

PUN 2016-00014

Charles A. Patterson

PLANT ECOLOGIST

1806 Ivanhoe Avenue, Lafayette, CA 94549

ph: (925) 938-5263 fax: 938-7723 email: cpwetguy@sbcglobal.net

RECEIVED

November 28, 2015

JAN 14 2016

Ralph Osterling
Osterling Consultants
1650 Borel Place, Suite 204
San Mateo, CA 94402

San Mateo County
Planning and Building Department

Re: Biotic survey report for proposed (vacant) lot, Miramar Terrace APN 048-054-120), Miramar Drive, San Mateo County

Dear Ralph:

Background and Methods

As requested, I visited the above referenced site on November 27, 2011, documenting its current biotic conditions, and specifically looking for any potential biotic features, habitats, or species of formal interest or regulatory concern. I walked the site and observed the vegetation and terrain closely throughout, identifying and noting all plant species observed. I reviewed the County's guidelines and definitions regarding riparian corridors and their associated buffer zones, and also reviewed the proposed homesite in relation to onsite biological resources, evaluating the potential for adverse impacts.

As a botanist and wetland specialist with over 30 years of experience in northern California, I was able to assess the site's current vegetation makeup and sensitivity relatively quickly, as literally the entire site supports non-native species. I examined the small creek at the rear of the lot for possible "wetland" conditions, and made a brief reconnaissance (and air photo survey) of the neighboring lands for other possible habitats or features of local biotic significance.

The site is situated in a small, older residential tract that is situated between Highway 1 and the Pacific Ocean at the junction of Miramar Drive and state Highway 1 just north of the town of Half Moon Bay. There is a small ephemeral creek that brings seasonal runoff from watershed above (east of) Highway 1, delivering it toward the ocean via the small channel on the lot's northern edge. This channel has evidence of considerable siltation from unknown upstream sources, and flows along a route downslope between the backyards of the numerous adjacent homes. Most of these homes have installed backyard fences, lawns, gardens, and other extensive landscaping, including what are now very large old eucalyptus and acacia trees.

This site/project ("Project") is located on a relatively small site, and occurs on level (historically graded) land between the street and the the small ephemeral creek. Aside from the creek, the site itself has no significant offsite watershed, and local runoff either percolates downward completely into the coarse silty/sandy soil, or sheet flows into the adjacent channel. All adjoining land has also been significantly altered by the placement of homes, roads, fences, and extensive landscaping.

The site was surveyed in detail on November 27 to document onsite conditions and determine whether or not sensitive species and/or habitats might be present. All plant species encountered were identified to at least the level needed to ascertain rarity or commonness. Records for sensitive plants in this region were reviewed to help guide the field search, but essentially the entire site was examined closely and all plants encountered were identified.

Existing Site Conditions

The Project site is a small vacant area within a small older existing housing development. Virtually the entire neighborhood has been fairly heavily altered biologically by the construction of numerous homes and other associated structures, the installation and maintenance of extensive ornamental landscaping, and the ongoing disturbances attendant to such a typical mosaic of paved roads, fences, manicured yards and gardens, and the occasional vacant lot. The Project site has been used for some years as the garden area for the adjacent home. This area supports virtually no native plant species, and has been used completely for typical gardening activities, including vegetable beds, ornamental shrubs and groundcover (ivy), walking paths, assorted pavers and areas of gravel, and fencing. There is one very large old Monterey pine tree in the front area by the street, and several very large old (planted) eucalyptus trees along the northern edge (at the top of the bank to the local creek).

As is often typical of such coastal sites in the region, the Project site here has come to support a general cover of non-native vegetation, including the dominant onsite trees (*Eucalyptus*, *Pinus*) and most of the groundcover. The creekbanks to the north are also heavily altered and currently support large eucalyptus, plus dense understory of mostly non-native species (*Vinca*, *Senecio mikanioides*, *Rubus*, *Cirsium*, *Picris*, *Solanum*), plus a few small individuals of native elderberry (*Sambucus*).

The Project site is completely dominated by common garden plants and scattered weeds, plus the peripheral eucalyptus and pine trees. The creek along the north edge of the site supports no significant native riparian vegetation, and there is virtually no native vegetation anywhere on the site.

The old, domineering eucalyptus and pine trees, plus the ongoing garden activities render the site completely unsuitable for any sensitive native species, plants and/or wildlife, and (along with extensive onsite disturbances) has resulted in a highly degraded assemblage of weeds and introduced trees/shrubs, with essentially no remaining native habitat or species. The small creek here has no true riparian growth on the Project's frontage, nor any aquatic habitat suitable for most water-dependent wildlife. It is largely just a loosely (barely) consolidated bed of sand and silt with a small meandering low flow channel that runs through a planted stand of old eucalyptus trees.

Sensitive Biotic Features and/or Species

No rare, endangered, or otherwise unusual or protected plants or wildlife have been reported from this site or immediately nearby, and no such species were observed during the field survey. There are no old native trees, and there is essentially no defined riparian corridor other than the narrow (five feet wide) channel zone itself. There is essentially no native riparian vegetation on or adjacent to the Project site. Because of the extreme degree of past and recent disturbances, combined with the strong overall influence by the surrounding eucalyptus stands, virtually the entire site has been rendered relatively unsuitable for native, much less sensitive or endangered, species.

Typical biotic features of concern for this region include protected (i.e., listed) and/or otherwise sensitive species, unusual or otherwise sensitive habitats (e.g., sand dunes, clay depressions, seeps, rock outcrops, creeks, riparian and wetland areas), significant or exemplary individuals or colonies of plants (heritage trees, native assemblages), and general native plant communities if relatively undisturbed. This region in particular is known to contain coastal bluff and shoreline habitats (and a number of associated rare species), redwoods and other dense canyon forest types, seasonal wetlands, freshwater marshes, and numerous types and sizes of riparian zones. The presence of any of these types would be potentially significant.

Because of the commonness of the soils, general habitats, and the high degree of disturbance, however, this site provides essentially no potentially suitable habitat for any of the region's listed, protected, or otherwise sensitive species, plants or animals. The study area is deemed therefore, as unlikely to support any rare or endangered plant species, and no such species have been found. Direct observation of the homesite footprint area confirmed the presence of only common (and highly degraded) vegetation, habitats, and species.

The Project site does not support any habitats considered to be of very high natural sensitivity (such as rare plant occurrences, significant natural wetlands, redwoods, sand dunes, riparian vegetation), although it does abut the small ephemeral creek. This drainage feature, however, exhibits considerable deposition of sand and silt from upstream sources, and the low flow bed is a small actively eroding channel through the larger overall bed and bank feature. "Ordinary High Water" is roughly one to 1.5 feet above the bed bottom, dictating a "jurisdictional" channel ("Other Waters") width of approximately five to eight feet on average locally, and this is well away from where the homesite occurs. There is no technically defined jurisdictional "wetland" present along the creek or anywhere else on the site.

Specific wildlife studies have not been conducted, but this investigator has considerable experience in assessing habitats for various sensitive wildlife species, and is familiar with the sensitive animal species known or suspected in the region. Because of its history of disturbance, surrounding human encroachments, and highly influential eucalyptus groves, the site does not contain any valuable resources for even most common wildlife, much less for any rare, secretive, endangered, or otherwise sensitive animal species. The garden species and associated weeds here may provide some meager habitat value for common small mammals, lizards and snakes, and songbirds, but because of its highly disturbed character and surrounding homes and yards, does not provide any significant value for raptors, deer or other larger mammals, nor for any shorebirds or waterbird use. The general creek corridor probably provides a movement corridor for local wildlife between surrounding pockets of undeveloped land, and the proposed project will not affect this movement potential.

Issues and Potential Project Impacts

The construction of a home on the Project site would result in no adverse impacts to botanical or other biotic resources. The primary potential impacts that would be of concern include (1) the direct disturbance to or adverse impacts to the small creekbed zone; (2) direct loss of or adverse impacts to habitats that support rare, endangered, or otherwise sensitive plants, and/or (3) direct loss of or indirect adverse impacts to native riparian or coastal woodland and/or forest vegetation. However, since the site lacks these resources altogether (aside from the small creek along the northern edge), impacts to such resources as native habitats, mature or significant native riparian vegetation, or sensitive species will be essentially zero. While there could potentially be downslope erosion and/or creekbed sedimentation, the creek is afforded a reasonable setback from the high water line, and the homesite is situated such as to be well back from the channel and its banks. It is presumed here that with the incorporation of regionally standard 'best

management practices' (e.g., full construction and grading precautions, silt fencing and other erosion control measures), these potential concerns would be adequately addressed (and actual impacts should be negligible).

The proposed Project would affect no wetlands (nor the actual creekbed), and this lot has ample space of common disturbed ground and weeds within which to site the planned home. No riparian habitats or significant native woody vegetation would be lost or otherwise affected with the Project. As discussed earlier, the study area has extremely low potential to support sensitive species, and none have been found or reported here. The entire site is composed of common vegetation, and the homesite supports only common, non-native garden shrubs, groundcover, weeds, grasses, and vines. No other habitats, species, or features of significance have been identified on the site, and there are essentially no significant botanical, vegetation, or other habitat related constraints on development of the site.

Summary and Recommendations

The site is dominated by very common non-native plant species, including primarily introduced species of garden plants, plus introduced blackberry and other vines, trees, and shrubs along the creek corridor. There are no natural habitats present, as even the small creek supports no native riparian growth. Historic and ongoing disturbances in the area, plus the non-native plant invasions onsite have converted virtually the entire site into a non-natural situation, and native species altogether are no longer a significant component here. The Project site supports no native grassland, forest or woodland, nor any significant riparian values, and the site has no unusual substrates or habitats, nor any discernible habitat values for any of the region's sensitive plant or wildlife species.

No sensitive plants or habitats would be lost or adversely affected with homesite development here, and general impacts to common non-native vegetation would be biologically insignificant. No native or otherwise significant trees would be removed, and with the creek setback proposed, there would be no significant adverse impacts to the small channel, nor to any riparian resources. General concerns relative to potential erosion, sidecasting of any unused materials, or other temporary disturbances that might be associated with construction can be effectively and adequately minimized as long as standard precautions are taken to minimize undue soil disturbance, erosion, and downslope sedimentation, as well as minimizing outward activities (outside the designated homesite envelope) to the extent possible.

This concludes my evaluation and report for this site. Please feel free to have the County staff contact me directly if they have any questions or additional biological issues they wish to discuss further.

Sincerely,


Charles A. Patterson

PLN 2016-00014

Bruce A. Chan

California Registered Landscape Architect, license no. 2324

RECEIVED

JAN 14 2016

San Mateo County
Planning and Building Department
January 14, 2016

Tom Carey
1580 Laurel Street
San Carlos CA 94070

Re: APN 048-054-120 Miramar Drive, Half Moon Bay CA
Tree Evaluation

Mr. Carey:

Per your request, I have reviewed the existing trees at the above property.

The trees are all of the same species *Pinus radiata* (Monterey Pine). The attached plan shows their respective locations. The trees are situated on the west side of the property, in a line running along the property boundary. They were likely planted about 60 years ago.

1. Tree #1. This tree has a dba of 36", and has multiple stems. Continued maintenance by PG&E has kept its height to approximately 30', and prunes the tree regularly. This tree can remain.
2. Tree #2. This tree has a dba of 24", and has two main stems. It is approximately 70' tall. One of the main stems extends towards a neighboring house. The foliage crown is sparse. There is evidence of past limb failure, and the tree is in declining condition. This tree is recommended for removal as it presents a hazard to adjacent properties and dwellings.
3. Tree#3. This tree has a dba of 32", and has two main stems. It is approximately 80' tall. The majority of the foliage crown is on the upper 25% of the tree, and is sparse. There is evidence of past limb failure, and the tree is in declining condition. This tree is recommended for removal as it presents a hazard to adjacent properties and dwellings.

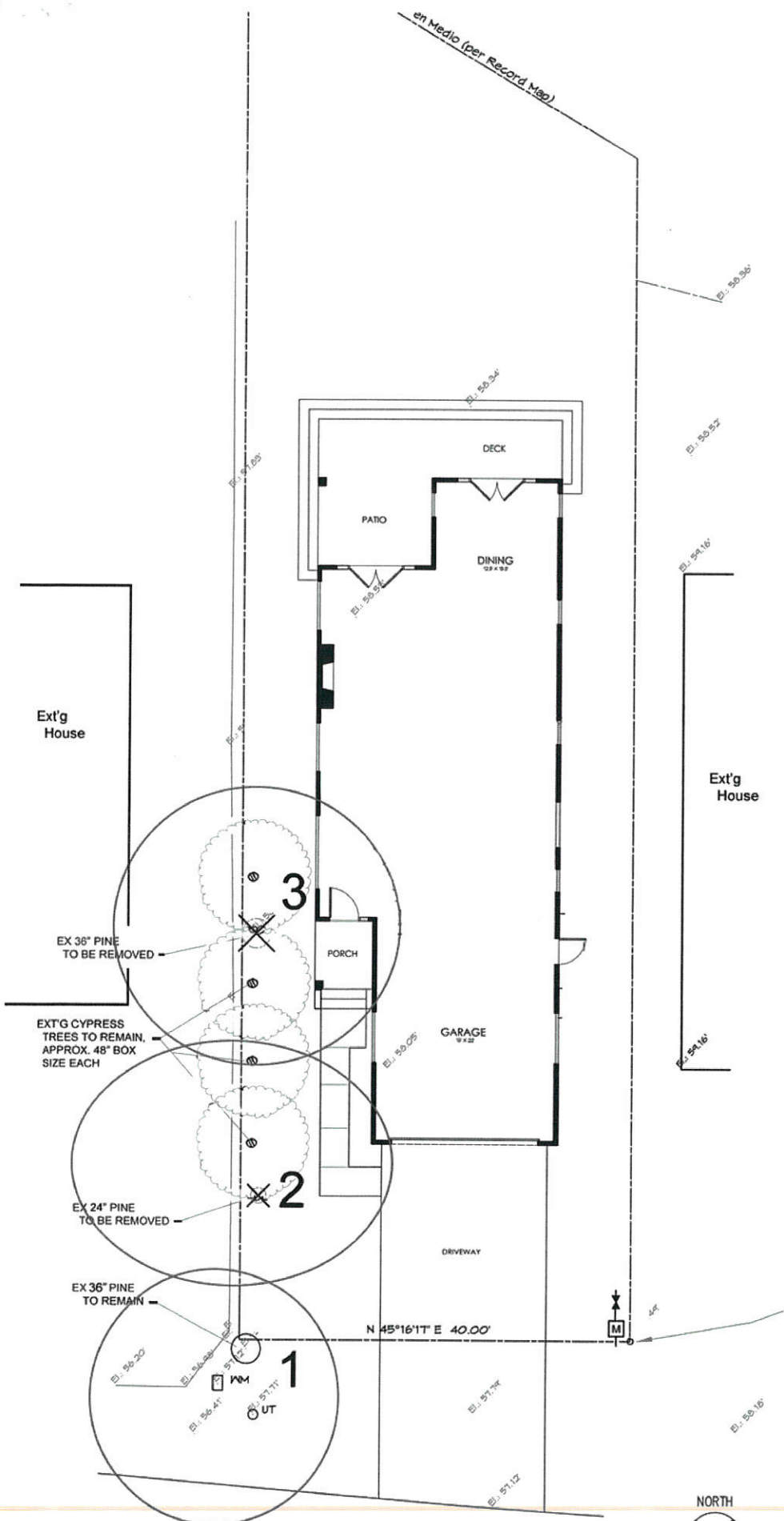
There are four Monterey Cypress trees planted in near trees 2 and 3, and these are adequate in mitigating the removal of the pines.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Bruce A. Chan
Landscape Architect CA registration no. 2324



Miramar Drive
 APN: 048-054-120
 Half Moon Bav. CA 94019



Tree #3 —

Tree #2 —

— Tree #1

Miramar Drive

APN: 048-054-120

Half Moon Bay, CA 94019