

Chair Chase called the meeting to order at 8:00 p.m.

Roll Call:

ASCC: Chase, Breen, Gelpi, Schilling, Warr
Absent: None
Town Council Liaison: Comstock
Planning Commission Liaison: McIntosh
Town Staff: Deputy Town Planner Vlastic

Oral Communications

Oral communications were requested, but none were offered.

Architectural Review for new residence and Site Development Permit X9H-524, 2 Buck Meadow Drive (Lot 36, Blue Oaks Subdivision), McClatchie

Chase referenced the comments in the September 8, 2005 staff report on this request and advised that the applicant had again requested a continuance to provide for additional time to resolve issues with the Blue Oaks homeowners association. Public comments were then requested, but none were offered. Thereafter, project review was continued to the September 26 regular evening ASCC meeting.

Project status update and proposed revisions to Landscape and Freeman House Plans, Blue Oaks Recreation Center, PV Blue Oaks Limited Partnership

Vlastic reviewed the comments in the September 8, 2005 staff report and briefly discussed the status of the Blue Oaks recreation center work. He advised that, initially, it was hoped that the revised landscape plan and plans for the Freeman House could be presented to the ASCC for consideration at the September 12 meeting, but that final review and approval by the Blue Oaks homeowners association relative to these plans is still in process. He therefore recommended that review of the matter be continued to the September 26 ASCC meeting.

Public comments were requested, but none were offered. Thereafter, project review was continued to the September 26 regular evening ASCC meeting.

Architectural Review for Carport Conversion, 15 Sandstone, Portola Valley Ranch, Kay

Vlastic presented the September 8, 2005 staff report on this proposal to enclose an existing detached, flat roof carport, located immediately to the southeast of the existing flat roof house on the subject Portola Valley Ranch parcel. He advised that the carport is within 11.5 feet of the street and then reviewed the 10-page project submittal prepared by the applicants. Vlastic noted that the submittal includes a cover letter from the applicants followed by the August 8, 2005 Ranch Design Committee approval letter and the proposed enclosure design details shown on sheets 3 through 10, dated 6/30/05.

Vlasic noted that all elements of the proposed carport enclosure would match existing materials and finishes and that both the existing house and carport have vertical wood siding and wood trim that are finished in a red cedar colored stain. He clarified that the fascia and associated trim are finished in a dark brown stain.

Mr. Kay was present to discuss his enclosure proposal with ASCC members. In response to a question, he clarified that both the existing and proposed electrical junction boxes are within the carport structure and would also be within the new garage (i.e., inside the new garage doors). He referenced the plans and confirmed that there is no proposal for additional outside lighting. In response to a comment in the staff report, Mr. Kay advised that a vine would be planted to grow on the proposed trellis. He noted that a vine on a neighbors trellis had been very successful and that the hope would be to use the same type of vine with this project.

Public comments were requested, but none were offered.

Thereafter, Schilling moved, seconded by Warr and passed 5-0 approval of the carport conversion as proposed and clarified subject to the following conditions to be addressed to the satisfaction of planning staff, unless otherwise noted, prior to issuance of a building permit:

1. A tree/vegetation protection plan shall be prepared and once approved shall be installed and maintained during the life of the construction project.
2. The plans shall be modified to show the planting of a native vine to grow over the proposed front elevation trellis. The vine planting shall be installed prior to town sign-off on the carport enclosure improvements.
3. A construction staging plan, including provisions for construction related parking and storage of construction materials, shall be prepared and, once approved, implemented.
4. A construction schedule shall be included with the building permit plans.

Chase commented that while she found this proposal consistent with the current Ranch guidelines for carport enclosures, she remained concerned with the long-term impact on the Ranch's architectural character from the proliferation of "carport enclosures."

Architectural Review for House Additions, 20 Sandstone, Thompson

Vlasic presented the September 8, 2005 staff report on this proposal for a small, 78 sf floor area addition to the existing two-story, gabled and flat roof residence on the subject Portola Valley Ranch parcel. He explained that the proposal is before the ASCC because, under the provisions of the Ranch Planned Unit Development (PUD) statement, all building permits at the Ranch are subject to ASCC review and approval and, more specifically, because it makes somewhat complicated use of the yard setback averaging provisions. ASCC members considered the staff report and the following 11 inch x 17 inch proposed plan sheets prepared by Harrell Remodeling, dated 9/5/01:

Site Plan (with yard setback averaging data)
Floor Plans
Front and (North) Side Elevations

Vlasic stated that the proposal calls for the additions to be finished to match the existing residence and would include a flat roof and board and batten siding. He noted that the existing/proposed siding and all trim are finished in a dark brown stain. He also advised that on August 8, 2005, the Ranch Design Committee completed review and approval of the request with the only conditions being those associated with a planned move of the "AC unit." Vlasic clarified that the ASCC does not typically review and act on air conditioning unit applications.

Mr. and Mrs. Thompson were present to discuss their plans with ASCC members.

Public comments were requested. **Pierre Fisher, 10 Valley Oak** commented that while he had no concerns with the proposed house additions, he opposed the Ranch design committee requirements for location of the AC unit on the Valley Oak side of the residence. He added that both he and his neighbor at 8 Valley Oak are concerned with the potential noise impacts with the unit located on the south side. He recommended that the AC unit be moved to the east side.

Mr. and Mrs. Thompson stated that they were in the process of appealing the design committee's AC unit location requirements to the Ranch board of directors and wondered if the ASCC might provide reactions on the matter. They explained that by locating the AC unit on the east side of the house it would be adjacent to the AC unit on the neighboring property to the east and avoid the noise spill concerns of the downhill, Valley Oak side neighbors.

Vlasic commented that the ASCC in the past had determined that review of AC units would be left to the building official relative to normal building code requirements as long as the units were located within the building envelope.

Following discussion of the proposed house additions, Warr moved, seconded by Breen and passed 5-0 approval of addition plans as presented subject to the following conditions to be addressed to the satisfaction of planning staff, unless otherwise noted, prior to issuance of a building permit:

1. A tree/vegetation protection plan shall be prepared and once approved shall be installed and maintained during the life of the construction project.
2. A construction staging plan, including provisions for construction related parking and storage of construction materials, shall be prepared and, once approved, implemented.
3. A construction schedule shall be included with the building permit plans.

Relative to the AC unit location, both Warr and Schilling indicated that consideration should be given to the concept of "co-location" of the AC units, which in this case would mean considering a location on the east side of the residence for the AC unit. Breen commented that while this concept seemed to make sense, she did not feel comfortable

taking a position without more data on actual site and area conditions. Chase, commented that the ASCC should continue its current policy of not getting directly involved in the review of plans for the location of AC units as long as they are located within building envelopes and meet normal building code requirements.

Architectural Review for conformity with Conditions of Use Permit X7D-162, Art Gallery Signs, 888 Portola Road, Loneragan

Vlasic presented the September 8, 2005 staff report on this request for review of signage proposals for conformity with the conditions of conditional use permit X7D-162, approved by the planning commission on August 17, 2005. He reviewed the following signage proposals as presented in the September 1, 2005 memorandum to the ASCC from the applicant:

- Photo simulation of the signage to be placed on the main, front entry doors
- Rendering of two sided sign proposed to be placed on front porch support post extending toward the Portola Road right of way
- Photo simulation of proposed two sided, post mounted sign

Vlasic noted his concerns, as evaluated in the staff report, with the proposed porch post supported sign, that these were shared with the applicant and that a revised proposal for this sign was to be presented at the ASCC meeting.

Mr. Loneragan was in attendance and presented a four page, September 9, 2005 revised signage proposal. He explained the proposal as follows:

- The front door window sign remains as originally proposed.
- The second sign would now be a freestanding sign, as recommended in the staff report, and would be located at the east end of the existing, easternmost front yard planter, i.e., at the east end of the building. The sign would have the same dimensions as proposed for the porch post sign, but would be mounted on 4"x4" wood posts. The sign dimensions shown on the September 9 revised plans are considered maximums and would be adjusted to ensure the final sign sizes properly fit the planter area. The maximum overall height would be 66 inches and the maximum width would be 30 inches.
- The free standing sign face and support posts would be wood stained to match the finish of the existing building. The sign copy would be painted and perhaps routed into the signboard. The text color would likely be very dark brown, or possibly the cream/off-white color proposed for the front entry door window sign.

Public comments were requested, but none were offered. ASCC members concurred that the revised plans for the freestanding sign were acceptable as proposed and clarified at the ASCC meeting and also concurred that the proposed dimensions should be viewed as maximums. Following brief discussion, Gelpi moved, seconded by Schilling and passed 5-0 approval of the proposal as presented and clarified at the ASCC meeting subject to the following conditions to be addressed to the satisfaction of the planning staff prior to installation of the freestanding sign:

1. The sign plan shall be finalized with respect to sign location in the planter and consideration of a location in the center of the planter is encouraged.
2. The sign dimensions shown on the 9/9/05 revised plan are the maximums for the sign. The final plan shall include accurate dimensions for the planter and the final sign dimensions shall be adjusted as needed to properly fit within the planter area.
3. All sign materials and finishes shall be completely described, and shall be consistent with the plans and clarifications presented at the ASCC meeting.

Continued Discussion -- Planning Commission Referral for ASCC comment -- Gates

Vlasic advised that at the August 22, 2005 ASCC meeting, members discussed this referral and then directed that he draft tentative recommendations, based on the 8/22 discussion, for possible zoning ordinance and design guidelines changes. Vlasic then reviewed the draft changes as presented in the September 8, 2005 staff report.

ASCC members discussed the draft and, after discussion, formulated the following recommendations that staff was directed to forward to the planning commission:

Possible changes to the zoning ordinance. Currently the zoning ordinance requires gates and entryway features to be setback one half the required front yard area in zoning districts requiring one acre or more in parcel area. Any gate or entryway feature in a front yard area is limited to a maximum height of four (4) feet and any gate or entryway feature requiring a building permit must also be reviewed and approved by the ASCC. An electrically operated gate requires a building permit, but a manual gate does not. Gate support columns do not require a building permit or any ASCC review. In order to address the concerns discussed at the 8/22 ASCC meeting, the ASCC recommends that the following changes to the zoning ordinance be considered:

1. All proposals for driveway gates and entryway features within the front setback area (or elsewhere, see #2 below) should be subject to ASCC review and approval whether or not they require a building permit. This would require some form of driveway gate permit or an expansion of the wording of the fence permit provision that has already been recommended for council consideration.
2. All driveway gates and entryway features should be subject to ASCC review and approval even if they are located within the building envelope. This could include, for example, a height limit of four feet for gates and related features, even if they are within the building envelope, with the possibility of added height, perhaps to a maximum height of six (6) feet, if the ASCC determines the gate will not be highly visible from the street corridor and otherwise conforms to the town's guidelines for gates and entry features. These requirements might be added under the accessory structure provisions of the zoning ordinance.
3. For one acre and larger parcels, require that all gates and entryway features be located within the building envelope provided, however, that the ASCC may permit them to be

located within the front setback area, but no closer to the front property line than one half the required front setback. Such front yard location would only be permitted by the ASCC if found acceptable pursuant to specific standards, e.g., low visibility, minimum impact on the character of the street corridor, etc.

4. Within the zoning ordinance gate provisions, i.e., Section 18.42.016, a statement could be added that precedes the setback provisions providing that "gates and entryway features are generally discouraged in the town," but when they are proposed they must conform to the design guidelines and the setback provisions contained in this section of the ordinance, including the requirement of ASCC review and approval.

Possible additions to the design guidelines. A copy of the current "Entryway" design guidelines is attached for reference. To address the comments offered at the August 22 meeting, the ASCC recommends consideration of the following additions to the design guidelines:

1. Add a preamble to the entryway guidelines that states gates and entryway features are in general discouraged because they detract from the openness and rural character desired along roadway corridors. The statement should also stress that any driveway gate or entry feature would only be considered if designed in concert with the design guidelines and zoning regulations.
2. Modify the existing provisions to state that lighting of gates and entryway features is generally prohibited unless found necessary in specific circumstances.
3. Modify the guidelines to include the concept that any permitted gates should be as transparent as possible and should not be designed so as to, in effect, create a visual barrier between the public and private sides of a property. If separation is desired, this should be achieved with plantings that conform to the planting provisions of the design guidelines.

It was noted that at the August 22 meeting, planning commission liaison Elkind suggested that the guidelines should emphasize non-obtrusive design for gates and that this should also include the support columns and pillars. ASCC members determined that the current provisions include such language and this language already extends to all entryway features.

In formulating the above recommendations, ASCC members offered some perspectives as follows:

- Current gate proposals typically include the support system, call box, motor/operation box, mailbox, address signage, lighting, etc. This was viewed as a lot of "stuff" that has potential for adding significantly to the visual impact of the "gates."
- Typically the ASCC would not want to take on more review burdens, but gates and the accessory features needed for them can cause, and in some cases have already caused, significant negative impact on road corridors within the community. ASCC members concurred this is an area where ASCC review is needed and would result in substantial long term benefits in terms of protecting the rural character of the town's roadways and neighborhoods.

Vlasic advised he would forward the ASCC recommendations to the planning commission, hopefully for consideration at the September 21 commission meeting. Commission liaison McIntosh indicated that planning commissioners were somewhat divided on the matter of setbacks for gates, but concurred with the ASCC comments on the need for more control of gates and entry features.

Approval of Minutes

Breen moved, seconded by Schilling and passed 3-0-2 (Gelpi, Warr) approval of the August 22, 2005 field meeting minutes as drafted. Thereafter, Breen moved, seconded by Schilling and passed 4-0-1 (Gelpi) approval of the August 22, 2005 evening meeting minutes as drafted.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

T. Vlasic