

ASCC Field Meeting, 25 Kiowa Court, Architectural and Site Development Review for an ADU and tree removal.

Vice Chair Koch called the field meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

ASCC: Vice-Chair Koch, Ross, and Wilson. Chair Sill and Breen were absent.

Town Staff: Laura Russell, Building and Planning Director and Planner Cynthia Richardson

Planning Commissioner: None

Others present

Lorin Hill, Architect

Cagatay Goksel, Architect

Connie Lin, applicant

MaryAnn Plunder and Peter Boot, 35 Kiowa Court

Shahid Choudhry, 311 Cervantes

Planner Cynthia Richardson presented the project which consists of Architectural Review for a new 1,000 square foot one-story Accessory Dwelling Unit that exceeds a vertical building height of 18 feet and does not have architectural style or materials similar to the main residence. The project includes the removal of two significant trees.

Following Planner Richardson's presentation, Architect Hill offered information regarding the project and that they would be matching the main house with a remodel in the future.

The group then walked to the back of the existing home to see the story poles for the new ADU. Mr. Hill explained that the reason for the height being over 18 feet was due to the guard rail that is required for the roof top deck.

Peter Boot of 35 Kiowa Court asked if there could be an antenna constructed on the deck of the new ADU. Laura Russell indicated that some types would need a building permit. She indicated that furniture could be placed on the roof top deck.

Maryann Plunder asked about the drainage and if additional drainage would be directed toward the creek. Mr. Hill indicated that a grading and drainage plan would be finalized for the project prior to the building permit approval.

Shahid Choudhry of 311 Cervantes asked if anything else would be constructed farther up the gulch. The owner Connie Lin indicated that it would be left open and natural.

Vice Chair Koch stated that Commissioners would offer further comments on the proposal at the regular evening meeting that evening. Members thanked architect for participation in the site meeting. The field meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Sill called the regular meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Town Center Historic Schoolhouse Meeting Room, 765 Portola Road.

Planning & Building Director Laura Russell called roll:

Present: ASCC: Commissioners Dave Ross and Jane Wilson; Vice Chair Megan Koch; Chair Al Sill
Absent: Commissioner Danna Breen
Planning Commission Liaison: Nicholas Targ
Town Council Liaison: Councilmember Wengert
Town Staff: Planning & Building Director Laura Russell; Associate Planner Cassidy; Planner Cynthia Richardson

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

None.

OLD BUSINESS

(1) **Architectural Review and Site Development Permit for a New Residence, Removal of Significant Trees, and Landscaping, 42 Santa Maria, Bylund Residence, File # PLN ARCH 41-2017**

Planner Richardson described the background of the project and the applicant's revised plans addressing previous ASCC comments and neighborhood concerns. Staff recommended that the ASCC approve the new residence, landscaping and tree removal, subject to the conditions of approval in Attachment 1, as detailed in the staff report.

Chair Sill invited questions from the Commission.

Commissioner Ross asked if the property could have been accessed from Louise Lane. Planner Richardson said it could have in theory, but would have required significant retaining walls which would have gone through the middle of Louise Lane making it more difficult to construct a road in the future.

Chair Sill invited comment by the applicant. The applicant described the project revisions.

Chair Sill invited questions for the applicant. Hearing none, Chair Sill invited public comment.

Andy Brown, a member of the road committee, said they've reviewed the project and are supportive. They want to ensure that Louise Lane remains as is, as an easement. He said there is some concern that oaks not be in the easement.

Bart Dolmatch, 16 Santa Maria. Mr. Dolmatch complemented the design and siting of the house. He said the applicant has done a phenomenal job mitigating the comments and suggestions made. He said he has the same landscape architect as the applicant. He said they are

supportive of adding oaks on the upside of the hill, with shared responsibility for privacy for both residences. He would like to review the plan for those trees. The landscape architect said the trees would be sited on both properties to accommodate the screening.

Ken Singleton, 40 Santa Maria. Mr. Singleton expressed appreciation for the effort put in by the applicant and the designers to modify the driveway. He said he did not feel strongly about Louise Lane. He said he appreciated the neighborhood's desire to retain the easement, but also appealed to the Commission to give them maximum flexibility and leniency to integrate that space into their yards because there's not going to be a road there in any foreseeable future. In response to Chair Sill's question, Planning & Building Director Russell said the condition is drafted retaining 24 feet unplanted. She said the concerns they received were about larger trees so it would be appropriate for smaller plantings to be located in that area as long as they are minimal and can be removed easily. Vice Chair Koch said it appears the neighbor would like to see a softening of that area.

Bart Dolmatch said Louise Lane is a paper street, but the hill is engineered. He hoped there was something that could be done to repopulate that hill in some way and suggested that planting things on it would stabilize the soil. He supported Mr. Singleton's comments.

With no additional public comment, Chair Sill brought the item back to the Commission for discussion.

Vice Chair Koch said the applicant did a great job of addressing all of the suggestions and comments made regarding the project. She said she could make the findings for exceeding 85%. She was supportive of the changes for the driveway access. She was supportive of the planting plan, but thought it might be almost too much. She suggested it be conditioned that a Commissioner be present for the siting of screening trees.

Commissioner Wilson thanked the applicant for all of the work done to mitigate the lighting and light spill concerns. She said she could make the findings for exceeding 85% because of the need to compact the building onto the available space. She said it was good they were sharing the landscape architect. She was supportive of the color board and design.

Commissioner Ross said the applicants did a great job hitting every mark. He said it was easy to make the finding for exceeding 85%. He said, with regard to Louise Lane, while he was not suggesting a change in the condition, he pointed out that the cost of removing a mature oak tree in the middle of Louise Lane would be negligible compared to what it would cost to develop Louise Lane. He supported the recommended condition that an ASCC member be present for the final siting of the trees when the home at 42 Santa Maria has been framed.

Chair Sill was supportive of the project. He said the architecture, materials, and design are great. He said he is comfortable seeing both landscaping plans merged together and did not think screening would be an issue. He could make the findings for exceeding 85%.

Commissioner Ross moved to approve the Architectural Review and Site Development Permit for a New Residence, Removal of Significant Trees, and Landscaping at 42 Santa Maria, including staff's conditions, and the additional condition that an ASCC member participate in the final siting of the screening trees. Seconded by Commissioner Wilson; the motion carried 4-0.

NEW BUSINESS

(2) **Architectural Review for a new 1,000 sq. ft. one-story Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) that exceeds a vertical building height of 18 feet and does not have architectural style or materials similar to the main residence. The project includes the removal of two significant trees, 25 Kiowa Court, Lin Residence, File # PLN ARCH 19-2018**

Planner Richardson described the proposed project and discussion items as detailed in the staff report. Staff recommended the ASCC review the proposed plans, consider the comments in the staff report and any additional comments which may be offered tonight, and approve the proposed ADU subject to the conditions in Attachment 1. A field visit was held at the site earlier this afternoon.

Chair Sill invited questions from the Commission.

Vice Chair Koch asked if the multi-trunk tree would be removed. Lorin Hill, the architect, apologized for an AutoCAD layering mistake that led the arborist to misidentify the trees that are proposed for removal. Mr. Hill said the leaning large two-trunk tree is close to the proposed footprint of the building, and the arborist has recommended they both be removed.

Vice Chair Koch said the leaning tree is dangerous and must be removed. She asked if the other trunk, which looks strong and viable with a nice canopy, was viable. Ms. Lin said there used to be a children's play structure right inside of where the ADU will be. She said one night, a large tree that she thought was healthy fell and destroyed the play structure, so she has concern about that. Mr. Hill said they are amenable to working with the arborist and staff to determine what is appropriate for those trees. Planning & Building Director Russell referenced the Arborist Report and said it does not sound like either tree is viable.

With no further questions, Chair Sill invited the applicant to comment.

Mr. Hill discussed the height issue. He said the relatively transparent cable railings protrude above to enable the roof terrace to have a usable open space. He said the larger area is more suitable to outdoor living and reduces the impact on the surrounding landscape, and they feel the protrusion is a reasonable accommodation that should be allowed.

Mr. Hill said, with regard to the style issue, the ADU is being somewhat reverse engineered for what the future new home may be. They made no effort to match the existing ranch style of the main structure and said this design will be a cohesive ensemble of buildings someday.

Mr. Hill said they would like the option of including perimeter low-impact rail lighting on the roof deck.

Chair Sill invited questions from the Commission. Hearing none, Chair Sill invited public comment.

Shahid Choudry, 311 Cervantes Road. He said he works from home, and the reason he lives in Portola Valley are the trees and atmosphere. He said he has a love affair with each tree just as with any human neighbor. He said he sits on his hill and reads books and looks into the trees. He said he hopes there is a way to artistically integrate nature with housing and ADUs. He said he does not want to cause any problems for neighbors, and he respects and loves them all. He said the design is beautiful, and he has no problem with the height. He said it is beautifully integrated into the hill.

With no further public comment, Chair Sill brought the item back to the Commission for discussion.

Commissioner Ross said the applicants have done an excellent job of citing and massing the structure. He appreciated that they were doing no landscaping or hardscaping around it. He said there is a very deep slope, and water control will be critical. He said it is an appropriate place for roof decks as open space. He was supportive of allowing the guard rail to extend above the height limitation. He suggested using a medium or dark bronze instead of black anodized aluminum for the stanchions. He said the ADU is invisible except to the residents of the front house and will not be offensive even if it takes some time to remodel the front house to match the style of the ADU. Commissioner Ross said Tree #7 is very close to the site of the building, and he is not troubled by the removal. He was supportive of the light fixtures. He would be supportive of the option to add rail lighting, but only on the long rail that is opposite the deck from the structure.

Commissioner Wilson was supportive of the design and appreciated it was built into the hillside subservient to the landscape. She liked the color palate and agreed she would prefer a bronze railing. She supported removing the bifurcated tree. She supported removing the bay trees which are unwanted in Portola Valley anyway. She was supportive of the project.

Vice Chair Koch supported the variance for the height because the railing is a very creative use of space, will have no impact on any neighbors, and will in fact make the ADU more enjoyable. She was supportive of the design being different from the existing structure because it makes sense in the program of this property. She said if there will be any lighting in the railings, she would want to see the detailed lighting plan. She said a construction staging plan is important in this small cul-de-sac. She said Tree #7 is not viable, and she supported its removal.

Chair Sill was supportive of the design, the siting, and the materials. He was supportive of the 20'6" height because the roof deck makes a lot of sense and impacts no neighbors. He was supportive of using a different style for the ADU since the direction is to change the style of the main house later. He was supportive of the removal of Tree #7. He was supportive of the project.

Vice Chair Koch moved to approve the Architectural Review for a new 1,000 sq. ft. one-story Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU); approve the height of 20'6" feet; approve the removal of the two significant trees; and approve the significantly different design of the ADU; with staff conditions and the additional condition to provide a final lighting plan for review by one ASCC member. Seconded by Commissioner Ross; the motion carried 4-0.

COMMISSION, STAFF, COMMITTEE REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

(3) Commission Reports

Planning & Building Director Russell did a site inspection at 15 Sausal with Commissioner Breen, looking at tree removal. She said the Fire District also got involved because some of the trees are now declining. She said phased removal of the trees may be considered, making sure that any trees representing a fire danger will be immediately removed. She said based on the results of the Fire District inspection, the property owner may request a phased removal, and it may be possible that an alteration of the condition might be brought back to the Commission.

Planning & Building Director Russell said staff has been working hard with the Planning Commission on the ADU work. She thanked the ASCC for the feedback they provided. She said, at the request of the Planning Commission, she and Associate Planner Cassidy will meet with Chair Sill to ask some follow-up questions to keep the process moving. She said the next Planning Commission meeting will be December 19, with a public hearing early in the new year, with a target of getting it to the Town Council in late February.

(4) News Digest: Planning Issues of the Day

Staff shared an article of interest with the Commissioners – “What’s behind the dramatic rise in 3-generation households?”

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

(5) ASCC Meeting of November 12, 2018

Commissioner Ross moved to approve the November 12, 2018, minutes as submitted. Seconded by Vice Chair Koch, the motion passed 3-0-1, with Commissioner Wilson abstaining.

ADJOURNMENT [8:00 p.m.]