

MidCoast Community Council Planning and Zoning Committee

An elected Municipal Advisory Council to the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors
Serving 12,000 coastal residents

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FAX

San Mateo County Planning Commission
455 County Center
Redwood City, CA 94063

Honorable Commissioners:

Subject: PLN1999-00215

Location: 2nd Street near Farallone Street, Montara

The MidCoast Community Council Planning and Zoning Committee (Committee) makes the following recommendation on this project. The Committee members are predominantly MCC members with the exception of two appointees: Chuck Kozak, long time MCC member, past chair of P & Z and MCC, and Neil Merrilees, appointee with a degree in architecture from UC Berkeley with a minor in urban planning.

On December 31, 1999 the applicant was given the option of one of two choices by Paul M. Koenig, Director of Environmental Services:

1. Revise your two projects to address the issues identified above (attached). We would then re-review your projects for compliance with applicable Zoning Regulations and/or Design Review Standards.
2. Request a final decision by Planning Staff. At this point in time, we would deny your projects based on the issues identified above. This decision could be appealed to the Planning Commission.

It appears that the applicant has chosen option 2. The Committee agrees with the Planning and Building letter of December 31, 1999 and recommends denial of this permit application for the following reasons:

Is the design of the structure appropriate to the use of the property and in harmony with the shape, size, and scale of adjacent buildings in the community?

- This parcel is located near a main pedestrian access point to the trails of Montara Mountain, designated open-space that will soon be part of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. It is not unusual, to see many walkers, hikers, and dog owners in this area.

Scale, character and topography:

The proposed house cannot even be described as slightly better than its previous design, as no changes have been made that have any visual effect, does not retain and blend with the natural surroundings. It is still out of scale with neighboring homes.

1. The front elevation facing Farallone still presents a 36 ft high, 3-story appearance.
2. The second story does not step back to follow the slope, so the structure's apparent mass is still large and will still loom over 2nd St.
3. The detached garage will enlarge the apparent mass not decrease it. By detaching the garage the applicant was attempting to reduce apparent mass by following the site contour. The mass of the garage, and the structure, will appear larger because of the garage's close proximity to the street. This would be the only house in the neighborhood with a zero-setback garage door facing the street. This presents an urban, auto-centric facade uncharacteristic of the rural atmosphere.
4. The east and west elevations present 2-story flat walls, with awkward pop-out and window configurations, and do not appear to fit in with the site.
5. The second story overhangs increase the apparent mass. They should be brought in within the footprint of the house.
6. Portions of the entire second story need to be pulled to provide daylight to the lots. There are no daylight planes on the house.
7. Even with altering the front roof forms to hip, the apparent mass of the structure has only been moderately reduced; it still will overwhelm neighboring homes.
8. The proposed structure continues to be above average in apparent mass for the neighborhood. It is placed on a lot that is below average in size for the surrounding neighborhood, making it incompatible in scale with the adjacent buildings in the neighborhood.
9. Using only the minimum set backs and maximum mass of the structures, will cause each home to appear to be even larger, and more out of character with the community.

Trees:

Because of its location near the urban/open-space boundary and in the scenic corridor the preservation of trees on this parcel and on its right-of-way is crucial to protecting the community and neighborhood character as well as the natural setting. The development has made no accommodation to preserve and conform to the existing trees. In actuality, it

Manipulating the County, Planning Department and this Commission should not be tolerated. Ignoring the Design Review recommendations does permanent long-term damage to a beautiful community, the gate-way to the MidCoast, and to the happiness and beauty of the area as noted so long ago when the design review standards were created in implemented in 1980.

Deficiencies of submission:

The Committee finds the plans we have seen are incomplete:

- The location and size of existing trees and trees to be removed are not indicated on the site plan, as required.
- Placement of existing or proposed well and/or septic is not indicated on site plan, as required.
- Roof and siding color-scheme samples have not been provided, as required.
- A landscape plan, designed to blend with the natural surroundings, has not been provided, as required.

In conclusion, despite the length of time to implement acceptable modifications, we find that no substantial changes have been made in accord with the requests of the MCC and the County. Please deny the project with the same findings as were made in the December 31, 1999 letter sent by Paul Koenig.

Sincerely,

Karen Wilson,
For the Planning and Zoning Committee