

**FINAL MINUTES
REGULAR PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
APRIL 13, 2010
CORTE MADERA TOWN HALL
CORTE MADERA**

COMMISSIONERS

PRESENT:

Chair Bruce Mace
Commissioner Richard Esteb
Commissioner Patrick Pagnillo
Commissioner Peter Schwartz

STAFF

PRESENT:

Dan Bell, Interim Planning Director
Larisa Roznowski, Associate Planner
Nancy Salcedo, Minute Recorder

1. OPENING

A. Call to Order

B. Pledge of Allegiance

C. Roll Call: All Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Bailey.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT: None

3. CONSENT CALENDAR: None.

4. CONTINUED HEARINGS:

A. 501 CORTE MADERA AVENUE, DESIGN REVIEW APPLICATION NO. 08-008, TED CHRISTENSEN & MICHELLE SLADE (OWNERS), DALE FURMAN (LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT)-Review of revised Landscape Plan. (Zoning R-1-A Low Density Residential District) (Planner: Larisa Roznowski)

Associate Planner Roznowski presented a review of the Design Review Application for a landscape plan that includes screening of the northern elevation of the approved single-family residence at 501 Corte Madera Avenue. On September 22, 2009 the Commission held a hearing to consider the application to construct a single-family residence with a driveway/retaining wall facing the northern property line which included a Landscape

Plan. The Town Council conditionally approved the construction of the residence on December 1, 2009. The Landscape Plan proposed for the area north of the residence included four 24-inch box pittosporum trees, one 24-inch box Coast Live Oak, and a number of one-gallon shrubs, perennials, annuals, groundcover and vines. The Commission decided that more landscaping should be included to add greater variety and depth and added as a Condition of Approval that the applicant submit a revised Landscape Plan to adequately screen the massing of the northern elevation with a variety of trees and shrubs. The applicant requested that the pittosporum be reduced from 24-inch box to 15-gallon size to achieve better growth, which was generally agreed by the Commission.

The applicant has proposed a revised Landscape Plan. A total of seven 1-gallon Mountain Laurel have been added where retaining wall is 6' or lower, and six 5-gallon Coffeeberry shrubs were added interspaced with the four pittosporum shrubs proposed in 15-gallon size where the wall height is greater than 6'.

In conclusion, the Commission should decide whether the revised Landscape Plan would provide adequate screening. If the Commission decides that the revised Landscape Plan adequately screens the northern retaining wall, the attached Resolution with findings and conditions may be adopted.

Chair Mace called for a presentation from the applicant.

Ted Christensen, 501 Corte Madera Avenue introduced Michael Martin to explain the details of the modified Landscape Plan.

Michael Martineau of 2917 Tavern Road in Alpine explained that he had reviewed the minutes of the previous Commission meeting in preparation of the revised Landscape Plan. He said he had incorporated Mountain Laurel to cover lower section of wall and Coffeeberry to cover the tallest section.

Guy Benstead of 425 Corte Madera Avenue noted that Commissioner Esteb had recused himself at the previous hearing for this project.

Chair Mace informed Mr. Benstead that Commissioner Esteb would not be voting on this matter.

Mr. Benstead thanked Associate Planner Roznowski who had emailed him the staff report, thanked Mr. Martineau and Mr. Christensen for the proposed screening, which is conforming, and thanked Mr. Martineau for an email about the sequencing of events.

He noted that the applicant was starting to work on reservoirs, and acknowledged everyone's good work. He said there haven't been final plans submitted for a building permit, and hoped to condition the project that there be no grading before building permits so they don't build walls before they put shrubs in.

Chairman Mace said the project's sequence is separate from Commission consideration, but is specifically guided in the building permit process.

Interim Planning Director Bell added that this evening's discussion pertains to the revised Landscape Plan only.

Hearing no more public comment, Chair Mace brought the discussion back to the Commission.

Commissioner Pagnillo said the revised Landscape Plan looks fine.

Commissioner Schwartz said he liked the choice of plants, trees and shrubs, and that the modified Plan provides a nice variety.

Chair Mace agreed, adding that the Commission had made specific comments at the last meeting, which are reflected here. He asked for a motion.

MOTION: Moved by Commissioner Schwartz, seconded by Commissioner Pagnillo to approve Design Review Application No 08-008 to approve the revised Landscape Plan at 501 Corte Madera Avenue.

Ayes: Commissioners Mace, Pagnillo and Schwartz

Noes:

Abstain: Commissioner Esteb

Absent: Commissioner Bailey

Interim Planning Director Bell read the appeal rights.

5. NEW HEARINGS

- A. 40 WINDWARD DRIVE, DESIGN REVIEW APPLICATION NO. 10-003, STEVEN & JOANNE SAXE (OWNERS), MORGAN PIERCE WILLIAMSON (DESIGNER)** - To allow a second-story addition to an existing two-story single family home. (Zoning: R-1 Medium-Density Residential District) (Planner: Larisa Roznowski)

Associate Planner Roznowski presented the staff report for which she used a slide presentation. She reviewed the request to construct a 15 sq. ft. storage room on the lower level and a 538 sq. ft. addition on the upper level. The addition on the upper level consists of adding a bedroom, bathroom, and walk-in closet above the garage at the front of the house. The addition above the garage is proposed to cantilever 2' over the garage wall below it, and an 18"-deep bay window extending beyond the cantilevered wall is proposed. Some interior wall reconfigurations are also proposed on the upper level.

The closest setbacks for the two side yards and the rear of the residence will remain the same. The front setback would decrease from 31'-10" to 29'-10" where a 25' setback is the minimum required. The lot coverage would increase from 12.3% to 12.8% where 30% is the maximum allowed. The Floor Area Ratio (FAR) would increase from 12.3% to 12.8% where 40% is the maximum allowed. The two-car garage would remain the same.

She reviewed a slide comparing existing and proposed front and side elevations. The addition would be constructed of fire resistant materials and would match the existing residence. The proposed project has no view, sunlight or privacy impacts to surrounding properties due to the large lot size, which provides for adequate setbacks and the varying topography of the site.

She explained that the Commission should consider the proposed design and decide whether it is in scale and harmonious with the surrounding neighborhood. The Mariner Highlands neighborhood consists of numerous two-story homes, a number of which have a second story overhanging. While the Commission has been consistent regarding second story setbacks, she reviewed slides depicting a number of homes in area with overhangs. The homes in the Mariner highlands neighborhood with second story overhangs appear to extend 1' to 1.5' on average, many with longer eaves to break up massing and hide the overhang.

She concluded that the Commission should consider whether the second-story addition above the garage is in scale and harmonious with surrounding areas. If the Commission decides that the proposed design is harmonious and compatible with the area, the attached Resolution with findings and conditions may be adopted.

Chair Mace asked for a presentation from the applicant.

Steven Saxe of 40 Windward Drive said he had been living here since 1969. He explained that now that his kids are grown they need a bigger house. He explained that

they propose a new master bedroom and to transform the now master bedroom into a nicer guest room, and rebuild the bathroom to serve the proposed bedrooms. He said that it is only the side view that shows the addition to be significant, and that this is not visible to anyone, and is setback quite a bit from the sidewalk.

Morgan Williamson, designer, explained that the shingles and the angle of the garage hide the addition. She said the interior is not large, and the 2' overhang makes it all work, while giving the master suite distinction. Due to the topography of the lot, the way it is laid out is optimal. There is no other place to do this.

Mark Williamson, contractor, said the proposed design is in keeping with the look of the neighborhood, and that there really isn't a precedent of design on the street, so the goal became to maintain the original look of the house.

Ms. Williamson added that over the front door the porch area is covered with a trellis, so one can see the front from the corner, which is not reflected in the 3-D model.

Joanne Saxe of 40 Windward Drive asked if the Commission had come by to view the site, adding that with the trellis and the existing landscaping, the proposal is within neighborhood context.

Kim Baez of neighboring 227 Prince Royal Passage said he likes the design and feels that the proposal would make a nice addition that enhances the house and neighborhood.

Hearing no more public testimony, Chair Mace brought the discussion back to the Commission.

Commissioner Esteb said he felt the proposal had some issues including a big front façade, which a trellis would not effectively break up. He said the Commission consistently requests stepping back the second story, and that he would prefer to see the addition pushed back rather than pushed out. He noted there are no bedrooms on the first floor, and that with the Town's aging population it may make sense to consider a first floor master bedroom suite.

Commissioner Schwartz said he had trouble with the massing, and less trouble with the overhang. He noted the sloped roof with gable at 144 Prince Royal Passage, and added that if the intention is to put the addition over the garage, massing needs to be broken up. Renderings do a disservice to any design in that they don't show trellis or

vegetation. He would like to see the applicant explore other options to retain space and reduce massing.

Commissioner Pagnillo said that in general the proposal as drawn is an improvement on the house. It would be better to break up massing in front without reducing space.

Chair Mace said he would like to see the applicant strongly work toward reducing massing and flat facades perhaps by setting the addition back. The Commission won't redesign but does offer suggestions. He said he drove around the neighborhood and was amazed how many overhangs and first and second story flat façade walls existed in the neighborhood. He agreed that renderings don't do justice. As designed, the proposal is an improvement, but he would like to see the applicant do something to the end over the driveway, perhaps add a trellis, truncate the bottom of the picture window, or truncate the gable itself. Overall, the design fits in and is harmonious with neighborhood, which overrides a lot of his concerns.

Commissioner Schwartz suggested extending the roofline of the bay window as a means of breaking the bulk. He said regarding another project at 323 Willow Avenue that he is now regretting a similar example of vertical mass that sits forward and could have been pushed back or tipped.

Commissioner Esteb noted that the neighborhood examples are located on a hillside with the second story portion at the lower end, but that this project includes two wings, each two stories in height on this flat corner lot, of which one clearly sees the facade. Even from the street one can see what appears to be a very large mass at the corner. He said he drove around the neighborhood as well, and noted the numerous overhangs. In looking at the plans, he wondered whether the addition could be pushed back 4' keeping the same amount of square footage.

Commissioner Schwartz asked for clarification whether Commissioner Esteb proposed pushing back the area at walk-in closet, which is over the new closet below to create an overhang on backside, which Commissioner Esteb confirmed.

Chair Mace asked for feedback from the applicant.

Mr. Williamson said that 401 Prince Royal Drive is also on a flat corner lot. Regarding pushing back the addition so the overhang is in the rear, he said there would be a height issue on the patio/hot tub area in the rear, and that a rear overhanging would incur additional expense in redesigning back area.

Ms. Williamson added that the rear of the lot is already part of the hillside and that pushing the addition back would consume more rear yard.

Mr. Saxe said there is an aboveground hot tub with a raised deck around it in the rear yard, so that anyone tall enough would hit an overhang in this area. He added that they had considered adding a master bedroom off the first floor towards the rear yard, but that would limit the flat area of the backyard to 300 to 400 sq. ft., which is too small.

Chair Mace brought the discussion back to the Commission.

Commissioner Schwartz said the overhang of garage is consistent with the neighborhood, but that he is concerned about the vertical façade.

Chair Mace summarized that the Commission would like to see a truncated roof, larger roof over the bay window, a trellis, and/or corbels or any combination thereof. He added that if this were located in a neighborhood without the overhanging second story precedent, it would be discouraged.

Commissioner Esteb said that he could be satisfied with a 3' trellis in front with the front overhang remaining.

Ms. Williamson said corbels have been incorporated.

Chair Mace asked that the applicant incorporate some of these design remedies.

Interim Planning Director Bell asked for feedback from the Commission on the truncated concept, and whether the definition of truncating included a horizontal roofline as seen at 9 Balclutha Drive, which the Commission confirmed.

Interim Planning Director Bell asked whether the Commission intended the trellis at the overhang rather than underneath, which the Commission confirmed.

Chair Mace asked for a motion.

MOTION: Moved by Commissioner Schwartz, seconded by Commissioner Pagnillo to approve Design Review Application No. 10-003 to allow a second-story addition to an existing two-story single family home at 40 Windward Drive, with the Condition that the applicant modify the design to incorporate some of the following elements: a trellis along the second story overhang, sloped roofline over the bay window, incorporation of corbels, and/or a truncated base roofline

subject to approval by the Planning Department prior to obtaining building permits.

Ayes: Commissioners Mace, Esteb, Schwartz, Pagnillo

Noes:

Abstain:

Absent: Commissioner Bailey

6. ROUTINE AND OTHER MATTERS

A. REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

i. Commissioners: Chair Mace attended the Town Council meeting.

ii. Interim Planning Director: Interim Planning Director Bell requested direction regarding Planning Commission review of proposed minor second-story residential additions, concluding that the Commission would review all second-story addition Design Review applications.

B. MINUTES: Planning Commission Meeting Minutes of March 9, 2010.

MOTION: Moved by Commissioner Pagnillo, seconded by Commissioner Esteb by to approve the minutes of the March 9, 2010 Planning Commission meeting.

Ayes: Commissioners Mace, Esteb, Schwartz and Pagnillo

Noes:

Abstain:

Absent: Commissioner Bailey

7. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 9 p.m. The next Planning Commission regular meeting is April 27, 2010 at 7:30 p.m. in the Corte Madera Council Chambers, 300 Tamalpais Drive.