

TOWN OF HILLSBOROUGH

SAN MATEO COUNTY

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1600 Floribunda Avenue
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Architecture and Design Review Board Minutes

August 21, 2006

Town Hall, 1600 Floribunda Avenue - Community Room

CALL TO ORDER - 4:00 p.m.

Boardmembers Present - Walter Heyman, Chairman; Ward Carey, Mark Heine, George Jewett, Jennifer Werbe and Charlie Barnett, Alternate member

Staff Present - Maureen Morton, Gina Tynan and John Mullins

Others Present – Councilman/Commissioner John Fannon

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES - A motion (Werbe/Carey) to approve the July 17, 2006 minutes passed 5-0. (Alternate member Barnett voted in lieu of Boardmember Jewett, who had been absent)

WRITTEN/ORAL COMMUNICATIONS – none

PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS

Consent Calendar:

Additions/Remodels

1. **660 El Cerrito Avenue** – Tu (Darosa & Associates)
Ground floor addition of approximately 294 sq. ft. and new second floor of approximately 816 sq. ft. (8.9% FAR) – Request to continue off- calendar

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

Discussion Items:

Additions/Remodels

2. **20 Pear Court** – Collins (Carmel Design)
Revisions to previously-approved plans to include exterior changes and additional floor area of approximately 479 sq. ft. at the second floor, approximately 105 sq. ft. and the ground floor and approximately 181 sq. ft. at the basement level (16.3% FAR)

The applicant, Mr. Collins, spoke of the history of his project indicating that his goal was to add two bedrooms and a bathroom upstairs. He explained that his original designer had submitted plans without his approval and, upon initiating construction, the family realized that they needed to change the floor plan. He further explained that the additions that he sought were not visible

from the street.

Chairman Heyman said that he believed that at the July 17th ADRB meeting the Board gave the applicant specific direction that the house, at this size, was already out of character with the neighborhood, and that additional square footage would not be acceptable. The applicant replied that the addition could not be seen and he believed that the massing issues had been adequately addressed.

A neighbor at 721 Jacaranda Circle (Mr. Beckheyer) spoke saying that he wanted to encourage the Board not to allow any additional increase in size. He clarified that he believed that the proposed addition would be visible from his yard.

Boardmember Heine stated that the applicant had addressed some of the Board's comments on the architectural detailing. He asked about the fireplace. He reiterated that it was the ADRB's understanding that they would not be allowing additional square footage.

Boardmember Jewett reported that, although he was absent at the July 17th ADRB meeting, he had reviewed the plans and the meeting minutes and believed that he was sufficiently informed to act on this application. He pointed out that the original design was at the very limit of what he believed this lot could handle. He supported the fact that architectural changes on today's plans better reflected what was originally proposed, which had been a better over-all design.

Boardmember Werbe said that she concurred that this house is currently a large, enormous structure. She was happy that the applicant had addressed some of the architectural detailing issues that were brought up by the ADRB at the last meeting, but she was not able to support any additional size for this home at this location. Boardmember Carey and Alternate Boardmember Barnett agreed.

The applicant indicated that he believe that his neighbor was in error – that this addition could not be seen from the neighbor's property.

Chairman Heyman said the location of this house is a cul-de-sac with significantly understated homes. He said that the ADRB stated at the previous meeting that it believes that the house is already at the maximum size that can reasonably be accommodated on this site. Chairman Heyman also underscored the point that he was concerned about any changes to this project that would further delay the never-ending process of the construction at this site.

A motion (Werbe/Carey) to approve the exterior architectural changes to the house, but to not approve any additional square footage beyond what had been originally approved passed 5-0.

3. **1502 Black Mountain Road** – Bhanot/Bhargava (Stewart Associates)
Second floor addition of approximately 1,046 sq. ft., ground-floor addition of approximately 60 sq. ft. and Second Unit (24.8% FAR)

Chairman Heyman pointed out that this project was at the maximum allowable FAR. The project architect explained that he had added some elements to break up the mass and had added windows to the bedroom at the front of the house. He said that he had also improved the delineation of the trims on the plans.

Boardmember Jewett said that, although he had missed the July 17th ADRB meeting, he had reviewed the plans and the meeting minutes and felt sufficiently informed to participate on this matter. He said that he thought the plans would benefit from the existing and proposed

elevations on the same sheet. He pointed out that this was not a substantial addition, and that it was in character with the existing house. He said that the proposed improvements were positive and that he generally would be supportive of the project.

Boardmember Werbe said that she thought it was a real shame when someone has such a beautiful site and they are only planning a larger, yet still very dated, home for it. She thought the massing was acceptable, although it was at the very high range of the allowable FAR. She felt that the additional expense that would be required to update this house to a style that makes more sense for the location would not be that significant. She pointed out that a Ranch Style, by definition, cannot be two stories. She stated that the result of attempting to make a two-story Ranch Style house is just resulting in a larger house with a dated architectural style.

Boardmember Carey said that he believed that the applicant had done the best that he could with what he had to work with and said that he would be willing to support the project. Alternate Boardmember Barnett asked about the windows and the skylight to which the architect responded that the skylight would be removed. Alternate Barnett said that he agreed more with Boardmember Werbe. In conclusion, he did not think that it was a great project, but he agreed that the addition was consistent with the rest of the house.

Boardmember Heine said that he also agreed that this was improved project, but it wasn't remarkable and he was not sure that it met the higher standard expected for a house at this FAR. He believed that a change to the architectural style would be beneficial, but the project was probably right at the limit as to what he could support.

Chairman Heyman said that he did not agree. He said that another Boardmember had said at the last meeting that his is probably the "least creative addition from this very creative architect". He believes that this is still true. He does not think that the changes made to the project adequately addressed the lack of integration of the addition. He stated that an expansion of the house by approximately 27%, when the outcome is so unattractive, is just not consistent with the Design Guidelines and not acceptable. He also told the architect that future plans needed to have the existing and proposed elevations on the same sheet.

A motion (Carey/Jewett) to approve the project passed 3-2 (Werbe and Heyman dissented).

4. **225 Roblar Avenue** – Wasson (Stewart Associates)

Garage replacement and ground-floor additions of approximately 956 sq. ft. (15.8% FAR)

Boardmember Werbe said that she has no problems with this design. She believed, however, that the landscape plan should address the driveway, the generators and the concrete pad. Boardmember Carey agreed, saying that this was a simple, cut-and-dry project and he again asked this architect to provide existing and proposed elevations on the same sheet of this plans.

Alternate Boardmember Barnett said that the materials were very positive, and it was overall a very nice upgrade. Boardmembers Heine and Jewett agreed, saying that they had no additional comments.

Chairman Heyman said that the landscape plan should show the screening, especially on the front and left side of the project.

A motion (Werbe/Carey) to approve the project, subject to the landscape plan addressing the issues as summarized by the ADRB, passed 5-0.

5. **310 Bridge Road – Lynde (John Matthews Architects)**

Partial demolition and new second-story of approximately 931 sq. ft. and ground-floor additions of approximately 114 sq. ft. (24.9% FAR)

Boardmember Carey said that he had liked what this applicant had done, and it was a great start. He liked that the character of the house would be retained. He asked if the bricks would be whitewashed to blend in better with the existing. Overall, he was supportive, saying that this addition fits in well.

Alternate Boardmember Barnett said that in general he believed that this addition was well integrated with the house. He asked about the windows and commented on the complexity of the roof plan. He pointed out that this project was pushing the maximum allowable FAR; as a result, he would like the windows to be custom to match the existing windows.

Boardmember Heine said that he basically liked the massing. He did not, however, support the way in which the garage and parking scheme worked. He said that it didn't work very well, especially spaces #3 and #4. He also thought the entry area could use some additional detailing – that it is less detailed than the rest of the house. He talked about the landscape comment that had been provided by staff for the 5'-wide landscape strip adjacent to driveways. He concluded by saying that his major concern is the functionality of the garage and parking spaces.

Boardmember Jewett said that he was not supportive of this addition. He did not believe that it integrated well with the existing house. He felt that it lacked a rationale and cohesiveness. He stated that, although the materials and details matched, overall the addition was not well integrated.

Boardmember Werbe said that this was one of the “more special” streets in Hillsborough. She agreed that the parking solution appeared to be very “forced” and it should be readdressed. She echoed the concerns about the entry element, saying that it was almost invisible on this house. She said that there were some beautiful elements to the house, and this neighborhood represented a very understated sophistication. She was also concerned about the windows, saying that the type that the architect explained did not sound sufficiently customized to be placed on a house of this nature.

Chairman Heyman reiterated the issues that had been mentioned, including the parking, the garage space and the windows. He said that he was possibly more supportive of the project than the others, saying that he thought it was tasteful, but he agreed that some aspects of it were quite “squeezed”. He mentioned the necessity for landscaping to screen the second floor and the property line. He also believed that the pool equipment should be removed from the setback area.

The project architect indicated that Planning staff had told him that the existing driveway was sufficient. He pointed out that the garage also meets the Town's standards. He said that they had given a great deal of study to the geometrics of the garage and the parking. He added that the entry element is existing, and that there are no changes proposed.

Boardmember Werbe clarified that, even though the entry is existing, with the second story addition there is a different appearance to the entry and she believes that it should be restudied.

A motion (Heine/Carey) to approve the project subject to the applicant addressing the issues of the pool equipment in the setback, restudying the driveway and parking issues, and using

custom wood windows to match the existing, unless staff is sufficiently secure that the proposed windows would be suitable for the project, passed 4-1 (Jewett dissented).

6. **2145 Geri Lane** – Lager (Suarez-Kuehne Architecture)
Remodel, including increased roof height and ground floor additions of approximately 997 sq. ft. (24.9% FAR)

The project architect explained that a two-story addition was considered, but abandoned in order to retain the Ranch Style of the house. He further pointed out that five of the neighbors had submitted letters of support for this project.

Alternate Boardmember Barnett said that this project was certainly an improvement over what is currently there. He believed that this also was one of the nicest streets in Hillsborough. He had some concerns that the house appeared to be “too sterile”, saying that he thought it needed some additional architectural character. He was concerned, for example, with the way in which the roofline bumped up over the garage. He stated that on this application he again believed that windows would be important. He was opposed to the skylight and would like a more textural roof material to be used.

Boardmember Heine said that he liked the improvement and the fact that the applicant had secured neighbors’ support. He thought that tree protection was an important issue. He also asked about the roof, to which the architect responded it was a synthetic slate product to match the existing. Boardmember Heine also opposed the skylight and supported the possibility of considering an alternate roof material.

Boardmember Jewett said that he thought that this project represented good choices and that it represented good design details. He complimented the applicant for the improvement over the current situation.

Boardmembers Werbe and Carey said that a landscape plan would be very important for this project. They also oppose the skylight and would like a different roof material. They were extremely pleased with the neighbors’ support.

Chairman Heyman asked about the landscape plan because he believed that the existing landscaping was immaculate and he was not sure that a landscape plan would be necessary. He also opposed the skylight, which he said would be visible from the street.

A motion (Jewett/Werbe) to approve the project, subject to (1) removing the skylight and (2) future administrative approval of a landscape plan passed 5-0.

7. **70 Tobin Clark Drive** – Batliwalla (Young & Borlik Architects/Mar Young, Landscape Architect)
Revisions to previously-approved remodel, additions, new second unit and associated landscape plan (24.9% FAR)

Boardmember Heine said that he remembered when this project first came before the Board, and he didn’t have any problems with the changes. He asked about the mahogany doors, windows and lattice. The architect responded that the proposal for the lattice had not changed; however, the property owner indicated that their research revealed difficulties with securing the mahogany windows and an alternative would be to go with clad windows. Boardmember Heine said that the mahogany package was a real selling point to him on this project. He stated that he would hate to see that lost. He also reiterated his previous concern about the handrail detail. Overall, he said he supported the project, especially with the use of the mahogany.

Boardmember Jewett said that he was supportive of this project initially; that it had a great feel, especially with the wonderful materials. He encouraged further study on securing mahogany windows. He believed that the proposed changes were appropriate. Boardmember Werbe agreed, saying that it would be a very sad compromise to use clad windows on this project.

Boardmember Carey and Alternate Boardmember Barnett agreed that the use of mahogany is what is what makes the design of this house successful.

Chairman Heyman concluded that the proposed changes to the project did not add any unreasonable impact, so he could support them. He also agreed how important the use of mahogany would be to this design.

A motion (Heine/Werbe) to approve the project, subject to the use of the mahogany doors and windows, passed 5-0.

New Houses

8. **830 Black Mountain Road** – Francis (Essalat Architects)

Teardown and new house of approximately 5,287 sq. ft. and associated tree removal (22.7% FAR)

Boardmember Jewett said that he supported the integration of the materials and the clean design of this project. He really appreciated the architectural model that had been provided. He believed that this was an elegant project.

Boardmember Werbe said that, even though this project technically was not consistent with the Design Guidelines, she believed that this design was so outstanding that it deserved to be built. She said that this project definitely works at this location and is overall very special and positive.

Boardmember Carey said that he is also in favor of this house. He said he asked himself whether or not it belonged on this street and pointed out that on many streets there is a mix of architectural styles that works well. He asked about the architectural concrete, saying that he felt that it needed to be softer, rather than industrial, in nature. He suggested that the landscape plan should probably offer some additional screening as the street.

Alternate Boardmember Barnett agreed that this was a beautiful project and a very good job. Boardmember Heine agreed, saying that he felt that a formal landscape application would be important.

Chairman Heyman said that he thought that this was a stunning project, exceptional in detail and materials, but the he looks at the context of this neighborhood, which is very traditional in style, and since this house is ultramodern in design, he did not believe it fit in with the neighborhood. He felt that this house was not consistent with the Design Guidelines; therefore, he could not support the project. He agreed that it was important that a landscape plan was submitted, especially with regard to the six trees to be removed.

A motion (Werbe/Carey) to approve the project, with the clarification that no tree removal would occur until the landscape plan was approved by the ADRB, passed 4-1 (Heyman dissented).

9. **2700 Ralston Avenue** – Miller (TRG Architects/Michael Callan, Landscape Architect)
New house of approximately 5,564 sq. ft. and associated landscape plan including new driveway and fencing along the street (16.9% FAR)

Boardmember Jewett stepped down due to a possible conflict of interest and Alternate Barnett served as a full voting member for this item.

The applicant made a presentation of the revised project, including a computer rendering showing the project from various vantage points. Chairman Heyman thanked the applicant for the presentation. The applicant explained that he had met with the neighbors and downsized his project by 1,100 sq. ft., increased the landscaping and addressed the previous concerns which had been expressed by the neighbors.

Mrs. Meyer, 2855 Ralston Avenue, spoke saying that the applicant had met with the neighbors and made a number of changes to the project including reducing the size, increasing the setback from Ralston Avenue, and by having only a partial (rather than full) second story and that the second story is located closer to Chateau Drive. However, she stated that she opposed any two-story element. She explained that she thought that Mr. Dwyer was required to reduce his house to a one-story house and that this house would be large next to Mr. Dwyer's house. She said that although she knew these following issues were not part of the ADRB's purview, she wanted to raise them at the meeting: (1) what is the status of the undergrounding of the PG&E power lines? and (2) whether or not a parking strip would be required on this property and if so, could it possibly be removed from the property across the street? She concluded by saying that she appreciated the fact that the landscape plan included large evergreen trees at the corner, although she probably would have been happier with a more diverse growth, she is happy that the corner will be so lushly planted.

Chairman Heyman clarified that the two questions raised were not within the ADRB's purview, but that they could be directed to the City Engineer.

A neighbor from across the street, Patty Hsiu Stein, said that this project represented good news and bad news. The good news was that the applicant had done a great job of meeting with the neighbors and revising the plans and had made a really good effort to compromise. She said that she wanted to mention the parking strip because the neighborhood would rather have the parking strip in front of this property rather than in front of her property. She said that she spoke with a sense of resignation because she believed that this project would probably get approved, and it's too bad that it's a two-story house. She wishes that the Town would have followed the Mitigated Negative Declaration specifying the house sizes. She reiterated that Mr. Miller had done a really nice job working with the neighbors; however, she believed that this three-lot subdivision should have only one house on one lot, rather than one house on each of the three lots. She believes that the Town should pay better attention to the Design Guidelines.

Mrs. Dyer at 3000 Ralston Avenue spoke, saying that she was very disappointed to see a large two-story house. She said that the applicant apparently had meetings to which she had not been invited. She said she looks down from her house and doesn't like what she sees. She believes that the three houses will be an eyesore, and that the neighborhood will have to live with these speculative houses day and night. She isn't pleased because she believes these are large homes on small lots. She has lived here for 42 years and enjoyed the serenity of the neighborhood. She urged the Board to require single-story homes.

Mr. Kaiser at 2835 Ralston Avenue spoke and thanked the applicant, Mr. Miller, for being so

gracious, forthcoming and forthright. He believed, however, that the roofline was still too high for this prominent location and urged the ADRB not to approve this project.

Boardmember Werbe said that she thought this was a particularly beautiful house and that it offered a great solution to the neighborhood and the site. She said that it was especially important because she had probably been the biggest critic on the ADRB of the prior application. She believes that, when built, this house will look as though it has been there forever. She also complimented the beautiful landscape plan.

Boardmember Carey said that he agreed with Boardmember Werbe. He said that this had been a very difficult issue and the ADRB had been somewhat caught between the applicant and the neighbors. He believed, however, that this solution was very well done, and done in a way that it will end up fading into what is a very positive landscape plan. He assured the audience that he is very familiar with this site and he does not believe in any way that this project will be an eyesore.

Boardmember Heine agreed, saying that this was a big improvement over the previous application. He stated that this was an excellent architectural style for this site. He said that, even though he had probably been one of the more supportive ADRB members of the prior application, he believed that this product was superlative. Even though he did not have some of the history of the subdivision, he knew the area very well and thought that the architect and applicant had done a very good job. His only concern was that the property-line fencing seemed to be too dominating in the architect's three-dimensional modeling. He believed, however, that with the landscape screening, probably in less than five years, the fencing and the house will not be prominent.

Chairman Heyman concluded by saying that he had "hammered" the previous design as much as he loves this current application. He believes that the materials are excellent, the size is acceptable and he appreciates the fact that the two-story element has been set away from Ralston Avenue. He said that the applicant is to be complimented on this strikingly beautiful design. He also believes that the landscape plan is wonderful. The Chairman thanked the neighbors for their input, saying that with their input the project had improved.

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

OTHER ITEMS

Preliminary Review; New Houses:

1840 Black Mountain Road (Teardown) – not reviewed because the owner was not present
600 W. Santa Inez (Teardown), 300 Pinehill Road (Teardown), 65 Bridge Road (Teardown)
[Boardmember Carey left the meeting at this point]
1125 Lakeview Drive (Teardown)

ADJOURNMENT

Maureen K. Morton, AICP
City Planner