

Planning & Zoning Committee of the MidCoast Community Council

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September 18, 2001

Fax: 1 Page

To: **Ms. Sara Bortolussi**

San Mateo County Planning and Building Division

Mail Drop PLN122, 455 County Center

Redwood City, CA 94063

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re: PLN2001-00270: Coastal Development Permit and Coastside Design Review for a new 2521 sq. ft. 1-story single-family residence including garage on a 8824 sq. ft. parcel near a riparian corridor, at 190 Escalona Ave. in El Granada.
APN 047-115-180

cc: William A. Churchill Architect (FAX: 650.726.5502)

Sara:

At our meeting of 9/5/01, the Planning & Zoning Committee of the MCC reviewed the above referenced application. We had the following comments:

The committee found the design of the building dramatic, functional and very well executed. We had issues with the proposal, though, in two areas.

Conformance with topography: The subject parcel has a severe cross slope, dropping 30 feet or more. The proposed house has minimal stepping or orientation to this slope – it does keep the clerestory sections toward the center and away from the lowest slope, but still results in a significant “stilting” on the posts on the west side elevation.

Prohibition of flat roof designs: Regarding this aspect of the design, in this instance, the FAR and coverage of the proposal is well within the required limits, but the precedent of allowing this sort of design is illustrated with this sort of slope. This approach would allow a building of uncharacteristic height, mass, living area that would not be possible with the regular required pitch-roof – even though it is only one actual floor of living area, the maximum height above grade is 27 feet at the line of the flat roof, and presents the above-grade mass of a two story building that would possibly have an FAR above what is permitted. Although we found the design of the house to be very well done and well suited for its location, we cannot recommend going ahead with this feature without the development of regulatory safeguards in conformance with existing LCP and Zoning policies to ensure that this does not become a problem in other areas.

In discussion, we came up with two possible solutions that taken together might deal

with both of the above issues. The first would be to utilize the existing room layout of the house, as arranged along its supporting posts, to lower the rooms on the west side that would allow this. This would retain the structural integrity of the construction style, as well as some level of elevation above slope, but enough to step down the structure along the slope. Proposed decks could be retained, and visual shielding from the house immediately below would be made much easier.

The second would be to incorporate a single sloped roof, high side to the east side of the structure, to follow the slope of the parcel. Clerestory elements in the design, located as they are in the center of the structure, could still be incorporated as pop-outs from this roofline with no loss of window space or available light.

We are also aware that the applicant is being required to do a more detailed Biological Impact Report to more tightly define the riparian areas on or near the parcels. That this may necessitate a change in the design (because of required setbacks from riparian areas), we would like to refrain from final comment until this has been determined. We would like the report to address the large willow grove directly across the street, as well as the seasonal flow channel that runs between this property and the one immediately below it, and the existence of the naturally occurring willows on this property border.

In other areas, we were concerned about how drainage and runoff from this project will be handled; runoff to Escalona seems to be channeled directly down to the creek at the end of the street, and we would like to see proper retention and filtering of the drainage from any approved project that would be the equivalent of the parcel's current undeveloped and fully vegetated state. We also recommend a thorough landscaping plan that utilizes a wide variety of trees and shrubs to maintain the variety of vegetation the parcel while discouraging the further spread of problematic invasive species such as Eucalyptus.

The committee finds at this time it cannot issue a recommendation beyond those listed above until we receive the final biological report. 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
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