

DATE: April 2, 1992
TO: MidCoast Community Council Members
FROM: Bob Brown *BB*
RE: Substandard Lots

Attached is a copy of a response to our recommendations on zoning regulations applied to substandard single family lots. The Planning Commission action on March 25 differed substantially from our recommendations as follows:

Side Setbacks

The Planning Commission endorsed 3 and 5 foot ground floor side setbacks, with no projections (chimneys, bay windows, etc.) on the 3 foot side only. Second floor setbacks must total 10 feet (could be 3' on one side and 7' on the other, 5' and 5', etc.).

We had recommended no projections into either the 3 or 5 foot ground floor setbacks. We also recommended that second floor setbacks be no less than 5 feet. A two story building located 3 feet from a property line was felt to be too great an impact on adjoining property owners.

Parking

The Planning Commission has required 2 parking spaces behind the front setback. This will require a 20 foot wide driveway.

We had recommended only one space be required to be enclosed, and a second space permitted in the front setback area, located on the driveway. This would have limited the driveway to only 10 feet wide. The Planning Commission thought providing adequate parking was more important than the design problem of having almost the entire front facade being parking facilities.

Incentives to Merge Substandard Lots Under Single Ownership

We offered no solutions, but requested consideration of options which would encourage owners of two or more contiguous substandard lots to merge them, creating a standard building site. This wasn't addressed by the Planning Commission or staff.

COUNTY OF SAN MATEO

Inter-Departmental Correspondence

Date: March 25, 1992

To: Planning Commission
From: Planning Staff
Subject: Comment from the Mid-Coast Community Council re: Substandard Lot Policy

Following review at a Mid-Coast Community Council meeting in El Granada on February 27th, the Council has forwarded their comments on the proposed Substandard Lot Policy.

1. Side Setbacks. The first floor side yard setbacks should be a minimum of three feet on one side and five feet on the other. Architectural projections (chimneys, greenhouses or bay windows) into these setbacks should not be allowed.

Staff Comment: This is a worthwhile addition to the proposed policy.

2. Side Setbacks. The second floor side yard setbacks should be a minimum of five feet on both sides.

Staff Comment: At this time, the recommended Policy only requires five-foot side yard setbacks for second stories on substandard lots in zones requiring larger side yard setbacks, daylight planes, etc. The Policy could apply to both.

3. Off Street Parking Requirement. Tandem parking, one covered within the residence footprint and one uncovered in the driveway, is proposed. The maximum curb cut would be limited to 10 feet (that allowed for a single-car garage).

Staff Comment: This parking proposal is very similar to that approved by the Planning Commission in 1962. The goal is to avoid the "parking lot" look and achieve a more residential appearance as seen from the street.

Staff understands and agrees with the aesthetic considerations. However, if we just address the parking situation, we find that this proposal would require two off-street parking spaces on the site and allow 10 feet of additional street parking with a single-car driveway. Staff recommends four off-street spaces (two within the building footprint and two in the driveway) that would provide 10 feet less street parking.

The owner of a two- or three-bedroom house on a standard sized lot would be required to provide four spaces (two covered and two in the driveway). The residents of this house would be expected to have at least two cars, plus guests. Also, about half of suburban garages are used for something

other than covered parking. Staff believes that the owner of a two- or three-bedroom house on a substandard lot should also provide the needed parking spaces to serve that site.

Comparing the two alternatives (again, only using parking criteria), we find that Alternative #1 would require parking for four cars on-site. Alternative #2 would require parking for two cars on site and allow 10 feet of more space for street parking. But, using the County Parking Standards, we find that if the two additional parking spaces were placed on the street, they would take a distance of 46 feet (the actual distance may be closer to 35 to 40 feet). Instead of gaining 10 feet of street parking, Alternative #2 may result in losing 35 to 40 feet of street parking.

The Zoning Ordinance presently requires all parked vehicles to have independent access (not tandem). The Ordinance also does not allow required parking within the front yard setback. Proposal #3 would require a variance for tandem parking and a variance for use of the front yard setback for required parking. Findings for these variances may be very difficult to make.

An amendment to the Zoning Ordinance to facilitate this proposal is suggested. A check with staff working on the Zoning Ordinance revisions finds that after investigating recent professional standards and the ordinances of other jurisdictions, there are no present plans to allow tandem parking or use of the front yard for required parking in the future zoning ordinance.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

- #1 - Approval as is.
- #2 - Possible approval of either second story width.
- #3 - Not recommended (proposal to retain 1962 parking policy).

SGD:cdn/kcd - SGDC0750.ACO