

October 2, 2002

Via email & Fax (4 Pages)

**To: Karen Wilson, Chair,
Members of MCC P&Z Committee**

cc: Lily Toy
San Mateo County Planning and Building Division
Mail Drop PLN122, 455 County Center
Redwood City, CA 94063
FAX: 650.363.4849

re: P&Z agenda item 6b - PLN 2000-00649: Coastside Design Review for a new single family dwelling with detached 2 car garage & lot merger on Edison St. 50 ft east of Date St. in Montara. **APN: 036-152-280**

Karen, Lily:

As I will be unable to attend tonight's P&Z meeting, I asked to be able to review this project ahead of time and supply comments. I am very concerned about the (lack of) progress on this application, especially in the manner that all the issues regarding its siting, location, sensitive habitat disruption, and past violations have not, to my knowledge, been addressed at all. The only difference in this latest "revised" application I can see is that the applicant has now filled out a CDP form, and even that is full of mistakes and misinformation as detailed below.

The initial review by P&Z in June of this year revealed numerous problems and substantial amounts of missing information with this project – none of these have been addressed. The issues of the violations of illegal tree removal, tree damage, illegal grading, trespassing, stream channel disruption & redirection, significant drainage impact and wetlands destruction that were outlined in our 11/12/01 letter to Jim Eggemeyer (regarding application PLN2001-00538 for the parcel immediately to the west) have also not been addressed at all. These violations have been on record since October 6, 2000, with no apparent effective action being taken.

In light of these outstanding issues, along with a design that is completely inappropriate and insensitive to its settings, and the inadequacy of the supplied plans and applications (both detailed below), my recommendation to the MCC P&Z Committee and to County Planning is to unconditionally deny this application at this time.

Submitted Plans:

- The proposed improvements to Edison Street are not shown.
- The proposed trees to be removed are not shown.

- The driveway as shown would be running into the parcel to the west, not to the street, and no explanation is given.
- The location of the well and of proposed utility connections are not shown.
- The relationship of the house to existing and/or finished grades is inadequately represented.
- The notation of “New Landscape” is not an adequate representation of a landscape plan, especially in an area such as this where runoff, erosion, water quality and flooding are critical factors. There are notes for things like a “New Italian Cypress Tree” but the location of the tree is not shown.
- No drainage system is shown, nor is there any indication that the substantial driveways, walkways and patios of the house would be anything other than impervious surfaces and contribute significantly to the runoff, erosion, flooding and water quality problems in the area.
- The scale on the plot plan is wrong – the plans are at 1:8, not 1:4 as indicated.
- The front setback at the side of the garage is only 7 ft., with no explanation given. This cannot be because of the slope exception because (a) the garage and driveway, as noted above, are not oriented toward the front of the lot and (b) the slope is primarily across the width of the lot, not the length.

Design and Siting:

- The house design is essentially two identical floors stacked one atop the other. There is some minor horizontal articulation on the east side (where no one would see it), but otherwise it is a flat-lot design that does not take into account the topography, siting, and slope of the lot or it’s rural setting.
- The size of the proposed house exceeds currently allowed FAR restrictions, and would be forever the largest one built in this block. Although it may be “grandfathered” (see point below on timing) under the older ordinance, it’s size, mass and scale are contrary to the principles of orderly community development as expressed in the Design Review regulations. House size restrictions are limits, not targets, and consideration of Design Review regulations are needed to prevent new construction from jumping immediately to maximum size and density.
- The plans would indicate there to be (by my rough calculation) at least 1500 sq/ft. of concrete driveways, patios, and walkways, and I did not calculate in the curved sections shown, so it is likely more than 2000 sq/ft. When considered with the house footprint of 2162 sq/ft., more than 2/3 of the lot would be covered with impervious surfaces with no drainage and/or retention system.

Submitted Applications:

Coastal Development Permit Application:

- 2: Basic information on adjacent property ownership is filled out incorrectly.
- 3. Materials and Finish listed do not match those in Design Review Application.
- 4b & c: There are documented wetlands and the stream channel of a seasonal creek within 50 feet of the parcel.
- 4i: Indicates 6 trees to be cut where proposed road extension would be – no plans for extension are given, and referral form project description (see Design Review application below) indicates 8 trees to be removed with or adjacent to the building envelope.
- 4n: The area is subject to excessive and uncontrolled flooding.
- 4t: The Caltrans ROW property, which is about 50 feet away from this property, is designated as a trail route in the current SMCo Master Trails Plan.
- 5A(2): the project would involve construction and grading not only within 100 feet of a stream and wetland, but any proposed improvement to Edison Street would need to go right through them.

Design Review Application:

- Application indicates detached garage – the garage shown on plans is attached.
- Application says no trees to be cut – Project Description on Referral sheet states “... includes the removal of 8 Eucalyptus trees ranging from 46-inch diameter to 94-inch diameter all of which are within or within 10 feet of the proposed building envelope.”
- Materials and Finish listed do not match those in Coastal Development Permit Application.

Environmental Information Application:

- General Information, #5: Says no trees will be removed. See note above about statements on referral form and CDP application.
- Environmental Information (b): Should be YES. Again, stating that no trees to be removed. See above. And as more than 2/3 of the parcel will either have a structure or pavement on it, significant vegetation WILL be removed.

- Environmental Information (c, e & f): Should all be checked YES. Parcel drains directly into a seasonal creek drainage system that supports wetlands systems and environmentally sensitive habitat in the immediate vicinity of the project, floods regularly in the winter, and is a tributary to Montara Creek.
- Environmental Information (h): Should be YES. See note above (Coastal Development Permit) on adjacent trail corridor.

Timing of Application Review:

- Given the activity in this area with other projects, many of them involving violations of grading, tree removal, etc., and how that should have generated some sensitivity to other proposed projects in the area, I cannot understand why this application, which was apparently received as early as August 29, 2000 (according to date on Environmental Information form) was not referred out for comment until May of 2002. If the application was held because it was in some way incomplete or inadequate, it should not qualify for grandfathering in under the old regulations.

All of this is from only an initial evening's review of this project, and the scope and extent of the issues and problems lead to me repeat my earlier recommendation that P&Z and County Planning unconditionally deny this application in this form.

Thank you for the opportunity to supply these comments.



Chuck Kozak
Chair, MidCoast Community Council
PO Box 370702
Montara, CA 94037
650.728.8237 (home) - 650.996.8998 (mobile) - cgk@montara.com