

# **Tam Design Review Board Minutes**

**Public Hearing - March 4, 2015**

**Secretary, John McCormick**

**Call to order: 7PM Jones-Chairman**

**Board Members Present: Alan Jones, April Post, Patrick LePelch, John McCormick**

**Public comment on items not on the agenda: None**

**Communications: Jones stated received 2 applications for TDRB – Applicant Loren Moller will observe during the Design Review process.**

**Present at Meeting: Mardi Horowih 350 Laverne Ave  
Rehee Binder  
Loren Mollner  
Justin McBaine  
Dani Hihston  
Chris McMahan, Architect  
Matt Thomas  
Eli Cohen  
JP Muller  
Ron DeStefano  
Laura Chariton**

**Design Review: 346 Laverne Avenue, Mill Valley**

**Project ID 14-0234, AP 047-181-15**

**Applicant: McMahan Architects**

**Planner: Heidi Scoble**

Re-submitted for third review, TDRB found the project incomplete at the January 7, 2015 TDRB review meeting (seen in July 2014).

Plans revised as follows:

- A. Revised Site Plan shows easements, roof plans, retaining wall heights, exterior lighting, landscaping, hardscape, a project data table, and an impervious surfaces table.
- B. Story poles have been installed.
- C. The garage has been redesigned to accommodate two independently accessible parking spaces.
- D. Letter from Carlile/Macy dated February 4, 2015, addressed the project retaining wall as it relates to the adjacent neighbors retaining walls.
- E. Geotechnical and drainage recommendations prepared by Divis Consulting, Inc. dated February 2, 2015.

Proposed construction of a new 5,453 square foot single-family residence with attached 670 SF' garage. FAR is 26.2%, on an 18,973.7 SF' lot with an average slope of 23.8%. The two-story structure has a maximum height of approximately 26 feet above grade (tam plan 30'). Following setbacks: 25 feet from the southerly front property line, 6 feet from the easterly side property line, 6 feet from the westerly side property line, and approximately 161 feet from the northerly rear property line.

**Design review is required because the total building area is greater than 4,000 square feet.**

**TDRB – Jones stated TDRB would review past findings of TDRB's last review of this project.**

**Project Discussion:** Architect, clarified plan square footage – 5,453 sq’ – 480sq’( garage ) = 4,973 building sq’

Revised site plan; letter from Carlile/Macy provided to TDRB; Geotechnical report provided; Arborist letter provided, clarifying impact of foundation & pier construction on Redwood & Doug Fir along East property line.

Drainage plan discussed: existing landscape swale along East property line will drain water from site to creek, a drainage pipe will be installed along the swale to handle the roof rain water, and terminates in a “Rock Garden” ( 2’ deep x 4’x 8’ ) located at the East corner on the house. TDRB / Post- questioned past concerns with water ponding on site. Architect, stated Civil Eng visited site to review issue, and noted in provided report. TDRB - recommended diverting water from the landscape swale away from neighbor’s property on the West side. Architect stated, a future landscape water cistern is planned, size to be determined and added to revised landscape plan.

Garage design discussed: size of garage did not change, stairs were re-designed and relocated, to provide the required parking spaces. TDRB - still has concerns with the practicality of the design.

Building plans: TDRB - questioned the size of the building cutouts for the trees on the West side of the house. Architect stated the size of the building cutout had not changed, the arborist report reviewed this issue. Location of the piers will be supervised by the arborist during construction and may be re-located as needed to protect the tree roots. TDRB – recommends an arborist supervised the pier drilling during construction.

Project owner, stated a lot of thought was given to the house design and its impact on the neighborhood. He has meet with 2 neighbors, and one has provided a letter to the County of no opposition to project.

Architect discussed design, problem site; steep down slope at front property line; location of creek on the property & sewer easement, impacts buildable area. The house was designed to be viewed as a one story from Laverne Ave, and two story building from the back of home; flat roof (grey roof material) was planned to lessen the mass & visual impact from Laverne Ave. A portion of the West side neighbor’s driveway is located on the project site, and impacts the design of the new driveway. The majority of the driveway paving will be permeable paving, except for the very steep areas. The size of the driveway and parking areas are designed per county requirements. TDRB has concerns with the amount of pavement, seen from the street, and the removal of a mature healthy redwood tree to accommodate the driveway. Architect stated, this is the only design that would work, and fit the county requirements. The design of the East wall of the project is articulated to lessen the mass. Architect clarified the type of building material used, a cementitious panels, similar to “Hardie board”

Landscape plan discussed: All trees removed will be replaced, 3 new trees to one removed. No lawns, back yard will be planted as a meadow. TDRB - recommends an appropriate type of planting for the boggy wet areas. TDRB / McCormick questioned the type of planting at the edge of driveway facing Laverne Ave. Landscape Arch stated, planting will be a Garrya elliptica, a native shrub, with trees that will grow 8’ to 15’ tall, screening the home and the majority of the driveway from the street.

**Public Comments:** Laura Chariton with Watershed Alliance of Marin has concerns regarding all buildings that will be near streams, is concerned with the water flowing in the landscape swale & “Rock Garden” and its impact to the creek and the steelhead population, and the spotted owls in the area. She recommends that applicant contact the planner to verify that all county creek concerns are met. TDRB - responded the project has been found complete, and recommended that she and anyone with concerns about the project send a letter to the planner regarding their concerns. Neighbors living next to the creek responded that they clean debris from the creek on a regular basis and have not seen steelhead in the creek, except for one neighbor who has.

Ron De Stefano @ 342 Laverne Ave comments: Original drawings were too close to the street; has concerns with the size of the home and the location of the house on the site. After the installation of the story poles the house is very large. He has had trees cut down on his property, without his permission, by the applicant. He has concerns on the impact of construction on the existing Redwood & Doug fir trees. He would like the house set back further from his property. He has had problems with water on the lower level of his house.

Marti Horowitz @ 350 Laverne Ave comments: Story poles installation shows that the new home will block sun to their home and they feel the project is too large for the property and too close to neighbors. TDRB stated: the front on the home cannot be moved forward on the site, it is presently located at the front setback line. They are concerned about the existing retaining wall and driveway, if it will be impacted or undermined by the new driveway construction.

Neighbor @ 355 Laverne Ave comments: Neighbors passing by on the street will view a lot of hardscape in the foreground. Architect stated the driveway cannot be made smaller because of county design requirements. A shared driveway to lessen the hardscape was discussed with the neighbor of the West side. Questioned defensible space around home.

Loren Mollner pointed out that, although the site may be technically large enough to support a large home, much of the lot cannot be considered buildable. He questioned should this limit the development permitted?

**TDRB discussion:**

TDRB /Jones: concerned with window bays projecting into 6’ side-yard setback. Architect stated, windows bays project 2’, and are allowed per code on a second floor.

TDRB / Jones felt the home is substantially too large for the site due to the limited buildable area as well as the character of the neighborhood. He questioned how the removal of the Redwood tree on Laverne Ave would impact the character of the neighborhood.

TDRB / McCormick: concerned with the size of the tree wells / building cutout for the Redwood & Doug Fir trees, and how construction will impact the root system of both trees.

TDRB / recommends moving the second floor along the West side yard 12’ back from the property line to help the visual & sun impacts to the neighbors at 350 Laverne Ave.

TDRB / McCormick noted that the garage walls along the East side of the project cannot be changed because it would impact the county parking requirements.

TDRB / recommends pushing back the East side of the home back from the side yard setback, and that the tree wells be at least 10' from the base of the Redwood & Doug fir trees. As stated in the arborist report, the arborist will be present during the construction of the foundation and pier work.

TDRB / discussed if parking in the garage is feasible, DPW to review this issue.

Architect stated they will look at changing the design of the second floor along both side-yard setbacks.

**Completeness of the Application:** TDRB - deemed the applicant has met the requested changes from the last review and found the project design complete. **Post / LePelch 2<sup>nd</sup> ; 4- Aye**

**Project Not Approved:** Reason – the massing and scale of the project is not appropriate to and compatible with the site surrounding and the community. **Jones / Post 2<sup>nd</sup> ; 4 - Aye**

**TDRB comments regarding – Not Approved:**

- A. Provide at least 10' for the trunks of the Redwood & Doug Fir trees, look at the size of the tree wells/building cutouts, on the East side of the project. Recommends an arborist be present during the construction of the foundations and pier drilling, to ensure proper setbacks from the tree roots
- B. On the West side of the home, it impacts the neighbor, and should be keep 6' side yards setback for the first floor, and move the second floor wall at least 12' along the side-yards, to provide more visual space for the neighbors.
- C. The project is substantially too large for the site because the buildable portion of the site is severely limited by slope, creek, easements, and setbacks.
- D. The developer was urged to work closely with the neighbors to address their concerns, about the massing of the project and it's impact on their property, as well as the driveway configuration.