

Tam Design Review Board – Minutes
Public Hearing - August 3, 2016
Secretary, Alan Jones

Call to order: 7PM: April Post, chair

Board Members Present: April Post, Alan Jones, John McCormick, Doran Drexler

Approval of minutes: Minutes for July 20, 2016 were approved 4-0

Public comment on items not on the agenda: None

Communications & Correspondence: None

Public Present at Meeting: John Hussey, Candice Hacker, Fred Hacker, Dale Gostnell, Stephen DeLapp, David Kudler, Daniel Barenbaum, Mary Peterson, Chris Dorman, others.

1. Kudler Design Review and Tree Removal Permit, Project ID P1299, 940 W. California Ave, Mill Valley, APN 050-012-02

Applicant: Chris Dorman Planner: Tammy Taylor

The applicant requests Design Review and Tree Removal Permit approval to construct a new 1,650 square foot house and a 390 square foot garage on a vacant lot in Unincorporated Mill Valley. The 2,040 square feet of proposed development would result in a floor area ratio of 29.93 percent on the 5,513 square foot lot. The proposed building would reach a maximum height of 29 feet 11 inches above surrounding grade and would have the following setbacks from the exterior walls: 15 feet 3 inches from the east front property line; 6 feet 6 ½ inches from the north side property line; 14 feet 8 ½ inches from the south side property line; 36 feet 3 inches from the west rear property line. The project also proposes to remove one protected tree and one heritage tree on the vacant lot.

Applicant presentation: FAR within County and Tam Plan requirements. Kept area small by leaving entry stair external. Minimized excavation except for Garage. Discussing with DPW the option of making driveway steeper to lessen excavation even more. Providing 2 enclosed and 2 additional off-street parking places. Mass of house kept toward North side to allow outside spaces and separation from neighbor on South side. Applicant provided additional 3D renderings, preliminary construction management plan and existing street information, and updated landscape plan.

Public comment: Looks nice. Question whether modern design fits with neighbors. Complaint about short notice given for meeting. Has soils engineering been done? There was a significant slide on the adjacent property some years back. Worried about stability of soil. Will excavation for project have significant adverse impact on neighbors from dust, etc? Will driveway to existing houses at 942-44 be adversely impacted by new driveway development? How long will construction take? How will construction be managed in relation to challenging street access? Can arrangements be made to access through the gate at the end of the street during construction? Don't use lower W. California as a staging area. Is "slab like" front facade consistent with the Tam Plan requirement that houses have an unobtrusive rural character? Will windows cause undesirable reflection?

Applicant responses: There is a detailed soils report from previous slide which he can make available. All recommended work was done by neighbor. Public Works has asked for a "stability report." A wall has been provided between the new driveway and existing driveway serving 942-44. Construction plan will include construction of a staging area onsite to minimize impact on road. Roadway will not be blocked during construction.

Board comments: Drainage plan is not sufficiently detailed. Board may be able to address drainage issues in merit comments. Drainage "rain gardens" shown may be too close to street to be effective. Consider supplemental drainage provisions further up hill. Impact of house from the front appears massive. Could measures be taken to step back, use color and material changes to mitigate? Commend suggested green wall at entry stairs to mitigate mass. What planting will replace heritage tree being removed? TDRB does not consider that the Community Goal on page I-3 C paragraph 2 that "...new development shall be integrated harmoniously into the neighborhoods...in order to maintain their distinctive characters" was intended to prescribe a particular style of architecture or preclude a modern design. The proposed project is compatible with the contemporary look of the neighbor, and has a pleasant massing and sense of scale that we deem to fit with the neighborhood with the possible exception of the front facade.

Application found complete: Jones, McCormick 4-0 with provision that missing drainage detail be noted under merit comments.

Application approved: McCormick, Drexler 4-0 Merit comments below are important.

Merit comments:

1. DPW should review detailed drainage plan. Explore options to dissipate any drainage possible before the bottom of the hill.
2. Explore options for breaking up the mass of the front facade with massing or with color and material selection to avoid a solid mass of white.
3. Recommend "living wall" concept or other landscaping mitigation of mass of entry stair.
4. DPW to verify that driveway serving 942-44 has no blind spot where the proposed retaining wall adjoins the two driveways, and no interference with access.
5. Preparation of detailed construction management plan and consultation with neighbors during construction is recommended.
6. Explore possibility of opening gate at end of street during construction. Neighbors report that this has been done during other construction, to provide access on this road with one egress.
7. Include more local native plants if possible in landscape plan to mitigate the effects on wildlife by the loss of the heritage oak, since the space does not allow for replacement with another oak.
8. Mitigate reflectivity of window areas if possible.
9. Consider posting bond for damage to W. California during construction.
10. Steeper driveway would be highly recommended if feasible as it would serve to reduce the apparent mass of the front facade.