

TOWN OF HILLSBOROUGH
SAN MATEO COUNTY

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1600 Floribunda Avenue
Hillsborough
California 94010

**Architecture and Design Review Board
Minutes**

April 19, 2004

Town Hall, 1600 Floribunda Avenue – Community Room

CALL TO ORDER – 4:00 p.m.

Boardmembers Present – Reisman, Heyman, Jewett, Luebke, Werbe and Benoit

Staff Present – Morton, O'Connell, Milke and Chan

Others Present – Commissioner John Fannon

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – A motion (Werbe/Jewett) to approve the minutes of March 15, 2004 passed 5-0.

PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS

Consent Calendar:

1. **15 Castle Court**—Cheung (Chu)
One (1) year extension of ADRB approval for a new house
2. **130 Stonehedge Road**—FW Spencer Companies (Lewis Architecture)
Alterations to garage plus new fencing and gates
3. **2256 Forest View Road**—Power
Tree Removal
4. **905 La Senda Road**— Breen (Skyline Design)
Additions totaling 1,008 square feet, new roof structures, remodel, and landscape plan
- 4a. **25 Santa Felicia Court**—Pahl (Morrison)
First and second-story addition of 1,777 sq. ft.

A motion (Jewett/Werbe) to approve the consent calendar passed 5-0.

Chairman Reisman noted that the application for the tree removal at 2256 Forest View Road was very nicely done.

Discussion Items:

Remodels/Additions

5. 1155 Barroilhet Drive—Marcus (Rossington Architecture; Bay Solar Power Design)

Roof-mounted solar panels on the front of house

Boardmember Jewett indicated that he was not a big fan of solar panels. He felt that having them where they are visible is not very desirable.

Boardmember Werbe echoed the same concern saying that placing panels in the front of the house might become precedent setting and not something that the ADRB necessarily supports. She asked if there was a way to modify architectural detailing of the roofline to make the panels less visible.

Boardmember Luebke said that he thought that the applicants had done a good job with the presentation and, since the panels were low profile and would not be highly visible, he could support the project.

Boardmember Heyman complimented the homeowner on the beautifully designed home and landscaping. He said he liked seeing photovoltaic panels as an energy saving measure. Boardmember Heyman did not believe that these panels placed in this manner on this particular roof would be offensive.

Alternate Boardmember Benoit said that since this was a flat roof there should be no neighbor issues regarding reflection.

Chairman Reisman complimented the applicant on the beautiful application package and pointed out that from most vantage points the panels would not be seen. He discussed with the applicant the possibility of slightly raising the parapet on the roof to improve the shielding of the panels from all vantage points.

The owner indicated that if there was shadow on even one row of cells the entire panel would be ineffective. In addition, the owner pointed out that she had letters of support from all the neighbors.

A motion (Luebke/Werbe) to approve the project with the findings that this particular application had been extremely well studied and, even though it was on the front portion of the roof of the house, there would be only minimum visibility from limited vantage points. The motion passed 5-0.

6. 324 Barbara Way—Friedlander (Kuehne) 22% FAR; 4,797 sq. ft. total

First floor addition of 1,370 square feet

Boardmember Werbe stated that she believed that this was a nice straightforward remodel. She further stated that it was very positive since it appeared that the neighbors were pleased with the project.

Boardmember Luebke agreed, saying that the project represented a good blend of the new with the existing.

Boardmember Heyman agreed, saying that he had no problem with the project and complimented the applicants on their positive communication with the neighbors.

Alternate Boardmember Benoit also supported the project but suggested to the homeowner that some improvements to the lighting and landscaping would further enhance the project.

Boardmember Jewett asked the designer about the portion of the front elevation where the addition is exposed and asked if it would be possible to carry the siding around the corner on Elevation A-7.

Chairman Reisman stated that the project would be more enhanced if the solar panels could be moved. He talked about some other ways in which the project might be enhanced, although he believed that what was being done was very positive.

A motion (Heyman/Jewett) to approve the project passed 5-0.

New Houses

- 7. 15 Mountain Wood Court**—Pinn Bros. Construction (Stewart Associates) 13.4% FAR; 6,151 sq. ft. New house, includes tree removal and landscape plan

The project architect reviewed his letter that highlighted the changes that had been made to the project since the preliminary review.

Boardmember Luebke said that he believed that most of the comments that the ADRB had made during the preliminary review had been addressed. He pointed out that there had been improvements to the exterior elevations.

Boardmember Heyman stated that he believed that the project was approvable; however, he did not support what he believed was the overuse of the wrought iron scrollwork. He also pointed out that it would be important to revise the landscape plan to address the comments of the Town's Consulting Landscape Architect. He further asked the project landscape architect if the seven (7) Cherry trees could be increased to ten (10) to help cover the right-hand side and provide additional screening. Boardmember Heyman also discussed that Oak tree #243 is reported to be in relatively good condition, and that the arborist's report says that it is one of the best trees on the site. He suggested that the patio be redesigned to save this tree. He also asked about the possibility of saving tree #253 (which is shown in the proposed driveway area).

Alternate Boardmember Benoit agreed, saying that these two trees were definitely worth saving if it was possible. She also quoted the arborist's report that indicated that tree #243 was a "treasure". She asked if it would not be possible to somehow realign the driveway to save tree #253. Alternate Boardmember Benoit said that she liked the façade and the eave lines, and she believed that the landscape plan was simple and straightforward and very positive.

Boardmember Jewett said that he did not see a way to save the trees and agreed that the project presented a very elegant design. He pointed out that the Board had reviewed this preliminarily and had no discussion at that time about needing to redesign to save the trees. Therefore, he did not believe that it was appropriate to ask that that occur at this point in the project review.

Boardmember Werbe said that she would like to see both of the trees saved. She believed that the house is beautiful, but also supported Boardmember Heyman's suggestion that the ironwork needed to be simplified. She also indicated that the comments of the Town's Consulting Landscape Architect should be addressed in revised landscape plans. She complimented the architect for the positive response to the Board's comments at the preliminary review.

Chairman Reisman said that he had seen incidences where paving stones had been applied under Oak trees in a manner in which did not disrupt the growth of the tree or damage it. He asked the applicant if further study could be given to the idea of preserving one or both of the trees. He pointed out that the two (2) Oak trees contribute to the overall mission of this project, which was to retain the "Old Hillsborough" look and feel. Recognizing that it was not within the Board's purview, he pointed out some places where the floor plan could benefit from refinement.

The applicant, Chuck Bomerito, from Pinn Brother's Construction pointed out that tree #243 had been shown for removal when the subdivision was approved and had been accounted for in the project EIR. He further said that this is a multi-trunked tree with some of the trunks growing towards the house, which would make it very difficult because if the tree were pruned to accommodate the house it would end up being very lopsided and not aesthetically pleasing. He also discussed the issues related to the tree shown in the driveway area saying that he would be willing to try and save that tree.

A motion (Heyman/Luebkeman) was made to approve the project subject to the applicant working with staff to demonstrate substantial effort to save trees #243 and #253 and to revise the landscape plan to address the Town's Consulting Landscape Architect's report. After further discussion, that motion and the second were withdrawn.

There was further discussion between the ADRB and the applicant about the possibilities for demonstrating that the trees could not be saved vis-à-vis demonstrating that the trees could be saved.

Mr. Bomerito asked if he could go forward and prune the tree to show the Board what the results would be. The Board indicated that they could not authorize such severe pruning of that tree.

A motion (Heyman/Werbe) to approve the house as submitted, but to continue to the meeting of May 17, 2004 the landscape plan and tree removal to allow the plans to be revised to address the comments of the Town's Consulting Landscape Architect and to demonstrate serious effort to retain trees #243 and #253 passed 5-0.

8. 870 Vista Road—Thorenfeldt (Stewart Associates) 24.5% FAR; 7,490 sq. ft.
New house, includes teardown, tree removal, and landscape plan

The project architect indicated that most of the neighborhood's objections related to having the two-story house and concerns about views and privacy. He pointed out that the house had been placed in the middle of the lot with 40-foot sideyard setbacks. He also pointed out that 846 square feet of the house are in the basement area, which tends to reduce the visual impact.

The project landscape architect pointed out that all the trees in the front are to remain, and that the information from the arborist's report resulted in the house being moved (from what was reflected on the initial plan) to preserve some additional screening.

Chairman Reisman reviewed for the public that on the east side of the property, the 40-foot setback appears to be at the nearest point, and that the average setback along the sides are much more significant than the minimum required 20 feet.

A neighbor at 860 Vista Road (Dr. Ho) spoke saying that this neighborhood is unique – it's a neighborhood of all single-story homes where they enjoy their privacy and views. He pointed out that even the street names relate to the views that this area affords. He stated that he believes this house is out-of-scale, overbearing and doesn't fit. He called it "vulgar and grotesque". He believed that the design was similar to that of a prison tower from which the applicants would be looking down onto adjoining properties destroying their privacy. He further believed that this project would be a detriment to the value of neighboring homes. While he appreciated that the trees were going to be salvaged, he believed that the scope of this project is overdramatic and would set a precedent that would ruin the peaceful character of the neighborhood. He showed the Board pictures showing what he believed to be the visual impact of the project. He asked that the applicant review the plans at 850 Vista Road, which he believes fits very nicely into the neighborhood.

Dr. Ho also spoke on behalf of the property owner at 108 Essex Lane (Mrs. Miller) who was in the audience. Dr. Ho said that Mrs. Miller had lived there 52 years, and he showed the Board pictures demonstrating what the view would be from her home and into her home from the project house.

A neighbor at 890 Vista Road (Ms. Kriessmann) spoke saying that she had lived there 33 years. She said that when she heard that the project was going to be a teardown and looked at the plan, she went to look at the same applicant's completed house at 331 Alberta Way and saw how big it was and became very concerned. She pointed out that this house was maximizing the size and that even though the architect had stated that the style was a Craftsman Bungalow – it was no Bungalow. Her concern was that it would be very large and very close to her property. She further pointed out that the site is not a heavily wooded site as the applicants had stated. She believed that this house would be more appropriate in a different neighborhood. She concluded by saying that this project was not sensitive to the neighborhood.

A neighbor at 870 Vista Road (Ms. McFarland) spoke saying that they had lived there for 15 years. She pointed out that the topography results in a knoll where all the houses on the knoll are single-story homes. She also pointed out that other people have made additions to their homes, but that they were all single-story additions. She did not believe that a speculative development would be as concerned about the neighborhood as an individual property owner.

A neighbor at 107 Essex Lane (Ms. Safrin) spoke saying that she believed that this house was overly large, overly tall and as a speculative home it's focusing on profit rather than the character of the neighborhood. She is concerned about the loss of privacy and the obstruction of views.

Ms. Ho at 860 Vista Road spoke saying that she was representing owners at 881 Vista Road (although no authorization was provided) who oppose this project because it is out of character with the neighborhood.

Boardmember Heyman stated that he believed that the Craftsman style was not unattractive, but he questioned whether or not it fits into this neighborhood. He said that he did not honestly believe that this style was a good choice; although, he did not find it offensive. He pointed out how well screened the property was, and said that he appreciated the concerns of the property owners at 890 Vista Road and 108 Essex Lane, as they would be the most impacted. He did not believe, however, that the neighbors across the street would ever be able to see the story poles

for the project. He believed that the landscape plan was approvable subject to addressing the comments of the Town's Consulting Landscape Architect's report.

Alternate Boardmember Benoit said that she really appreciated the neighbors' concerns and their feelings. She stated that she loves the Craftsman's style, but she was not sure if it's the best choice for this neighborhood. She further pointed out that the site is very heavily screened, and that the color palette was very sensitive to the landscape screening. Her review of the photos from the house on Alberta Way resulted in a comment there were no trees on that property. She believed that the trees on this property should mitigate any objections.

Boardmember Jewett pointed out that there had been some effort to push this house down into the site. He agreed that some views may be impacted, but asked if they were being completely ruined. He believed that the house was nicely designed and that the style was appropriate for the neighborhood. He did not believe that the story poles were visible from many areas in the neighborhood; although, he was sympathetic to those who spoke and are experiencing changes in the neighborhood.

Boardmember Werbe said that this was one of her favorite houses that she has seen produced by this architect and coming before the Board. However, she does not believe that it belongs in this neighborhood. She said that there are too many neighbors that have concerns with this project, and she did not believe that this style home on this lot was appropriate in this neighborhood. Therefore, as much as she appreciated the architectural style, she would not support the project.

Boardmember Luebke said that he believed that this style did fit within the neighborhood. He was very glad that Mr. Stewart had not brought forward a Mediterranean-style house for this site. He said that, especially given the high degree of landscape screening on the property and the site plan with the increased setback areas, the transition of this project into the neighborhood was very well done. He further pointed out, although some of the photos had shown the project as a "big orange block", that when it is built with its natural materials, it will blend nicely into the surrounding landscape and will not be as harsh a reality as depicted in some of the photomontages that had been presented.

Chairman Reisman told the applicant that there might be a split vote on this project. He explained that if a house is large, if there are neighbor concerns, if the house is being developed as a speculative project by a developer, and/or if a project is approaching any of the maximums in terms of FAR or setbacks, that the project tends to get a higher level of review by the ADRB. Chairman Reisman also pointed out that there is a very distinctive knoll, and all of the other houses on this knoll are one story. He further added that the level of detail on this project is very nice. He believed that it exceeded that of the house on Alberta Way that was also built by the same builder. He agreed that the color palette would help the project fade into the trees. However, he believed that there needed to be some color change to add some "punch" to the architectural detailing.

A motion (Luebke/Werbe) to approve the project subject to revising the landscape plans to address the comments of the Town's Consulting Landscape Architect passed 3-2. (Reisman and Werbe dissented.)

Continued Items

9. 385 Robinwood Lane—Young (Gumbinger Avram Architects) 21.2% FAR; 4,805 sq. ft. total
First and second-story addition of 2,143 square feet

Alternate Boardmember Benoit stated that this project had evolved in a positive way. She pointed out, however, that the south elevation, which was the family recreation area, lacked architectural detailing, stone treatment and landscaping.

Boardmember Jewett believed that the Board's previous comments had been well considered and addressed. He believed strongly, however, that a natural roofing material would greatly enhance the project.

Boardmember Werbe agreed that the project architect responded nicely to the Board's comments, and she echoed Boardmember Jewett's comments about the roofing material. She supported the stone, believing that it was a good product for this application.

Boardmember Luebke said that he believed that this project still had problems. He believed that there was still plainness to the design which had not been adequately addressed. He pointed out that there are actually five (5) elevations in architecture and that the designers need to look at all five. He said that he was not sure whether or not he would support the project at this point.

Boardmember Heyman said that he agreed with Boardmember Luebke, pointing out the plainness of the south and west elevations. He believed, however, that many of the issues that the Board had at the March 1, 2004 meeting had been addressed.

Chairman Reisman concluded that he believed that this was an unspectacular home, and he agreed with the comments about the two elevations. He was not at all supportive of the skylights. He reminded the applicant that the skylight facing the street was not consistent with Board policy. He pointed out that there are alternative ways to get light into a house. He summarized by saying that this project should probably not be denied, but it could definitely become more special.

A motion (Heyman/Jewett) to approve the project with comments that the project would benefit from improvement to the design and the style by carrying through the features to the south and west elevations and using natural materials on the roof passed 4-1. (Luebke dissented.)

10. 1490 Crystal Drive—Spano (Robert Allen Williams)
New house, including teardown and landscape plan

Boardmember Jewett said that he liked the progress on this project. He said he appreciated the efforts that the homeowners had made to respond to the Board's previous concerns. He had a concern about the roof material since it appeared to have a shiny finish. He also was concerned that the colors on the materials board might be too muddy, and the colors on the rendering appeared to be much better.

Boardmember Werbe agreed, saying that the project had come a long way. She shared the concerns about the apparent shine in the roofing material and the muddy looking color on the color board. She suggested that the applicants test the colors on a wall before finalizing their paint color choices.

Boardmember Luebkehan concurred with the other Boardmembers saying that this is a good example of how the design review process really does work. He also pointed out that the landscape plan should be revised to address the comments of the Town's Consulting Landscape Architect.

Boardmember Heyman said that he really likes what he sees now, and that the project no longer looks "dated". He asked if the roofing material was varied in color, to which the architect responded it was. He said that he believed that the architectural detailing was very attractive. He also referenced the Town's Consulting Landscape Architect's report, specifically comment #5.

Alternate Boardmember Benoit said that this project represented a very nice turnaround on the Board's previous comments. She believed that the materials selected were very positive. She also shared concern about the colors and suggested that the paint is tested on the site. She stressed the importance of foundation planting in the landscape plan.

Chairman Reisman agreed that the colors required further study, possibly after the walls are installed. He offered the homeowners some additional comments on the floor plan.

A motion (Heyman/Luebkehan) to approve the project subject to revising the landscape plan to address the comments of the Town's Consulting Landscape Architect's report passed 5-0.

OTHER ITEMS

Preliminary Review

New Houses:

2255 Skyfarm Drive
1045 Whitwell Road

ADJOURNMENT TO STUDY SESSION IN TOWN HALL ANNEX TO REVIEW AND COMMENT ON THE DRAFT DESIGN GUIDELINES

Maureen Morton, AICP
City Planner