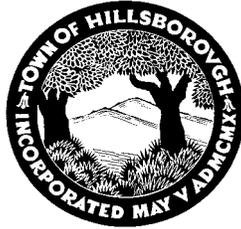


TOWN OF HILLSBOROUGH  
SAN MATEO COUNTY

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1600 Floribunda Avenue  
Hillsborough  
California 94010

**Architecture and Design Review Board  
Minutes  
December 6, 2004**

Town Hall, 1600 Floribunda Avenue – Community Room

**CALL TO ORDER** - 4:00 p.m.

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

**Staff Present** – Morton, Tynan, Milke

**Others Present** – Commissioner John Fannon, Vice-Mayor Tom Kasten

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES** — A motion (Heyman/Werbe) to approve the minutes of November 1, 2004 passed 5-0.

**PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS**

**Consent Calendar:**

- 1. 25 Mountain Wood Court** – Ping (Hunt Hale Jones Architects/Michael Callan, Landscape Architect)  
Revisions to previously approved plans to include new doors, exterior materials, and a balcony at the second floor; new swimming pool; new hardscape and planting areas in rear yard; new plantings including a vineyard and fountain in the front setback; and new retaining walls, gates and columns along the street (19% FAR)
- 2. 385 Robinwood Lane** – Young (Darosa & Associates)  
Revisions to approved architectural plans for addition and remodel to an existing home to include an additional 95 sf at the first floor and 190 sf at second floor; changes to floor plans; new window and door locations; and changes to exterior finishes (22% FAR)

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

## **Discussion Items:**

### *Revisions to Previously Approved Plans*

#### **3. 925 Seabury Road – Johal (Bruce MacDonald)**

Minor revisions to an approved landscape plan consisting of a materials change from stucco to redwood fencing on the property line and an increase in fence height from six feet to eight feet

A neighbor at 635 Hillsborough Boulevard (Guido) spoke saying that she did not believe that the change in fencing was a minor change. Her concern was that she had believed that the stucco wall would hold up longer than a wooden fence. She said that she currently repairs the wooden fence. She also believed that the higher the fence, the better.

Boardmember Jewett said that an 8-foot high fence is taller than what is typically allowed.

Boardmember Werbe said that she believed that the original design was better and did not support the proposed change.

Boardmember Heyman said that, although he would rather see the CMU wall, he didn't really think there was a basis for the ADRB to object to a redwood fence which tends to be a relatively common application.

Boardmember Benoit said that the Board was "sold" on the look of the CMU wall. She believed that the masonry wall finished off the project with a sense of appropriate grandeur. She did not think that it was important whether or not the wall was 6 or 8 feet high.

The applicant was asked why the change was proposed, to which he responded that it was a combination of cost and concern for potential damage to the roots of the Redwood trees.

Chairman Reisman said that it appeared that the proposed 8-foot height was not a problem to those speaking at this meeting. He said that it appeared that three of the ADRB members would like to keep the original design.

With concurrence of the applicant, it was decided that perhaps the project could be redesigned to include measures that would address the concerns of the neighbor, and at the same time address some of the concerns of the applicant.

A motion (Jewett/Werbe) to continue this application to the meeting of February 7, 2005 to allow for revisions to the design passed 5-0.

### *New Houses*

#### **4. 39 Glenbrook Drive – Knuff (Toby Long Design/Garden Architecture)**

Teardown and new house with roof-mounted solar panels and landscape plan including tree removal, new swimming pool, and new fencing and gates at the street (8% FAR)

Boardmember Werbe stepped down due to the proximity of her home to the project site.

A neighbor at 41 Glenbrook Drive (Heine) said that he liked the design of the house quite a bit, saying that he believed the materials were nice and the design was well thought out. He felt, however, it was a bit "looming" when he saw the story poles. He presented the Board photos from his home. He further stated that he was very comfortable with the existing screening including the two large trees in the front and the side property screening. He did not believe that the proposed Olive trees would contribute positively to a screening plan. He was particularly concerned about the screening at the bocce court. He also expressed concerns about the impacts of construction of this project and other projects to this relatively small street.

A neighbor at 40 Glenbrook Drive (Werbe) spoke saying that she also believed it was a beautiful home but pointed out that this was a small, tight street. She urged that placement of the solar panels be reconsidered so that there would not be direct views from the two houses above. She also spoke with concern about the proposed removal of the trees, which she believes should be reconsidered.

A neighbor at 46 Glenbrook Drive spoke saying to the applicant that the "street" welcomed them. She was also in favor of keeping the two trees in the front. She reiterated concerns related to construction impacts.

A neighbor at 65 Glenbrook Drive (Saffo) spoke in support of the concerns that had been stated by the other neighbors. He pointed out that this was a friendly street where people get together on holidays and exchange keys to their houses. He believed that, as a group, the neighbors could work out the details related to this proposal.

The public hearing was then closed. Boardmember Heyman indicated that he liked the plans. He pointed out that the roof panels did not face the street which is consistent with the guidelines, but that they could be seen by neighbors at 25 Glenbrook Drive. He referred to the Town's Consulting Landscape Architect's report suggesting that trees #58 through #60 are retained and also trees #1 and #2 unless the adjoining neighbor agreed. (From the audience the neighbor indicated that they did not agree to the removal of trees #1 and #2.)

Boardmember Heyman also pointed out an apparent discrepancy in the plans with regard to the gutters and the flashing. He also suggested that the applicants consider a locking mailbox.

Boardmember Benoit also complimented the plans, saying that the entire package had been prepared beautifully. She also believed that it was important to keep the trees and urged the applicants to work on an alternate location for the roof panels.

Boardmember Jewett agreed that the house was a lovely design and supported the comments regarding working with the neighbors on retaining the trees and relocating the roof-mounted solar panels.

Chairman Reisman complimented the beautiful architectural package which had been prepared for the Board's review. He stated that the floor plan was beautiful and well thought out, and this was a standard to which he hoped that all designs could be held. He asked the architect if he had considered any other locations on the site for the house, given some of the comments that had been heard.

The architect responded that they had studied the siting in great detail and tried to be sensitive to grading, views and the balance. The property owner pointed out that the house was not on the highest point on the site, and further, that the highest point of the house does not reach the highest point of the land.

A motion (Heyman/Benoit) to approve the project subject to addressing comments #4 and #5 of the Town's Consulting Landscape Architect's report, which referred to retaining trees, passed 4-0-1. (Werbe abstained).

*Exercising an abundance of caution to avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest, Boardmember Jewett stepped down for items #5, #6 and #7*

- 5. 2700 Ralston Avenue** – Miller (TRG Architects/Michael Callan, Landscape Architect)  
New house and landscape plan including a swimming pool, pool house, fencing and columns along the street, a fountain in the front setback, and a new driveway (22% FAR)

The applicant indicated that he had met with some of the neighbors to discuss the issues of the design of this house, and it had been suggested that a one-story house would be most appropriate. In response, one-story elements have been incorporated into the house, and the majority of the bulk of the second-story is pushed back. He stated that he believed that this style provided for breaking up the masses into smaller shapes and allowing for the one-story elements to be closer to the street.

The property owner at 2855 Ralston Avenue (Meyer) spoke, referring to the letter that she had written. She stated that she believes this process requires the Planning Commission and "the buck has been passed." She said that she had some concerns about the accommodation of construction vehicles, but now understands that the ADRB is not the appropriate forum for those issues. She believed that of the three new houses at this location, this design was the best conceived because of the single-story elements on the street side. She still believed, however, that the house was very large and that the short driveway would not accommodate large vehicles. She was not supportive of the use of Olive trees to screen the house from Ralston Avenue. She expressed her concerns about the approval of the subdivision and referenced her request for a moratorium on any approvals at this location.

The property owner at 100 Robin Road (Waterman) spoke, saying that he also had questions about the subdivision which he believed should be clarified before any approvals were granted on the designs of the houses. He suggested that the view from Ralston Avenue and the Crocker School presented a house that was very "looming". He did not believe that the proposed trees would provide sufficient screening. He summed up his concerns by saying that he was concerned about the massing, the topography, the safety and the "looming" nature of the design.

The property owner at 2780 Ralston Avenue (Mangano) stated that he had questions about the two-acre zoning at this location. He further stated that he had not been approached about the design of these houses, and he believed that they represented an oppressive presentation on Ralston Avenue.

The neighbor at 2715 Ralston Avenue (Stein) spoke saying that he lived across the street from the project. He stated that, looking up from his home, all that he could see is the roofline of this house. He believes that this project is "looming" especially since his home is 10 - 15 feet below the street level. He said that this house looks like a "tower." He further stated that, although he liked the house design, he didn't believe it fit in well with the Ranch-style of his home. He believed that this house would be the first of this style and landscaping style for the neighborhood. He also believed that the house was too large, especially for the lot which has a pointed area which limits the siting options. He pointed out that the house appears to be pushed towards Ralston. He stated that he would like it to be pushed more towards Chateau, although he realized that would result in it being even higher.

The property owner at 37 New Place Road (Johnson) spoke saying that she had written three letters, and that she agreed with all of the previous speakers. She urged the ADRB to look at these three houses as one unit. She further stated that she was disappointed in the fact that the “buck was getting passed.” She asked the Board why they would approve a house that doesn’t have any parking. She urged the Board to assume a role of leadership and to secure the tools necessary to prohibit the degeneration of the community.

The property owner at 2725 Ralston Avenue (Cahen) spoke saying that his home “straddles” two of the new proposed homes. He stated that he has lived in his home for 23 years. He feels that now they are faced with huge monstrous homes which could affect all of Hillsborough. He believes that these houses look like hotels, and that they are too large for the neighborhood. He believes that their proximity allows for setbacks that are too close to each other. He did not think that there would ever be enough landscaping to sufficiently screen these houses, none of which are compatible with the neighborhood.

The property owner at 2705 Ralston Avenue (Glick) spoke, urging that the ADRB look at all three of the lots, especially in relation to one of the Guidelines which asks if this project relates to the site.

The property owner at 2835 Ralston Avenue (Kaiser) spoke saying that the Negative Declaration must be applied as well as the Guidelines. He believed that a wholesale redesign was required urging that only single-story homes are constructed in the size range of 4,500 to 5,000 square feet.

The public hearing was then closed. Boardmember Werbe said that, in evaluating this proposal, she was going to assume that the other two lots have been built. She believes that this house is too large for the lot, and that it doesn’t fit within the context of the neighborhood. Although she believed the house was well designed, she was not able to approve it at this location.

Boardmember Heyman said that this site is a “gateway” to Hillsborough. He agrees with many of the issues that have been expressed by the neighbors, saying that he didn’t feel comfortable voting in support of this project. Although he had no problem with the design, he believed that for this location the house was too large, too bulky, and represented too much mass. He pointed out that the materials and the landscape plan were exceptional. He also said that he did not believe that the ADRB could approve one house without evaluating it with the other two proposals. He spoke with some concern about school children walking safely on Chateau and believed that a parking strip should be required along that frontage. In conclusion, he could not support this application.

Boardmember Benoit stated that everyone on the ADRB has done research on this issue, and that it is very difficult for them to analyze these three houses as separate applications. She commended the applicant for improving this design from when the Board had originally reviewed it, saying that he had responded positively to many of the ADRB’s comments. She believed, however, that the house was still too massive to be constructed across the street from Ranch-style houses which are on a downhill slope. She also did not believe that the vineyards were a good idea or an appropriate replacement for the “woods” that had been lost on this site. She also did not believe that Olive trees were a good choice for screening. She supported what she believed was a concept for a semi-circular driveway as a good way to get vehicles off the street. She also expressed concern for school children walking on Chateau, suggesting that a pedestrian path, which could be worked out in conjunction with the school, might be a good idea. In conclusion, she believed that this house represented too much bulk and did not fit into the neighborhood.

Chairman Reisman stated that he was more sympathetic than the others towards the design. He believed that the design was quite lovely. He agreed that the concept of the vineyard seemed to be a strange one. He stated that he did not have any problems with the design of the house. He clarified that the semicircular element was a walkway rather than a driveway. He appreciated the fact that the volumes had been brought down with the one-story elements to the front and that, short of going totally to a one-story house, he believed that the applicant had done everything possible to minimize the visual impacts of the home.

Boardmember Benoit reiterated that she thought that the architecture was lovely, but that it needed to be scaled down. She believed that it represented an abrupt affront, especially from the school, the southerly side, and the homes to the south.

Chairman Reisman stated that one of the things that he liked about the three house designs at this location was the diversity.

With the concurrence of the applicant, a motion (Werbe/Benoit) to continue this item to the meeting of February 7, 2005 to allow for design changes passed 4-0-1. (Jewett abstained.)

#### *Continued Items*

- 6. 2778 Ralston Avenue – White** (Hunt Hale Jones Architects/Michael Callan, Landscape Architect)  
New house and landscape plan including tree removal, fencing and gates along the street, and a new driveway (12% FAR)

The applicant urged the Board to consider these three houses as separate applications, pointing out that there are three separate owners, and that each application deserves to be reviewed and considered on its own merits in accordance with the Guidelines, just as every other new house in Hillsborough. He pointed out that issues of pedestrian safety mitigation measures were addressed in the public improvement plans for the subdivision and that they are not relevant to the ADRB's review of the project at this point. He also pointed out that the mitigation measures in the Negative Declaration did not include limiting the size of the houses. The issues that are part of the mitigation measures, including lighting, tree replacement and limiting impervious surfaces have been addressed in the design of this home.

The property owner at 2835 Ralston Avenue (Kaiser) spoke saying that the Negative Declaration did specify the sizes of the house. He also questioned the fact that the applicant claimed that the average slope was 19.3%, and the City Engineer said that it was greater. He urged the ADRB to require that the plans are returned for revisions. Mr. Kaiser specifically mentioned Mitigation Measure #12 related to approval of the driveway location. He does not believe that the driveway at this location is sufficiently safe.

The property owner at 2855 Ralston Avenue (Meyer) spoke saying that she supported the revision which shows that the house has been rotated from the previous application, but she further pointed out that this change required the removal of additional trees. She said that she believed that the issue of bulk had not been mitigated, and that the driveway is a bad design. She pointed out that, although the applicants report that the house has been lowered in two places, the roof height is the same. She did not believe siting the house at the apex of this property was a good design decision. She believed that this was a very large house on a small piece of land, especially because most of this lot is not developable.

The property owner at 100 Robin Road (Waterman) spoke, saying that he had the same remarks as with the previous application. He suggested that if this was the only house on all three of the properties, it might be successful. He had concerns about the rotation of the site plan which resulted in additional tree loss. He asked the ADRB to address the issue of the two-acre lot size, the safety issues, and to evaluate this home within the context of the other two.

Property owner at 2780 Ralston (Mangano) spoke saying that he was concerned about the two-acre zoning, the bulk, the fact that the roofline had not been altered, and that this project required an exemption for the driveway. He also stated that he is concerned that most of the trees have been removed from the site.

The neighbor at 2715 Ralston (Stein) spoke saying that he had concerns about the driveway safety, indicating that he believed there was a very short line of sight. He pointed out that, although the rotation of the house makes the design work better, additional trees are lost. He stated that without the rotation, two of the houses appear to be too close together.

The public hearing was then closed. Boardmember Benoit said that it was difficult to place three houses on these three properties. She said that it is unfortunate that the City Council doesn't set building pads on subdivisions. She believes that the ADRB should review all subdivision applications to provide input to the City Council on siting. She stated that she had given positive comments on this house design during the Preliminary Review, but in gleaning additional information from the constituency and after doing some soul searching, she can no longer support the project. She pointed out that this is the highest point on the site and the closest to the ridge; she believes this to be the least successful of the three houses. She did not believe that the project was integrated into the topography, and that it did not conform to page 23 of the Design Guidelines. She further stated that she believed that the massing was wrong. One of her earlier comments was that the house on this property needed to be stepped to the site (she noted that she believed that the application at 2700 Ralston Avenue did this the best of the three). She believes this house is a big rectangle and does not believe that this design is consistent with page 21 of the Design Guidelines. She stated that she believes wood fencing along Chateau is not an appropriate look – that the landscaping at that location should be further embellished. In conclusion, due to the massing and ridgeline issues, she could not support the project.

Boardmember Werbe stated that the ADRB is always asked to look at projects within the context of the neighborhood. She believed that this was a lovely well-designed house; and she also believed that the applicant has tried to answer the concerns of the ADRB. She said that if this house was located elsewhere, she would be happy to support this application, but at this location, she could not.

Boardmember Heyman said that he concurred with the previous comments; and making comments on only one house is irresponsible. For the record, he stated that he had been absent on September 20, 2004, but he believed that he was sufficiently informed to be eligible to vote on this project. He complimented the applicant for complying with many of the ADRB's stated concerns. However, he did not believe that the issues of size, mass and bulk had been adequately addressed. He further reiterated the support for the quality of the design of this house, but he had to agree with some of the concerns expressed by the neighbors, saying that this site is like a "raised stage."

Chairman Reisman stated that he was more supportive of this revised application than his fellow Boardmembers. He acknowledged the revisions that the applicant had made to address the direction which had been provided by the ADRB and the positive comments on the design which had been

made. He supports the application based on the aesthetics, which is the ADRB's responsibility, versus other aspects of the project which were the subject of the City Council's action on the subdivision application, He also asked the applicant if he wanted to provide any additional information.

The applicant explained the difference between the slope density calculations in the Municipal Code and the slope of the development site. The applicant asked the ADRB for a vote on the application.

A motion (Werbe/Benoit) to deny the project, but continue to January 3, 2005 for the adoption of findings of denial, including issues of inappropriate massing, relationship to adjacent homes and incompatibility with the neighborhood, passed 3-1-1. (Chairman Reisman dissented; Boardmember Jewett abstained.)

**7. 2768 Ralston Avenue – Dwyer (Chu Design/Michael Callan, Landscape Architect)**

New house and landscape plan including a swimming pool, rear yard fencing along the street, and a new driveway (22% FAR)

The applicant pointed out that his lot was the closest of the three lots to a standard rectangular lot. He reviewed that some of the things he had done were to lower the height by 1 2/3 feet and add landscaping. He pointed out that the size of his house was 5,800 square feet of living space. He indicated that providing a parking area on Chateau was not a good idea, from a safety standpoint.

The neighbor at 2715 Ralston Avenue (Stein) spoke saying that many of his previous comments applied to this application. He didn't believe that this design showed a mass that was broken up as well as 2700 Ralston. He said that its proximity to the other houses is interesting, but that the siting of the house so close to Ralston Avenue is a problem. He pointed out that the applicant's rendering was unclear in regard to what the vantage point was. He said it would be important to have realistic renderings.

Property owner at 2855 Ralston Avenue (Meyer) spoke saying, in her opinion, this was the most untenable of the three designs because it faces squarely onto Ralston Avenue with minimum setbacks and the garage is within the front façade. She believed that the site has limited parking and suggested that it should be pushed more towards Chateau. She believed that this design represented a rectangular mass, and that it needed to be setback so there is not such a massive structure "looming" over the street.

The property owner at 2780 Ralston Avenue (Mangano) concurred saying that; once again, he believed that this design was not compliant with the neighborhood, and that it would change the entire neighborhood context.

Mrs. Johnson at 37 New Place Road spoke saying that she wanted to comment on Boardmember Werbe's comments about looking at other houses. She also asked the Board to consider the difficulty of planting very large trees on hills due to problems with the use of a crane.

Mrs. Waterman, 100 Robin Road, spoke thanking staff for acknowledging that the Council Subcommittee would be addressing the 2-acre minimum lot issue, and thanking the ADRB for its excellent work for developing the Design Guidelines. She said that she supported all of the comments that had been previously been made, especially regarding the massiveness and the way in which this house "looms" over the street, especially in relationship to the neighboring the houses across Ralston Avenue.

Mrs. Cahen, 2725 Ralston Avenue, stated that her home faces this house. She likes the floor plan and the elevations. However, especially in relation to the adjacent house, this has the appearance of two houses or a college campus, and it does not look like a residential neighborhood.

Chairman Reisman asked her to clarify if she was talking about the relationship with this house and the proposal at 2700 Ralston Avenue, and she clarified that she was.

The public hearing was then closed. Chairman Reisman said that he was not sure how the ADRB could look at this home without looking at the designs of the other two houses. He pointed out that only one wing of this house comes out towards Ralston Avenue. He stated, however, that it was pushing at the site setbacks. He believed, however, that on its own design merits, this house was very nice.

Boardmember Heyman pointed out for the record that, although he had been absent on October 4, 2004, he had fully studied the plans in the file and believed he was eligible to vote on the application. He commended the applicant for complying with many of the ADRB's comments. He complimented the architectural design, saying that he particularly liked the materials in the landscape plan. But, he did not believe that the mass or the bulk was appropriate for this site.

Boardmember Benoit agreed. She wanted to commend the applicant for setting the house back 65 feet, but she said that this reminds her of another ADRB application where a garage had originally been placed in front of the home, and the applicant was able to redesign the project to relocate the garage. She asked the applicant to try resiting the garage to the rear, and stepping the house, which may result in it sprawling more. She believed that the house was too large and massive, and that the siting of the house was too high.

Boardmember Werbe said that the design of this house had improved greatly from when the Board had originally seen it; however, she believed that it was still too big for the context of the neighborhood. With the concurrence of the applicant, a motion (Benoit/Werbe) to continue the application to the February 7, 2005 meeting to allow for design changes passed 4-0-1. (Jewett abstained.)

## **OTHER ITEMS**

### **Preliminary Review:**

*New Houses:* 150 Bella Vista Drive (Teardown)  
19 Mountain Wood Court  
2961 Churchill Drive (Substantial Remodel/Teardown)  
225 Roblar Avenue (Teardown)

Maureen Morton, AICP  
City Planner