



August 1, 2002

Via email & Fax (2 Pages)

Farhad Mortazavi

San Mateo County Planning and Building Division
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re: PLN2001-00837 and 00838: Coastside Design
Review for two new residences on the east side of Birch
St. between George and Harte in Montara.
APN(s): 036-103-230 & 340.

Attendance: Chuck Kozak, Ric Lohman, Kathryn Slater-Carter, Paul Perkovic. Karen Wilson was recused.
Applicant was represented by architect William Riddle.

Dear Farhad:

The Planning and Zoning Committee of the MidCoast Community Council reviewed again the above application at our regular meeting of June 19, 2002.

Our initial comment on these applications concerns the need to fulfill the requirements of the December 20,2000 **Notice of Final Local Decision** from the Board of Supervisors concerning the After-the-Fact Tree Removal Permit PLN2000-00053. These include the removal to the ground of existing stumps, planting of required replacement trees and other landscaping, posting of the performance and maintenance sureties, the fence construction, submission of arborist reports for any other tree removal (see below), and submission, review and approval of required drainage and erosion control plans.

Regarding these specific applications, the committee had the following comments:

1. The drainage plan for the projects shows water to be pumped up from the rear of the lots and released on Birch Street. The problem with this plan is that Birch Street at that point drains to the north, so that water would run down to the properties between here and Cedar St, and then down through the properties or the George Street culverts and then onto Cedar Street into the drainage this was meant to avoid. As this section of the drainage culverts is already beyond capacity during heavy rains, any addition of water to this will only worsen the existing flooding problems of the houses on Cedar Street. The water should be transported to the point on Birch St that drains to south, which would route the water down Harte Street directly to Montara Creek. In general, the committee requests that the drainage be structured so that the property does not add any additional water at any increase in rate to the existing drainage systems or onto any adjacent property.
2. We would like to see an arborist report for the tree removal that is proposed for the projects, as required in the above-referenced decision letter.

3. Because of the slope of the lot, we found the rear mass of the houses to be very intrusive to the two houses located behind them – with the current designs, the lower floor windows would be level with the second floor bedroom windows of the houses behind them. We recommend that the house designs be stepped along the grade to bring the lower floor at the rear down to grade level and the height in the rear kept to one floor. The applicant’s architect agreed to this suggestion.
4. We found the design of the houses, despite the minor design variations, to be much too similar, and would like to see more variance and difference in the design, layout and size of the two structures so that they may be more in character with the variety of houses in the neighborhood. The applicant’s architect agreed to this suggestion.
5. We recommend that the side setbacks between the two houses be increased to 10’ each for a total of 20’ to minimize shading and the effect of total mass on the two houses behind the projects. The applicant’s architect agreed to this suggestion.
6. Members of the committee and of the public suggested that the general size of the houses be reduced to decrease the potential for appeal of the designs as out of scale and character with the surrounding neighborhood.

The committee also notes the large numbers of wells that will be installed in this block – in addition to the existing and proposed one for this project, there are at least 3 others in existence, and an unregulated “ag” well being used for landscaping, and submitted applications for at least 5 more within this block. We feel that this level of impact on the local aquifer, without any analysis of the cumulative effect of these wells, could present a danger to the health and safety of the residents and of the surrounding environment.

The committee recommends that the above issues be addressed and actions be instituted before this application proceed any further, and we would expect the project, with whatever changes are instituted, to be resubmitted to us for review when the conditions are satisfied. Thank you for your help, and please keep us informed of any further developments, redesigns, hearings, approvals or appeals concerning this application.

For the MCC Planning & Zoning Committee,



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cc: Terry Burnes, Planning Administrator
Karen Wilson