



July 11, 2003

To: **Gabriel Rowan**

San Mateo County Planning and Building Division
Mail Drop PLN122, 455 County Center
Redwood City, CA 94063
650.363.1829 - FAX: 650.363.4849

re: **PLN2002-00240**: Coastal Development Permit and Coastal Design Review for construction of a new 3,969 s/f 2-story triplex residential building on a 6,108 s/f parcel at the southeast corner of Avenue Portola and Coronado Avenue in El Granada. APN 047-232-040.

Gabriel:

The MidCoast Community Council's Planning and Zoning Committee reviewed this project at our regular meetings of May 21 and June 4 of 2003. Overall, we think the proposed project is well suited for the property and the area, and we are encouraging of well-designed multi-unit buildings within the zoning regulations. In considering the highly visible and impactful location (along one of the main thoroughfares in El Granada) of this project, we had the following additional comments:

Unit Configuration and Parking

Our main concern is the parking situation – although the three units are designated as “single bedroom”, the 100 s/f second floor lofts with separate hall closets could easily be used as second bedrooms.

We feel the single car garages for these units to be inadequate parking for how these will realistically be utilized. Even a single couple using it just as a one- bedroom will likely have two cars, and if the loft areas are utilized as extra bedrooms, we could easily expect each of these two units to have up to three cars. We think that the current parking requirements for these units is inadequate.

An approach to address this issue would be to minimize the loft areas to something that could not be used as easily for a bedroom – they could be reduced to 5x8' and recessed into the roofline from the north elevation – the closets could be reduced to linen closet size and the extra space used to enlarge the bathrooms.

We discussed with the applicant some possibilities about incorporating more off-street parking into the landscaping. See comments below.

Integration of Building with Natural Grade

There is an approximate 2-3 ft drop in grade from the front of the lot (Coronado St. – north elevation) to the rear. We would like to be sure that the south side of the structure is brought down to natural grade (approx. 35' elevation) so that the building is not sitting up on it's foundation, and that the building is set into the grade on the north elevation where necessary.

Exterior

We feel the building's faces could be further enhanced and broken up by using shingles and decorative vents under the eaves on all sides. Other recommendations included continuing the bracket, pillar and beam detail of the north elevation to the other sides of the structure. Trim should be "heavy" – 6" with a 10" fascia. We feel the design and the setting lends itself to a medium-to-dark, earth-tone two-color scheme with finished wood detail.

Landscaping

A good landscaping plan will do a lot to integrate the structure fully the lot and minimize its visual impact. To step down the tall ends of the structure, short (15-20') trees should be used next to the east and west elevations, followed by tall shrubs (6-10') followed by short to ground level plantings. Along the north and south elevations, tall shrubs (6 – 8 ft) should be used along the windowless walls, with medium ones (3-4 ft) below the higher windows. Medium height (30 ft) shade trees should be planted along the north and east sides, and taller trees (like Monterey cypress, Douglas fir) could be planted along the north and west sides.

Off-street gravel parking areas for additional cars (see parking comments above) could be integrated into the landscaping plan along the north elevation and possibly along the east – these areas could be screened by taller shrubs and connected to the entrances with pathways and plantings.

Visual Impact

Because of the extremely visible location of the project and to help inform the community of what is being proposed, we recommend that the applicant erect story-poles at the project site for at least a two week period during the remainder of the processing period for this application. In the past, we have found that this approach, accompanied by posted drawings at the site of what the proposed structure will look like, is very effective in letting the community know what is being proposed, gaining additional input on the proposed project, and avoiding unnecessary complaints and opposition based on misinformation.

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



Chuck Kozak
Chair, MCC Planning & Zoning Committee
PO Box 370702
Montara, CA 94037
650.728.8237 (home) - 650.996.8998 (mobile) - cgk@montara.com