

MILL VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION

MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING OF MONDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2013

COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL, 7:00 PM

26 CORTE MADERA AVENUE

PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS:

Heidi Richardson - Co-Chair
Ricardo Capretta
Chris Skelton

(00:00:00)

CALL TO ORDER

(00:00:04)

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS: Time for comments from members of the public on issues not on this Planning Commission agenda. (Limited to 3 minutes per person.)

(00:07:21)

PLANNING AND BUILDING DIRECTOR'S ORAL REPORT: Report on items being considered by the City Council.

LIAISON REPORTS: None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: None.

(00:13:05)

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

It was **M/s** by Commissioner Skelton/Commissioner Capretta to approve the agenda. The motion was carried 3/0.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

(00:13:18)

- 1. 511 Lovell – Hatfield – Design Review – File No. 4050 (Svanstrom) A DESIGN REVIEW hearing to demolish an existing 2,400 square foot single-family residence, 698 square foot detached second unit, and detached 400 square foot garage, and construct a new 6,100.5 square foot single-family residence and a 1,044 square foot detached garage. The subject property is in the RS-43 (Residential Single-Family – 43,560 square foot minimum lot size) Zoning District.**

511 Lovell doc

(00:13:28)

Staff Presentation from Senior Planner, Kari Svanstrom

(00:22:52)

Presentation from Applicant, Architect Bob Hatfield

(00:40:40)

Presentation from Landscape Architect Jim Bradanini

(01:11:28)

Public Comment

(01:24:57)

Commission Deliberation

Commissioner Capretta began by stating he likes the feel of the architecture and he likes some of the changes but not some of the material changes that were made. He agreed with Co-Chair Richardson that the Commission is handicapped because of the incompleteness of the elevations. He said although this project has a low cut and fill net number it has very, very large cut and fill numbers, almost 1,000 cubic yards, huge numbers for Mill Valley. He noted the one plan doesn't allow the Commission to understand how cut and fill affects this site and that cut and fill needs to be demonstrated both in plan and section. He stated the overall site layout is a step in the right direction, however the house sits too high, especially in the sport court and garage. He further stated the garage wall is not acceptable because it is one flat, 29-foot tall wall and it needs to be broken up. He also said the sport court wall is 18-19 feet tall and needs to be scaled down. He said that in looking at the west elevation there are very, very tall walls that should kept to 6-8 feet, however the wall below the house is almost 10 feet. He noted that the garden walls are an appropriate height. He said that overall the solar is fine. He agreed there should be a condition for no night lighting on the sport court. With respect to the materials, he is disappointed to see so many flat, long stucco expanses, especially the garage piece. He echoed that on the glass material is not appropriate for the fencing/gate because glass is too polished and not earthy enough. He stated that the encroachment needed to be addressed. With respect to the landscaping, he agrees with Mr. Rand that 6-8 feet is appropriate and he definitely does not want to see 25-foot tall trees and shrubs. He believes the redwoods the applicant proposes to plant could eventually affect the view of 510 Lovell and he does not see the need to add more redwoods as there are enough of them in this canyon.

Commissioner Skelton stated an east elevation streetscape color rendering needs to be included in the presentation so how the fence would interact with the street can be seen. He believes it should be limited to shrubs only on the street level, because the trees create a green fence. He said he likes the sport court in the design but it creates issues with the height of the walls. He suggested the applicant consider dropping the court down a little because it looms and to put some type of trees there to help mitigate it. He agreed with comments made with respect to materials. He does not believe the glass material for the fence is appropriate and believes it

would stick out. He said he does not have an issue with the new roof or the stucco expanse, because he can't think of anyone who would see it. He likes the way the roofing material looks. He believes that the 80 square feet on the lower level for the entryway door should count into the FAR, because they are not approaching their maximum FAR.

Co-Chair Richardson stated she echoes her fellow commissioner's comments. She believes stucco is different from ledge stone and there needs to be some consideration to the down slope walls, perhaps with terracing. She also agrees there should be absolutely no night lighting for the sport court and no heavy-duty path lighting. She agreed with the neighbor who said the sport court is too tall and could be easily lowered; adding she thinks it is in the wrong place. She also agrees that the glass material is not appropriate for the gate or fence for that part of Lovell. She stated she is not sure where the idea of the 25-foot shrubs came from because the Commission was clear on the height being 6-8 feet. She believes the proposed redwoods are in the same view corridor as the existing redwoods and they probably wouldn't block the neighbor's view, but she will leave it to the applicant to ensure they do not. She said she thinks the east elevation needs to be enlarged so the Commission can understand it. She agreed with Commissioner Skelton that the 80 square feet in the entryway should count toward the FAR.

Commissioner Capretta agreed with his fellow commissioners that the 80 square feet should be counted toward the FAR. He pointed out that drawing A-14 in the Commissioner's packet had a 33 foot tall garage corner, but the Commission was given a revised A-14 that has a 29 foot garage corner but nothing changed on that corner, further reinforcing how critical it is to see dimensions and being able to correlate it with the civil drawings.

The Commissioners agreed by consensus that there were enough issues with the application that it needed to be continued and returned to the Commission.

(01:53:41)

- 2. 6 Longfellow – Chambers & Chambers – Study Session – File No. 4117 (Zanarini)
A STUDY SESSION for Design Review to consider the construction of a 2-story, 2,850 square foot single-family residence with a 500 square foot attached garage on an 8,574 square foot vacant lot. The subject property is in the RS-7.5 (Residential Single-Family – 7,500 square foot minimum lot size) Zoning District.**

6 Longfellow doc

(01:56:35)

Presentation from Applicant, Barbara Chambers

(02:10:25)

Public Comment

(02:16:15)

Commission Deliberation

Commissioner Skelton began by stating with respect to landscaping the applicant needs to implement mitigation measures on both sides of the lot, because they are going up to the setback and removing the oak tree, which though not in good condition still provides some shielding from the neighboring residence. He said the neighborhood appears to be mostly single story homes and the bedroom/garage of the project appears a little tall and out of character, and although he likes how it is built not as a second story but as a half-story he believes it should be lowered a foot. Overall he believes the project would be a great addition to the neighborhood. He hopes the applicant will be able to address some of the disrepair of the lot, such as the decaying wood retaining walls.

Commissioner Capretta stated that drawing A-1.1 needs to show the outline of 14 Longfellow. He also said that an area map is needed as well. He said the square footage floor plan needs measurements provided. He also asked to make sure cut and fill is shown on the sections as well as natural grade, especially from the north to the south. He believes draining will be a big issue and the applicant needs to ensure all the drainage is handled on their platform and make sure they are not draining water down the backside. He said the elevations seem fine, but his biggest issue is the massing, scale and height. He noted the neighborhood character is one-story homes and there are one-story homes on either side of the project, so the garage seems too significant and he would like to see it pushed back and not have it loom so large on the frontage. He said he also thinks the back massing seems pretty vertical and he would like the applicant to break up the long, tall elevation and be more sensitive to mass and scale. He said the roof plan seems fine. He also stated it would be great if green features could be incorporated.

Co-Chair Richardson stated her main wish is to see a streetscape that reflects the topography of the street and the relationship of the house to the street as well as to the neighbors on each side. She agreed the garage looks tall with the one big, flat wall that faces 4 Longfellow and suggested that since the applicant is not counting the area in the bedroom upstairs that there is an opportunity to either lower the ridge or modify the massing. She said the garage needs work as far as softening the appearance on the street. She also said drainage is a big issue. She agreed with Commissioner Skelton with respect to the landscaping. She stated anything the applicant can do to make a two-story house in a one-story neighborhood look smaller is desired, although she realizes it is only the garage that is two-story. She said she does not like the double-story deck and terrace in the back and doesn't believe it helps the design. She suggested the applicant find a way to soften the elevation in the rear using materials and articulation, such as what was done with the bay window. She said that overall she thinks the design is nice and on the right track.

(02:24:23)

- 3. 170 Throckmorton – Assing – Study Session – File No. 4118 (Svanstrom) A STUDY SESSION for a Conditional Use Permit and Design Review to demolish an existing duplex (1,097 square foot unit and a 457 square foot unit) and construct a new 3,605 square foot duplex (1,904 square foot front unit and 1,701 square foot second unit)**

over an attached 2, square foot 4-car garage. The subject property is in the C-N (Neighborhood Commercial) Zoning District.

170 Throckmorton doc

(02:26:52)

Staff Presentation from Senior Planner, Kari Svanstrom

(02:37:23)

Presentation from Owner, Jim Assing

(02:39:49)

Presentation from Applicant, Architect Bob Hatfield

(03:17:21)

Public Comment

(03:31:40)

Commission Deliberation

Commissioner Capretta began by stating there is a significant square footage increase resulting in an extremely large off haul number. He believes this off haul issue will govern what the applicant does. He said there is massing that impacts the site and doesn't fit in well to the neighborhood character and seems to impact 162 Throckmorton the most. He also said there is an issue with light, although there is no view ordinance in Mill Valley. He agreed with the owners of 162 Throckmorton that it would be simple to put the entries on the west side of the building. He liked the flat roofs and thought it goes a long way to reducing the massing. He agreed again with the owners of 162 Throckmorton that the heights could be brought down a bit more, definitely in the garage level. With respect to the architecture, he said contemporary style is fine but there are too many wall masses that are uninterrupted without breakup. He does not like the gray color and believes having one monolithic colored stucco element would not be sensitive to or harmonious with the neighborhood. He said there are two or three different ways the site could be developed that could be a better long-term solution.

Commissioner Skelton agreed with Commissioner Capretta's comments. He said the first and second floor could be lowered by six inches. He suggested looking into what the neighbors said about the elevator tower being unnecessary. He suggested the applicant could get articulation by adding another clerestory window, which would give more light. He stated the project looked naked, partly because of the lot coverage issue where there is no room for landscape mitigation, and it put the burden on the neighbors to implement that mitigation. He said he leans toward abiding by the Residential Zoning Code and that would include the 50% lot coverage, although he could see some flexibility because of the challenge of the site, however he would not want to see this structure grow in height as a result. He believes the applicant's 67% is a high percentage of lot coverage, but he thinks there are ways around that and the applicant needs to look more critically at the design in order to minimize that. He believes parking is the driving force in overall strategy here and finds the spin wheel creative, but perhaps not so practical or realistic.

He liked the roofs that lowered the height, bulk and mass. He appreciated the concerns that the applicant looked at regarding window placements. He didn't like the long, expansive surfaces. He said he is leaning towards the residential restrictions with a little leeway, but the applicant certainly needs to bring the lot coverage down more in terms of percentage.

Co-Chair Richardson agreed with Commissioner Skelton that the project looked naked and that parking is driving the lot coverage. She said what also strikes her is that the architect has made the front unit set back and unseen from Throckmorton, which is not that important if one considers what is across the street, and as a result it throws the rear unit way into the back yard, impacting the neighbors on both sides. She said she realizes the applicant is the last to build on the block, but light and air is written into the residential design guidelines, although view is not. She suggested the front unit be more compact and flipped, because it didn't make sense to her that the courtyard would face the carport. If one can imagine those step-backs pushed forward, that pushes the rear unit forward automatically and helps the neighbors and the lot coverage. She said she did not think the narrow front unit surrounded by asphalt or tiles was a good solution for what is happening on each side. She agreed with her fellow commissioners regarding the height reduction.

Commissioner Capretta stated he thought there should be four onsite parking spaces, because parking is extremely tight on that street. He suggested another option would be a tandem garage where cars back out, however that wouldn't be desirable on Throckmorton, so the most logical scheme is to have a 45 foot deep by 40 foot area where cars park sideways, 18 foot stalls with a 22 foot backup driveway and a door off to one side, and probably put the stairs somewhere in the front, which would cut the cut and fill in half. He echoed Co-Chair Richardson's comments about the plans and the need to see dimensions. He also echoed the need on a site such as this to see site sections with the cut and fill dashed in and shown. He agreed with the neighbors that the glass roof is an inappropriate design feature. He agreed with Co-Chair Richardson that the project could be pushed closer to Throckmorton, thus opening up more light and air for the rear unit. He said he supports the zero lot line setbacks for the garage structure only and believes that would be a good solution here. He suggested since the applicant was going with flat roofs that this would be a great opportunity to install solar panels and make a real environmental statement close to downtown. He agreed with Commissioner Skelton on the lot coverage and said he would be willing to be flexible on over 50% coverage but it needs to be closer to 50% than 69.7%.

Commissioner Skelton agreed with Commissioner Capretta on a zero setback for the garage. He said he likes how recessed the building is and the wedding cake style and he hoped the applicant could keep elements of that while still cutting down on the lot coverage. He said the structure should not loom over people walking by on the street, but it could be moved up a little, although he doesn't believe the second story could be moved up much more.

Commissioner Skelton stated he does not have an issue with the amount of off haul because of the location of the site near an arterial road.

Co-Chair Richardson stated the garage should be designed in a way that minimizes off haul. She said because Throckmorton is always busy during the day with many vehicles double parking, in addition to not being very wide, she does not believe it would be easy to haul the dirt away. She

said on the other hand she understands that the applicant has to get four parking spaces in there. She felt when the application comes back the off haul number should be verified by a civil engineer and her belief is it should be under 1,000 cubic yards, but she could be persuaded otherwise.

Commissioner Capretta stated he is in favor of 50-55% lot coverage, but he could be swayed to 60% if Commissioner Skelton feels that way.

Commissioner Skelton stated he believes it would take a substantial hurdle that is very difficult to overcome to get the lot coverage up to 60%. Commissioners decided e consensus that the lot coverage should be 50-55%.

Commissioner Capretta stated he would support the 7-foot front setback that the property qualified for due to the slope in front.

Co-Chair Richardson stated she would also support the 7-foot front setback. She said while the garage door is going up the vehicle needs to be off the street, which seven feet allows.

Co-Chair Richardson and Commissioner Capretta agreed to a zero garage setback and then comply with RM-1.5 for the rest of it.

Commissioner Skelton said he would agree if the applicant went with the seven-point turnaround style, but he did not believe that anyone would do that and that they would eventually become comfortable backing in or out. He asked if that is the case, why allow for going directly up to the property line when in reality it's not going to be an added benefit?

Commissioner Capretta and Co-Chair Richardson agreed the rear setback should be 15 feet.

It was decided by consensus that the height should be 25/35 feet for single/double setbacks.

It was decided by consensus that minimum usable open space should be 175 square feet per dwelling unit.

It was decided by consensus that parking could support up to two compacts and the back out depth could go down to 21-22 feet. Parking arrangements could be flexible as long as they were safe, and should be worked out with staff.

Commissioner Capretta suggested off haul should be kept to 800 cubic yards.

Commissioner Skelton stated he had no problem going up to 1,000 cubic yards of off haul.

Co-Chair Richardson agreed with Commissioner Capretta that off haul should be kept to 800 cubic yards.

(04:14:00)

4. **Design Guideline Revision – (Moore) CONSIDERATION of an amendment to Guideline 10, “Minimizing Grading, Off haul, Excavation and Erosion” of the City’s Residential Design Guidelines. The proposed amendment would recommend that new basements should be designed to minimize off haul (the removal of soil by truck from the project site) and allow the Planning Commission to exercise discretion in determining whether or not a basement of more or less than 300 square feet would be appropriate for a given project site.**

Design Guideline Revision doc

It was **M/s** by Commissioner Skelton/Commissioner Capretta to continue the application to the November 12, 2013 meeting. The motion was carried 3/0.

(04:16:24)

ADJOURN

It was **M/s** by Commissioner Skelton/Commissioner Capretta to adjourn. The motion was carried 3/0.

Any decision made by the Planning Commission on the above items may be appealed to the City Council by filing a letter with the Planning Department within 10 calendar days describing the basis for the appeal accompanied by the \$250 appeal fee.