

**Planning & Zoning
Committee of the
MidCoast
Community Council**
PO Box 64, Moss Beach
CA 94038
Serving 12,000 residents

Jan 24, 2005

FAX/Email

Farhad Mortazavi

San Mateo County Planning and Building Division
Mail Drop PLN122, 455 County Center
Redwood City, CA 94063
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RE: PLN2004-00585: CDX and DR for a new 3-story
4718 s/f SFD with a 474 s/f garage on a 9137 s/f parcel on
El Granada Blvd, El Granada. APN: 047-181-840.

Dear Farhad:

The Planning and Zoning Committee of the MidCoast Community Council reviewed the above-referenced project on January 5, 2005 with Jit Battacharya, representing the owner, in attendance.

As set forth in detail below, we feel strongly that this project needs to be redesigned because the three-story facade doesn't fit the design review guidelines or the community standards and as such is unacceptable. Mr. Battacharya did tell the Committee that the applicant will be resubmitting plans and we hope our following comments will be taken into consideration with these plans.

First, this project should not proceed to design review without a comprehensive drainage and landscaping plan because of the extremely steep slope of the parcel. The On-line permit Center notes indicate that a site drainage plan is not required until the time of application for a building permit. We believe this is inadequate for this project and should be part of the planning stage because the steep slope may require building modification to adequately control drainage.

Second, there is a question about the roof height. The On-line Permit Center has the comment that, "*The resubmitted plans dated 12/06/04 has increased the roof height of the center 40 percent to 34.5 ft. where 33 ft. is allowed (although it addressed the garage roof height issue),....*" Mr. Battacharya told the Committee that if the measurement is from side elevation that the height is within the zoning. We would like it clarified and confirmed that this project's height is within the zoning.

Third, we recognize that there are many large homes on El Granada Blvd, but most of them were built prior to the current Design Review Standards, and moreover, many of these overbuilt homes helped provide the impetus for the new standards. Therefore, we feel strongly that the current Design Review Standards should be rigorously enforced for this project and the surrounding overbuilt homes should not be used as an excuse to disregard the current Design Review Standards. Regarding design we have the following comments:

- This house may be visible from highway 1, as some houses on El Granada Blvd are visible especially with the continued loss of the tree canopy due to development.
- This house design has a three-story façade which violates the following Design Review Standards by not following the existing contours of the land. Three stories are allowed, but only when they are used to enhance stepping the house up or down a steep slope:

Many existing lots in the MidCoast are on steep slopes, and in many cases, the topography of a site is its key natural characteristic. New homes and major additions should be designed so that the structure will follow the existing contours of the land. A building's appearance of bulk can be reduced by shaping the building forms so that they harmonize rather than contrast with the existing topography. (Elements of Design (6565.20) (D) a. Relationship to Existing Topography Discussion)

The standards following this discussion further provide:

To the extent feasible, structures shall:

(1) Conform to the existing topography of the site by requiring the portion of the house above the existing grade to step up or down the hillside in the same direction as the existing grade.

(Elements of Design (6565.20) (D) 1a. Relationship to Existing Topography Standards)

b. Neighborhood Scale

(2) On relatively level lots, avoid designs that incorporate more than two useable floors, excluding basements, within the maximum height limit, since this contributes to a massive or boxy appearance for the home and makes it more difficult to be in scale with surrounding one and two story homes.

Multiple stories are allowed on sloping lots where it is necessary to ensure that the home steps up or down with the slope. (Elements of Design (6565.20) (D) 1b. Neighborhood Scale Standards, emphasis added)

- The house design with red tile roof and moonstone will really stand out from the environment rather than blend in as required by design standards:
 - (3) Architectural styles that complement the natural setting are encouraged. (Standard (3) in Elements of Design (6565.20) (D)2a Architectural Style of the Coastside Design Standards)
- The applicant's use of a 12-inch stucco band is not an architectural feature that addresses the design standards requirements.
- Cutsheets for outdoor lighting are required.

We feel strongly that this project needs to be redesigned because the three-story facade does not fit the design review guidelines or the community standards and as such is unacceptable. In a sense, the applicant has overfilled the buildable envelope. One suggestion was that he step each story in or bring the bottom out rather than cantilever so that could step the house in and up the lot more effectively.

Thank you for your help. We request that you keep us informed of any further developments, redesigns, hearings, approvals or appeals concerning this application.

For the MidCoast Community Council Planning & Zoning Committee,



Sara Bassler
Chair, MCC Planning & Zoning Committee

cc: Karen Wilson, Coastside Design Review Committee