

Town of Tiburon STAFF REPORT

AGENDA ITEM E2



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TO: **DESIGN REVIEW BOARD**

FROM: **PLANNING MANAGER WATROUS**

SUBJECT: **20 SOUTHRIDGE DRIVE WEST; FILE #20426
SITE PLAN AND ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW FOR THE
CONSTRUCTION OF ADDITIONS TO AN EXISTING SINGLE-FAMILY
DWELLING, WITH VARIANCES FOR REDUCED FRONT AND SIDE
YARD SETBACKS AND EXCESS LOT COVERAGE**

MEETING DATE: **JANUARY 20, 2005** _____

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PROJECT DATA:

ADDRESS:	20 SOUTHRIDGE DRIVE WEST
ASSESSOR'S PARCEL:	34-311-07
FILE NUMBER:	20426
PROPERTY OWNERS:	DENVER AND THERESA COLEMAN
APPLICANT:	HOLSCHER ARCHITECTURE
LOT SIZE:	14,972 SQUARE FEET
ZONING:	RO-2 (SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL - OPEN)
GENERAL PLAN:	MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
FLOOD ZONE:	C
DATE COMPLETE:	DECEMBER 21, 2004

PRELIMINARY ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION

Town Planning Division Staff has made a preliminary determination that this proposal would be exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) as specified in Section 15301.

PROPOSAL

The applicant is requesting Design Review approval for the construction of additions to an existing single-family dwelling on property located at 20 Southridge Drive West. The property is currently developed with a one-story residence.

The proposed project would involve the construction of several additions to main floor of the existing house, as well as the construction of a new second story. The main floor would be reconfigured to add a new family room and office, remove two bedrooms, and relocate the living room and dining room. The proposed second story would include a new master bedroom suite, two additional bedrooms and bathrooms, and a new playroom/laundry room. New decks would be constructed off the main floor family room and living room, and off the upstairs master



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bedroom. A new 4'6" stucco wall would be constructed along the front property line in front of the entry to the house.

The floor area of the existing house would be increased by 1,624 square feet to 3,493 square feet, which is four square feet less than the maximum floor area for a lot of this size. The proposed additions would increase the lot coverage on the site by 240 square feet to a total of 3,000 square feet (20.1%). As the maximum lot coverage permitted in the RO-2 zone is 15.0%, a variance is requested for excess lot coverage.

The proposed additions would extend to within 25 feet, 1 inch of the front property line, and within 7 feet of the northern side property line. As the RO-2 zone requires front and side yards of 30 and 15 feet, respectively, variances are also requested for reduced front and side yard setbacks.

A color and materials board has been submitted, and will be present at the meeting for the Board to review. The structure would be finished with yellow colored stucco siding, and medium red roof tiles.

ANALYSIS

Design Issues

The residence across the street and above at 25 Southridge Drive West has the only views across the subject property. Although that neighboring house is oriented generally away from the site toward San Francisco and Sausalito, views of Richardson Bay from the rear deck and patio area around the swimming pool toward Strawberry Point would be impacted by the proposed second story addition. The applicant has obtained the signature of the owner of this neighboring property indicating support of the proposed project. Goal 3, Principle 7 (A) of the Hillside Design Guidelines states that "view protection is more important for the primary living areas of a dwelling (e.g. living room, dining room, family room, great room, kitchen, and decks associated with these rooms) than for less actively used areas of a dwelling (e.g. bedroom, bathroom, study, office, den)." Although the rear deck and pool area are not considered to be "primary living areas," it is recommended that the Design Review Board visit this neighboring property and determine whether the views from this property would be unfairly impacted by the proposed addition.

Most of the homes on the downhill side of Southridge Drive West have been designed with only one-story elements visible from the street. However, several homes along the street (most notably the residence at 32 Southridge Drive West) have two-story building facades visible from the street similar to that proposed for the subject house. Section 4.02.07 (c) of the Tiburon Zoning Ordinance (Guiding Principles in the review of Site Plan and Architectural Review Applications) states that "the height, size, and/or bulk of the proposed project [should] bear a reasonable relationship to the character of existing buildings in the vicinity." Although the proposed design for the subject residence would not be completely inconsistent with the design of the homes in the surrounding neighborhood, the Design Review Board should consider



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whether the proposed design would “bear a reasonable relationship to the character of existing buildings in the vicinity.”

Similarly, the proposed exterior design may be incompatible with the surrounding neighborhood. Most homes in the vicinity utilize wood siding, and few have the Mediterranean design attempted by the proposed project. Further, although the exterior colors and materials are intended to evoke a Tuscan style (even using a “Tuscany” roofing material), the exterior design has little in the way of authentic Mediterranean design. The bright colors proposed for the house, combined with the stucco finish and the large, two-story façade prominently visible from the street, would appear to be inconsistent with the predominant character of this neighborhood.

Although the proposed project would only add 240 square feet (1.6%) to the lot coverage, the fact that the resulting house would be further over the maximum lot coverage for the site and within 4 square feet of the floor area ratio for a lot of this size indicates that the size of the house could be too large for the property. Most lot coverage variances that have been historically granted in the Reedlands neighborhoods have come from projects that spread development out on the site in order to avoid going into other peoples’ views. Although the view impacts from the proposed second story may be insignificant, the request is inconsistent with the purpose of others usually granted in the vicinity and elsewhere in the RO-2 zone

The exterior lighting fixtures proposed to be installed as part of this project are “carriage lights” that are not considered to be downlights. It is recommended that these lighting fixtures not be approved as part of the project, and be replaced with appropriate downlights.

Zoning

Staff has reviewed the proposal and finds it to be in conformance with the development standards for the RO-2 zone with the exception of the previously noted front and side yard setback and excess lot coverage variances.

Variance

In order to grant the requested variance, the Board must make all of the following findings required by Section 4.03.05 of the Tiburon Zoning Ordinance:

1. ***Because of special circumstances applicable to the property, including size, shape, topography, location, or surroundings, the strict application of this Ordinance will deprive the applicant of privileges enjoyed by other properties in the vicinity and in the same or similar zones.***

The subject property is substantially smaller than the minimum size for new lots in the RO-2 zone. This reduced size is a special circumstance that limits the areas and extent of construction on the site; the strict application of the front and side yard setback and lot coverage requirements on such a lot would deprive the applicant of the development potential enjoyed by other homes in the vicinity.

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2. ***The variance will not constitute a grant of special privileges, inconsistent with the limitation upon other properties in the vicinity and in the same or similar zones.***

Numerous other properties in the Reedlands neighborhood have received variances for reduced front and side yard setbacks, primarily to design homes that work with the generally sloping topography found in this area.

As noted above, most variances for excess lot coverage which have been granted to other homes in the vicinity and in the RO-2 zone in general have been the result of project designs that spread living areas horizontally across the site to avoid creating view or privacy impacts on neighboring homes. In contrast, the proposed second story addition would result in a much more vertical design for this house, which does not appear to be visibly consistent with the character of other homes in the vicinity. The requested lot coverage variance would therefore appear to be inconsistent with the limitations placed upon other properties in the vicinity and in the RO-2 zone in general.

3. ***The strict application of this Ordinance would result in practical difficulty or unnecessary hardship.***

The existing house extends into the required front and side yard setbacks and already exceeds the maximum lot coverage on the site. The strict application of the front and side yard setback and lot coverage requirements for this property would impose an unnecessary hardship on the property owner by severely limiting the location of any additions that could reasonably be expected to be proposed for this property.

4. ***The granting of the variance will not be detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to other properties in the vicinity.***

The proposed construction should not result in significant view or privacy impacts on neighboring property owners. Although the two-story façade may be inconsistent with the predominant character of other homes in the vicinity, the requested variances would contribute little to this effect.

From the evidence provided, Staff believes that there is sufficient evidence to support the findings for the requested variances for reduced front and side yard setbacks. In order to approve the requested variance for excess lot coverage, the Design Review Board would need to articulate how this request would not constitute a grant of special privileges to the applicant.

Public Comment

The applicant has submitted signatures from the owners of the adjacent properties at 12, 24 and 25 Southridge Drive West. A letter of objection has been received from the owner of 4 Janet Way #106, objecting to the principle of requesting variances for the project.

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RECOMMENDATION

The Board should review this project with respect to Zoning Ordinance Sections 4.02.07 (Guiding Principles) and determine that the project is exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) as specified in Section 15301. If the Board wishes to approve the project, the necessary findings should be made for the variance request for excess lot coverage. Staff would recommend that the attached conditions of approval be applied if the project is approved.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Conditions of approval
2. Application and supplemental materials
3. Letter from L. Sims, dated January 11, 2005
4. Submitted plans

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CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

20 SOUTHRIDGE DRIVE WEST

FILE #20426

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 with the application dated by the Town of Tiburon on June 22, 2004, or as amended by these conditions of approval. Any modifications to the plans of December 7, 2004, must be reviewed and approved by the Design Review Board.
3. Plans submitted to the Building Division 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 Division 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 Planning Division 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 Planning Division 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 must be down light type fixtures. The lighting fixtures indicated on the submitted plans are not approved, and shall be replaced with appropriate down lights.
6. All skylights shall be bronzed or tinted and no lights shall be placed in the wells.