



Town of Tiburon

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Subdivision. The site is bounded to the east and south by the residences along Rancho Drive, and is bounded to the north and west by the residences along Cypress Hollow Drive. The property itself is irregularly shaped and relatively flat.

The property has historical significance as being homesteaded by John and Hilarita Reed, whose names are ubiquitous on the Tiburon Peninsula today. John Reed was reportedly the first European settler in Marin County. The original house on the subject parcel was built in 1876 by John Joseph Reed, John Reed's son. The original residence was a 14 room mansion along with a barn and ranch house structures. The Reed's also planted much of the existing vegetation on the site including the prominent row of cypress trees and other significant trees. The original home was demolished, and the existing structure was erected in 1959 by the previous owners, the Deffebach family. The current owners, Mr. and Mrs. Altman, purchased the property in 2002.

The existing home is a sprawling one story ranch style design. The floor area of the existing building is approximately 4,380 square feet, and the building covers approximately 4% of the subject site. Other existing improvements on the site include a swimming pool, large paved parking area, and a flat lawn area. Much of the original landscaping remains on the site, and has been essentially un-maintained for the past year.

The applicant is proposing to demolish the existing facilities to build the new residence and accessory structures. The residence itself would be a two story building, approximately 8,700 square feet in size. The detached studio would be 740 square feet, and the detached pool house would be 1,262 square feet in size, resulting in a total of 10,697 square feet for the project. Since the floor area limit for the property is 8,000 square feet, the applicant is requesting a floor area exception of 2,697 square feet. The proposed lot coverage would be 8.7%, which would comply with the lot coverage limit of 30%.

ANALYSIS:

Site Design

The project site is relatively flat, with no obvious physical hindrances to development. The project has been designed so the only vehicular access to the site would be from Barn Road, with additional pedestrian access from Rancho Drive. The driveway off of Barn Road would lead up to a large auto court, in front of the proposed garage. A portion of the site to the east of the existing residence would be terraced to create a flat patio and lawn area. The north and east sides of the property would remain largely undeveloped besides some landscaping improvements, footpaths, and a series of ground-mounted solar panels.

The proposed residence would be laid out in a sprawling fashion, with mostly an east-west orientation, similar to the layout of the existing residence. One of the two proposed accessory structures, the pool house, would be located near an existing small knoll on the south end of the property. The other accessory structure, the exercise studio, would be located within an existing stand of trees on the north end of the property. The proposed pool and patio areas would be located adjacent to the main wing of the residence.



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It appears that a key element in the site design is to maintain the physical character of the site. This is evident in the minimal amounts of grading proposed, and the retention of original site features such as the rock retaining wall on the northeast side of the property and significant trees throughout the site.

Building Design

The proposed buildings, as previously stated, are laid out in a sprawling fashion. The attached garage would be approximately 750 square feet, and would be attached to the main building by a narrow hallway. The garage would accommodate four covered parking spaces. A guest bedroom off of the garage is proposed. In addition, an "in-law" suite would be located above the garage. The unit would be comprised of a bedroom, bathroom, living room, and outdoor terrace. The in-law suite would be approximately 720 square feet in size.

The main building is designed with two levels consisting of four bedrooms, five bathrooms, multiple living areas, a kitchen, a library, a laundry room, and storage areas. The floor plan of the first level would be fairly rectilinear with the living areas on the west end, the kitchen, library and family room centrally located, and the master suite on the east end. A ground level terrace would be located off the rear, or south side, of the building. An additional terrace would be located off of the master suite which would include a built-in spa.

The second level would be about half the size of the first level, and would be reserved for the children's bedrooms and bathrooms. A mezzanine would be created above the library on the first level. An exterior terrace would be constructed off the back of the second level.

A long unenclosed arbor would visually and functionally connect the main building with the pool house to the south. The pool house would be a two level structure with a shower, dressing room, and a lounge on the upper level. Underneath this area, partially subterranean, would be a media room, game room, and pool equipment room. The floor area of the pool house would be approximately 1,220 square feet, including the media room even though it is partially subterranean.

The exercise studio would be remotely located from the rest of the residence, to the north of the main building. The exercise studio would consist of a general purpose room, a bathroom, and storage areas.

The exterior design of the buildings would be a combination of "retro" styling with contemporary appurtenances and materials. The forms of the buildings would be very rectilinear with the occasional oblique angle in the roof line or wall line. The buildings would have low sloping shed roofs with flaring eaves reminiscent of a mid-century chalet. The roof on the main building "opens up" in the southerly direction. The south elevation would have expansive glass and clerestory windows. A metal trellis would be located below the clerestory windows. This design would maximize the natural light and heat for the home, while providing some shade. The north facing sides of the building would be well shaded, and some of the windows would have deep sills to protect against the harsh sun and the elements.



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The body material for the buildings would be a mix of horizontal wood siding, cement plaster, and stone veneer. The colors of the home would be a combination of earth tones. The roof material would be standing metal seam, and would be grey in color. A color and materials board and a colored rendering of the project will be made available for review at the Design Review Board meeting.

Landscaping

The applicant is proposing an extensive landscaping plan including the selective removal and thinning of existing vegetation; planting of several new species; creation of foot paths around the property; installation of landscape and safety lighting; grading of the site to create lawn and garden areas; construction of a patio terrace and swimming pool; installation of solar panels; and installation of new property line fencing.

The applicant has submitted a detailed landscaping plan and design concept reference booklet. Each garden area on the property would have its own design concept, but the overall theme of the planting and removal plan is to keep most of the significant vegetation, do some general selective thinning, remove the scrub and overgrowth, and plant under the existing trees to create a denser and more aesthetic barrier around the property.

The densest vegetation would be located on the northeast side of the property where there is an existing large stand of Black Acacia trees and some Eucalyptus. It appears that the most significant new vegetation would be planted near the entrance to the property in the area referred to as the "entry drive garden". The plant list for this area includes Madrone, Lacebark Pine, Monterey Pine, and Redwood; all of which are considered undesirable species according to the Tree Ordinance, and would normally require a tree permit to install. Each of these trees would have the ability to grow more than 60 feet tall, and would have the potential to impact views from properties in the vicinity if not properly maintained. Although the Board would have the ability to approve the installation of these undesirable species under the auspices of this design review application, the introduction of these species anywhere on the site should be discouraged.

Some grading on the site would be required to create the flat lawn terraces on the property. These lawn areas would be to the east, west, and south side of the residence. Adjacent to the upper lawn would be the swimming pool. As previously mentioned, an outdoor arbor would be constructed to connect the pool house to the main residence. The arbor would be planted with vines, and solar panels would be integrated into its design. These arbor-mounted solar panels would be supplemented by a series of ground-mounted panels on the southeast side of the property. The ground-mounted panels would be installed at grade, and would be tilted upward in the southerly direction. These panels would be screened from the adjacent residences by six to ten foot high shrubs.

While there is some existing fencing around a portion of the property, the applicant is proposing to install new fencing to complete the perimeter. The new fencing would be located along the east property line, a portion of the north property line, a portion of the south property line, and along the southwest property line at the entrance to the property. The new fence would be six



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feet high and comprised of wire mesh with wood posts. An electric vehicle entry gate would also be installed across the driveway.

Potential Impacts

The subject site is an expansive parcel surrounded by numerous lots approximately 10,000 to 20,000 square feet in size. It would initially appear that the potential for view and privacy impact in a geographical location such as this would be significant. However, the subject parcel is very much secluded because of the dense vegetation that surrounds the property. The property is also located on a low rising knoll which creates an additional visual buffer. The design of the proposed residence and the site layout centers the buildings and activity areas towards the middle of the site, which leaves much open space around the perimeter of the property.

After visiting the site and some of the surrounding properties, staff has determined that there is a potential view impact for at least one property; 30 Monterey Drive. The residence at 30 Monterey Drive is located to the north, and is on the opposite side of Cypress Hollow Drive from the subject site. This nearby house is at an elevation slightly higher than 121 Barn Road, and there is a small slot view from the kitchen and the second level deck of downtown San Francisco between the existing eucalyptus trees. It is apparent that this view would be blocked by the second story element of the proposed main building. The owners of 30 Monterey Drive have stated that this view exists because the previous owners of 121 Barn Road helped create the "view window" in the established vegetation. Even though this view is a created view and not an inherent or natural view, the impact on the view should still be carefully considered. The Tiburon Hillside Design Guidelines address in more detail the issue of view blockage (Exhibit #3):

- *Goal 3, Principle 7, of the Hillside Design Guidelines states that although some view blockage is inevitable, partial view blockage should be avoided whenever possible. View protection is most important for the primary living areas of a dwelling which include the dining room, living room, and kitchen, and decks associated with these rooms.*

The view blockage would be from the kitchen and living room deck at 30 Monterey Drive, which is an important view to protect.

- *Goal 3, Principle 7 also states that a wide panoramic view can accept more view blockage than the smaller slot view.*

The view of downtown San Francisco as seen from 30 Monterey Drive is an extremely narrow slot view, which would be significantly impacted by the project. This house also has more panoramic views, which consist mostly of the surrounding hillsides.

Except for the above mentioned view impact, staff foresees no other significant impacts on the properties in the vicinity.



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ZONING CONFORMANCE:

Except for the above mentioned floor area exception, the project appears to be in conformance with the development regulations of the R-1 zoning district.

Floor Area Exception

In order to grant the requested floor area exception, the Board must make the following findings as required by Section 4.02.08 of the Tiburon Zoning Ordinance:

- 1. The applicant has demonstrated that the visual size and scale of the proposed structure is compatible with the predominant pattern established by existing structures in the surrounding neighborhood.**

The project site has always been developed with a large single-family residence. Keeping the site as a single family parcel would maintain the historic visual size and scale of the site. Even though the proposed structure is larger than the existing and previous homes on this site, in a relative sense it is of similar scale.

The applicant has suggested that for most properties in Tiburon, as the property size increases, so does the floor area limit. However, when a parcel is over 60,000 square feet, the floor area limit is capped at 8,000 square feet. The subject parcel is over 130,000 square feet, but the floor area limit remains 8,000 square feet. When compared to the density established by the existing structures in the vicinity, the proposed project would be much less dense.

To bring the subject site into greater conformance with the density of the surrounding neighborhood, the applicant has suggested that the subject site could be subdivided into numerous smaller lots, which could conceivably occur based on the zoning criteria, whose collective building area would have a much greater impact than the proposed project. Although the proposed house would be significantly larger than all other houses in the surrounding neighborhood, the project would have much less impact than a multiple lot alternative in respect to existing neighborhood character, population density, traffic patterns, and resource and utility usage.

- 2. The applicant has demonstrated that the proposed structure is compatible with the physical characteristics of the site. The characteristics include, but are not limited to, the scale of trees, rock outcroppings, stream courses, land forms, and the dimensions of the lot.**

The proposed home is located in the same general vicinity of the existing residence. The home is designed to fit into the confines of the existing vegetation and geographical features. This is evident in the small amount of vegetation that would be removed and the amount of earthwork or grading being proposed. In addition, the proposed residence is of similar scale of the current and historic buildings on the property when compared to the large size of the property.

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CONCLUSION:

The applicant is requesting approval for a large residence on a large parcel with historic significance. Great care should be taken in the site layout and the design of the structures on the parcel. The applicant is attempting to develop this site in accordance with the historical use and context. Much of the existing physical characteristics of the site would be maintained.

The expansiveness of the site and its relative seclusion affords the applicant the ability to introduce a creative and functional design with very few inhibitions. However, the development of this site still needs to be sensitive to the surrounding neighborhood. It appears as though an important view from the property at 30 Monterey Drive would be blocked by this project. In addition, some of the significant trees proposed to be planted may result in a future view impact problem.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

The applicant has submitted seven letters from property owners in the vicinity which indicate support of the proposed project.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Board review this project with respect to Zoning Ordinance Sections 4.02.07, and 4.02.08 (Guiding Principles, Hillside Design Guidelines, and findings for a Floor Area Exception) and determine that the project is exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) as specified in Section 15303. If the Board finds that the design of the project is consistent with the Guiding Principles for Site Plan and Architectural Review, the Hillside Design Guidelines, and all necessary findings can be made for the floor area exception, then it is recommended that the project be approved with the attached Conditions of Approval.

EXHIBITS:

1. Conditions of Approval.
2. Application and supplemental materials dated August 14, 2003.
3. Excerpts from the Hillside Design Guidelines.
4. Design review application booklet compiled by the applicant.
5. Plans for the proposed project.

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EXHIBIT 1

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL **121 Barn Road** **FILE #703140**

1. This approval shall be used within three (3) years of the approval date, and shall become null and void unless a building permit has been issued.
2. The development of this project shall conform to the application and plans dated by the Town of Tiburon on November 10, 2003, or as amended by these conditions of approval. Any modifications to the plans must be reviewed and approved by the Design Review Board.
3. Plans submitted to the Building Department for plan check shall be identical to those approved by the Design Review Board. If any changes are made to the approved Design Review plans, the permit holder is responsible for clearly identifying all such changes when submitted to the Building Department for plan check. Such changes must be clearly highlighted (with a "bubble" or "cloud") on the submitted plans. A list describing in detail all such changes shall be submitted and attached to the building plans, with a signature block to be signed by the Design Review Staff member indicating that these changes have been reviewed and are approved, or require additional Design Review. All changes that have not been explicitly approved by Staff as part of the Building Plan Check process are not approved. Construction that does not have Design Review approval is not valid and shall be subject to stop work orders and may require removal.
4. The applicant must meet all requirements of other agencies prior to the issuance of a building permit for this project.
5. All exterior lighting fixtures other than those approved by the Design Review Board must be down light type fixtures.
6. The combined height of the proposed retaining wall and fence on the south end of the property shall not exceed a six feet.
7. The landscaping plan shall be revised to eliminate all new trees that meet the definition of "undesirable trees" contained in the Tiburon Tree Ordinance.
8. Prior to under-floor inspection, a certified survey of the structure foundation will be required. Required documents shall include graphic documentation locating the building on a site plan and including specific dimensions from property lines and other reference points as appropriate, and elevations relative to sea level of the foundation walls and slabs. No inspections will be provided until the survey results have been verified.

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9. The project shall comply with the following requirements of the Southern Marin Fire Protection District:
 - a. The structure shall have installed throughout an automatic fire sprinkler system in accordance with NFPA standard 13-D. The system design, installation and final testing shall be approved by the District Fire Prevention Officer (UFC 1003).
 - b. Approved smoke alarms shall be installed to provide protection to all sleeping areas (UBC 310).
 - c. Approved spark arresters shall be installed on chimneys (UFC 1109).
 - d. A greenbelt shall be provided by cutting and clearing all combustible vegetation within 30 feet of the structure (UFC 1103).
 - e. The water pump, if required, for domestic supply shall be sized to supply the automatic fire sprinkler system.

10. The following requirements of the Marin Municipal Water District shall be met:
 - a. A High Water Pressure Water Service application shall be completed.
 - b. A copy of the building permit shall be submitted.
 - c. Appropriate fees shall be paid.
 - d. The structure's foundation shall be completed within 120 days of the date of application.
 - e. The applicant shall comply with the District's rules and regulations in effect at the time service is requested.

11. All requirements of the Town Engineer shall be met.