

Planning & Zoning Committee of the MidCoast Community Council

PO Box 64, Moss Beach CA 94038

Serving 12,000 residents

September 4, 2001

Fax: 1 Page

To: **Adam Gilbert**

San Mateo County Planning and Building Division

Mail Drop PLN122, 455 County Center

Redwood City, CA 94063

650.363.4161 - FAX: 650.363.4849

re: PLN2001-00368: Lot Merger, CDX and Coastside Design Review for a new 3-story, 2483 sq. ft. house including garage and a second unit on a 5617 sq. ft. parcel at the southwest corner of 9th and East in Montara. APN 036-025-160 & 290.

Adam:

At our meeting of 8/29/01, the Planning & Zoning Committee of the MCC reviewed the above referenced application. We were informed by the applicant that the owner would attend our meeting, but no one showed up to represent the project. We had the following comments:

Although the committee found the proposed house to be attractive and well designed, we had some serious reservations on the utilization of this design in this location and for the stated purposes of a second unit dwelling.

The parcel is located at the top of the ridge that sits to the south of Montara Creek, at the highest point in this part of Montara. The surrounding parcels on three sides slope downhill, and to the east is a large undeveloped tract of PAD land. It would appear that this structure would be visible from Highway 1. Because of these site conditions, we felt that a structure that was this tall, and with the reduced roof peak to accommodate the third floor bedroom would be out of character and scale. No other building in the area had this sort of height and mass – most were split or single level houses, like the one immediately to the west, the only other one prominently on the ridge line.

We thought that the tall, unbroken, 25 –27' high faces in the east and south elevations presented an incompatible design with this ridge-top setting. These faces are downplayed in the supplied color rendering by a lush landscaping, but it should be noted that where the landscaping would be, the plans show a parking space against the east side of the building that would prohibit any use of vegetation for this purpose.

Because of the above, we felt that the little attention had been given to site sensitive design. This feeling was furthered by the fact that this house was originally designed for a different location, in a much different topography, and reviewed by our committee (with

the same color rendering) over a year ago. (I will forward a copy of those comments to you as soon as I can find them in the files, as I have no PLN or APN number to reference to).

We also found the main & second units situation to be puzzling – from the looks of the plans submitted, the main unit (as it is connected by a doorway to the enclosed garage) is one bedroom, hence the single car garage. The single, small bedroom is on the top (third) floor – it's associated bathroom and dressing area are on the bottom floor, immediately adjacent to the main entrance and the inside garage door. We found it odd that the design would require one to descend three floors, passing through the kitchen and dining area, and past the front door, to take a shower and get dressed.

The second unit, on the other hand, has two full-sized bedrooms, but only one carport space, as required in the regulations. A third, uncovered parking space is provided on the east side, but it has no direct access to the second unit.

We found this to be playing “fast & loose” with the parking requirements – this is essentially a 3-bedroom house that could create the need for parking 4 to 5 cars that, through use of a carefully designed “second-unit” circumvents the regular parking requirements for what would normally be three dedicated spaces. This leaves us in a curious place – often we make recommendations for internal and structural changes to designs to minimize their potential for being used easily for illegal second-units, Here, the impracticality of the main unit leads us to the concern that the house might be converted to a single-family unit with inadequate parking.

With the above comments, we find that although the proposed building meets the numeric zoning requirements, we cannot recommend approval because of the tall and dominant design, poor site-sensitivity, and the potential for inadequate parking.

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



Chuck Kozak, MCC Planning and Zoning Committee Chair
POB 370702, Montara CA 94037
Voice/FAX: 650.728.8239 Day: 650.996.8998 - cgk@montara.com