

Midcoast Community Council

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

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March 18, 2003

President Rose Jacobs Gibson
Supervisors Church, Gordon, Hill and Nevin
400 County Center
Redwood City, CA 94063

Dear President Jacobs Gibson and Members of the Board:

At our March 12, 2003 meeting, the MidCoast Community Council unanimously voted to delegate Karen Wilson to attend the Planning Commission meeting on March 26 and reiterate our positions on PLN 2001-00462: the addition of two decks to the new single family residence at 349 8th St., Montara. We should emphasize that our comments are not part of the appeal being filed by members of the public. We feel that there are specific issues with the process by which this addition was approved.

As stated in our letter to Terry Burnes of January 26, 2003, the building project has undergone a number of revisions to bring it into compliance with FAR and LC standards, and to alleviate the concerns of the surrounding neighbors. The size and height above grade of the rear decks has always been problematic, as reflected in Lily Toy's note (9/10/01) recommending that the decks be excluded so that the rest of the project could move forward.

Although both the MCC Planning and Zoning Committee and County planning staff repeatedly reviewed the plans and emphasized the issues with the decks, the applicant elected to *change the natural grade* of the site in order to achieve lot coverage compliance, rather than making a good faith attempt to modify the deck design. We hope the County will consider whether it wants to let the precedent stand that it's OK to perch a deck on added fill in order to avoid having the deck count toward total lot coverage.

We stand by our comments in our letters of November 7, 2002 and January 26, 2003. While we recognize that the January letter was submitted after the December 31 deadline stated in Terry Burnes' letter of November 27, there was certainly enough information already on hand to activate the "adequate controls" mentioned in Director Burnes' letter. Somehow, this project eluded those controls.

With the new Coastside Design Standards nearing their final form, we should use this opportunity to prevent any future confusion over the interaction of deck heights and lot coverage. With regard to this specific project, it is the view of the MidCoast Council that the lower deck should be eliminated and access to the back yard consist of a short flight of steps.

Sincerely,

Sandy Emerson, Chair
MidCoast Community Council