

## Planning & Zoning Committee of the MidCoast Community Council

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September 17, 2001

Fax: 3 Pages

To: **Ms. Miroo Brewer**

San Mateo County Planning and Building Division

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**re: PLN2000-00585:** Revised application for a Coastal Development Permit and an Home Improvement Exemption to allow a 37.9% lot coverage with a new 250 sq. ft. addition to the garage of an existing non-conforming 3951 sq. ft. residence on a 8260 sq. ft. parcel at 101 Niagra in Moss Beach.

Miroo:

At our meeting of 8/29/01, the Planning & Zoning Committee of the MidCoast Community Council reviewed the above referenced application. Project owners, applicants and neighbors were in attendance. We had the following comments:

The committee was unable to come to any full consensus concerning this project. One member thought it would be okay to grant the requested exemption, and one expressed the opinion that no change in the existing house and garage should be approved and the owners would just have to deal with a somewhat clumsy, but not unworkable driveway situation as many in the MidCoast area do. Some general areas of agreement were reached:

- members attendance thought at least that other options had not and should be fully explored,
- that the house had over time, through additions, exceptions, and the re-orientation of it's parcel, become a nonconforming structure and that proposals that created further non-conformities should be discouraged,
- that the apparent non-conformities of the setbacks and lot coverage of the house immediately to the east were already detrimental to the neighborhood and should not be used for justification of further non-conformities in the area, and
- that whatever solution was reached, it should be one that kept access on Niagra and to all neighboring properties clear of impediments and at required County standards.

We were presented at the meeting (by the applicants) for the first time with driveway options that had been put forward by the Public Works Department as examples of what they would consider to be required/acceptable in terms of grading, paving and access. That these showed an option for using the existing

garage configuration even after the removals and modifications required of the property owners only added to our feeling that all possibilities were not being openly considered.

Other ideas that were put forward that the committee felt should warrant examination:

- Reconfiguring the garage internally so that the southeast wall (instead of the current southwest wall) could be used for the entrance,
- Restructuring the proposal to rebuild the garage more or less in its present position but with the new orientation so that it would be directed straight out towards Niagra.
- Reconfiguring the proposal with two single-car garages with minimal expansion to the existing structure, one set back further into the house than the other, which would allow for a more flexible driveway design.

The applicants seemed unwilling to give these ideas any credence, primarily because they would affect design elements of the existing house. While the committee does agree that the house is a very striking and well done design, we would like to note that this is an area where design should be reliant upon and in harmony with the existing topography, and accomplished with respect for coastal resources and the zoning district regulations that set density and setback requirements to protect neighborhood scale and character.

Drainage and potential impacts on the coastal bluffs were other topics that brought much discussion. No one at the meeting was clear what the final drainage system on Niagra would be, especially after Public Works completed its re-grading of the street. It was agreed that any solution would have to take into effect the management of stormwater runoff both in protecting the integrity of Niagra and in not causing any further erosion of the blufftop.

With the above comments, recommendations and ideas, the committee could not find a basis for a recommendation for approval of the project as presented, but would encourage that the County work with the applicants and the neighbors to find a solution that would be most protective of the coastal resources in the area and the preservation of existing zoning standards. We would be happy to assist in this effort in any way we can. Thank you for your help, and please keep us informed of any further developments, redesigns, hearings, approvals or appeals concerning this application.



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