

ARCHITECTURAL AND SITE CONTROL COMMISSION **January 28, 2019**
ASCC Field Meeting, 105 Santa Maria, Preliminary Architectural and Site Development Review for a two-story residence , removal of significant trees and landscaping.

Chair Koch called the field meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

ASCC: Commissioner Wilson, Breen, Sill and Chair Koch. Commissioner Ross absent.
Town Staff: Planning and Building Director Laura Russell, Planner Cynthia Richardson
Planning Commissioner: Ann Kopf-Sill
Conservation Committee: Judith Murphy

Others present

Jennifer Fraser – Applicant
Bill Manfred – Architect
Rob Maday – Landscape Architect
Jim Bull – Romero Construction
Michael Katz and Lawton Allenby – 107 Santa Maria
Jen Kuhn – 66 Santa Maria
Jean Isaacson – 19 Santa Maria

Planner Cynthia Richardson presented the report regarding the project which consists of preliminary architectural review and site development permit for a two-story residence with detached garage, tree removal, and new landscaping.

Following Planner Richardson's presentation, owner Jen Fraser offered information regarding the project and reviewed the colors and materials. The group discussed the tree removal as the owner pointed out the redwood trees to be removed. The group walked the upper portion of the site looking at the story poles.

Neighbor Lawton Allenby mentioned the window locations adjacent to his property and concerns regarding light spill. He inquired if there could be any kind of screens or eyebrow outside of the home over the windows. He mentioned that he would like the two redwood trees directly adjacent to his property to remain for screening. He also pointed out that with the new driveway, car headlights will shine directly into his property. He invited the group to visit his home and view the story poles from inside.

Jen Kunz mentioned that she would like to see the building moved to keep the view open as she drove by the property.

Neighbors Michael Katz and Lawton Allenby invited the group to their home. While on the deck, Commissioner Breen mentioned that all of the homes face the view out and that both homes were oriented in that direction. She mentioned that the Deodar cedar tree should also be removed as well.

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 5:00 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Koch 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, Al Sill, and Jane Wilson; Vice Chair Danna Breen; Chair Megan Koch
Absent: None
Planning Commission Liaison: Anne Kopf-Sill
Town Council Liaison: Maryann Derwin
Town Staff: Planning & Building Director Laura Russell; Associate Planner Cassidy; Planner Cynthia Richardson

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

(1) Architectural Review for an Addition and Remodel, 10 Ohlone Street, Jessie McEvoy & Terry Lee Residence, File # PLN ARCH 22-2018

Planner Richardson described the project data, background, code requirements, and discussion items regarding this proposal for an addition of 268 square feet to the main house and for the conversion of a carport into a garage, as detailed in the staff report. Staff recommended approval of the proposed addition and remodel subject to the Conditions of Approval in Attachment 1.

Chair Koch invited questions from the Commissioners.

Vice Chair Breen said she thought the glass garage door had not been approved by the Ranch Committee. Planner Richardson said she assumes this is an acceptable cut sheet, or they would bring a new one back to the Commission that is acceptable to the Ranch.

Chair Koch invited comments from the applicant. The applicant said all the materials will match the existing house. He said the architecture is similar to the Ranch. He said the additions are at the rear of the residence and are not visible. He said they will be returning to the HOA for a final landscaping plan prior to building permit.

Chair Koch invited questions from the Commissioners.

Commissioner Wilson asked about the HOA requiring a written response regarding accepting conditions by December 9. The applicant said that was done. Commissioner Wilson asked if there was a further update from the HOA. The applicant said they also submitted the garage door and light fixture cut sheets to the HOA who will be considering it on January 30.

With no further questions, Chair Koch invited public comment. Hearing none, Chair Koch brought the item back to the Commission for discussion.

Commissioner Sill was supportive of the project. He said it is a good usage of space. He said they did a good job of blending the new portion into the existing and said it will have very little impact. He said the garage changes look good, and the lighting plan is great. He said the preliminary landscape drawing looked hedge-like, and he encouraged the applicant to avoid creating a line of trees. He was supportive of the findings.

Commissioner Wilson was supportive of the project. She said it is a sensible addition and alteration.

Vice Chair Breen was supportive of the project. She said the project didn't need any landscaping.

Commissioner Ross said many people have electric powered tools or chargers with colored lights in a garage. He said if those are on at night, they are quite visible, and will illuminate the glass garage door. He said when the garage is remote from the house, it is possible to forget a light got left on, so he recommended timers for the garage lights. He agreed that there was no need for landscaping unless there was an issue with the neighbor. The applicant said the landscaping is being driven by the neighbor who is very specific as to the screening of the windows in the master bedroom and deck area. Planner Richardson said bringing a landscape plan back to a member of the Commission is included as Condition #9. Commissioner Ross said they might consider waiting for the final placement of the trees until the framing is complete. He appreciated the minimalist approach to exterior lighting. He also appreciated the very modest increase to impervious surface. He was in total support of the project.

Chair Koch was supportive of the project. She said she can support the findings. She agreed that the landscape plan should come back to one member of the ASCC for review.

Commissioner Sill moved to approve the Addition and Remodel, with staff's Conditions of Approval. Seconded by Commissioner Wilson; the motion carried 5-0.

(2) Preliminary Architectural Review and Site Development Permit for a New Residence, Removal of Significant Trees, and Landscaping, 105 Santa Maria, Fraser Residence, File # PLN ARCH 02-2018

A field meeting was held at this site earlier today.

Planner Richardson described the project data, background, code requirements, discussion items, Committee recommendations, public comments, and unresolved issues regarding this proposal for the demolition of the existing home and construction of a new 2,926 square foot residence with two single car garages, tree removal, landscaping, and associated improvements, as detailed in the staff report. Staff recommended the ASCC offer comments and direction to assist the applicant and project architect to make adjustments or clarifications prior to Commission consideration of final action on the application.

Chair Koch asked if the pathway leading to the firepit had any stairs. Planner Richardson said the pathway meanders back and forth with the grade, and there are small stairs in between. Chair Koch asked if there were stairs from the deck area to the firepit. She was concerned about the location of the associated lighting. Planner Richardson showed where the pathway

lighting was located.

Commissioner Sill asked if the wall sconce conforms with Town requirements. He said it appeared to shine light out to the side quite a bit. Planner Richardson said it's a poor image in the photograph, and the fixture is actually a cylinder with frosted glass, but she will double-check that it conforms.

Vice Chair Breen asked if there is any other fencing than what is shown along the top. Planner Richardson said no other fencing is proposed. In response to Vice Chair Breen's question, Planner Richardson confirmed the driveway material is gravel.

Commissioner Ross said even if that light fixture is frosted glass, it will be more effective at broadcasting light than illuminating the adjacent area. He said his guess is this fixture is not dark sky compliant.

Chair Koch invited the applicant to comment. The applicant thanked Planner Richardson for her work on the staff report. The applicant noted that they wanted to complete the tree removal prior to the nesting period for birds.

Chair Koch invited questions for the applicant.

Vice Chair Breen asked regarding plans for the windows and controlling light spill, and if there would be any glass treatment, especially on the southern elevation. The applicant said there is a slight tint to the glass and there will be solid shades at the top windows.

Commissioner Wilson asked why the bathroom windows on the south-facing elevation are at a different height to the bedroom windows. The applicant said the window is just meant to bring light in and is in the shower.

Chair Koch said that at the field visit today, the neighbors had creative ideas for reducing light spill. She said their main concern was the clerestory windows. She asked if the applicants would be amendable to creating some type of architectural detail on the clerestories that face the neighbors. The applicant said she would prefer shades that go down when it's dark rather than adding an architectural element to the exterior.

Commissioner Wilson asked if the applicant would consider lowering the height of the garage roofs. The applicant said she had not considered that.

With no further questions, Chair Koch invited public comment.

Lawton Allenby, 107 Santa Maria. Mr. Allenby said they welcome the new residence. He said they are concerned about the lighting. He said when the review committee was looking at 109 Santa Maria, which is currently under construction, they had a similar design where the cupola was all glass, and they ended up removing them, but were still able to get the front and back light sources in the cupola area. He said because in the subject residence these are over the great room, more light will be coming out of them. He said his experience as an architect dealing with interior blinds and window coverings is that it does not necessarily work 100 percent of the time. He said the applicant used to have pathway lights going down to her house that would be left on and shining into their bedroom at night. He said they would have to ask her to turn them off, which she would. He said some of the bedroom windows could be narrowed. He said looking at the downward face, there are sliding doors that go out onto patios which is a

great area of glass for lighting and ventilation, far exceeding what the IBC requires. He said adding the other windows are certainly an enhancement for more light, but they are already meeting the code requirement for lighting on the downhill side. He said the landscape planting was not complete. He said there are going to be toyons that are not listed so they don't know what that is. He asked if it would be a large tree or if they would have to wait 10 years. In response to Chair Koch, he said he was referring to the screening from his entry patio. He said he was less concerned about the applicant pulling in and parking, but more about the opportunity to mitigate the car lights coming up Santa Maria. He said his main concern was light pollution, and that the architectural features on the outside cut down some of the massing.

Ramesh Subramonian, 20 Russell Avenue. Mr. Subramonian said the idea of "I had my windows first and therefore you can't have yours" strikes him as not a good thing. However, he said he is not an architect. He said he moved to Portola Valley because it is a wonderful community. Two years ago his project came before the ASCC. He said many neighbors told him he had to plant live oaks on his property, had to build a 400 square foot garage, etc. He said he is very grateful that the Commission listens to all the opinions, as it should. He said their decisions should be fair and objective and based on established rules and procedures and not be swayed by personal preferences.

Jean Isaacson, 19 Santa Maria. Ms. Isaacson agreed with Mr. Subramonian's statement. She said it is a great project and follows all of the design guidelines. She said someone stated at the field visit that they were bothered there would be a house in this spot that for many decades has been an open view. She said the house at 109 will take away a view that she has enjoyed, but said that person has a right to build their house there. She said for the last 10 years she's enjoyed looking at an open space at 16 Russell, that is now being developed with a big house, and that's okay, too, because she doesn't have the right to say they can't build there or should have a smaller house, as long as they are following the Town rules and design guidelines.

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

Commissioner Ross said the massing and location of the project are thoughtful and work very well. He said he asked staff about the setbacks because it appears the current house is well into a rear setback that would not be allowed today, and this project brings everything closer to the street, which is where the buildable area in the Code actually exists. He said in that regard, the project brings the use of the site into better conformance with the Town rules and guidelines. He said the front elevation of the garages is attractive in a rustic way, doing a nice job of screening and providing some privacy for the main entry of the house. He was supportive of the materials board. He said he had some concerns about the lighting, and asked the applicant to check that the exterior lighting is dark-sky compliant. He said the path lights will have different uses in the different locations, which calls for separate switching. He said they see a lot of applications that want to maximize the glass as to bring in daylight. Commissioner Ross said he prefers that be done with windows rather than skylights, which illuminate the sky at night. He said there are issues with interior light spill with windows. He said the ASCC cannot tell people how to light the interior of a home, but it would be helpful to see a lighting plan so they can get an understanding of the light that will be emitted from all this glass. He said he also lives in a denser neighborhood, and everyone knows when someone is up late at night because the window glow is visible. He said finding ways to mitigate that will be appreciated by the community. He said he is not as concerned about car headlights driving up the street and pulling into the driveway because he thinks that will be an infrequent occurrence. He suggested that it might be helpful to screen that somewhat with planting.

Vice Chair Breen loved the direction the applicants are headed. She said the siting is obviously improved for the function of the house. She likes that the garage is in the front, which will preserve the sense of darkness from the street. She said the streetscape experience is really good. She wants them to revisit the light fixture and said it should be covered. She said the rear elevation expresses itself almost like a three-story house with a lot of glass. She said the light fixtures seem to be mounted too high. She said the lighting at the front is excessive and suggested one pendant fixture that would cover the hallway between the garages. She said her concern is wall washing in between the garages. Vice Chair Breen supported the removal of the trees and would like to see the Deodar cedar removed. She said she was initially concerned about the plate heights, but said the design of the garage in the front mitigates that. She did not go down to Trinity and look up to see the experience of probably three stories of glass, but it sounds like they are taking care of the glass and window treatments. She said she did look at the landscape plan since they are removing a lot of redwoods. She said *Myrica californica* tend to be temperamental and *Prunus ilicifolia* (hollyleaf cherry) is a better choice. She said because so many redwoods are being removed, she suggested lemonade berry, which has very deep roots and is often used to hold hillsides.

Commissioner Wilson suggested the applicants consider lowering the height of the garage. She said a 1-foot or 2-foot reduction would not make much of a difference from the design point of view but would make a difference for people driving past. She said the Commission needed to find that the location, design, and construction would minimize disturbances to the natural terrain and vistas, and this will affect the vista for people driving up and down Santa Maria. She suggested a reduction of the wall sconces on the rear decks and the front and back of the garage and on the downlights in the soffits. She suggested adding toyon to the plant list. She said she trusts the applicant's choice for suitable window treatments. She suggested reduction in path lighting. She said it is a great design.

Commissioner Sill said the design and siting are excellent. He was supportive of the material choices and liked the blue roof. He agreed with the proposed tree removals and Vice Chair Breen's suggestion for the Deodar cedars. He was concerned about the sconce fixture. He said there is too much lighting at the rear of the house with the sconces and recessed lights and should be reduced by a third to half. He liked Vice Chair Breen's idea about a pendant light. He said if that does not work out, the lights should be on a timer because that glow will be very noticeable from the street if left on. He was supportive of the architectural style. He said the plan with the toyons will address the car headlights. He said the addition of one oak would go a long way toward softening the view from the neighbor into the bedroom lights on the south elevation.

Chair Koch loved the materials board and said it will be a spectacular experience from the street. She said the fact they are also getting offsite parking as well as the garage is huge. She was supportive of the experience of the two garages and the walkway down. She agreed with Vice Chair Breen's idea of a pendant light with perhaps some step lights. She said construction staging will be important, especially with the nearby project that is still under construction. She said the lighting fixture needs to come back for review. She said the applicant and neighbors should be able to figure out the toyons separating the two properties, and the landscape plan should be brought back for review. She said the applicants should explore the clerestory shading, either internally or externally.

Commissioner Wilson said there were comments made today about timing the tree removal and the nesting periods. She asked if that could be done now. Planning & Building Director Russell said that would be possible with a motion made tonight, approving the tree removal separate from the rest of the development application to allow the removal before nesting season. She

encouraged the Commission to be very specific about what is being approved to avoid any miscommunication.

Vice Chair Breen moved to approve the removal of the redwoods, the Deodar cedar, and the oak tree (#19), encouraging that the wood coming from those trees be milled or cut in such a way it is usable. Seconded by Commissioner Wilson; the motion carried 5-0.

(3) Architectural Review of an Application to Legalize and Convert Existing Space to an Accessory Dwelling Unit, 175 Fawn Lane, Dobrenski Residence, File # PLN ARCH 23-2018

Commissioner Wilson recused herself due to conflict of interest.

Associate Planner Cassidy described the project data, background, and discussion items regarding the proposed 695 square foot ADU created by remodeling an existing home and deck, as detailed in the staff report. Staff recommended approval of the proposed ADU subject to the Conditions of Approval in Attachment 1.

Chair Koch invited questions from the Commissioners.

Vice Chair Breen asked if there was more coming beyond these projects. Associate Planner Cassidy said other remodeling projects are already permitted and underway, but there were no triggers associated with the remodel requiring ASCC review.

James Barker, project architect, advised that they felt it made the most sense to create/legalize the ADU in the existing space.

Chair Koch invited questions from the Commissioners.

Hearing none, Chair Koch invited public comment. Hearing none, Chair Koch brought the item back to the Commission for discussion.

Commissioner Sill said the project is reasonable, and it is good for the Town to have another ADU. He supported the findings to exceed the 85% maximum floor area, and he was in support of the project.

Vice Chair Breen was supportive of the project. She encouraged changing the landscaping in front because from the streetscape it does not feel very Portola Valley-like. She could make the findings to exceed the 85% maximum floor area. She said she heard work is being done on this project on weekends, and she urged the applicants to be more respectful of their neighbors.

Commissioner Ross supported the project. He said it is important that legal ADUs be part of the housing stock. He said the only small concern is there will be a bit of a car shuffle if somebody parks in front of the garage doors and somebody wants to get out of the garage.

Chair Koch was supportive of the project. She said she loves seeing ADUs, and this one makes such good sense. She also heard about construction on the weekends and advised the applicants to be mindful of the neighbors. Chair Koch said she could make the findings and supported the project.

Commissioner Sill moved to approve legalization and conversion of existing space to an

Accessory Dwelling Unit, with staff's Conditions of Approval. Seconded by Commissioner Ross; the motion carried 4-0. (Commissioner Wilson recused.)

(4) Architectural Review of an Addition, New Pool and Outdoor BBQ, and Reconfigured Parking, 175 Willowbrook Drive, Cheng Residence, File # PLN ARCH 17-2018

Commissioner Wilson rejoined the meeting. Vice Chair Breen recused herself due to conflict of interest. Vice Chair Breen also noted that she had no additional reports and had read and approved the minutes, as she would not rejoin the meeting.

Associate Planner Cassidy described the project data, background, and discussion items regarding the proposed 584 square foot attached garage and gym, new pool and outdoor barbecue, and reconfigured parking area, as detailed in the staff report. Staff recommended approval of the proposed addition and improvements, subject to the Conditions of Approval in Attachment 1.

In response to Chair Koch's question, Associate Planner Cassidy said the two pool lights that are proposed are below the lumen count.

Commissioner Sill said the applicants are modifying a gate that does not conform to current code. He asked what would trigger a requirement for the applicants to put the gate in the correct spot. Associate Planner Cassidy said staff would consider requiring the correct placement of the gate if it were changing location anyway. She said at this point the applicants are only removing a decorative feature. Commissioner Sill said they were refurbishing it, and it will look different. The applicant said it will be painted a dark color, the crown detail will be removed, and the actual opening mechanism will be refurbished. Commissioner Sill said he finds it very objectionable to see the gate at the road. Associate Planner Cassidy said that gate was permitted for the property prior to the setback requirement for gates existed, so it is a legal nonconforming feature.

Commissioner Wilson asked if the entire property was fenced. The applicant said it was. Commissioner Sill asked if the decorative crown feature was going to be removed from the entire fence. He said if the applicants are going to work on the fence, they might as well get rid of the unattractive hedge growing into it.

Chair Koch invited comments by the applicants. The architect and project designer were present. The architect further described the proposed work to be done.

Chair Koch invited questions from the Commission.

Commissioner Wilson asked if they are considering a kitchen in the guesthouse. The applicant said the owner was not interested in that at this time.

Commissioner Ross said the routing of the pool infrastructure between the pool and the equipment enclosure looks like it may be tricky. The applicant said the owners preferred for it to not be at the pool area itself.

With no further questions for the applicant, Chair Koch invited public comment. Hearing none, she brought the item back to the Commission for discussion.

Commissioner Ross said moving the gate to the current setback requirements was possible, but would be quite a project and he would not make it a condition of approval. He said he is a little concerned about nighttime light spill in the vicinity of the gym skylight. The applicant said the light in the gym is a fan light with the fan above the light which should help, plus it is only used for specific periods of time. Commissioner Ross was supportive of the project.

Commissioner Wilson was supportive of the project. Her only concern was that two light fixtures appeared to have clear shades. The applicant said the lights are dark sky compliant. Planning & Building Director Russell explained that glass was aesthetic only, and the bulb is entirely up inside the black canister. Commissioner Wilson said she was not happy that the entire property is fenced in.

Commissioner Sill said he was supportive of all the proposed changes. He said the property could use some landscaping. He said lawns don't belong in Portola Valley, the gate doesn't belong where it is, and the hedge along the front of the house doesn't belong there. He said there are some real problems with this property, and he doesn't like that those but understands they cannot be fixed with this application.

Chair Koch was supportive of the project. She wished there was an opportunity to move the gate back.

Commissioner Ross moved to approve the Addition, New Pool and Outdoor BBQ, and Reconfigured Parking with staff's Conditions of Approval. Seconded by Commissioner Sill; the motion carried 4-0. (Vice Chair Breen recused.)

COMMISSION, STAFF, COMMITTEE REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

(5) Commission Reports

None.

(6) Staff Report

Planning & Building Director Russell reported on the last Planning Commission meeting regarding the ADU resolutions.

(7) News Digest: Planning Issues of the Day

Staff shared an article of interest with the Commissioners – “Building a Bay Area granny flat still challenging.”

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

(8) ASCC Meeting of January 14, 2019

Commissioner Wilson moved to approve the January 14, 2019, minutes as submitted. Seconded by Commissioner Ross, the motion passed 4-0.

ADJOURNMENT [8:41 p.m.]