

**MINUTES
REGULAR PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
JANUARY 26, 2016
CORTE MADERA COMMUNITY CENTER
CORTE MADERA**

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chair Peter Chase
Vice-Chair Phyllis Metcalfe
Commissioner Dan McCadden
Commissioner Tom McHugh
Commissioner Nicolo Caldera

STAFF PRESENT: Adam Wolff, Planning Director
Phil Boyle, Senior Planner
Doug Bush, Assistant Planner
Joanne O’Hehir, Minutes Secretary

1. OPENING:

- A. Call to Order** – The meeting was called to order at 7:35 p.m.
- B. Pledge of Allegiance** – Chair Chase led in the Pledge of Allegiance.
- C. Roll Call** – All the commissioners were present.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

3. CONSENT CALENDAR – None

4. CONTINUED HEARING ITEMS – None

5. NEW HEARINGS

- A. 422 REDWOOD AVENUE:** Public hearing to consider permit amendment application 16-001 to amend a previously-approved design review application allowing for modifications to the approved exterior materials and colors, lighting fixtures, window sizes, and decorative elements. (Planning Director Wolff)

Planning Director Wolff presented the staff report. Mr. Wolff discussed the previous approval of the project in October of 2014, when the Applicant had proposed a second story enlargement of an existing home. Mr. Wolff confirmed the project was approved but the Applicant has since reconsidered the design and is proposing exterior changes. He discussed the modifications to the colors and materials, a change in size to some of the windows, and decorative elements

and lighting. Mr. Wolff confirmed that no changes are proposed to the original variance.

Mr. Wolff discussed the proposed changes to the windows on the north façade, which he said improve privacy. He said the changes are compatible with the neighboring properties and they provide contrast to the log-cabin style structure. However, he suggested the commissioners study the exterior lighting to determine the level of glare. Mr. Wolff noted that there is a materials board and he discussed the findings that are specific to the colors. He noted that a resolution has been provided recommending project approval.

Joe Harrington, Applicant, noted that the main changes are to the siding materials with minor amendments to window sizes and lighting. He said they believe the design fits more naturally with the existing structure.

Mr. Wolff noted that the Christmas Tree Hilldwellers Association (CTHA) supports the changes.

Vice-Chair Metcalfe and Mr. Harrington discussed lighting. Mr. Harrington said they would ensure there would be no glare on to neighboring properties, and that they would attach a dome and diffuser to the front door light.

Chair Chase discussed the light above the deck with Mr. Harrington, who said the light should be covered by a palm tree at the front of the property. Chair Chase discussed his concerns that lights located towards the top of a dwelling emit too much light and should be shielded. He commented on the difference in appearance by using board and batten, rather than shingle, and he discussed the window changes with Mr. Harrington.

Chair Chase opened and then closed the public comment period when no-one came forward to speak.

Vice-Chair Metcalfe said she likes the new design but that she is concerned about the exterior lighting. Vice-Chair Metcalfe also noted a minor correction in the Resolution that was amended.

Commissioner Caldera said the design is elegant and that he supports the project.

Commissioner McCadden and Mr. Harrington discussed a detail on the trellis. They also discussed the window changes, which Commissioner McCadden said would eliminate natural light. Mr. Harrison replied that the window changes would provide more kitchen cupboard space and eliminate a privacy issue with a bedroom window.

MOTION: Motioned by Commissioner McHugh, seconded by Vice-Chair Metcalfe, to adopt Resolution No. 16-004 to approve permit amendment application 16-001 to amend a previously-approved design review application allowing for modifications to the approved exterior materials and colors, lighting fixtures, window sizes, and decorative elements at 422 Redwood Avenue.

AYES: Caldera, Chase, McCadden, McHugh, Metcalfe

Mr. Wolff read the appeal rights.

B. 136 SUMMIT DRIVE: Design Review Application No. 15-023 for the proposed addition of a third story and additions to the existing lower and main stories of the existing two-story single family home. (Senior Planner Phil Boyle).

Senior Planner Boyle presented the staff report. Mr. Boyle discussed the design review request for an addition to the home, which he noted is located near the top of the Christmas Tree Hill Area. He discussed the site, which he noted is steep, and the property abuts the roadway, which he discussed in relation to the flexible setback guidelines that relate to Christmas Tree Hill.

Mr. Boyle noted that the dwelling is set 10 feet from the lower part of Summit Drive and 15 feet from the upper part of Summit Drive. He explained that the proposed addition would be 12 feet from the lower part and 15 feet from the upper part of Summit Drive. Mr. Boyle discussed the code section relating to Christmas Tree Hill that recognizes the unique conditions of the area that would render adherence to the setbacks an undesirable constraint for property owners. Mr. Boyle explained that the encroachments are allowed as long as they do not significantly affect the sightlines for roads or views from neighboring properties.

Mr. Boyle noted that many letters of support for the project have been received and no objections.

Mr. Boyle discussed the location of the proposed addition and noted that the third story element consists of a master suite and bedroom, with a staircase to provide access to all three levels. He discussed the FAR, confirming that the existing FAR is 33% and will increase to 34.7% with the proposed addition. Mr. Boyle noted that the maximum allowed is 35% and that the stairway element increases the space by just 100 sq. ft.

Mr. Boyle discussed the elevations and he noted that a materials board is available. He said the CTHA have reviewed the plans and submitted comments relating to the variety of exterior materials and parking. Mr. Boyle confirmed the proposed project will meet the parking requirements. He used slides of other

dwelling in the vicinity to provide comparisons to the proposed project, and he noted that that the applicant has reviewed the plans with his neighbors. Mr. Boyle said that seven property owners have submitted letters of support.

Mr. Boyle discussed the northern elevation and stairway and suggested that the commissioners may wish to discuss the elevation with the applicant in more detail. He said that staff believes the project is consistent with most of the Christmas Tree Hill standards and overlay district, in addition to the design review guidelines. However, Mr. Boyle noted that the dwelling will result in a significantly larger home, which he discussed. He also discussed a visibility issue with the north-east elevation, and made recommendations to the commissioners regarding the project discussions. He said the commissioners must also determine if the guidelines and findings are met, in addition to the Zoning Ordinance. Mr. Boyle said that a resolution has been provided if findings can be made and the project approved.

Chris Dorman, Project Architect, Dorman Associates, discussed the project and said they have tried to lessen the mass as much as possible. He discussed the design of the lower right hand corner and said that the unique location masks the third story so that it appears as if it the structure consists of two stories. Mr. Dorman discussed the reasons they have designed the master suit on top, rather than below, and for the location of the stairway, which relates to impact.

Mr. Dorman explained that they have tried to emulate a cottage-style. He discussed the entryway and the second story master suite, which he noted would allow the views from that side of the house to be utilized. Mr. Dorman said they would modify the color selection in response to comments submitted by CTHA.

Commissioner McHugh discussed his concern regarding the flexibility of the setbacks in relation to the proximity of the stairwell on the northern edge to the road. He said the addition appears to be hanging over the road. Mr. Boyle noted that the code relating to setback flexibility was created exclusively for CTH due to the size of the roads, the unusual lots and the original buildings being situated close to the roads. Mr. Boyle noted that the property line of this property is in the middle of the road.

Commissioner Caldera complemented the applicant on their well-documented, easily understood drawings.

Commissioner McCadden and Mr. Boyle discussed measurement of the setbacks from the road. Commissioner McCadden noted that the project would exacerbate the setback encroachment, and Mr. Boyle explained that the overhang is not included in the calculations to determine distance from a setback. Mr. Boyle clarified the position of the story poles, which he noted generally depict the corners and ridges of a building.

Commissioner McCadden and Mr. Dorman discussed pier construction in relation to slope stability. In response to Commissioner McCadden, Mr. Boyle discussed the design guidelines that encourage the longest roofline and longest ridgeline to be designed parallel to a slope. Mr. Boyle said the staff report notes as a point of interest that the roofline is perpendicular to the natural slope, not parallel.

Chair Chase and Mr. Dorman discussed how the piers would be tied together and other aspects of construction. Chair Chase noted that it is not within their purview to comment on a contractor's abilities.

In response to Commissioner McCadden, Mr. Dorman said they would undertake construction during the dry season.

Chair Chase and Mr. Dorman discussed the possibility of tree planting to provide screening, and Mr. Boyle noted that a landscaping plan has not been provided. Chair Chase discussed his concern that the project would impact a neighbor's morning sunlight and he commented on the size of the addition.

Vice-Chair Metcalfe discussed her concern that a retaining wall should be constructed for safety purposes. Mr. Wolff brought attention to a condition that relates to earthwork being allowed during the dry season, only, and the requirements of the Public Works Department.

Mr. Dorman said the back pier will be installed on flat ground, and Chair Chase opened the public comment period.

Wade Winblad, Summit Drive, said he owns the structure above 136 Summit (160 Summit), which would be the most affected by the proposed addition. Mr. Winblad said that a very small piece of his view might be impacted but that he supports the project. He commented on the development in the area and said that the improvements make it a better place, and that the proposal will increase the value of his property.

Commissioner Caldera said the design is rational and an improvement. He said the stairwell is the most significant aspect of the design but that the design flows well and he understands the use of different sized windows. Commissioner Caldera said the colors are great, that he visited the site, and that the addition will blend well with its surroundings. He concluded by saying that the project is well executed.

Commissioner McCadden commented on the façade, which he thought would be imposing, and he discussed the busyness of the design that includes horizontal lines and vertical scalloped shingles. He thought this would result in an addition that would not blend in well with the surroundings.

Vice-Chair Metcalfe said the design blends in with the neighborhood and that she likes the different size of windows. She said that the colors fit well and the different materials break up the mass. Vice-Chair Metcalfe commented on the vertical stairwell and the horizontal boarding and said she supports the project.

Commissioner McHugh commented on the lot being a challenge for the applicant and that he believes they have taken a reasonable approach. He expressed concern with the need to make the proper findings regarding the CTH guidelines relating to roof forms, noting that the proposed roof design is sensible. In response, Mr. Boyle noted that his interpretation is consistent with staff's interpretation and they are guidelines only.

Vice-Chair Metcalfe said she concurs with Commissioner McHugh's comments about the roofline findings.

Chair Chase agrees that the geometry of the house renders the roof design unalterable, and said that the CTHA confirms they believe the design is well thought through and meets the setbacks. Chair Chase commented on the scalloping and colors, which he thought provide interest. He said that fitting a 2,600 sq. ft. house on a lot that meets the guidelines is acceptable, although he noted there are not many dwellings of that size in the vicinity. Had the proposal not fallen within the conforming guidelines, Chair Chase said that approval for a dwelling of that size might be difficult and that he believes the structure will appear to be large on the site. He said it is a good design but that screening needs to be provided on the uphill side.

Commissioner McHugh discussed the challenges of providing tall trees to screen the addition. Chair Chase discussed the variety of species he thought would be acceptable to reach a two-story height. Mr. Wolff suggested it would be a reasonable condition for a landscape architect to explore the opportunity of screening the specified area and to provide an appropriate plan.

Commissioner McCadden discussed his concern that sunlight to the deck would be limited, which would not be his preference over blocking some of the neighbor's view. Chair Chase suggested another element above the fence could be added to enhance the site and that a plan should be presented to the Planning Commission for their deliberation.

In response to Commissioner Caldera, Mr. Wolff said that staff would determine if the request results in too much hardship for the applicant.

General consensus was reached that the project could be approved with a condition that the Planning Commission would review and approve a landscape plan. Mr. Dorman sought clarification about augmenting the current landscaping.

MOTION: Motioned by Commissioner McHugh, seconded by Commissioner Caldera, to approve Design Review Application No. 15-023, to add a 766 square foot third story to an existing two story residence and the remodeling and adding of approximately 155 square feet to the lower floor, as well as remodeling and adding approximately 58 square feet to the main floor at the property located at 136 Summit Drive, subject to the condition that the applicant prepares and submits to the Planning Commission a landscape plan for proposed screening of the addition of the property above the fence line on the southeastern portion of the property:

AYES: Caldera, Chase, McCadden, McHugh, Metcalf

C. 76 SUMMIT DRIVE: Design Review Application No. 15-030 for the proposed addition of approximately 238 square feet of living space and a deck to the main level of the existing three level house. (Senior Planner Phil Boyle).

Senior Planner Boyle presented the staff report. He discussed the design review application for a remodel of interior space and the conversion of an existing roof to a deck. Mr. Boyle said the addition is within the center of the structure and that there is no change to lot coverage. He noted there would be a 12-foot extension on the north east side over the living room that results in an addition of 238 square feet above the lower floor living space. This would then open on to a new wood deck, also built above the lower floor, and within the limits of the existing foot print. Mr. Boyle noted that the FAR would rise from 23% to 25% and that the maximum allowed is 45%. He used a slide presentation to discuss the elevations and roofline, and he noted that the proposed flat deck corresponds with the existing flat decks.

Mr. Boyle said that a color board has been provided, showing that the colors will match the existing house. He noted that landscaping is not proposed and neither is exterior lighting. Mr. Boyle noted that, if exterior lighting is included on the plans that are submitted for a building permit, the Planning Department will review them for night sky compliance.

Mr. Boyle noted that letters of support have been submitted from most of the neighbors surrounding the property. He discussed the findings staff can make to support the project, including the Christmas Tree Hill Design Guidelines, in addition to the Town's design review guidelines.

Rob Wilkinson, Project Architect, commented on staff's thorough analysis of the small addition, which he said is primarily an interior remodel with an extension of the living area. He said they are taking a low-pitched roof in front of the living room and converting it to a flat deck. Mr. Wilkinson explained they will be

installing a transparent railing, and noted that the main purpose of the plans is to update the house, move the kitchen to the main living area and take advantage of the views. He discussed the reasons why the proposed sloped roof is not identical to the existing roof slope and why they believe the proposed design would be less impactful than other designs they considered. Mr. Wilkinson confirmed the materials and colors would match the original structure to blend in.

Vice-Chair Metcalfe said the proposal is a good-looking augmentation and fits the house and neighborhood. She said the design works and will not be noticeable from the front of the property. Commissioner Caldera concurred with Vice-Chair Metcalfe's comments.

Chair Chase opened and then closed the public comment period when no one came forward to speak.

Commissioner McCadden commended staff on the evaluation of the project.

Commissioner McHugh expressed concern that exterior lighting has not been included in the plans but said he is comfortable with staff's confirmation that the plans will be reviewed for lighting at the building permit stage.

Vice-Chair Metcalfe and Chair Chase commented on providing future applicants with the Town's lighting requirements.

MOTION: Motioned by Commissioner McHugh, seconded by Vice-Chair Metcalfe, to approve Design Review Application No. 15-030 for the proposed addition of approximately 238 square feet of living space and a deck to the main level of the existing three-level house at 76 Summit Drive.

AYES: Caldera, Chase, McCadden, McHugh, Metcalf

7. ROUTINE AND OTHER MATTERS

A. REPORTS, ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REQUESTS

i. Commissioners

Vice-Chair Metcalfe reported on the January 27th Town Council meeting. She said Councilmember Bailey requested that the draft agenda for the following Town Council meeting is provided at each meeting to allow members of the public and Town Council to propose agenda items.

Vice-Chair Metcalfe led a discussion on scheduling a joint meeting between the Town Council and Planning Commission. Chair Chase commented on the

need to provide an agenda for discussion and Commissioner McHugh said that the agenda should be sufficiently specific to comply with the Brown Act.

Chair Chase also reported that the Town Council would be adopting an ordinance prohibiting the commercial cultivation of marijuana.

Chair Chase noted that there is a commissioners' conference in March. Mr. Wolff encouraged the commissioners to attend presentations they believe would be useful. Chair Chase asked staff to determine if they are due for ethics training and whether it would be useful for the commissioners to attend the ethics training workshop.

ii. Planning Director

Mr. Wolff reported that the Town Council has requested that they are given regular reports on the Corridor Study. He provided an update on the Corridor Study and noted that meetings will be scheduled with residents beginning in March.

Mr. Wolff reported on the next Planning Commission meeting, which he said would include items on two second-story additions and a preliminary study session for a new house on Chapman Drive.

In response to Commissioner McCadden, Mr. Wolff confirmed that there is no update on the Quiet Title action concerning 210 Morningside Drive. He noted that the Town Council has conducted a closed session on the subject. In further response to Commissioner McCadden, Chair Chase said that Councilmembers would make a determination on a request by a planning commissioner to attend a closed session meeting.

Mr. Wolff discussed the commissioners' attendance at future planning commission meetings.

In response to Commissioner McCadden, Mr. Wolff said the Town Council discussed the gravel lot application during a closed session. He said open discussions should be taking place at the next meeting. Mr. Wolff noted that a consultant has been hired to prepare an environmental impact report.

B. MINUTES

i. Planning Commission Meeting Minutes of January 12, 2016

MOTION: Motioned by Vice-Chair Metcalfe, seconded by Commissioner Caldera, to approve the Planning Commission Meeting Minutes of January 12, 2016:

AYES: Metcalfe, Chase, McCadden, Caldera
ABSTAINED: McHugh

9. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made, seconded and unanimously approved to adjourn the meeting at 9:45 p.m.