

Midcoast Community Council

An elected Municipal Advisory Council to the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors

Post Office Box 248, Moss Beach, CA 94038-0248

mcc.sanmateo.org

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(Vacancy)

(Vacancy)

June 9, 2010

Design Review Committee
Redwood City, Ca

Re: PLN 2010-00083

The Midcoast Community Council would like to make the following comments regarding the above application and ask that you take them into consideration in deciding if this project meets the Design Review Standards (DRS) of zoning regulations 6565.20.

The project is in a designated Coastal Scenic Corridor, on a prominent corner lot that can be seen from Highway One. This building will have a strong visual impact from Highway One and on anyone turning into Montara on Second Street, which is a main artery into the community.

Flat Roof

The design has a flat roof which is prohibited by the Local Coastal Program and is strongly discouraged by the Design Review Standards. Flat roofs increase the apparent mass and scale of the building. They do not minimize view blockage for neighboring homes. The flat roof exceeds the 20% maximum in the standards and is not compatible with neighboring homes. Other flat roofs in Montara are on much smaller buildings and/or were built before the DRS were adopted.

Roof Deck

The DRS require that design respect the privacy of surrounding buildings. The roof deck appears to cover the entire flat roof of the building and would negatively impact the privacy of the surrounding yards and homes. Roof top decks should not be proposed that look directly into neighboring houses or outdoor living spaces per the Standards. Is the roof deck included in the square footage?

Daylight Plane/Façade Articulation

Which option is the design conforming to? The standards require "the committee must find that the façade is well articulated and proportioned and the building wall is broken up so as to not appear sheer, blank, looming or massive to neighboring properties". The current design does not appear to be well articulated or meet the standards of this section of the Standards.

Neighborhood Scale

The Standards require that designs respect the scale of the neighborhood through dimensions, shape and form, façade and articulation that appear proportional and compliment other homes in the area. The flat roof and lack of articulations creates a "massive or boxy appearance" that does not comply with this standard. Surrounding homes have pitched roofs and articulations.

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Second Story Location

The Standards recommend that placing a second story over the entire first story “can make it appear boxy”. Placement of the second story back from the first story is recommended. The walls of the design appear to be flat planes which combined with the flat roof are incompatible with surrounding buildings and appear massive and boxy.

Setbacks

The address of the building is on Second Street, which should be the front of the house, although this is not clear. Does the design meet the setback minimum of 20 feet on the front and rear?

Story poles

Story poles should differentiate where the floors begin and end. They do not appear to meet standards. Has natural average grade been determined? The lot is on a slope and this cannot be seen from the story poles.

Neighborhood Character

The Standards recommend asking how this design contributes to the visual character of the neighborhood. As stated above, the characteristics of this design with a flat roof, lack of articulation, and boxy shape is sitting on a prominent corner in a scenic corridor. We do not believe the scale, appearance and proportions of this proposed design, to the surrounding homes, and on this site, is consistent with the character of the neighborhood.

While we realize that aesthetics is subjective it is imperative that zoning regulations regarding design, that improve the quality of life for neighbors and the community at large, be upheld. We recommend a redesign for this project that provides the basics in terms of a pitched roof, articulations, and set backs that will respect the privacy of neighbors, sit well on the building site, and blend with the surrounding neighborhood.

Thank you for your consideration and contribution to our community.

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