

Vice-Chair Ross called the special site meeting to order at 4:05 p.m.

**Roll Call:**

ASCC: Breen, Clark, Harrell, Ross

ASCC absent: Koch

Planning Commission: Hasko, McKitterick, Targ, Von Feldt

Town Council Liaison: None

Town Staff: Interim Town Planner Kristiansson

Others present relative to the proposal for 123 Pinon Drive:

Jason Donahue, property owner

Cynthia Richardson, representing 127 Pinon Drive

Kristiansson presented the July 10, 2014 staff report. She advised that the property owner had considered roof-mounted solar panels but was unable to install them because of the roof materials and roof form. Due to a combination of factors, including north-facing slopes, a creek running through the property and associated flood-plain, and existing vegetation, the property owner determined that the best location for the solar panels would be in the side yard setback. The panels were proposed to be located in an inactive Westridge trail easement between an existing property line fence and a retaining wall along the driveway. The Westridge Association had already reviewed and approved the project, with the requirement that the property owner lease the easement for the solar panel use. Because the solar panels would be located in the required side yard setback, a variance was required. Kristiansson noted that Planning Commissioners would be able to provide preliminary comments during this site meeting, and that the ASCC could make its recommendation to the Planning Commission concerning the variance at its regular evening meeting. The Planning Commission would then be able to take action on the variance at its August 6 meeting.

The ASCC considered the staff report and the following project plans and supporting materials:

Plans prepared by Harmony Solar and dated 4/1/14 unless otherwise noted:

Sheet P1, Site Plan and Cover Sheet

Sheet P2, Ground Mount Plan

Sheet P3, Electrical Diagram, dated 2/10/14

Sheet P4, Array Wiring Plan

Sheet P5, NEC Signage, dated 2/10/14

Sheet P6, Module Data Sheet, dated 2/10/14

Sheet P7, Inverter Data Sheet, dated 2.10.14

Sheet P8, Mount Data Sheet, dated 2/10/14

Additional supporting materials:

- Letter from property owner Jason Donahue, dated May 27, 2014 (attached)
- Approval letter from the Westridge Architectural Supervising Committee, dated May 19, 2014
- Letter from neighbor Joan Platt at 127 Pinon Drive, dated May 2, 2014

Property owner Jason Donahue provided the following information to the Commissioners:

- He had been working on installing solar panels at the property for over a year, and started by looking at a roof-mounted installation but was told it would not be feasible. First, the roof has a number of smaller roof surfaces, which would require the array to be split across difference surfaces and would not be efficient. Also, solar panels could not be installed with the existing roof material, so the roof would need to be replaced.
- The proposed location would also be less visible to neighbors than other areas on the property, and less visible than roof-mounted panels.
- The design for the ground-mounted array was adjusted to accommodate requests from the adjacent neighbor at 127 Pinon Drive. In particular, the array was originally designed to be three panels high, but was reduced to two panels in order to keep the top of the array at least 8" below the top of the wood fence. The mounting equipment for the array would be painted black, and three shrubs would be planted near the end of the array as screening.
- To improve the efficiency of the panels, about 10' should be trimmed from the canopies of the mature oaks across the driveway, and the small oaks growing across the fence would need to be trimmed up.

Commissioners walked the site to view the property, potential other locations for the array, and the roof form of the house. During the walk, the following additional facts were mentioned:

- Mr. Donahue said that he had talked with the neighbors on the other side of the property about the solar panel project as well, and they had no objections.
- The solar array would produce approximately 9 KW of energy and would provide about 80% of the power needed for the house. The energy produced is intended for the house.

Cynthia Richardson, representing Joan Platt at 127 Pinon Drive, said that the existing oaks along the property line fence had been planted to screen views of the house from the driveway. She noted that her client would likely object to those trees being trimmed straight up from the fence as that could affect their health. Mr. Donahue said that the trees would only need to be trimmed from the top of the solar array, which is several feet in from the fence.

Commissioners offered the following comments:

- The mature trees across the driveway from the proposed solar array location are Blue Oaks or Blue/Valley hybrids, and can be fragile. Trimming should be limited to the tall oak closest to the house and the smaller oak next to it, and the largest oaks should not be trimmed for this project, although they could be pruned as necessary for their health. The birches in front of the house could be trimmed or removed; replacement birches in a wetter location would likely do better.
- Moving the solar panels somewhat west of the proposed location might allow for a more efficient installation without the need to trim the oaks. Also, the applicant might want to consider expanding the application to include more land to the west, so that if he wanted to expand the solar array at a later date, he could do so without needing to apply for another variance.

- The solar panels would be impervious and could concentrate rainwater close to the retaining wall. It will be important to be sure that the existing drainage system could handle the change in conditions.

### **Adjournment**

The special site meeting was adjourned at approximately 5:00 p.m.

Vice Chair Ross 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, Ross

Absent: Harrell, Koch

Planning Commission Liaison: Hasko

Town Council Liaison: Derwin

Town Staff: Assistant Planner Borck, Interim Town Planner Kristiansson

**Oral Communications**

Oral communications were requested, but none were offered.

**Follow-up Architectural Review and Revisions to Previous Approvals for Residential Additions and Remodeling and Detached Guest House, 25 Bear Gulch Road, Richardson**

Borck presented the July 14, 2014 staff report on this follow-up review and modifications to the previously approved project. She explained that the proposed project had been approved by the ASCC in March 2012 with a number of follow-up conditions for ASCC review prior to building permit issuance. She informed the ASCC that the building permit plans are currently under review with applicant-directed modifications that include reducing the scope of the approved guest house to a gazebo and remodeling the existing pool rather than installing a new pool. She noted that all conditions of the 2012 approval had been addressed in the plan submittal.

ASCC members considered the staff report and the following project plans:

Architectural Plans by Hyland Design Group, dated 4/7/14

Sheet A0, Cover Sheet

Sheet A1, Site Plan

Sheet A2, Existing Floor Plans

Sheet A3, Proposed Lower Floor Plan

Sheet A4, Proposed Upper Floor Plan

Sheet A5, Exterior Elevations

Sheet A6, Exterior Elevations

Sheet A7, Gazebo Floor Plan/Exterior Elevations

Sheet A8, Vent Calculations

Sheet E/M1, Electrical Plan

Sheet T24.1, Title 24

Sheet GB1, Build It Green Checklist

Landscape Plans by Zeterre Landscape Architecture, dated 4/14/14, unless otherwise noted

Sheet L1.0, Title Sheet

Sheet L2.0, Construction Layout Plan

Sheet L3.0, Construction Details 1  
Sheet L3.1, Construction Details 2, dated 6/4/14  
Sheet L4.0, Lighting Plan, dated 6/4/14  
Sheet L5.0, Planting Plan, dated 6/4/14  
Sheet L6.0, Planting Specifications  
Sheet L7.0, Irrigation Plan  
Sheet L8.0, Irrigation Specifications

Civil Plans by DMG Engineering, Inc.

Sheet C1, Grading and Drainage Plan, dated 4/24/14  
Sheet C2, Grading and Drainage Plan (BMPs), dated 4/2/14

Survey Plan by MacLeod & Associates

Sheet 1 of 1, Topographic Survey Plan, dated 1/26/12

In addition to the plans, the follow-up submittal included the information listed below:

- Transmittal letter from Hyland Design Group, dated 4/22/14
- Transmittal letter from Zeterre Landscape Architecture, dated 4/15/14
- Arborist letter by Fred Jungbluth, dated 6/6/14
- Arborist report by Fred Jungbluth, dated 5/12/14
- Exterior lighting cut sheets, received 5/13/14
- Colors and materials sheet, received 5/13/14

Natalie Hyland, project designer, was present to discuss the project with ASCC members. She summarized the changes that had been made to the proposal.

In response to questions, Ms. Hyland stated that:

- The proposed lights on the balcony could be moved to the railing.
- The lighting plan included locations of both existing and proposed exterior lighting.
- The gazebo lights will be downlights and cut sheets would be provided.

Public comments were requested, but none were offered.

ASCC members briefly discussed the proposed modifications and follow-up submittal. Breen stated that a less-invasive replacement for the Pride of Madeira should be selected and that the entry gate columns appear “chunky.” Clark suggested that the column material could be changed from stone to a stucco surface matching the siding on the residence. Ross stated that the balcony lights should be eliminated as they are not required by the building code.

Following discussion, Clark moved, seconded by Breen and passed (3-0) to approve the follow-up plans and modifications with the following conditions:

1. The exterior lighting plan shall be modified to eliminate all lighting at the home’s upper level.
2. Cut sheets for the gazebo downlight fixture shall be submitted prior to building permit issuance to the satisfaction of Planning staff.

3. A final tree protection plan that includes all recommendations of the project arborist in his report dated 5/12/14 shall be submitted to the satisfaction of Planning staff prior to building permit issuance.
4. Samples of the proposed autocourt and entry path pavers shall be submitted to the satisfaction of Planning staff prior to building permit issuance.
5. The landscape plan shall be modified with a non-invasive replacement for the Pride of Madeira.
6. The gate columns shall not exceed two feet in width and shall be finished in colors and materials to match the house siding.

### **Architectural Review for Carport Enclosure, 2 Ohlone, Down**

Borck presented the July 14, 2014 staff report on this proposal for approval of plans for a carport enclosure on the subject Portola Valley Ranch property. She stated that the project had been approved by the Ranch design committee and appeared to meet the requirements for enclosures under the PUD design guidelines.

ASCC members considered the staff report and the following project plan and materials:

- Sheet: G-1, Floor Plan & Elevations by Jon Jang, dated 5/19/14
- Color image of existing carport (to be available at ASCC meeting). The photograph shows the existing carport views along Ohlone and an image of the dark bronze window frame that will be used, dated 5/19/14
- Ranch Design Committee conditional approval letter dated 2/14/14

Jon Jang, project architect, was present to discuss the project with ASCC members.

Public comments were then requested, but none were offered.

Following a brief discussion, Breen moved, seconded by Clark and passed (3-0) to approve the project with the following condition:

1. A detailed construction staging plan shall be submitted to the satisfaction of Planning staff prior to building permit issuance.

### **Architectural Review for Workshop, 1 Indian Crossing, Portola Valley Ranch**

Kristiansson presented the July 10, 2014 staff report for this item. She described the geologic constraints to development in the area and noted that the proposed site was the only area near the existing corporation yard and Ranch House which was located on stable land per the Town's Ground Movement Potential Map and recent research conducted by the Town Geologist. Kristiansson advised that, as set forth in the staff report, the workshop proposal appeared to be consistent with Ranch PUD Statement. She also noted that the Ranch design committee had reviewed and approved the project.

The ASCC considered the staff report and the following project plans and materials in the submittal packet titled “Portola Valley Ranch Maintenance Workshop” and dated 6/17/14:

- Page 1: Title page
- Page 2: Site view
- Page 3: Site view – Relative to fault zones
- Page 4: Site view Close-up
- Page 5: Shows existing relative contours and drainage
- Page 6: Existing Site View (Closeup), shows proposed relative contours and drainage
- Page 7: Front and side elevations
- Page 8: Floor plan
- Page 9: Light fixture design

Bob McCowan of the Ranch Infrastructure Committee and Craig Sander were present to discuss the project with the Commission. In response to questions, they noted the following:

- The grading at the southwest corner of the workshop could be adjusted to eliminate the need for the guard rail.
- The proposed light fixture could be used with LED or fluorescent bulbs and would not need to be incandescent.

Public comments were requested, but none were offered.

The ASCC briefly discussed the project. Breen moved to approve the project with the following conditions to the satisfaction of planning staff prior to building permit issuance:

1. The applicant shall comply with the condition of approval set forth in the June 26, 2014 letter from the Town Geologist.
2. The project shall be modified to adjust the grading at the southwest corner of the workshop in order to eliminate the need for the railing.
3. The bulbs used with the light fixtures shall not be brighter than a 75 Watt incandescent bulb and shall be either LED or fluorescent.
4. An arborist’s report shall be provided that identifies any potential impacts to the health of nearby trees due to construction or the location of the workshop. The report shall also recommend mitigation measures to protect the trees, and those measures shall be incorporated into the project.
5. A tree protection and construction staging plan shall be developed and provided.

### **Architectural Review for Detached Studio and Detached Guest House, 465 Golden Oak Drive, Hicks**

Borck presented the July 14, 2014 staff report on this proposal for approval of plans for a 385 sf detached studio and a 750 sf detached guest house on the subject 1-acre Alpine Hills subdivision property. She stated that the proposed structures fully complied with all height, setback, and floor area limits. She advised that the proposed landscaping plan included screening trees and plants for the studio, and that an area of grapevines were proposed at the guest house. She noted that the downhill neighbor had expressed concerns about the proposed studio and its visibility from the autocourt, deck and kitchen window. The guest house

would be visible to the uphill neighbor. Both neighbors had submitted letters to the ASCC expressing their concern over the view relationships.

ASCC members considered the staff report and the following project plans:

Architectural Plans by Metropolis Architecture, dated 6/20/14:

Sheet A1, Proposed Site Plan/Project Info

Sheet A2, Proposed Guest House Floor Plan, Elevations and Section (includes exterior lighting)

Sheet A3, Proposed Studio Floor Plan, Elevations, and Section (includes exterior lighting)

Landscape Plans by Ransohoff, Blanchfield, and Jones, dated 6/20/14:

Sheet L1, Landscape Master Plan

Sheet L2, Grading & Lighting Plan

Sheet L3, Coverage Calculations

In addition to the plans, the project submittal included the following information and correspondence:

- Outdoor Water Efficiency checklist, dated 5/19/14
- Exterior lighting fixture cut sheets, received 5/20/14
- Colors and materials board, received 6/23/14
- Completed Build It Green Checklist for the studio with 28 points proposed, received 5/20/14
- Completed Build It Green Checklist for the guest unit with 61 points proposed, received 5/20/14
- Email from Bill and Judy Leckonby, 455 Golden Oak Drive, received 7/8/14
- Email from Julia and Ravi Thomas, 475 Golden Oak Drive, received 7/14/14

Larry Kahle, project architect, and Paula Blanchfield, project landscape architect, were present to discuss the project with ASCC members. Mr. Kahle clarified that the applicants did meet with the neighbors. He explained that the applicants sought a design for the accessory structures that worked with the existing house and that the studio had been sited to work with side and front yards. He also submitted an updated color board that included the proposed windows and roofing material for the studio.

Ms. Blanchfield discussed the landscape layout plan, stating that the driveway expansion would alleviate the maneuvering difficulties currently experienced on site. She also explained the screening strategy that would include planting multi-branched oaks with lower-level foliage and Myrica to soften views up to the studio by the downhill neighbor. She noted that she would be willing to work with the uphill neighbors concerning screening for the guest house.

Clark asked Borck if staff had discussed the double-access driveway and possible removal of the additional entry with the applicant. Borck stated that she had mentioned this during the pre-application meeting, and that the Public Works Director stated that he had no objections to it remaining in place.



Breen inquired about the rear property line fencing and if consideration had been given to removing the non-native trees within the Blue Oak forest on the downhill slope. Ms. Blanchfield stated that the rear yard fencing was existing. She advised that the applicants had previously had an arborist review the trees on the property and the property owner had been working on implementing the recommendations starting with the upper slope. They had not yet started on the downhill slope but would likely want to keep some of the trees as they do provide screening for the downhill property. Breen expressed that she supported looking at the lower hillside to remove non-natives and restore the native vegetation.

Ross asked about the possibility of lowering the finished floor elevations. Mr. Kahle explained that he had discussed lowering the elevations of the studio with the applicant and that they were agreeable to doing so. He stated that lowering the guest house finished floor would be more difficult due to the cross-slope. In response to a question from Breen, Mr. Kahle said that the plate height for the guest house was eight feet in the back and nine feet in the main area.

Ross asked about the small window on the east elevation of the studio and whether they had considered eliminating the window given the privacy issues relative to the downhill neighbor. Mr. Kahle clarified that the window was for natural light, but could be removed.

Breen inquired whether locating the studio in the rear of the property had been considered. Mr. Kahle stated that they had explored that, but with the steep drop-off of the hillside and the desire to maintain certain distances from the other structures, that it was not a viable option.

Public comments were then requested.

**William Leckonby**, 455 Golden Oak Drive, stated that he would like screening planting for the guest house. He requested that the plantings be mature and installed early on in the construction process so that at the time of final inspections, the structure would be well-screened.

**David Thomas**, 475 Golden Oak Drive, stated that he appreciated the architects' work on the proposed project. He noted that he understands the challenges of the site and slope. He summarized his main concerns as the potential impacts to privacy from the studio, including the east elevation window, the apparent mass of the structure, and the loss of the slope as a buffer between properties. In addition, the studio would block light entering the downhill property. He stated that he understood the property owners' desire to create a private area but a shorter fence could serve the same function.

**Julia Thomas**, 475 Golden Oak Drive, expressed her concern over the fundamental change of the environment and loss of privacy by locating the studio on the slope. She stated that the studio would be looking down on their property, be an imposing structure, and did not comply with the Design Guidelines, as she explained in detail in her letter to the ASCC. She added that in regards to the Blue Oak forest, she did not desire any more planting on that slope.

Breen asked the Thomas's about their discussions with the applicants.

**Ravi Thomas**, 475 Golden Oak Drive, stated that the story poles went up first, they then received the notice of the project from the Town on July 7<sup>th</sup>, and were then contacted by the applicants. As they were out of town, they were not able to meet with the applicants until July 10<sup>th</sup>. The more they looked at the story poles and thought about the project, the more concerned they became. He stated that the structure would look like an 18-foot wall when previously they had the slope as a buffer for privacy, and that it "doesn't feel right."

Julia Thomas added that meeting with the applicants at such a late point in the design process made it seem like there was no opportunity for their comments and concerns to be addressed.

**Mrs. Michael**, 465 Golden Oak Drive, stated that her daughter (the applicant) was excited about the project and did not feel she was “entitled” to build it.

Commissioners then discussed the project. Clark asked whether the studio could be shifted closer to the main residence and suggested that the studio’s east elevation window could be eliminated. Regarding the guest house, he suggested that the screen planting could be completed early in construction.

Breen stated that she would have appreciated a site meeting for the proposal because it is a complicated site, even though this is a relatively small project. Concerning the studio, she said it should be pulled in closer to the residence if it could not be moved to the back of the property. She suggested that the guest house be lowered a few feet and that the screen planting should be along the fence line, be mature, and be planted early. Regarding the studio screen planting, she stated that she would like to see only toyon on the east side at the Blue Oak forest.

Ms. Blanchfield explained the plant selection strategy in seeking species that were deer resistant, had significant screening properties, and were appropriate for a forest environment. In response, Breen stated moving the studio closer to the house would provide more space to accommodate the proposed species and would benefit both the applicant and the downhill neighbor. She also stated that she had noted a significant amount of exterior, non-conforming lighting at the rear entertainment area. She suggested that a comprehensive lighting plan was needed for the entire site. Mr. Klahe said that he would need to discuss moving the studio location with the owners, but in any case, it could not be moved more than a few feet or it would be too close to the main house.

Ross agreed that the potential impacts to the downhill neighbor could be lessened by moving the studio closer to the house, lowering it closer to grade, and removing the east elevation window. He stated that lowering the guest house one to two feet would give it a much better sense of being tucked into the site. He said that he did not see the feasibility of moving the studio to the rear of the property due to the slope and that the front gate should not have any lighting installed on it. Ross also questioned the density of the Blue Oak forest and what effect a 24-inch box live oak could have on the canopy. Breen suggested that if the studio was pulled back, the existing oaks that would be removed otherwise could remain instead of planting a new oak.

Following discussion, Breen moved, seconded by Clark and passed (3-0) to approve the project with the following conditions to be met, unless otherwise noted, to the satisfaction of two designated ASCC members and staff:

1. The two proposed downlights at the pedestrian gate shall be eliminated. All existing flood-type lighting on the existing residence shall be removed prior to final inspections.
2. A comprehensive site lighting plan shall be submitted that includes all existing and proposed lighting. The plan shall identify all lighting in the patio/entertainment area, including non-conforming lights such as the “string” lights, and all non-conforming lighting shall be noted to be removed.

3. The east elevation window on the studio shall be eliminated.
4. The finished floor of the studio shall be lowered closer to grade.
5. The studio shall be moved a minimum of four feet closer to the existing residence, and the landscape screening plan shall be revised accordingly.
6. The highest ridge of the guest house shall be lowered by two feet.
7. The landscape screen planting for the guest house shall be located along the fence, include mature specimens, and be planted early in the construction schedule (this fall). Additionally, the plan shall be shared with the neighbor at 455 Golden Oak Drive for comment.
8. Any lighting proposed in the area of the guest house skylight shall be downward-directed and mounted below the skylight.
9. A detailed construction staging and tree protection plan shall be submitted to the satisfaction of Planning staff prior to building permit issuance.

#### **Architectural Review of Variance X7E-137 for Placement of Ground-Mounted Solar Panels within the Side Yard Setback, 123 Pinon Drive, Donahue**

Kristiansson presented the July 11, 2014 staff report on this review of the proposed variance request to allow a ground-mounted solar panel array in the side yard setback. She reviewed the events of the afternoon site meeting and the comments offered at that meeting. (Refer to above site meeting minutes that describe that meeting and include a listing of project plans and application materials.) In particular, Kristiansson advised that the main concern raised at the site meeting related to trees and potential impacts of trimming on the significant Blue and Blue/Valley oaks on the south side of the driveway. She also noted the concern raised about impacts on the retaining wall drainage from the impervious surface of the panels.

ASCC members had no questions, and public comments were requested.

**Cynthia Richardson**, representing Joan Platt at 127 Pinon Drive, stated that her client had no objection to trimming the oaks located on her property adjacent to the proposed solar panel location and that she would like to hire McClenahan's to do the trimming and be responsible for it. Mr. Donahue thanked her and stated that he appreciated Ms. Platt's support and would coordinate with her.

Commissioners then discussed the project and stated that they recommended approval of the variance with the following suggestions:

- Trimming of the Blue and Blue/Valley oaks relative to this project should be limited to the two closest to the house and the live oak. Commissioners noted that because the Blue and Blue/Valley oaks are deciduous, they will have less impact on the array in winter.
- To improve efficiency of the array without additional tree trimming, the applicant should consider shifting the array to the west.

- The ASCC would support allowing additional solar panels to the west of the proposed array.

### **Commission and Staff Reports**

Kristiansson advised the ASCC about a number of ongoing projects, including the following:

- The meeting with the project team for 1260 Westridge Drive would take place on Friday, July 18<sup>th</sup>, and that Koch, Breen, Plunder, Murphy, and Vlasic would attend.
- The Sequoias were developing plans to remove some redwoods located in the interior of the property that were impacting buildings and walkways. She stated the plans also include some minor building modifications.
- The applicants for the Sausal Creek subdivision were exploring possible revisions to the approved project.
- CalWater was exploring potentially consolidating the two pump stations on Portola Road into one larger facility, and that this would require CUP approval.

Ross inquired if there was an update on the Gillett project in relation to the neighboring CalWater property. Staff confirmed that there has been no further communication on the matter.

Clark advised that he had reviewed and approved with Kristiansson a new location for the portables at the Priory.

Ross reported that a mock-up of the clerestory cove lighting for 7 Veronica will be completed at the time of framing for nighttime review by a designated ASCC member.

### **Minutes**

Breen stated that the 5/27/14 minutes did not reflect her recusal on the project at 20 Russell Avenue. Breen then moved and Clark seconded to approve the 5/27/14 minutes as amended. The motion passed (2-0-1), with Ross abstaining.

Ross moved and Clark seconded to approve the 6/23/14 minutes. The motion passed (3-0).

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:09 p.m.