



City of Santa Barbara Planning Division

PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

March 16, 2006

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair John Jostes called the meeting to order at 3: 28 P.M.

ROLL CALL:

Present:

Chair John Jostes

Vice-Chair Charmaine Jacobs

Commissioners, Bill Mahan, George C. Myers, Addison S. Thompson and Harwood A. White, Jr.

Absent:

Stella Larson

STAFF PRESENT:

Bettie Weiss, City Planner

Jan Hubbell, Senior Planner

Steve Foley, Project Planner

Kathleen Kennedy, Associate Planner

N. Scott Vincent, Assistant City Attorney

Julie Rodriguez, Planning Commission Secretary

I. PRELIMINARY MATTERS:

- A. Requests for continuances, withdrawals, postponements, or addition of ex-agenda items.

None.

- B. Announcements and appeals.

Ms. Hubbell announced that the appeal for 523-531 Chapala Street was heard at Council on Tuesday. The Council denied the appeal with revised conditions of approval making changes to the second and third floor, consistent with the condition imposed by the Planning Commission; and added a condition prohibiting residential parking permits for the project.

C. Comments from members of the public pertaining to items not on this agenda.

Chair Jostes opened the public hearing at 3:30 P.M. With no one wishing to speak, the public hearing was closed at 3:30 P.M.

II. CONCEPT REVIEW:

ACTUAL TIME: 3:30 P.M.

APPLICATION OF ISAAC ROMERO, SUZANNE ELLEDGE PLANNING AND PERMITTING SERVICES, AGENT FOR THOMAS SWIGGUM, 1318 & 1320 ONTARE ROAD, 055-160-027 & 055-160-046, A-1 ZONE, GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION: RESIDENTIAL 1 UNIT PER ACRE (MST2003-00296)

The project consists of the conceptual review of a two-lot subdivision of an 8-acre lot in the A-1 zone and Hillside Design District. The resulting lots would have a net area of 4.23 (parcel 1) and 3.77 acres (parcel 2), with average slopes of 32.53% and 36.16%, respectively. A 14,728 square foot building envelope is proposed on the new parcel to accommodate the development of a new residence accessed by a driveway approximately 340 feet in length. The grading for the driveway access would involve 2,700 cubic yards of grading of which 1,300 cubic yards results from cut and fill, and 1,400 cubic yards of soil would be exported from the site. No native trees are proposed for removal. A trail easement is offered for dedication in favor of the City of Santa Barbara across the property between the Ontare Hills Lane property to the west and the County owned property to the east.

The purpose of the concept review is to allow the Planning Commission an opportunity to review the proposed project design at a conceptual level and provide the Applicant and Staff with feedback and direction regarding the proposed land use and design. No formal action on the development proposal will be taken at the concept review, nor will any determination be made regarding environmental review of the proposed project. Upon review and formal action on the application for the development proposal, the proposed project will require the following discretionary applications:

1. Tentative Subdivision Map (SBMC § 27.07); and
2. Neighborhood Preservation Ordinance (SBMC § 22.68.060, § 22.68.070.A.3)

Case Planner: Steve Foley, Project Planner
Email: sfoley@santabarbaraca.gov

Steve Foley, Project Planner, gave the Staff presentation.

Isaac Romero, Suzanne Elledge Planning and Permitting Services, gave the applicant presentation.

Commissioners' questions and comments:

1. Asked what is the minimum slope density required for the site.
2. Asked why this is a single parcel with two parcel numbers associated with the lot.

Chair Jostes opened the public hearing at 3:53 P.M.

With no one wishing to speak, the public hearing was closed at 3:53 P.M.

Commissioner's comments:

1. Asked for the Fire Department's view on the proposed conceptual design of the house.
2. Lot split is not an issue; concerns are with slope and grading for the driveway and house.
3. Commented on soil problems associated with grading and retaining walls.
4. The City policy is that grading over 30% is not permitted; this proposed lot is 33% on highly erosive soil. The needed grading and large retaining wall for the driveway are issues in this project.
5. Consensus of Commissioners cannot support home site number one.
6. Site number two along the low ridge southeast of the existing house is conceptually a possibility for this project.
7. Supports trail dedication; beneficial to the public. Would like to see size, bulk, and scale impacts addressed from an additional as a part of the package moving forward.
8. Asked about applicant's perception of ridge line objections in site number two. Does not consider lot two to have a ridge line. According to the Neighborhood Preservation Ordinance, a ridge line is when a house is seen against the sky.
9. Concerned with driveway and grading. Asked about land use policy; looks at the slope density requirement as a performance standard as entry into the development process.
10. Suggest adherence to the first 3-4 suggestions in the Hillside Housing Technique.
11. Proposed driveway is marginal.
12. Some Commissioners support lot split but it is up to the applicant to prove to the commission that a suitable building site exists.
13. Suggested a linear house with the rooms descending along the slope.
14. Suggested looking at how much grading and retaining wall would be required for the driveway.
15. Suggested looking at unusual parcel shape and perhaps using the small triangle space for part of the trail.

Ms. Hubbell replied that there is a three acre minimum required for the slope density.

Mr. Foley replied that while there are two parcel numbers, this is one legal lot. There may be many reasons, including tax purposes for the two numbers. Mr. Foley stated that the Fire Department has been consulted and that the project meets the Fire Departments access requirements.

Ms. Hubbell stated that there is a ridge line in site number two, but that it is low Ms. Hubbell clarified the policy on grading over 30%.

Mr. Romero added that the proposed driveway does not require retaining walls. A technique is used to create the flat area called a geo grid and avoids a down slope retaining wall. The site would need to be secured to prevent the gradual erosion of the building pad. Asked the Commission for direction on viable alternatives. He asked if the goal is to have the home nestled into the hill or a traditional flat lot design on a single plane. Mr. Romero also asked if it would be fair to minimize trade-offs and grading for access.

Ms. Hubbell referenced another near subdivision and its trail development. No signs would be needed because it is a continuation of an existing trail. Ms. Hubbell added that the relocation of the building site could result in a different lot line configuration which may result in the need for a public street waiver.

III. NEW ITEM:

ACTUAL TIME: 4: 23 P.M.

APPLICATION OF CHRISTOPHER DENTZEL, ARCHITECT FOR THOMAS J. AND SYLVIA J. HOFFMAN, 2 SANTA CRUZ BOULEVARD, APN 045-185-009, E-3/SD-3, ONE FAMILY RESIDENCE AND COASTAL OVERLAY ZONES, GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION: RESIDENTIAL, FIVE UNITS/ACRE, (MST2004-00232)

The proposal consists of a 761 square foot, second floor addition and a 30 square foot, first floor addition to an existing 1,660 square foot, single-family residence on a 10,871 square foot lot in the Coastal Zone. The existing 391 square foot garage would be replaced with a 500 square foot garage and 95 square feet of accessory space attached to the garage. The existing vegetation would be removed from the public right of way and a new sidewalk and parkway would be installed.

The discretionary applications required for this project are:

1. A Modification to allow a hedge and fence to be five feet high, instead of the maximum allowable height of three and one half feet, along the front property line (SBMC§28.87.170); and
2. A Coastal Development Permit to allow the proposed development in the Appealable jurisdiction of the Coastal Zone (SBMC§28.45.009).

The Environmental Analyst has determined that the project is exempt from further environmental review pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Guidelines Section 15301 (Existing Facilities).

Case Planner: Kathy Kennedy, Associate Planner
Email: kkennedy@santabarbaraca.gov

Kathy Kennedy, Associate Planner, gave the Staff report.

Chris Dentzel, Architect, representing the applicant, made himself available to answer questions.

Chair Jostes opened the public hearing at 4:30 P.M.

Dennis Gaon, adjacent neighbor, spoke in support of the project; and also stated he would like to see palm tree located in the right of way be removed because it blocks his view.

With no one else wishing to speak, the public hearing was closed at 4:32 P.M.

Commissioner's questions and comments:

1. Asked for clarification on what palm tree is being asked to remain.
2. Asked if there is a way that the palm tree could be moved because it is not pedestrian friendly, due to sharp edges. Asked if the project could go to the Architectural Board of Review (ABR) and receive feedback on the palm tree and the additional design.
3. Appreciates the extended sidewalk; an asset that finishes off the pedestrian strip.
4. Likes the project and how it is complimentary with the residence at 6 Santa Cruz. Commissioners appreciated the applicant working with the neighbor. This is a model example for future applicants.
5. Would like some input on the sidewalk and stairway to make it more pedestrian friendly. The palm tree is not pedestrian friendly and perhaps could be replaced. This is a city tree, and the spikes are dangerous to pedestrians.
6. Would like engineering to reconsider connecting the sidewalk to the steps. A condition should be included to have the consideration made.
7. Commissioners believed there are many ways to address the drainage issue and were in agreement that the drainage issue could be addressed.
8. Commissioners were in agreement that the palm tree should be removed and replaced with a more pedestrian friendly tree that would not block the neighbor's view.

Ms. Hubbell stated that the concern engineering had with the connection between the sidewalk and the steps dealt with water drainage and spillage to the steps.

STRAW VOTE:

Remove the palm tree with ABR direction for a replacement tree.

Ayes: 6 Noes: 0 Abstain: 0 Absent: 1 (Larson)

David Lack, general contractor, representing the owner, agreed with Staff on the research done with the drainage issue. He does not feel that the issue needs to go back to ABR since the owner is willing to remove the palm tree completely.

Ms. Hubbell consulted with Rob Dayton, Supervising Transportation Planner, and stated that the connection between the stairs and the sidewalk can be engineered but is very expensive to design and must consider wheelchair use and the relocation of a fire hydrant. Ms. Hubbell consulted with Transportation Staff who have made it clear that they do not want to address the ADA issues at this time, due to the expense of the necessary improvement.

Thomas Hoffman, owner, stated that he has put great expense into the project and wanted clarification on how much of the proposed sidewalk is the City's responsibility and how much would be his. He is willing to meet the City halfway on any further expense.

MOTION: White/Myers

Assigned Resolution No. 013-06

Approve the project making the findings for a Coastal Development Permit and the modification with the following additional conditions: 1) it go to ABR for review of the project, with the understanding that the design is very close to meeting the design guidelines, and the removal and replacement of the palm tree. 2) The sidewalk shall be extended to the stairs.

Comments:

1. Commented on the significant expense the applicant has made for public improvements thus far and that consideration be given that at some point it is enough.
2. Asked for clarification of what part of the project would be going to ABR.
3. Envisioned that the sidewalk could be extended in a bulb shape that could also be grated to allow for drainage. The only requirement for handicap access is a 4 foot platform, and that can easily be done.
4. Does not feel that it is fair to talk about the cost to the applicant without talking about the value to the applicant of the addition.
5. Some Commissioners do not feel that this is a large expense for the applicant and should not exceed \$ 2,000.

This motion carried by the following vote:

Ayes: 6 Noes: 0 Abstain: 0 Absent: 1 (Larson)

Chair Jostes announced the ten calendar day appeal period.

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE AGENDA

A. Committee and Liaison Reports.

1. Mr. Mahan reported on the Neighborhood Preservation Ordinance Steering Committee meeting that took place on Friday; another meeting will be held this Friday. The Committee is about to wind up and the proposed guidelines will be forthcoming to the Planning Commission for review.
2. Mr. Thompson reported on the Airport Commission; the Citrix project is close to receiving building permits and have closed in on the Platinum LEED certification for design. The terminal project design is close to subcommittee review with the selected design team.

B. Review of the decisions of the Staff Hearing Officer in accordance with SBMC §28.92.026.

None were requested.

C. Action on the review and consideration of the items listed in I.B.4. of this Agenda.

MOTION: Jacobs/Mahan

Approve the minutes and resolutions as corrected. The Commission continued the minutes of February 16, 2006, until next meeting.

This motion carried by the following vote:

Ayes: 6 Noes: 0 Abstain: 0 Absent: 1 (Larson)

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Jostes adjourned the meeting at 5:18 P.M.

Submitted by,

Julie Rodriguez, Planning Commission Secretary