

**FINAL MINUTES
REGULAR PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
NOVEMBER 25, 2008
CORTE MADERA TOWN HALL
CORTE MADERA**

**COMMISSIONERS
PRESENT:**

Chair Bruce K. Mace
Commissioner Sloan Bailey
Commissioner Richard Esteb

STAFF PRESENT:

Bob Pendoley, Planning Director
Larisa Roznowski, Associate Planner
Nancy Salcedo, Minute Recorder

1. OPENING

A. Call to Order

B. Pledge of Allegiance

C. Roll Call

All the Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioners Pagnillo and Schwartz.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT: None

3. CONSENT CALENDAR: None

4. CONTINUED HEARINGS: None

5. NEW HEARINGS

A. 413 MANZANITA AVENUE, DESIGN REVIEW APPLICATION NO. 08-035, VARIANCE NO. 08-012, SCOTT GARLAND & KATE LOWE (OWNERS), GREGORY JOHNSON (ARCHITECT)-To allow partial demolition of an existing, one-story single-family home and allow one and two story additions, and including a Variance to allow the second, on-site parking space to be located within the 20' front yard setback. (Zoning: R-1 Medium-Density Residential District) (Planner: Dan Bell).

MOTION: Motioned by Commissioner Esteb, seconded by Commissioner Bailey and passed unanimously to continue this item to December 9, 2008, due to lack of quorum.

B. 58 GOLDEN HIND PASSAGE, DESIGN REVIEW APPLICATION NO. 08-015, HERWIG BAJER & KARIN FINGER-BAJER (OWNERS), CHRISTIAN OBERHAUSER (DESIGNER)- To construct an 837 Gross Floor Area (GFA) second-story addition to a one story, single-family residence and an attached two-car garage. (Zoning: R-1 Medium Density Residential District) (Planner: Larisa Roznowski).

Planner Roznowski presented the staff report, for which she used a slide presentation. She explained that the applicant is requesting Design Review approval to construct an 837 GFA second-story addition to an existing 1,552 sq. ft. residence and 489 sq. ft. garage on a 7,463 sq. ft. lot. The addition would include a hallway, two bedrooms and a bathroom on the western right side of the house. Colors would match the existing residence, including stucco and horizontal wood siding, vinyl windows, and roofing to match existing. The addition will complement the existing style and form of the house and neighborhood with hipped rooflines and an articulated front elevation. All of the setbacks and lot coverage would remain unchanged. The FAR would increase from 27.35% to 38.56% where 40.82% is the maximum allowed. The maximum height of the house would increase from 17'-7" to 22'-1" where 30' is the maximum allowed.

The pitch of the rooflines on the existing house would be changed from 5:12 to 3.5:12 to match the pitch of the second story addition. The roof over the garage is proposed to be changed from a gabled end to a shed roof to match the slope of the hipped roofline of the second story above.

Views, sunlight and privacy impacts to the adjacent neighbors are not significant or adverse. No significant views will be blocked from any adjacent neighbor by the proposed addition. Privacy will not be significantly affected because there are only three small windows proposed to the east elevation, which faces the closest adjacent neighbor, and all are elevated with openings at 4'-8" above the floor level. The building proportions would be within scale of surrounding residences and within the range of intensity of surrounding residential development.

Christian Oberhauser, of Oberhauser Interiors and the project's designer, said that Planner Roznowski had explained the project thoroughly. He added that the owners have approached him with a simple request for the addition of two bedrooms and a bathroom. He said there were not too many options given the recently remodeled lower level.

Commissioner Bailey asked if any effort was made to approach the neighbor across the street at a diagonal. The applicant said that those residents are renters, and that they could not locate the property owners. Commissioner Mace said owner contact information could be found in the County tax records for future reference.

Commissioner Esteb said the project fits well in the neighborhood, and that he is 100 percent behind it.

Commissioner Bailey said he could make the required findings for project approval.

Commissioner Mace said that he had visited the site, and at first wondered why the addition was forward, but added that he then realized this was the more practical approach given the lower level floor plan.

Commissioner Esteb said he also felt the addition was pushed to the front, but added that if it had been further back, it may have blocked the view of the neighbor behind.

MOTION: Motioned by Commissioner Bailey, seconded by Commissioner Esteb and passed unanimously to approve Design Review Application No. 08-015 to construct an 837 Gross Floor Area (GFA) second-story addition to a one story, single-family residence and an attached two-car garage at 58 Golden Hind Passage.

Planning Director Pendoley read the appeal rights.

C. 479 MONTICITO DRIVE, DESIGN REVIEW APPLICATION NO. 08-023, ELLIOT GRIMSHAW (OWNER), INGRID SCHOENLANK (DESIGNER)-To construct a 2,484 Gross Floor Area (GFA) addition to an existing 2,581 GFA two-story residence and one-car garage on an 18, 264 sq. ft. net lot area (Zoning: R-1-A Low Density Residential District) (Planner: Larisa Roznowski).

Larisa Roznowski presented the staff report for which she used a slide presentation. She said the applicant is requesting Design Review approval to construct a 2,484 GFA addition. An 879 sq. ft. addition is proposed on the First Floor toward the eastern front and southern side of the house, and a 1,424 sq. ft. addition is proposed on the Second Floor on the eastern front and southern side of the house. A 181 sq. ft. addition is proposed at the garage, expanding it from a one-car garage to a two-car garage, which will connect it to the residence. The project includes 551 sq. ft. in proposed deck area to be added to the existing 113 sq. ft. existing deck area, for a total of 664 sq. ft. of deck space. She noted the colors and materials board at the side of the room, and reviewed the additional landscaping, primarily at the front of the house that is also proposed.

She said the front yard setback would be 28" where 25' is required. The FAR would increase from 14.1% to 27.7% where 40% is allowed. The proposed southern left side yard setback would be 44'-11" where 10' is required. The northern right side yard setback would remain the same as existing. The rear yard setback would be 35'-7" where 35' is required. The lot coverage would increase from 13.9% to 20.1% where 25% is allowed. The maximum height would remain the same at 26'-5' above grade.

She said that staff's one area of concern is the apparent bulk and mass of the area of the addition above the garage as seen from Montecito Drive and the roadway easement. She said the applicant had originally submitted plans to construct the addition over the new garage and directly flush with the garage below towards the front property line. The Planning Department staff had recommended that the applicant revise the proposed garage and addition to a design that breaks up the apparent bulk and mass as seen from Montecito Drive. The steep slope from the roadway towards the garage accentuates the mass of the building as seen from the road below, although it is softened to some degree with the existing landscaping on the slope in the front yard. The applicant's design solution to address the massing issue was to step back the addition above the garage by 6 feet and add a deck, which is reflected in the current plans and story poles.

The existing vegetation and varying topography protect views, sunlight and privacy impacts from surrounding neighbors to the north, east and south. Open space is adjacent uphill to the west. The residence is setback 120 feet or more from the neighbors across the street. Additional proposed landscaping will buffer the house from the street and adjacent residences. She said that the applicant had submitted neighbor letters of comment, most of which were in approval, but that some included requests for additional landscaping. Views, sunlight and privacy are not significantly adverse.

Ingrid Schoenlank, project architect, said that the applicant had approached her with the goal to increase the size of the garage, and connect it to the house, and to take advantage of the surrounding views.

In the absence of the owner, Commissioner Bailey asked Ms. Schoenlank if the owner had addressed the any of the concerns raised in the letters from the neighbors at 477 and 478 Montecito Avenue. Ms. Schoenlank said they could certainly address the landscaping requests. Commissioner Bailey asked if the owners had agreed to this, and if this would help both neighbors, which the architect affirmed.

Sandy Newman at 477 Montecito Avenue said that her concerns regard the vegetation. She said the owner had removed all of the existing oak woodland vegetation and replaced it with palm and banana trees. She said she hopes the owner is not intending to take down any more trees. Commissioner Mace asked Mrs. Newman if she were concerned with tree removal or the type of trees removed, which Mrs. Newman affirmed both. She said she had worked to keep the native plants.

Commissioner Esteb asked for clarification of Mrs. Newman's letter in which she wrote that existing trees were coming down. Mrs. Newman said she does not know if it is the owner's intention to remove more of the existing trees. The architect said no more vegetation is to be removed unless it is within the footprint.

John Husker of 477 Montecito Avenue said that he has no sense that anything that is said by the owner is going to happen. He said he is not accustomed having a neighbor trim bushes on his property without talking to him first. He said he would like to see the owner pay attention to neighborly consideration.

Elliot Grimshaw, the owner apologized for arriving late, and said he had heard Mr. Husker's concerns, and had had his lot corners surveyed so he knew what he was doing. He said that anything he had cleared was dead or dying, and that he did the neighborhood a favor. They added that they had paid particular attention to screening neighbor's homes.

Commissioner Bailey asked the applicant if he was willing to add landscaping, which was affirmed. He said he had talked to Mr. Husker and that three bushes had already been planted, though he was not sure if that was done on his or Mr. Husker's property, as Mr. Husker's fence is located 1' into his property.

Mr. Husker referenced the survey included in the Commissioners' packet on sheet C-3. It was noted that the survey shows that the existing fence is on Mr. Husker's side of the actual property line, and the owner apologized and said he was wrong. Mr. Husker said things are just not right as all of these bushes were on his property. He said they were not great bushes, but that he is more concerned that he and Mr. Grimshaw are just going to continue to have problems.

Commissioner Bailey said there is a consensus that the architect has done a good job. If the owner is willing to make accommodations, that could be the beginning of something useful. He noted that the other neighbor at 487 Montecito Avenue has given sensible direction to the contractors that they mind their equipment. Planner Roznowski said there is a construction management plan required on the conditions of approval.

Commissioner Esteb said he would like to see them take the design one step further and flatten the roof more on the existing house, but he understands it is cheaper this way. Landscaping with tall screening in front of the garage and to the right of the entry stairs is important. He echoed the comment from the Newman's about non-natives. He said that the proposed plantings are great for the style of house, but noted that in the updated General Plan the Town is discussing the importance of native planting.

Commissioner Mace said the master bedroom over the garage appears pulled to the front. He said the computer-generated graphic was misleading, but the photo from the slide presentation shows that it is massive. He said that the plans show a low rock wall, and this texture will help break up the bulk. He said it would be appropriate to pull it back another 3 feet, but that overall, it is a good design and a big improvement. He noted that the landscaping must be larger than 1 and 5-gallon to mitigate the view impact. He said the front façade plantings need to be higher than the current 4' flax. He

concluded that a meeting with Mr. Husker is very important, as that talk will go a long way to bringing neighborhood happiness.

MOTION: Motioned by Commissioner Esteb, seconded by Commissioner Bailey and passed unanimously to approve Design Review Application No. 08-023 to construct a 2,484 Gross Floor Area (GFA) addition to an existing 2,581 GFA two-story residence and one-car garage on an 18,264 sq. ft. net lot area with the following conditions:

1. The applicant shall submit a revised landscape plan showing revised proposed plantings in the planter on the eastern side of the garage which should have a substantial height and width to screen the garage as seen from Montecito Drive. The species, container size at planting, and height at maturity must be indicated on plans and is subject to approval by Planning Department staff.
2. The applicant shall submit a revised landscape plan showing additional proposed plantings to the north of the proposed 10- and 15-gallon plantings near the northern side property line that shall provide adequate screening and buffering from the adjacent neighbor. The species, container size at planting, and height at maturity must be indicated on plans and is subject to approval by Planning Department staff.

6. ROUTINE AND OTHER MATTERS

A. REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

i. Commissioners: None.

ii. Director: Planning Director Pendoley said regarding scheduling that the next special Planning Commission meeting would be December 9, 2008, followed by the next Regular Planning Commission Hearing January 13, 2009.

B. MINUTES: None

7. ADJOURNMENT The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m. The next Planning Commission Special Meeting is December 9, 2008 at 7:30p.m. in the Corte Madera Council Chambers, 300 Tamal Vista Avenue in Corte Madera.