

Justification Letter

01-29-21

The Owners purchased this site because of the solar access, wonderful views and the privacy that it affords being at the end of a long private road. The owner's principal objectives were to provide a modest sized, two-story home with a larger usable yard space that includes a swimming pool and sunny patio areas. The home is to be a high quality, modern and environmentally responsible design. The home was to be designed to take advantage of spectacular views of the western hillside. The owner's wanted a home that personifies their healthy lifestyle where outdoor recreation and living is incorporated within the design of the residence and the site.

The existing residence does not meet the owner's requirements in several ways. Largely, the floor plan layout for all levels would require so many modifications to meet the owner's principal objectives that this residence would be deemed a technical demolition anyway. The existing residence is essentially a three-story residence. The main living space, located on the second floor, is surrounded with a large unprotected deck area that poses a fire danger and only provides limited access to outdoor yard areas.

Constraints Analysis and Site Selection

The existing site is located with on a west facing hillside approximately 150 feet above the adjacent valley floor. The existing 3-story residence is visible from Shannon Road as well as the Viewing Platform located at the southwest corner of the intersection of Blossom Hill Road and Los Gatos Boulevard. With a highly visible site and a 3 story residence, a remodeling of the existing residence would result in a project that did not meet the HDS&G objectives.

The proposed residence is repositioned on the site in same general location as the existing residence; however the proposed design is less than 18 feet high and the mass of the structure is positioned further back on the site to reduce visibility impacts.

Development Intensity

Overall, the proposed residence will not have the most floor area nor have the largest FAR of the surrounding neighbors. The proposed development will occur only on the existing disturbed areas on the site and leaving the surrounding natural landscape conditions and maintain all the larger trees.

Site Planning and Site Elements

The terraced retaining walls forming planters along the immediate edges of the landscaped areas follow the natural contours and integrate into the natural hillside. The walls will be constructed with a stone finish, screened with shrubs and are generally less than 3 feet in height. The retaining walls allow most of the site's development to be condensed and clustered around the residence while maintaining the majority of the remaining site in a natural state. Nominal grading within the original pad areas

substantially eliminates any grading on native portions of the site and substantially reduces the overall grading quantities.

The preponderance of grading is required to adjust the driveway and turnaround to meet the Fire Departments standards. Currently the slope of existing driveway fundamentally exceeds the allowable slope of 20% and portions of the existing turnaround do not meet the minimum area and slope requirements. This posed several problems requiring a balanced solution. The solution drops the current height of the required turnaround area by grading the hillside down to a point that reduced the driveway grade to less than 20% while not exceeding the maximum allowable cut and fill depths.

Architectural Design

The 3 district floor levels of the proposed residence step in cadence with the existing topographic contours of the site while maintaining an overall height below 18 feet. The building's mass is integrated into the site and broken into smaller segments in order to maintain a lower profile. The benefits from this design also include lower grading quantities and minimal overall height. As compared to the highly visible residence that currently occupies the site; the proposed residence recedes into the surrounding natural landscape.

Selecting building materials with integrated colors, all with a LRV of 30 or less, combined with extra-large roof overhangs and deeply recessed window fenestrations will cast shadows that reduce glare and visual impacts.

Landscape Design

Although there are 9 trees proposed to be removed, none were considered of any great value according to the Arborist's Report. The most valuable trees are all being retained. There are a total of 27 replacement trees (24" box) being planted on the site (19 Coastal Oak trees and 8 Western Redbud).

Neighborhood Outreach

On October 21, 2020, a copy of the proposed plans with an intro letter, neighborhood response form and a stamped envelope with return address were mailed to 11 of the surrounding neighbors including each site that shares the same private driveway. At this time, none of the neighbors have responded to our "neighborhood response form". We will continue to reach out to the surrounding neighbors in ways that are "safe" and legal. We intend to post a sign along the common driveway, similar to the sign that will be erected announcing the Public Hearing.