

**Architectural and Site Control Commission**  
**Special Site Meeting, 274 Corte Madera Road, Byrne/Dickerson and**  
**Regular Evening Meeting, 765 Portola Road, Portola Valley, California**

**June 11, 2012**

Vice Chair Breen called the special site meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. at 274 Corte Madera Road.

**Roll Call:**

ASCC: Breen, Clark, Koch, Warr

Absent: Hughes

Town Staff: Town Planner Vlasic, Planning Technician Brown

Others\* present relative to the Byrne/Dickerson application:

Andy Byrne, applicant

Jonathan Feldman, project architect

Marianne Plunder, Conservation Committee

Pat McGuire, 267 Corte Madera Road

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\*Others may have been present and didn't identify themselves and/or may have come or left during the course of the site meeting without formal identification.

**Preliminary Review, Architectural Review for Residential Redevelopment, 274 Corte Madera Road, Byrne/Dickerson**

Vlasic presented the June 7, 2012 staff report on the preliminary review of this proposal for residential redevelopment of the subject .48-acre Brookside Park area property. He emphasized that the site meeting provided the opportunity for the applicant and project design team to explain the proposal, address neighbor and ASCC questions and obtain preliminary reactions. He added that project review would be continued from the afternoon site meeting to the regular evening ASCC meeting at the town center where additional input could be provided. He commented that at the conclusion of the evening meeting, project consideration would be continued to the June 25<sup>th</sup> regular ASCC meeting to provide the opportunity for any design changes or clarifications that may be needed prior to the ASCC considering final action on the project.

Vlasic noted that the proposal calls for a partial two-story residence with a total floor area of 3,496 sf, or 92.6% of the total floor area permitted on the parcel. He advised that the house would exceed the 85% limit of 3,208 sf by 288 sf and that this concentration of floor area is only possible subject to the ASCC making the findings required by Section 18.48.020 of the zoning ordinance. Vlasic added that the required findings are evaluated in the staff report but should also be considered by the ASCC during the course of the site meeting.

ASCC members considered the staff report and the following project plans, unless otherwise noted, dated April 30, 2012 and prepared by Feldman Architecture:

Sheet G.00, Project Info

Sheet G.01, Build it Green Checklist

Sheet SU1, Topographic Survey, Lea & Braze Engineering, 3/13/12

Sheet L1.00, Landscape Site Plan, Peter Rosekrans

Sheet A1.00, Site Plan

Sheet A2.00, First Floor Plan

Sheet A2.01, Second Floor Plan

Sheet A2.02, Roof Plan  
Sheet A2.03, Cabana Plans  
Sheet A3.00, East and West Elevations (front and rear)  
Sheet A3.01, South and North Elevations (left and right sides)  
Sheet A3.02, Patio Elevations  
Sheet A3.03, Cabana Elevations

Also considered by the ASCC were the following materials provided as part of the application proposal:

- May 1, 2012 letter from project architect and 5/9/12 calculations from project civil engineer defining the grading for the project at 90 cubic yards.
- An exterior materials board, 5/1/12.
- Outdoor water use efficiency checklist, 4/30/12.
- Arborist Report, McClenahan Consulting, April 4, 2012

Mr. Byrne and Mr. Feldman presented the plans to the ASCC and led all present on an inspection of the site and the story poles set for the site meeting. During the course of the inspection, they offered the following comments and clarifications, partially in response to questions raised during the site meeting and also matters noted in the staff report:

- The intent of the design is to have the new house have minimum potential for standing out along the street corridor. The flat roof form and siting have been selected to minimize potential visual impacts of the new house and also capture views from the house and property to the western hillsides and Windy Hill.
- The proposed improvements have been located to minimize potential for impacts on site oaks and to also take into account visual relationships with the houses on the parcels to the north and south. The upper level master bedroom represents a small second story and has been located to minimize potential for view impacts on the parcel to the south, but also allows for capturing of views to Windy Hill.
- The cabana has been moved to the west and located along the southwestern portion of the site. This siting with the low, flat roof protects views across the west side of the parcel to the western hillsides.
- In response to a question, it was noted that the scope of front yard landscaping was planned to help the house recede from view along the street corridor, but that somewhat less planting would be considered to address the concern that the front yard area may be over-planted. It was agreed that a balance between “screening” objectives and a more open streetscape should be considered.
- The planned garage doors are to be wood to match the proposed wood siding for the house. They will not be metal and glass as noted on the plan elevation sheet.
- In response to a question regarding risk from the “overhanging” branches of the very large pine tree on the property to the north, it was noted the applicant and neighboring property owner were in discussions relative to possible tree trimming. It was also noted that the neighbor was not interested in removing the tree.
- In response to a question regarding possible use of a very low pitch shed roof to tie the new roof form more into the forms generally found in the neighborhood, it was explained that such a design had been considered but rejected. It was further explained that when

a possible shed roof design was modeled, it resulted in higher elements and more visual presence for the house and that this contradicted the objectives of drawing views over the property and downplaying the importance of the structure. It was also noted that the sheds, to work visually, would have the higher elevations exposed on the west side and this is the side where more sun impact is expected.

During the course of the site walk it was noted that the story poles placed to model the proposed cabana were not fully consistent with the data presented on the site plan. The project architect advised that the intent was to keep the cabana height as low as possible by grading into the site. This raised concerns over the potential impacts on the adjacent 36" Blue Oak (tree #2 in the arborist's report). It was agreed that the plan for grading and building siting would be reconsidered with the project arborist to ensure that oak would be protected. It was understood that the outcome of this reconsideration would be part of a revised submittal to be provided prior to the June 25<sup>th</sup> ASCC meeting.

Public comments were offered. **Ms. McGuire** offered support for the proposed design placing the new house in much the same location as the existing house and maintaining a very low profile as demonstrated by the story poles.

**Marianne Plunder** noted that conservation committee would review the proposed landscape plan and offer input prior to the June 25<sup>th</sup> ASCC meeting. She suggested, however, that the applicant check on the potential impact of the overhanging pine branches on fire insurance for the proposal residence. She also recommended that the applicant consider removing one of the two existing front yard oaks on the north side of the entry walk. She offered that one would likely thrive to its full potential and neither would do as well if left adjacent to one another.

ASCC members considered the project and found it generally acceptable and appreciated the information provided during the site meeting. Breen expressed some initial concerns over making the findings needed to allow the project to exceed the 85% floor area limit. After, however, considering site and area conditions, she advised that she was beginning to understand that the concentration would likely be superior to additional floor area in detached structures in the rear yard area. The specific ASCC concerns included the following:

- Verify that the final cabana siting and design should have minimum potential for impacting the health of the adjacent 36" blue oak.
- Reduce the scope of planting, particularly in the front yard area. Breen noted that the proposed *Myrica californica* could get very tall and mass together into a linear form.
- Eliminate the fire pit or limit the fire source to gas to protect the oak whose branches are immediately above the proposed fire pit siting area. (It was noted that this element was being reconsidered by the applicants.)

At the conclusion of the site meeting, Vice Chair Breen thanked the applicants, project architect and others present for their participation at the meeting and advised that project discussion would continue at the regular evening ASCC meeting.

## **Adjournment**

The special site meeting was adjourned at 5:40 p.m.

Vice Chair Breen called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. in the Town Center historic School House meeting room.

**Roll Call:**

ASCC: Breen, Clark, Koch, Warr  
Absent: Hughes  
Planning Commission liaison: None  
Town Council Liaison: Aalfs  
Town Staff: Town Planner Vlastic, Planning Technician Brown

**Oral Communications**

Oral communications were requested, but none were offered.

**Architectural Review for changes to original exterior lighting plan, 120 Golden Hills Drive, Rubin**

Vlastic presented the June 7, 2012 staff report on this request for approval of plans for exterior yard and driveway lighting beyond that allowed for with the original 2007 approval of plans for new residential development of this, then vacant, Oak Hills subdivision property. He explained that the new lighting proposal is described in the June 5, 2012 letter from project architect Robert Stoecker and shown on the "**Exterior Site Lighting**" plan dated 5/10/12 prepared by Stoecker and Northway Architects Incorporated.

Vlastic emphasized that the main purpose of this ASCC meeting was to determine how to proceed with review of the proposal, which would best be done at an evening meeting where lighting conditions could most appropriately be evaluated. He noted that options for a site meeting were discussed in the staff report. He added that based on the communications received from neighbors, both before and after the staff report was prepared, including the letter statement from Mr. and Mrs. Jack, 938 Westridge Drive, received June 11, 2012, it now seems most appropriate for the ASCC to conduct a fully noticed site meeting. In response to a question about possibly conducting the site visit after "this evening's" regular ASCC meeting, Vlastic advised that this had not been noticed and, thus, would not be appropriate.

Robert Stoecker, project architect, was present to share the proposal with ASCC members and discuss the framework for a site meeting. He referenced the proposed plans and also had samples of the yard light fixtures available for reference. He offered the following comments and clarifications:

- As noted in his June 5, 2012 letter, the scope of proposed lighting could be found consistent with town lighting standards in terms of light function, intensity and visibility from off site. As can be seen from the plans, a number of "existing" fixtures are to be removed, or have been removed, and others have already been oriented to ensure not only the source, but the entire glass covering over the source is not visible from off the property. It was explained that the existing fixtures proposed to be removed have been fitted with plastic sleeves that fully cover the light source.

- The property owner does have evening outside gatherings and lights are needed for safe use of the pathways and stairs, particularly from the front parking area to the rear yard.
- While the number of driveway lights is to be reduced as shown on the plans, some lighting is desired for pedestrian use. The driveway is relatively steep and guests do walk the driveway to get to and from parking along the driveway and street to the house.
- The concerns expressed by neighbors over views to the driveway and guest parking area have been considered by the property owner. He has recently planted four, 48" box size trees on the north side of the driveway that now partially screen views, and in time will achieve significant screening of views, to the driveway surface. In time, these will be effective in terms of screening views from the Jack, Aldag and other nearby properties. A Google map/air photo exhibit was presented to show the location of the screen trees relative to the views from these neighboring houses located to the east and northeast of the Rubin property.
- While the town lighting standards and guidelines address lighting in terms of incandescent watts, a better measure is of light spread in foot candles. Unfortunately, even this currently has problems as a number of the more energy efficient LED light sources don't have foot candle ratings.
- The proposed driveway and yard light fixtures are mostly the "S" type shown on the plans. These are narrow tubes with the light source limited to a small channel on one side. This light channel has been directed down and into the site to ensure minimum potential for light spill. The "T" fixture is similar, but has light sources in two tubes that extend out from the middle mounting column of the "T." These fixtures are used to light the decks and the pathway along the west side of the house. The light is directed down and the property owners use the deck lights with the interior lights off when they dine or otherwise use outside deck areas. The pathway along the west side is important for night access between the rear yard entertainment area and front yard parking area.
- The applicant fully appreciates concerns over the lighting proposals and is prepared to have a fully noticed ASCC site evening meeting at the property.

Public comments were requested and the following were offered:

**Robert Jack, 938 Westridge Drive**, reviewed the comments and concerns in his written statement to the ASCC received by the town earlier in the day. He stressed that the scope of existing/proposed lighting is not consistent with town standards and policies and is not in harmony with the more rural environment people have come to Portola Valley to enjoy. He noted that even with the proposed removal of fixtures, the lighting would still be excessive and that it is made more intense by the light color of the surface of the concrete driveway. He encouraged an evening night meeting and asked that the ASCC come to his property to view the subject site and the impacts of lighting from it. He offered that not only the yard and driveway lighting have impacts, but also lighting from within the house, which should be considered in evaluating the lighting proposal. He concluded by asking the ASCC to continue to act to protect the visual character of the community.

**Mary Jack, 938 Westridge Drive**, added to the comments offered by Mr. Jack and in the June 11<sup>th</sup> transmittal to the ASCC. She stressed that the house designed by Mr. Stoecker was well done, but that the driveway surface was not consistent with the original ASCC

approval. She noted that the added landscaping provides some benefit, but that the requested lighting is not consistent with town values and should be denied. She provided a photo of the light fixture on the subject site and noted that the channel of light suggests significantly more illumination than indicated in the comments from Mr. Stoecker.

**John and Melinda Lipa, 125 La Sandra Way**, provided photos of their view to the night lighting of the subject property. They indicated that lights are illuminated for relatively long periods of time and that the house lights, both interior and exterior, add to the significant evening light spill. They noted that the lights over the garage are on regularly until approximately 10:45 p.m. every evening. They expressed concern over the driveway concrete finish and requested that the ASCC consider evening views from their property. They also concluded that the proposed lighting was not consistent with town values or lighting standards.

ASCC members considered the comments from Mr. Stoecker and the neighbors. They agreed that a noticed evening meeting with the full ASCC would be needed and this meeting was set to start at 8:30 p.m. on June 25, 2012, i.e., at the end of the next regular ASCC meeting. Members directed staff to adjust the 6/25 agenda to accommodate the site meeting and that the session should start at the Rubin property so that the existing conditions, including the lights, driveway surface and recent screen landscaping can be considered. Mr. Stoecker was directed to work with the town planner to set the details for the review, which should include time for visiting at least the Jack and Lipa properties to consider views and illumination from the site.

Following discussion, project consideration was continued to the June 25, 2012 site meeting as directed above.

### **Preliminary Review, Architectural Review for Residential Redevelopment, 274 Corte Madera Road, Byrne/Dickerson**

Vlasic presented the June 7, 2012 staff report on this proposal and discussed the event of the afternoon site meeting on the project, (Refer to above site meeting minutes which include a complete listing of project plans and materials.) He reminded the ASCC and others present that this was a preliminary project review and that following the offering of additional input to that provided at the site meeting application consideration should be continued to the regular June 25, 2012 ASCC meeting. He clarified that this would allow the applicant and project design team to address preliminary review comments so that the plans, hopefully, could be in form for a formal ASCC action at the next meeting.

Julie Dickerson, Jon Feldman and Peter Rosekrans were present to further discuss the project and proposal plans and materials with the ASCC. The following comments and clarifications were offered as additional to those presented at the afternoon field session:

- Concerns over more “aggressive” front yard landscaping will be considered and addressed with a revised landscape plan. In addition, the issues relative to the cabana and its relationship to the 36” oak will be reviewed with the project arborist and any design adjustments found necessary made to the proposal.
- In response to a question, it was noted that the Texas Privet at the west end of the site was actually on the neighboring parcel to the west.
- If the fire pit remains in the plans it will be a gas unit.

Public comments were requested. Marianne Plunder, on behalf of the conservation committee, advised that the committee would review the plans and likely have additional comments to offer. She did note, however, that the applicant might want to consider less planting of materials with “red” characteristics.

In response, Ms. Dickerson advised that she preferred whites and blues and would review the plant color palette with Mr. Rosekrans. Mr. Rosekrans advised that he believed that the current palette did not over emphasize “red,” but would further review the matter.

ASCC members discussed the project and concurred support for it, including the proposed concentration of floor area, subject to the clarifications discussed at the site meeting. In addition, the following preliminary comments were offered:

- The plan for house lighting should be presented on a comprehensive plan that shows both house and yard lighting. Warr commented that any upper deck lighting should be minimal and, preferably, no lighting should be needed for the deck since it does not have access to grade. It was also suggested that any lighting at the BBQ area be identified and that consideration be given to reducing the number of step lights from the house to the cabana.
- The final landscape plan should include provisions for management of the planned meadow grass area to ensure that invasive materials, e.g., thistle, are eliminated and prevented from reestablishing in the meadow.
- In developing landscape plan revisions for less planting, consideration should be given to reducing the *Myrica californica* under the oaks.

Following sharing of these additional comments, project consideration was continued to the June 25, 2012 regular ASCC meeting.

### **Report on Portola Road Corridor Plan, Progress of Taskforce Work and Next Steps**

Vlasic presented the June 7, 2012 staff report on the status of the taskforce work and noted that the minutes from the June 6, 2012 taskforce meeting had been distributed to ASCC members after the staff report for the June 11<sup>th</sup> meeting was completed. Breen also discussed the work of the taskforce and the notes from the June 6<sup>th</sup> meeting. She stressed that the taskforce concurred with the previous ASCC comments that while a multi-use trail corridor should exist along Portola Road, the path should not be paved like the Alpine Road C-1 trail.

Clark also commented that any plan should stress removal of all non-native materials along the corridor and should also provide directions relative to removal and long-term control of invasive materials. He added that consideration should be given to a different color for the now white guardrail along the Sequoias road frontage and even elimination of the guardrail if possible.

Vlasic advised that the additional comments would be shared with the planning commission when it considers the taskforce report now scheduled to take place at a July 18, 2012 planning commission study session.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Clark moved, seconded by Breen, and passed 2-0-2 (Koch, Warr) approval of the May 29, 2012 special meeting minutes as drafted.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:53 p.m.

T. Vlastic