

June 12, 2017

Re: Planning Commission hearing for PLN2016-00153, APN 047-071-260, Sevilla Avenue, El Granada

Dear Members of the Planning Commission,

Our family lives next door to the above referenced project which we have been following closely since receiving notice of the Design Review Committee hearing that was held on April 13, 2017. We are writing this letter because we are concerned that the house proposed on APN 047-071-260 does not make reasonable efforts to respect our privacy and minimize the effect on our views “to the extent feasible” as required by the governing *Standards for Design for One-Family and Two-Family Residential Development in the Midcoast (“Design Standards”)*, and as we were required to do in building our own house. To bring the project into conformance with the *Design Standards*, and as further explained below, we respectfully request that you require the following minor modifications to the design plans: (1) shift the house 3 ft. so that it provides a 10 ft. setback from our rear property line; (2) relocate the patio and patio entrance door to the corner of the lot; and (3) reduce the size of one window that provides direct sight lines into our home.

The project is subject to the *Design Standards* and the *Design Standards* require that “to the extent feasible” new buildings be sited and designed to “respect the privacy of neighboring houses” and that “an effort should be made to minimize the effect on views from neighboring houses.” San Mateo County Zoning Code Section 6565.20(C). As explained in the *Design Standards*, “[w]hen the term ‘to the extent feasible’ is used, it shall mean that if a house can be designed to comply with that standard, without conflicting with other applicable design and zoning requirements, the house shall comply with the standard. If a house cannot be designed to comply with the standard, it shall be designed to substantially comply.”

Our concerns stem from the overall massing of the development and its proximity to our house. At 2,909 square feet with 3 stories (including lower level garage and workshop) the proposed house is significantly larger than any houses in the surrounding area, where the largest house is 2,491 square feet and no houses have a lower level garage with 2 stories above the garage. (see attached Diagram A on p4). The proposed house appears to maximize all of the size, coverage and height guidelines allowable by zoning regulations. Also due to the unusual triangular shape of the lot, the house does not provide a typical rear setback, which would usually provide a measure of privacy to the rear neighbors. Given the height, size and proximity of the proposed structure to our house, our ocean views have been nearly eliminated and our privacy severely comprised. However, as explained below, our requested modifications would reduce these impacts to the extent feasible without requiring any major redesign or reduction of the home’s square footage.

In the process of designing and building our own house, we made modifications to our design to address concerns of our neighbors, including moving the house 3 feet to the North and changing the landscaping to preserve views of our neighbors. Therefore we were surprised when, although we attended the Design Review hearing on April 13, 2017 and expressed our concerns about our privacy and views, our concerns were not addressed or responded to by the applicant or by the Design Review Officer, nor

were they even acknowledged in the DRO report dated April 26, 2017 which should be included in your packet.

We, therefore respectfully request that you address our concerns by requiring the following modifications. Because to our knowledge these modifications are feasible and do not otherwise conflict with any other applicable design or zoning requirements, and because they further the *Design Standards* regarding privacy and views, we believe these modifications are required in order to make the finding of approval that the project complies with the *Design Standards*.

1. Provide a 10ft side setback adjacent to the rear of our property

The project currently provides a side setback of only 7 feet adjacent to the rear of our property. We understand the original recommendation from the Planning Manager, Lisa Aozasa, was for a 10 foot setback along the rear yards of the rear neighbors. See excerpt below from email provided by Camille Leung, Senior Planner:

“6/4/14 CML - APN 047-071-260: Per Lisa Aozasa, Planning Manager, front setback is along Sevilla & rear is a triangle piece at the right corner & side setback aligns with the rear yards of the rear parcel. Communicated to owner (Brad Jaeb) that for new 2-story house, a combined setback of 15-ft, that 10-ft is recommended along the rear yards of the rear neighbors....”

We request that the development follow the original recommendation of the Planning Manager by providing a 10 foot setback from our rear property line. Doing so would help preserve our privacy and involve only a simple shifting of the home 3 feet, and no modifications to the design or floor plan of the proposed house. Also, by moving the property 3 feet further away from our property line, the house would be further down the natural grade of the slope which would slightly lower the height of the house and help preserve a portion of our views.

2. Relocate side patio and change living room double door to a window

The designs include double doors and a patio within the side setback adjacent to our property line (see attached Diagram B on page 5). The patio nearly abuts our fence and faces one of our bedrooms. These rear doors provide direct sight-lines into our house. Further, the exterior lights on either side of the doors would allow significant light into our house.

We request that the side patio be relocated to the rear corner of the yard which provides significantly more open space allowing the patio to be further setback from our property line. We also request that the existing double doors be replaced with a window and the exterior lights be removed. Removing these doors would still leave four other exterior doors (not including balconies), including one door leading to the relocated patio. These modifications would minimize direct views into our house and orient proposed high activity areas (i.e. the patio) so they are not adjacent to a low activity area (i.e. rear bedroom) of our house, in compliance with the *Design Standards*.

3. Reduce size of second story rear right side window

The designs include a large three-paned window on the rear right-side of the second story (see attached Diagram C on page 6). This window would allow direct sight lines into our house. We request that the size of the window be reduced to match other second story windows to minimize direct views into our house in compliance with the *Design Standards*.

In conclusion, we believe the modifications requested above are both minor and reasonable and honor the intent of the *Design Standards*. We respectfully request that the Commission require these modifications as conditions of approval for the project in order to make the finding that the project complies with the Design Standards.

Sincerely,
Matthew & Sarah Sanders

Diagram A - Scale



Source: Google Maps and Zillow

Diagram B – Relocate side patio

Request that side patio be relocated to rear corner of lot where there is greater open space and patio will not abut fence of rear neighbors.

Request that double doors be converted to a window and exterior lights removed.



