

**Architectural and Site Control Commission** **February 25, 2013**  
**Special Site Meeting, 420 Golden Oak Drive, Wood, and**  
**Regular Evening ASCC Meeting, 765 Portola Road, Portola Valley, California**

Chair Breen called the special site meeting to order at 4:03 p.m. at 420 Golden Oak Drive.

**Roll Call:**

ASCC: Breen, Clark, Hughes, Ross

ASCC absent: Koch

Town Council Liaison: Aalfs

Town Staff: Town Planner Vlastic, Interim Planning Manager Padovan,  
Assistant Planner Borck

Others\* present relative to the proposal for 420 Golden Oak Drive:

Douglas Woods and Barina Hawes, applicants

Carter Warr, project architect

Kevin Schwarckopf, project architect

Judith Murphy and Jane Bourne, Conservation Committee

Virginia Bacon, 205 Golden Oak Drive

Esther and Martin Litton, 180 Bear Gulch Road

Jean and Ted Lamb, 190 Bear Gulch Road

Greg Corrales, 410 Golden Oak Drive

Howard Lau, 390 Golden Oak Drive

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\*Others may have been present during the course of the site meeting but did not formally identify themselves for the record.

**Preliminary Architectural Review – Residential Redevelopment with swimming pool and related site improvements, 420 Golden Oak Drive, Woods**

Vlastic presented the February 21, 2013 staff report on this preliminary review of the subject application for residential redevelopment of this 1.1-acre Alpine Hills subdivision parcel. He explained that the project includes a new, two-story, 5,263 sf Mediterranean style architecture residence with attached garage, large basement, new swimming pool and other site modifications including proposals for removal of acacia, eucalyptus, elm and other non native vegetation. Vlastic reviewed the issues with the proposal as discussed in the staff report, with particular concern over the findings that need to be made by the ASCC to allow for the planned concentration of floor area. He also discussed the additional data needs and plan clarifications outlined in the staff report.

Vlastic stressed that no specific action is taken with the preliminary review process, and that while a number of plan matters need to be clarified, staff wanted to make use of the preliminary review to obtain neighbor input and ASCC reactions to the proposal. He noted that understanding site conditions would be important to the ASCC and, therefore, he asked that the applicant and project design team take sufficient time to explain site conditions and the plans to ASCC members and neighbors.

Vlastic advised that after the site meeting, project review should be continued to the regular evening ASCC meeting and from that meeting to at least the March 11, 2013 regular meeting to permit time for the project design team to consider and respond to preliminary review input and ASCC directions. Vlastic also referenced the January 25, 2013 letter to the

ASCC from Jeanne Kunz, 235 Golden Oak Drive, offering comments and concern over the proposed project.

ASCC members considered the staff report, neighbor letter and the following project plans, unless otherwise noted, dated 1/29/13, and prepared by CJW Architecture:

Sheet: T-01, Title Sheet  
Sheet: T-0.2, Exterior Lighting Sections  
Sheet: T-.4, Build It Green (See attached Checklist for corrected BIG target numbers.)  
Sheet SU1, Lea & Braze Engineering, Inc., 6/13/12  
Sheet: A-0.1, Demolition Site Plan  
Sheet: A-1.1, Site Plan  
Sheet: L-1, Landscape Plan, Williams Brothers, Landscapes  
Sheet: A-2.1, Main Floor Plan  
Sheet: A-3.1, Exterior Elevations

Also considered were the following materials provided In support of the plans:

- Revised BIG Checklist received 2/15/13 targeting 229 BIG points whereas a minimum of 228 points is mandated for this project.
- Finish Board, 1/30/13, CJW Architecture
- Outdoor Water Use Efficiency Checklist, 2/4/13 (**no** irrigated turf proposed)

The applicants and project architects presented the proposal and during the presentation and site inspection made use of story poles installed to model the proposed changes, including the new two-story house with stair “tower” and swimming pool with fill. Warr referred to the design evaluation comments on plan Sheet: A-1.1 and also presented a new plan sheet to clarify the grading cut and fill volumes and a sheet with a section through the site including the new house and pool area. Making use of the plan data and story poles, all present were provided with an overview of the project, and several attendees walked the site with the applicants and design team members. Views were also considered from the Golden Oak Drive frontage and from Bear Gulch Road as well as the properties on the southeast side of Bear Gulch.

During the site inspection, the applicants and project architects provided the following comments and clarifications.

- The building areas/pads established with original property development were considered appropriate to accommodate the now planned concentration of floor area. This results in lesser impacts from grading and vegetation removal and the majority of trees to be removed are those the town guidelines call for removal and/or replacement. The preference would be to remove the majority of the acacia, elm and eucalyptus with project construction, as shown on the plans. It is, however, recognized that this will open the building site to views, particularly from Golden Oak Drive and, therefore, a phased program for removal can be considered and would be acceptable to the property owners.
- The fill for the pool area is really to replace contours to a more native condition. The topography that exists at the pool site was created originally for level outside play. This area would be returned to elevations more consistent with original site conditions and landscaping added on the fill slopes and to also close vegetation gaps that exist along Bear Gulch Road frontage.

- The project proposes to plant significant new oaks to provide screening lost with the removal of the non-native trees, particularly the acacia and elms. Large oaks have already been acquired and are being maintained off site. Some of these trees are 60-inch box size and have heights of up to 23 feet. These can be installed very soon after demolition of existing conditions and rough site grading. This would ensure that the trees are in place and hopefully established at the site for screening when the proposed project is ready for occupancy.
- The new garage location and driveway changes actually result in removing asphalt surfaces on the east side of the house and this allows for more effective placement of new screen trees. Further, the new garage location will ensure that views from Golden Oak are not directly to the garage doors as is currently the case.
- While placement of the new house and garage toward the northernmost corner of the parcel does require some uphill grading and removal of two smaller oaks, this location provides for better “hiding” of the garage and also helps keep the house out of view from the uphill neighbors. As requested by staff, an arborist report is also being prepared relative to the significant trees on the site and actions that will be taken to protect them.
- The concerns over the house stair tower are appreciated, but with the planned landscaping views to the “tower” should be mitigated.
- The proposed architecture is a Montecito style and is deemed appropriate for the neighborhood, and fitting in with site conditions. The concerns in the staff report relative to materials, finishes and massing are, however, being considered.
- The lower level guest unit would be accessed by a stair that descends from the pool level. Thus, there would be no view from off site to the lower level access. In addition, the floor area questions relative to the basement raised in the staff report are being clarified.
- Materials from the basement excavation would be used for the fill at the swimming pool and the intent is to balance the cut and fill on the property.

The site inspection included the area for the new house, the garage, pool, and also consideration of possible uses of the house pad extensions to the east and west of the existing house. It was noted that while the west side pad that contains the bocce ball court could be used, the impact on views from the house and yard areas on 410 Golden Oak would be more significant. Extensions to the east would result in added impacts on views from Golden Oak.

After walking the site and considering views from Golden Oak Drive and Bear Gulch Road, comments were requested from those present other than ASCC members. ASCC members advised that they would provide comments at the evening ASCC meeting. The following were then provided.

**Virginia Bacon** expressed concern over the size of the project relative to the neighborhood conditions and particularly the views to the east end of the proposed two-story house. She also expressed concern over the size of the proposed basement and encouraged a smaller house and moving the mass of the house to the west. She also encouraged removal of non-native plant materials.

**Martin Litton** expressed concern over the structural integrity of the pool fill and construction part of the project particularly given the hillside condition of the property and seismic setting of Portola Valley. In response to questions, he did not offer any concerns relative to the proposed house design or potential visual impacts relative to views from his property.

**Ted Lamb** noted that his main concern was with replacement screen planting. He also commented that the current site has considerable lights located in trees. (Vlasic advised that permanent lighting in trees is prohibited by town ordinances.)

**Greg Corrales** thanked the applicants for reaching out to him and for proposing additional screen planting along the common property line with his parcel. He also expressed appreciation for the placement of the house and offered that additional massing in the area of the bocce ball court would adversely impact views from his home. He also expressed the opinion that the town review process is overly burdensome and that the ASCC should proceed to approve this project in a timely manner.

**Judith Murphy** offered that while phased removal of the non-native plant materials might be considered, she concluded that it would be preferable to remove them with project construction and allow for the new screen planting to be installed as soon as possible.

After the site discussions and sharing of the above preliminary comments, ASCC members agreed that they would offer their comments and reactions on the proposal at the regular evening ASCC meeting. Members thanked the applicants and neighbors for participation in the site meeting. Thereafter, project consideration was continued to the regular evening ASCC meeting.

### **Adjournment**

The special site meeting was adjourned at 5:07 p.m.

**Architectural and Site Control Commission**  
**Regular Evening Meeting, 765 Portola Road, Portola Valley, California**

**February 25, 2013**

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

**Roll Call:**

ASCC: Breen, Clark, Hughes, Ross

Absent: Koch

Planning Commission liaison: Gilbert

Town Council Liaison: Aalfs

Town Staff: Town Planner Vlasic, Assistant Planner Borck and  
Interim Planning Manager Padovan

**Oral Communications**

Oral communications were requested, but none were offered.

**Architectural Review for addition of detached accessory structure “recreation room/studio,” 121 Ash Lane, Vidalakis**

Vlasic briefly reviewed the comments in the February 21, 2013 staff report on this proposal for approval of a detached, 504 sf recreation room/studio on the subject 3.7-acre Westridge Subdivision area parcel. He explained that the applicant has requested that project review be continued to the March 11<sup>th</sup> meeting, as she is still trying to find a location for the proposed structure that meets her needs and satisfies the requirements of the Westridge Architectural Supervising Committee (WASC). Vlasic added that staff supports the requested continuance to the March 11<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Public comments were requested, but none were offered. Thereafter, project consideration was continued to the regular March 11, 2013 ASCC meeting.

**Staff Referral for Architectural Review -- Fence Permit Application, 295 Golden Oak Drive, Keamy**

Borck presented the February 21, 2013 staff report on this staff referral to the ASCC approval of fencing proposed within the front setback and along a majority of the western side property line, the full length of the rear property line, and a portion of the eastern side property line of the subject 1.1-acre Alpine Hills property. She reviewed the recent history of town approvals for the site and then presented the fencing proposal as described on the “All Fence Company, Inc.” documents received February 1, 2013. She also reviewed the revised fence plan received 2/22/13 with further adjustments added to the rear and side property line fencing.

Sunnie Bertolucci, All Fence Company representative, presented the proposal and noted that she understood the concerns in the staff report relative to the linear and exposed nature of the proposed front yard fencing and was seeking ASCC direction on this matter.

Breen requested clarification of the scope of possible ASCC action on the fence the referral. Vlasic advised that while staff concluded the majority of the proposed fencing did conform to the provisions of the fence ordinance, concern was identified over the proposed front

ornamental yard fencing and if the proposal was consistent with the intent of the purpose statements in Section 18.43.010 of the ordinance. Vlastic noted that the ASCC, under fence ordinance provisions, could act to request changes and or deny a fence proposal if it concluded it did not satisfy the purpose statements of the ordinance. In response to a question, Vlastic shared a copy of the landscape plan that had been required with the ASCC approval of the house project for the subject site. He noted that it appears that all of the required front yard planting had not been installed, but that project construction had been "signed-off" by the town.

Ross requested a clarification as to the fence design and, specifically, if the posts for the post and wire fence would be located on the inside or outside of the fence wire. Ms. Bertolucci advised that this aspect of the design had not been finalized and could be as preferred by the ASCC. Mr. Ross suggested that an "inside" location would result in a "cleaner" expression to neighbor views.

Public comments were requested. **Virginia Bacon, 205 Golden Oak Drive**, questioned if the proposed front yard ornamental fencing fit the site, particularly with the lack of front yard landscaping.

ASCC members discussed the proposal and found that members could, with conditions, support the 2/22/13 modified plans for side and rear yard fencing, but were not prepared at this time to support the requested front yard fencing. In particular, it was noted that the front yard plan needed to be modified to minimize the potential view impacts resulting from the lack of landscaping and more formal appearance of the proposed straight run of ornamental fencing. Suggestions included moving the fence further back into the site, adding landscaping to soften views to the fencing, altering the fence design to a "staggered" form, and/or moving the fence back to the existing pool retaining wall where it could be lowered, using the wall and a shorter fence together to meet the homeowner's objectives for control of dogs.

Ms. Bertolucci stated appreciation for the ASCC comments and advised that she would also review the landscape plan originally approved for the site in developing a modified plan for the front yard fencing.

Following discussion Hughes moved, seconded by Ross and passed 4-0 approval of the 2/22/13 revised plans for only the side and rear yard fencing subject to the following conditions for plan modifications to be addressed to the satisfaction of a designated ASCC member prior to issuance of the fence permit:

1. The west side fence alignment shall be modified to pull the fence downhill and away from the property line in a manner that minimizes visual impacts on views from the swimming pool and pool deck area on the parcel to the west.
2. The posts for the proposed post and wire fencing shall be located on the inside, i.e., subject property side, of the fence.

Ms. Bertolucci stated she hoped to return at the next ASCC meeting with a revised plan for the desired front yard fencing.

## **Preliminary Architectural Review – Residential Redevelopment with swimming pool and related site improvements, 420 Golden Oak Drive, Woods**

Vlasic presented the February 21, 2013 staff report on this preliminary review of the subject application for residential redevelopment of this 1.1-acre Alpine Hills subdivision parcel. He reviewed the events of the afternoon site meeting on the project and noted that ASCC members advised they would offer their preliminary comments and reactions at the evening session. (Refer to above site meeting minutes, which include a complete listing of the proposed project plans and materials.)

Applicants Douglas Woods and Barina Hawes, and project architect Carter Warr were present to discuss the project further with ASCC members. Warr advised that the issues noted in the staff report would be addressed with plan revisions and that an arborist report is also being finalized. He again reviewed the reasoning for the proposed concentration of floor area, as discussed at the site meeting, and stated appreciation for ASCC attendance at the meeting to gain information and for the input provided by neighbors. He stressed that the intent of the project is to fit well into the neighborhood, while meeting the applicant's family needs. He also stressed that the long-term objective is to removal the exotic plantings and install new, significant plant materials consistent with town landscape guidelines.

Public comments were requested and the following offered:

**Virginia Bacon, 205 Golden Oak Drive**, again shared her concerns over the proposed size and style of the house and noted it was not consistent with the character of the neighborhood. She worried particularly over the expression of the house as viewed from Golden Oak Drive and also over the size of the proposed basement. She expressed concerns over basement construction and offered that it was time for the town to revisit the matter of large basements and the need for new regulations to limit basements.

(Vlasic noted that the matter of basements had been previously considered and that the town received considerable "push-back" from residents over the idea of new controls. He also commented that recently, i.e., over the past several years, the size of proposed basements have generally been smaller and that overall fewer basements have been proposed.)

**Ken Kornberg, Minoca Road**, expressed concern over the size of the proposed house, particularly relative to views for those driving up Golden Oak Drive. He also expressed concern over the proposed floor area and wondered if the plans exceeded the town's floor area limits.

(Vlasic advised that the plans needed some floor area corrections relative to the basement, but that they did not exceed the total allowed floor area. He explained, however, that the specific request was to exceed the 85% limit for the single largest structure and in this case, the proposal was for 100% of the floor area to be in one building. He clarified the findings the ASCC needed to make to allow for the proposed floor area concentration.)

ASCC members then shared the comments and preliminary reactions to the proposals. Members concurred that the site meeting was very helpful in understanding the plans, site and area conditions. Members also concurred that it would likely be preferable to remove the exotic plants, particularly the acacia and elm trees, and magnolia, with project construction and install the new larger oaks as soon as possible after demolition and rough

grading. Breen, however, encouraged preservation of the large eucalyptus tree at the east end of the property. The following additional comments and reactions were provided:

- While, in general, some concentration of floor area appears appropriate given site conditions, there is concern over the massing of the proposed house particularly at the east end. Design changes need to be made to reduce the scale and massing of the house and east end elevation with stair tower. The current plans are more of a design statement and one that is not consistent with the neighborhood character. The proposal pushes to the maximum all of the town's numerical standards.
- While Clark suggested that perhaps a concentration of floor area at no more than 90% should be considered, all agreed that it was more about the design solution and scale and massing than a specific target floor area number. In any case, there was strong agreement that with the current design it did not seem possible to make the required findings to support the requested concentration of floor area.
- The stair tower is of significant concern relative to conformity with neighborhood conditions and the potential for light spill from the high tower windows adds to this concern. This tower feature needs to be made less prominent or eliminated.
- The fill on the downhill side of the pool should be as high as possible to hide the pool walls.
- The proposed garage location and driveway access appear appropriate.
- With removal of the elm trees, the proposed guest parking spaces need to be pulled into the site, and this will allow for more landscape area uphill from the corner of Golden Oak Drive and Bear Gulch Road. Further, a pervious surface should be used for the guest parking spaces. Enhanced landscaping at the corner should be considered. Even with preservation of the eucalyptus tree, there would still be open views under the tree's canopy.
- While it is still early in the overall design process, the scope of exterior lighting shown on the plans appears excessive and needs to be reconsidered. There should be fewer fixtures at the garage and for the guest parking area and fewer pathway lights. Existing lighting in trees needs to be removed.
- Changes to exterior materials need to be considered including roof materials as suggested in the staff report. Perhaps less use of stone for the vertical elements and more overall use of wood could help. In any case, the material palette should be reconsidered with the objective of reducing the apparent massing of the project.
- The roofed patio areas add to the apparent massing and bulk of the project and changes to these elements need to be considered to help support findings for any floor area concentration.
- Given the rocky soils conditions, the environment may not be the best for the proposed valley oaks. It is recognized that the applicant has obtained several large valley oaks and if they are to be depended upon for screening, then their installation should be done in a manner that fully responds to site soils conditions and ensures their long-term survival.



Following discussion, project consideration was continued to the March 11, 2013 regular ASCC meeting.

### **Commission and Staff Reports**

Vlasic reported on the March 13, 2013 joint town council and planning commission study session on the need for clarifications to the “meadow preserve” provisions of the general plan. He noted that the council direction was that the matter of the “open space” preserve provisions of the general plan required further review beyond just those that apply to the meadow preserve designated area. Vlasic also advised that the owners of the property that includes most of the meadow preserve, i.e., Dr. Neely and Holly Myers, would likely be seeking amendment to their conditional use permit for the addition of vineyards and if such an amendment is proposed the ASCC would also be involved in review of the request and formulation of recommendations for consideration by the planning commission.

Vlasic reported on the status of actions being taken by the town relative to the unauthorized tree cutting and vegetation removal at 18 Redberry Ridge in the Blue Oaks subdivision. He explained that the representatives of the property owner have been working with town representatives, including ASCC member Breen, to develop a site restoration and remediation plan. Vlasic also noted that the town council was considering actions that could be taken to remedy the loss of open space value as a result of tree and vegetation removal in the town’s open space easement on the subject property.

Vlasic reported on the status of recruitment for a “planning director” to fill the vacancy created with the retirement of planning manager Leslie Lambert. He commented that the intent would be to transition this position to the town planner position over the next year or two with his projected retirement. It was noted that the deadline for the current round of applications was March 1<sup>st</sup>.

### **Minutes**

Hughes moved, seconded by Ross, and passed 4-0 approval of the February 11, 2013 meeting minutes as drafted.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

T. Vlasic