

# Strawberry Design Review Board (SDRB)

## MINUTES

Public Meeting – Monday, May 2, 2022, 7:35 p.m.

**Meeting location:** Via Zoom.  
**Call to order:** 7:35 p.m. by Joe Sherer, Chair  
**Board members present:** Julie Brown, Penna Omega, Joe Sherer, Chad Sparks and Matt Williams.  
**Board members absent:** None  
**Other attendees:** Christian & Catherine Elder, Emily Lavin, Supervisor Stephanie Moulton-Peters, Michelle Sandusky, Robert Sandusky and Katherine Lehmann (notetaker).

**Correspondence and announcements:** None

### Any Comments from the Public for Non-agenda Items:

- **District 3 Supervisor Stephanie Moulton-Peters:** Thanked the Strawberry DRB for their service, noted that more than one of the board members has served for more than five years, and shared the email response she recently received from Senior Planner Michelle Levenson, regarding the Next Steps related to the Seminary Project.
- The Draft EIR (Environmental Impact Report) will be ready in late fall of this year, followed by a 45-day Comment Period and Public Hearing with the Planning Commission. Then, the Final EIR will be prepared and will include responses received. Then, the Final EIR will go back to the Planning Commission and then to the Board of Supervisors (BOS). The Strawberry DRB, and members of the public, are welcome and encouraged to submit comments and make suggestions at any time, on both the Draft and Final EIRs, during the process.
- So, additional public meetings about the Seminary Project will be held at the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission meetings, like the BOS meetings, are hybrid meetings (both in-person and online), and members of the SDRB, as well as the public, are welcome to attend and voice their concerns.
- **Julie Brown** suggested that this update on the status of the Seminary Project be posted on the project page of the County website so that the public is aware of what is happening. **Stephanie Moulton-Peters** said she will pass that suggestion on to the County.

### Agenda Item #1:

**RE:** Sandusky-Elder Design Review  
280 Richardson Drive, Mill Valley  
Assessor's Parcel 043-231-05  
Project ID P3564

**APPLICANT:** Robert L. Sandusky  
**SENIOR PLANNER:** Immanuel Bereket

### PROJECT SUMMARY:

The applicant requests a Design Review approval to construct a retaining wall on a developed lot located in the Alto Strawberry area of Mill Valley. The proposed retaining wall would reach a

maximum height of nine feet, six inches (9'6") above the surrounding grade and the exterior face of the retaining wall would maintain the following setbacks: zero setback from the southern front property line *and encroach into the public rights-of-way by up to ten feet*; 23 feet from the eastern side property line; 53 feet from the western side property line; and over 100 feet from the northern property line.

Various other improvements would also be entailed in the proposed development, including the following: (1) convert the existing 448 square-foot garage into a habitable space (2) construct a breezeway connecting the detached garage (proposed to be converted to habitable space) to the main residence; (3) construct a by-right, 558 square-foot garage attached to the main residence within three feet of the front property line; and (4) other improvements including interior remodel, installation of a driveway, new landscaping, and various general site improvements to accommodate the proposed project. The conversion and addition would result in a building area of 3,666 square feet, a floor area of 6,670 square feet, and a floor area ratio (FAR) of 25 percent on the 10,365 square-foot lot.

Design Review approval is required pursuant to Section 22.42.020.B of the Marin County Development Code because the project proposes retaining walls that do not conform to Section 22.20.052 of the Code. Under Marin County Code Section 22.20.090(E)(2), in any zoning district allowing residential uses, where the slope of the one-half of the parcel beginning at the street-access side is 20 percent or more, a parking structure may be built to within three feet of the front and side property lines that abut the adjoining street from which vehicular access is taken. Therefore, the proposed garage meets this exemption from discretionary review process.

**Zoning:** R1-B1 (Residential Single Family combined district, 6,000 sq. ft. minimum lot)  
**Countywide Plan Designation:** SF5 (Single-Family residential, two to four units per acre)  
**Community Plan:** Strawberry Area Plan

#### **Robert Sandusky Project: Residential Remodel & Garage Addition:**

- Remodeling grandfather's house to add a garage at the lower level, with a roof deck on top. Additional remodeling of existing garage, raising its roof by 2 feet, and adding solar panels. Conversion from gas to electric.
- Retaining wall to create the lower-level garage.

#### **BOARD REVIEW:**

- Street frontage 44.5 feet, 60% of the frontage is concrete.
- Setback from the front to the deck? From the property line it is 9'8". This is within the regulations.
- Additional impervious surfaces in the driveway.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

- Message from a next-door neighbor, Emily Lavin, who has no problem with the design.

#### **BOARD DISCUSSION:**

- Setbacks seem to be within the regulations. Use of spaces looks good.
- Existing driveway left behind looks a little odd.
- Steep slope (30 degrees) going down to the garage next to the retaining wall.
- When it rains, they will be dumping water at the property line, into the drainage pipe, which needs to be repaired and upgraded. Make sure the water going downhill won't affect the neighbors. Lot of water at the bottom of the site towards the neighbors. Street Gutter is shallow. Rainwater flowing down should not overwhelm the neighbor.

- This Drainage easement to be cleared out and needs to be maintained. (Note: The drainage ditches are not normally maintained by the County but by private homeowners).
- Existing garage could be screened from the road. (It has a view of the city). The owners intend to have some potted plants to have some screening, which could be moved when parking is needed.
- Code will require a 42” railing along the retaining wall between the driveways. That should help with the concern of backing over the drop off.
- Exterior lighting: downward lighting, shielded lights in the landscape. Not too harsh.
- Suggest making a Master Plan for the future works so that neighbors have a level of comfort with the current plan.
- Too much concrete. Some further screening and softening of the frontage would be a positive asset for the neighborhood.

**Motion:** To recommend approval of the application, with the following conditions:

- That a study of the drainage situation is pursued, to reduce the off flow from this site to the downhill neighbor's property.
- Installation of a curb on the driveway east edge, to force the water into the street or into their own backyard.
- That a railing be added at the retaining wall per code.
- Creation of a Master Plan for future work to reduce the driveway frontage and the amount of visible concrete.

The motion was approved unanimously 5-0.

## **Agenda Item #2:**

### **Bi-annual Report:**

The SDRB discussed different goals that **Julie Brown** recently suggested, in response to Joe’s request for input from the board members. Via county portal, the draft was amended and voted on. JS, JB, CS, PO, and MW all voted affirmatively. The unanimously approved draft report was submitted electronically prior to adjourning the meeting.

The SDRB thanked Katherine (the note-taker provided by the County) for all her help over the past year and wished her well. They also thanked Joe Sherer for all his leadership, as chair of the SDRB over the past 5+ years. Julie Brown will be chairing the next SDRB meeting in June.

**The meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:10 p.m.**