future of any community? The project being considered this evening is located in a downtown gateway neighborhood and its appearance will send a message about our community. We must ensure that it is the message we want.

Best regards,

Alyce Boster
171 Hamilton Ct
650-948-5165