

Tamalpais Design Review Board Meeting Minutes
Regular Meeting: May 15th, 2019, 7:00 PM
Meeting Location: TCSD Cabin - 60 Tennessee Valley Road, Mill Valley

I) Call to Order: 7pm - Andrea Montalbano (Chair)

Board Members Present: Andrea Montalbano (AM), Doron Dreksler (DD), Logan Link (LL), Alan Jones (AJ)

II) Approval of minutes: April 17th, 2019

- Motion to approve: DD; Second: LL; unanimous approval

III) Correspondence: Alan Jones will discuss Bothin Marsh after project proposal.

IV) Items not on the agenda:

- Community member Stephen DeLapp (SDL) brings up that there is an unfished construction project on Loring Avenue and asks if anything can be done to secure the site.
- Brooks McDonald (BM) agrees that this is concerning and notes that he has called vector control to report the issue.
- There is a similar unsecured project at Green Glen x Marin Avenue.
- Board recommends calling code enforcement.

V) Agenda Items:

Green Ridge partners: Address between 251 & 271 Loring Avenue

The applicant is requesting Design Review, Lot Line Adjustment and Tree Removal approval to construct a new 2,461 square foot residence on a vacant lot in Mill Valley. The 2,461 square feet of proposed development would result in a floor area ratio of 30 percent on the proposed 8203 square foot lot. The proposed building would reach a maximum height of approximately 28 feet above surrounding grade and would have the following setbacks from the exterior walls: 25 feet, 4 inches from the western front property line; 5 feet from the southern side property line; 5 feet, 9 inches from the northern side property line; 29 feet, 6 inches from the eastern rear property line. Various site improvements would also be entailed in the proposed development, including the construction of retaining walls to accommodate site access and develop a patio at the rear of the proposed residence; the removal of two Protected trees (one 18 inch California bay laurel and one 12 inch coast live oak) and one Heritage tree (22 inch coast live oak); and a lot line adjustment between adjacent properties as outlined below:

Assessor's Parcel Number	Street Address	Existing Area	Proposed Area
050-032-13	251 Loring Avenue	6,498 sq. ft.	6,882 sq. ft.
050-032-12	Vacant Lot	5,475 sq. ft.	8,203 sq. ft.
050-032-44	271 Loring Avenue	11,635 sq. ft.	8,524 sq. ft.

Design Review approval is required because the project is proposed on a vacant lot that is considered to be substandard pursuant to 22.42.020.D of the Marin County Development Code. Design review is also required for retaining walls that exceed the maximum height established in Section 22.20.052, as outlined in Section 22.20.060.F.2 of the Code. Tree Removal Permit approval is required for the removal of a Heritage and Protected Trees pursuant to Chapter 22.62 of the Marin County Development Code. Pursuant to Section 22.90.020 of the Marin County Development Code, Lot Line Adjustment approval is required because the project involves adjusting lot lines between two adjacent parcels, where land is taken from one parcel and added to an adjacent parcel without creating more parcels than originally existed.

Presentation by Brooks McDonald, owner of 271 Loring and vacant lot:

- BM presents five letters of support from neighbors and notes that neighbors have seen the latest renderings.
- Addresses board's concern over lot line adjustment and proposed FAR by quoting Tam Plan III-85 and related pages.
- Discusses actions that have been taken to address board's concerns about massing.
- Notes that overhang roof helps break up the lines of the building.
- Clarifies that railing material will be cedar; shows photo of 202 Ethel as example of similar railing. Railing to be mostly solid, addressing neighbor's privacy concern.
- Presents image demonstrating massing of proposed project vs. 940 W. California, pointing out that Loring imposes less against the sky.
- Asks board for opinion about an L shaped stair vs a scissor stair at front exterior; BM is open to either option.

Questions from Board / Board Discussion with Applicant:

- Board reviews floorplans again.

Public Comment:

- Stephen DeLapp (neighbor) notes that, although the Tam Plan is open to allowing lot line adjustments to create more standard parcels, it also clearly states the importance of preserving community/neighborhood character.

- SDL questions purpose of Tam Plan if not followed or changed.
- SDL brings up other recent project on Loring as an example of something that had a major effect on the character of the area; both because of use (now an AirBnb) and architecture.
- On the topic of the other Loring property, board member DD notes that landscape plan was not executed as shown.
- BM agrees that other Loring project was problematic for community character; notes large amounts of glass and light.
- Board mentions lack of enforcement body for landscaping and agrees that landscaping has a huge effect on neighbors.
- LL asks SDL is there is anything that could be done via the design to help prevent neighborhood impact. SDL notes that limiting the reflectivity of windows and keeping the amount of light shining from inside the house towards the street/surroundings to a minimum would be helpful. Additionally, the roof should be an unobtrusive color and non-reflective to avoid detracting from surrounding open space.
- BM shares that solar panels are planned for mostly non-visible locations.
- Board brings up usefulness of adding anti-reflective film to panels.

Board Discussion:

- Seeing lot line adjustment excerpt from Tam Plan was very helpful and important.
- The design of the home is thoughtful and respectful to the surroundings.
- The height of the retaining walls is not ideal but the tallest wall will not be visible to the public.
- Excellent planting is essential to lessen the effect of the 11ft wall at the street.
- BM said he will use a native hanging/draping *Arctostaphylos Manzanita*; Board supports this choice.
- L shaped staircase is better than scissor staircase and the increased area this allows for planting is favored.
- Under overhang (“eyebrow roof”), at the NW corner of the house at the main deck, it would be an improvement to replace the column with a thick/hefty wing wall – this helps with privacy from neighbors, aesthetics, etc. Also avoid a double gutter.
- Board agrees that this project, and Loring in general, is a good reminder that it is of utmost importance to make sure that each and every proposed project matches the character of its neighborhood.

Motion:

DD brings motion to approve as presented with suggestions as outlined; AJ seconds.
Unanimous approval.

Merit Comments:

- The retaining wall at the street must be covered specifically with hanging/draping *Arctostaphylos Manzanita*.
- Front exterior staircase to be L shaped with increased area for planting.

- Wing wall to be placed at NW corner of the house at the main deck, in place of the currently proposed column.
- Avoid double gutter by not lowering overhang over entryway.
- Because the front retaining wall will be mindfully landscaped and effect diminished as much as possible via architectural choices, and the back retaining wall is not visible by the public, the board views them as acceptable in this particular case.
- Applicant to minimize the amount of light shining to street/outside and to avoid reflective surfaces.

V) Correspondence:

Bothin Marsh:

- AJ shares with board and public the “Bothin Marsh Open Space Preserve – Evolving Shorelines” information booklet and summarizes the ongoing discussions surrounding Bothin Marsh and the multi-use path.
- Board notes that this is a good time to pay attention to the buildings on the East side of Shoreline Highway.

Tam Junction banners/signage:

- AJ brings up that the auto shop at Tam Junction, along with other nearby businesses, has taken to hanging multiple banners on their building. These are signs and therefore should be subjected to design approval.
- AM notes that Dan’s Liquors also appears to be in violation. Board agrees this is an important topic. AM will add to agenda for next meeting.

Alta Way project:

- AJ shares that rumors about the Alta Way project have been circling and this might be a good time for the board to look into the the project. It sounds as though new plans have been created but are not yet available on the County website.
- AM will alert the County that the plans have not yet been posted.

List for Applicants:

- AM reminds the board of past idea to create a list for applicants, outlining what they should bring with them when coming before the design review board.
- BM agrees that this would be great and very useful. Suggest that we ask applicants to bring a 3D rendering image and letters/proof of neighbor support. Applicants are likely to bring more materials if it is stated that large format is not necessary. Also notes that it would be helpful if the board suggested that applicants read the Tam Plan and host a meeting with neighbors prior to appearing for design review.
- AM and AJ discuss that it would also be helpful to have an info sheet for the process of creating an ADU.
- LL asks SDL if there is anything the board could do to be more helpful to neighbors/the community. SDL mentioned the usefulness of the existing Nextdoor posts and suggest the inclusion of a link to the project plans.

- SDL notes that archived meeting minutes are no longer available on the County website. These were very useful and are missed.
- LL agrees to post current meeting minutes to Nextdoor when they are available.

VI) Public in attendance: Brooks McDonald (BM) and Stephen DeLapp (SDL)

VII) Meeting adjourned: 8:50pm