



County of Santa Cruz

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

701 OCEAN STREET - 4TH FLOOR, SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060
(831) 454-2580 FAX: (831) 454-2131 TDD: (831) 454-2123
ALVIN D. JAMES, DIRECTOR

Agenda Date: March 23, 1999

March 12, 1999

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
County of Santa Cruz
701 Ocean Street
Santa Cruz CA 95060

Subject: Report Back on Design Review Issues

Members of the Board:

Background

On December 15, 1998, your Board considered a report from the Planning Department which proposed several changes to our application requirements and land use procedures to improve the quality of design review. These proposed changes were brought to you in response to several recent land use approvals where the "built" project did not meet the expectations of the original approvals. It has become apparent that "in-fill" development projects deserve special attention to ensure that the issues of privacy, scale, compatibility with surrounding development, buffering, and setbacks are given the appropriate attention in the decision-making process and in subsequent permit review processes. The goal is to improve the quality of the application review, decision-making and permit processes to ensure that the "built" project is fully consistent with the original approval. Accordingly, your Board approved our recommendations to:

- ▶ Direct the Planning Department to augment submittal requirements for development projects which are subject to the Design Review ordinance;
- Record the final Conditions of Approval;
- ▶ Require any changes to approved projects to return to the decision-making body for consideration in the form of a public hearing setting letter;
- ▶ Require that final Conditions of Approval be included on all construction plans; and,
- ▶ Direct the Planning Director and the Director of Public Works to work together to improve coordination and condition compliance relative to tentative map and final land division review **and** approval.

As an additional action, your Board directed staff to meet with interested members of the public to discuss these changes.

In a related item, your Board considered a report from Supervisors Symons and Beautz and further directed staff to:

- ▶ Require all development project applications to include 3-dimensional drawings or computer models that reflect the proposed development and its relationship to existing neighborhoods; and
- ▶ Require all land division and residential development applications to include complete building elevations and site designs, including the placement of windows.

The minute order summarizing your Board's actions on these two reports are attached (Attachment 1).

The purpose of this report is to update your Board on the department's progress in implementing your directives, to advise your Board on the issues and concerns that were raised at our meeting with the development community, and to propose some additional recommendations for your consideration to clarify both the scope and administration of these new design review changes.

Implementation of the Expanded Design Review Requirements

Since your Board's action, Planning staff began to require the additional materials listed on "Supplemental Requirements: Design Review" (Attachment 2). The additional requirements include a more detailed site analysis consisting of drawings depicting the elevations of structures visible from street frontages, a 3-dimensional view of proposed improvements with emphasis on the interface with adjacent developments, and exterior elevations of all structures including the size and locations of all windows. These requirements have been imposed on all new applications subject to the Design Review ordinance, as well as those pending land division applications subject to the Design Review ordinance.

One question that arose after your Board's direction involved the scope of this action. In Supervisors Beautz and Symons letter of November 24, 1998 (Attachment 3), which was approved in conjunction with staffs recommendations, your Board directed "that all new development plans be submitted with either 3-Dimensional drawings or computer models." Clearly, taken literally, this is a broader direction than staff had recommended because not all development proposals are subject to the Design Review ordinance. Examples of applications not subject to Design Review include lot line adjustments, fences greater than 3-feet in height in a required front yard, Coastal Development Permits not within a designated Special Community or sensitive site, Variances, and Minor Land

Divisions outside the Urban Services Line.

Staff have assumed, in the initial implementation of your December 15 directives, that your Board's intent was to apply these new requirements to larger projects, such as new commercial developments, urban land divisions, large residential projects, and other projects subject to the County's Design Review ordinance. The context for these new requirements in the November 24, 1998 letter from Supervisor Beautz and Symons were recent urban subdivision approvals, as well as the commercial project in Davenport, not smaller projects such as single-family dwellings.

Similarly, the second direction contained in that same letter requires "that all land divisions and residential developments provide complete elevations and site designs of all buildings . . ." However, omitted from this list of projects are other development projects subject to Design Review, including new commercial and industrial construction.

For case of administration and consistency, in our judgement, it is appropriate to apply the new submittal requirements to those land division, residential, commercial and industrial projects which are subject to the County's Design Review ordinance. These are projects which your Board has previously determined are sensitive either in terms of their size or location so as to trigger design scrutiny. The compatibility of "in-fill" development with surrounding development, whether it is residential, commercial, or industrial is equally important. The same level of information may not be necessary in every instance, but the threshold should be clear. Using the County's Design Review ordinance provides this clarity. If your Board disagrees with this interpretation of your intent, it will be necessary to redefine the class of projects to which these expanded requirements apply. If your Board concurs with our approach, no further action is necessary as to the basic applicability of the new design review requirements, as this has been our practice since your December 15 actions.

Occasionally, a developer will propose revisions to project plans following final approval. Your Board directed staff to place these projects on the consent agenda of the decision-making body, in the form of a hearing setting letter, for consideration. In the event the decision-maker finds that such changes are significantly different and merit further review, a public hearing would be scheduled to review and take action on the proposed changes. This procedure is currently in place for projects subject to Design Review.

Meeting with the Development Community

Planning staff sponsored a meeting with representatives of the development community on February 8, 1999. The meeting was attended by engineers, architects, land use consultants, property owners, developers, realtors, and a few Board aides. A total of 18 individuals were in attendance. Many had sent letters articulating their concerns in advance of the meeting, copies of which are attached for your Board's review (Attachment 5).

Most of the individuals expressed general support for improving design review. However, they raised concerns regarding the timing, specificity, inflexibility, and content of the materials stipulated. They gave a specific example in the case of a land division in which the lots would be sold individually with the purchasers designing and building custom homes. They explained that requiring complete elevations for all proposed lots, including the placement of windows, eliminates a great deal of flexibility for customizing new residences for individual buyers. Many felt that such a requirement could have the effect of encouraging “cookie cutter” plans or “tract” style development, due to the additional, possibly significant, cost of preparing original, custom plans at the tentative map stage.

In addition, some developers presented arguments suggesting that the current application of the new design review requirements is overly broad and inflexible. They pointed out that in some circumstances, there is existing vegetation such as a riparian corridor, or topographic features that provides a natural buffer to existing development. Some questioned whether this level of information is necessary where larger parcels (e.g., 10,000 square feet), are proposed. They requested a waiver or exception process. Section 13.11.040(j) of the County Code currently authorizes a waiver process, however, it's exercise requires that the Planning Director certify that the nature of the project is minor or incidental to the purpose of the design review. (It also authorizes the Planning Director to impose design requirements if the same certification criteria are met.)

A waiver could be justified through graphic representations that illustrate no impact to surrounding development, for either the entire project, or specific parcels, thus precluding the need for detailed design plans. Presently, we have not developed a formal process for waivers to the new requirements for land divisions or other large projects, but have granted administrative waivers for three minor projects: 1) a restroom in a public park, 2) the replacement of pumps and a canopy at an existing service station, and 3) a three-lot minor land division that will create just one additional building site which abuts a large rural parcel which is subject to an open-space easement contract.

A couple of the attendees suggested a two-step design review process for land divisions. This approach could include approval of the tentative map with conceptual level plans, and a second public hearing after tentative map approval to consider more detailed architectural guidelines or plans for either the entire project, or for those parcels which have been identified as requiring special review.

Potential Design Review Refinements

The objective of improving the development review process for in-fill development is an important one. The changes to the application submittal requirements which were implemented in mid-December have improved the information available to the decision-making body. For instance, the new requirement for the submittal of 3-dimensional or perspective drawings for in-fill development was well received by the Planning Commission. At their February 24 hearing, the Planning

Commission considered two different land division applications in the urban area, both of which included perspective drawings. The Commission commented that the additional plans were helpful to their review of these projects. Copies of the drawings are attached for your information (Attachment 6). The 3-dimensional plans help to visualize how the new development will “fit in” with the existing residential development.

In addition to the new submittal requirements, the other major changes to the development review process are procedural in nature. These changes include a new requirement for any deviations from the approved plans, including the placement of windows, to return to the decision-making body in the form of a public hearing setting letter. There are also new conditions requiring the recordation of conditions and the inclusion of the final conditions of approval on the actual construction plans. These new requirements have been included in the recent approvals, but we do not have any experience per se with the new procedures since the approvals are so recent.

In consideration of the comments provided by the development community, the implementation of the new design review requirements may need some refinement. The combination of the new requirements for detailed plans, including complete elevations for each lot that show window placement, coupled with the new procedural requirements for evaluating changes to either the elevations or other plans which were considered by the decision-making body (which includes grading plans, drainage, street detail, and so forth), results in a dramatic change in the way in which new development, especially land divisions, have been considered. Developers are required to essentially work out, prior to tentative map approval, not only the lot configuration, preliminary drainage, environmental constraints, circulation, and site improvements, but also the final elevations of the buildings on each lot.

The requirement for precise plans at the initial approval stage, whether for land divisions, commercial projects, or industrial buildings, is important in those instances where the “fit” is critical. The detailed plans assist the public in understanding the project, and help the decision-makers to properly evaluate and condition the project to ensure that the final “built” project is consistent with the original approval. The insurance for such an outcome is a process of zero administrative tolerance for proposed modifications in the subsequent plan review process by staff. If the plans which are submitted for staff review vary from those approved by the decision-making body, then requiring an opportunity for review by the same body is a logical requirement. At a minimum, the decision-making body will receive a report on their consent agenda. If the decision-making body concludes that the changes are material in nature, then a full public hearing will be required.

On the other hand, the requirement for precise plans at the initial approval stage, and the associated requirement for taking all subsequent proposed changes to the preliminary plans back to the decision-making body, at least on the consent agenda, may not be appropriate for all projects subject to Design Review. For example, large lot subdivisions, projects which are buffered from surrounding

areas by topography or other natural feature, and certain commercial developments may have proposed minor changes that are inconsequential and, would result in virtually no impact on or interest to anyone except the project sponsor. In these instances, the previous design review requirement for conceptual level plans and written architectural guidelines may be more useful. Final plans would still need to conform to the preliminary plans, but minor revisions and refinements would not necessitate further review beyond the staff level. In this class of projects, the elevations or guidelines would not be specific with regard to window placement, or any finish details, but would illustrate overall mass and height of structures. In other words, they would define a three dimensional building **envelope**, by defining setbacks, height, etc., and would describe a style of development (e.g. ranch style, Spanish style, contemporary), but the final detailed building or residential design would occur after "conceptual" project approval. This would allow for continuation of flexibility in the design of custom single-family dwellings and "build-to-suit" commercial development in appropriate cases. The key to this approach, is clearly defining what those appropriate cases are, i.e., which projects require precise plans up-front, and which do not.

To this end, staff are recommending that the new submittal and processing requirements be retained for the following projects:

- ▶ All Land Divisions (Minor Land Divisions and Subdivisions) inside the Urban Services Line;
- Subdivisions outside the Urban Services Line;
- Single-family dwellings in the Coastal Zone in a designated Special Community;
- Single-family dwellings greater than 7,000 square feet;
- Residential developments of 3 or more units (e.g., apartment projects); and
- ▶ New Commercial, Industrial, or Institutional developments.

The remaining projects which are still subject to Design Review would require conceptual level plans and written architectural guidelines.

We are also recommending the development of a waiver procedure for those situations where detailed plans are simply inappropriate due to site specific conditions, such as topography or the presence of natural vegetation, or due to the minor nature of the project. It would be incumbent on the applicant to demonstrate why the requirements should not apply. The Planning Commission would remain the final arbiter and could ultimately still require detailed plans if it deemed a waiver to be inappropriate. Under this scenario, if that body is persuaded that the detailed submittal requirements are unnecessary, then the developer may proceed through the review process at his or her own risk, with the understanding that the "waiver" is not final until the project is ultimately approved by the decision-making body. (In other words, if a project requiring Zoning Administrator approval has been granted a waiver of detailed plan submittal requirements by the Planning Commission, the waiver would not be deemed final until the project receives its Zoning Administrator approval. The Planning Commission, until that decision, could reconsider its waiver

decision) Waiver requests associated with Zoning Administrator cases would be referred to the Planning Commission who would retain jurisdiction on issues related to any waiver it granted. Waiver **findings** could be required by the Planning Commission to ensure consistency in the granting or denial of waivers. In effect, such findings would support the dual propositions that situations do exist where impacts are inconsequential and good design often benefits from creativity --the latter of which requires some level of flexibility. If this approach is unacceptable to the developer, then they have the option of submitting detailed plans at the time of original submittal.

These refinements, differentiating those projects which should be subject to the new requirements and those which should be subject to the former design review requirements, as well as establishing a waiver process, are appropriate changes that we are recommending at this time. We are also recommending that we revisit this issue after a full year of experience, and return to your Board with any further recommendations for your consideration. Of course, we will return sooner if something unanticipated arises that requires your attention.

Planning and Public Works Coordination on Subdivision Review

Staff from Planning and Public Works have conducted numerous meetings to improve coordination between our two departments. Public Works began forwarding to the Planning Department a complete set of final engineered improvement plans for our review and comparison to the approved Tentative Maps. Also, we are preparing revised forms for Planning staffs' use in reviewing Final and Parcel maps to insure conformance with approved Tentative Maps.

Recordation of Conditions

As your Board directed, for all subdivisions and land divisions we have included in the final conditions of approval a requirement to record the conditions in the Office of the County Recorder. Recordation is intended to afford the opportunity for this information to be discovered by any purchaser of property. The Department of Public Works handles the recordation as part of the Final Map approval. Staff is in the process of developing the administrative procedures to expand the recordation requirement to the other Use Approvals that are subject to the Design Review ordinance, with implementation scheduled to occur in April,


Conclusion and Recommendation

As evidenced by this discussion, there are some basic refinements to the new Design Review requirements that we believe will improve and clarify the administration of the Design Review process. In addition, some flexibility in reducing the scope of the submittal requirements is appropriate in some circumstances,

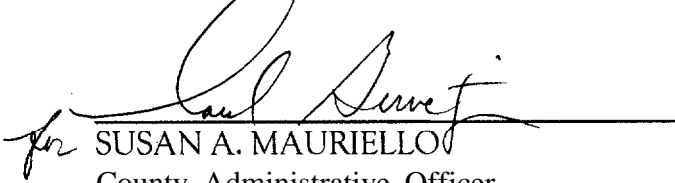
It is therefore, RECOMMENDED, that your Board:

1. Direct the Planning Department to require the additional Design Review submittal requirements for the following projects: a) All Land Divisions within the Urban Services Line; b) Subdivisions outside the Urban Services Line; c) Single-family dwellings in the Coastal Zone in a designated Special Community; d) Single-family dwellings greater than 7,000 square feet; e) Residential developments of 3 or more units; and f) All new Commercial or Industrial construction projects.
2. Refer the proposal to have the Planning Commission decide request for waiver of design submittal requirements to the Planning Commission for consideration and recommendation back to the Board on or before May 25, 1999. The Planning Commission recommendation could include proposed waiver findings to be used in considering waiver requests; and,
3. Direct the Planning Director to prepare a report back to your Board in January 2000, which would discuss the results of the direction approved in connection with this Board letter and would include recommendations as appropriate.

Sincerely,


ALVIN D. JAMES
Planning Director

RECOMMENDED:


for SUSAN A. MAURIELLO
County Administrative Officer

Attachments:

1. Minute Order for Item No. 66.1 on the December 15, 1999 agenda
2. Supplemental Requirements: Design Review
3. Letter of Supervisors Beautz and Symons dated November 24, 1998
4. Letter of the Planning Director dated December 4, 1998

5. Correspondence
6. Sample 3-Dimensional Drawings

cc: Department of Public Works

ADJ/SAM/mjj

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COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

ATTACHMENT 1



AT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING

On the Date of December 15, 1998

REGULAR AGENDA Item No. 066.1

(CONSIDERED report on changes to submittal requirements
(and processing procedures for development projects
(subject to Design Review;
(1) motion made to approve recommendations in letter of
(Planning Director dated December 4, 1998;
(2) motion made to amend the main motion to direct
(Planning staff to immediately begin requesting from
(applicants, the materials specified by the "Submittal
(Requirements: Design Review," form. These items shall
(be deemed the minimum submittal requirements for a
(project to be deemed complete for processing; require
(the recordation of permit conditions in the Office of
(the County Recorder, following project approval;
(require that any changes to approved projects be
(returned to the decision-making body in the form of a
(hearing setting letter and placed on such body's
(Consent Agenda for appropriate consideration and
(action; require that the final Conditions of Approval
(be included on all construction plans. A complete set
(of plans including the final Conditions of Approval
(shall be provided by the project sponsor prior to
(issuance of building permits; direct the Planning
(Director and the Director of Public Works to continue
(working together to improve coordination and condition
(compliance relative to tentative and final land
(division review and approvals; with an additional
(directive to direct the Planning Director to meet with
(local businesses to determine the effectiveness of the
(actions and return to the Board with any
(recommendations for Board consideration; passed main
(motion, as amended...

Considered report on changes to submittal requirements
and processing procedures for development projects subject to Design
Review;

Motion made by Supervisor Wormhoudt, duly seconded by Supervi-
sor Beautz, with Supervisors Symons and Belgard voting "no", to
approve recommendations in letter of planning Director dated Decem-
ber 4, 1998;

State of California, County of Santa Cruz-ss.

I, Susan A. Mauriello, Ex-officio Clerk of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Cruz, State of California, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the order made and entered in the Minutes of said Board of Supervisors. In witness thereof I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the seal of said Board of Supervisors.

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COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

ATTACHMENT 1



AT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING

On the Date of December 15, 1998

REGULAR AGENDA Item No. 066.1

Motion made by Supervisor Symons, duly seconded by Supervisor Alqumist, to amend the main motion to direct Planning staff to immediately begin requesting from applicants, the materials specified by the "Submittal Requirements: Design Review," form. These items shall be deemed the minimum submittal requirements for a project to be deemed complete for processing; require the recordation of permit conditions in the Office of the County Recorder, following project approval; require that any changes to approved projects be returned to the decision-making body in the form of a hearing setting letter. and placed on such body's Consent Agenda for appropriate consideration and action; require that the final Conditions of Approval be included on all construction plans. A complete set of plans including the final Conditions of Approval shall be provided by the project sponsor prior to issuance of building permits; direct the Planning Director and the Director of Public Works to continue working together to improve coordination and condition compliance relative to tentative and final land division review and approvals; with an additional directive to direct the Planning Director to meet with local businesses to determine the effectiveness of the actions and return to the Board with any recommendations for Board consideration; passed main motion, as amended

cc:

CAO
Planning

State of California, County of Santa Cruz-ss.

I, Susan A. Mauriello, Ex-officio Clerk of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Cruz, State of California, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the order made and entered in the Minutes of said Board of Supervisors. In witness thereof I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the seal of said Board of Supervisors.

Page 2 of 2

by Alicia Spivey, Deputy Clerk, on December 28, 1998.



SUPPLEMENTAL REQUIREMENTS: DESIGN REVIEW

COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ - PLANNING DEPARTMENT
GOVERNMENTAL CENTER
701 OCEAN STREET - 4TH FLOOR
SANTA CRUZ CA 95060
(831) 454-2130

Chapter 13.11 and Section 18.10.210(e) of the County Code set forth the procedures and requirements for development projects located in Santa Cruz County that are subject to Design Review. In order to expedite our review of your application, please provide each of the items checked on this sheet. Copies of plans are required. Without these materials, your application will not be accepted. Certain types of applications are accepted by appointment only. For information call (831) 454-2130; for an appointment to submit an application call 454-3252.

- ☐ 1. A **Vicinity Map**, drawn to an appropriate scale, showing the location of the project in relation to major roads, streams, or other physical features
- 2. **Site Plan**, drawn to an appropriate scale, showing:
 - ☐ Layout of all streets immediately abutting and/or providing access to the project; include street widths
 - ☐ All existing and proposed property lines
- 3. **Site Analysis Diagram**, drawn to an appropriate scale, showing:
 - ☐ All building footprint outlines and dimensions including percentage of site coverage, square footage of floor area, and floor-area-ratio
 - ☐ Setbacks from all property lines
 - ☐ Contiguous land uses and uses across the street from the project site
 - ☐ Location of improvements on contiguous parcels including the size and location of mature landscaping
 - ☐ A perspective drawing depicting the elevations visible from all street frontages and contain sufficient information to gauge the projects impact on the surrounding neighborhood. This material shall, at a minimum, include a 3-D perspective or an axonometric view of the proposed improvements with emphasis placed on the interface with adjacent lots as well as section illustrations depicting topography and building outlines. Where land divisions are proposed, this emphasis shall be placed on the adjacent neighborhoods
- ☐ 4. **Design Guidelines** for the project consisting of a written statement establishing the parameters of site planning, landscaping, and architectural design
- 5. **Preliminary Architectural Plans**, drawn to an appropriate scale, including:
 - ☐ All exterior elevations showing building height, exterior materials, and the location and size of glazing (**Note: The location of windows on the preliminary architectural plans will constitute final approval unless changed by the decision-maker(s).**)

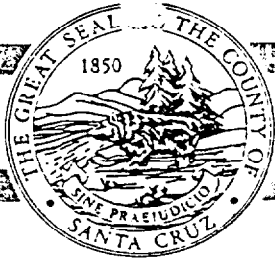
SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS
DESIGN REVIEW

- ☐ All floor plans (calculate and note on the plan the floor area of each plan)
- 6. A **Landscaping Plan**, including:
 - ☐ Location, size, and species of existing plants
 - ☐ Location, size, and species of proposed plantings
 - ☐ Irrigation plan and specifications
 - ☐ Location, height, material, color, and elevation of any proposed retaining walls
- ☐ 7. **Material and Color Sample Board** showing a complete inventory of proposed materials and colors displayed on an 8-1/2" x 11" board. Include manufacturers specifications.

C:\Core\WP\Forms\DesignReviewSupplementalRequirements.wpd

January 15, 1999

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS



COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

GOVERNMENTAL CENTER

 701 OCEAN STREET SANTA CRUZ, CALIFORNIA 95060-4069
 (408) 454-2200 ATSS 564-2200 FAX (408) 454-3262 TDD (408) 454-2123

 JANET K. BEAUTZ
 FIRST DISTRICT

 WALTER J. SYMONS
 SECOND DISTRICT

 MARDI WORMHOUDT
 THIRD DISTRICT

 RAY BELGARD
 FOURTH DISTRICT

 JEFF ALMQUIST
 FIFTH DISTRICT

AGENDA : 12/8/98

November 24, 1998

 BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
 County of Santa Cruz
 701 Ocean Street
 Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Dear Members of the Board:

On October 20, 1998, the Board discussed a number of Planning Department issues with regard to the Bailey/Steltenpohl project in Davenport.

At the time it was our impression that a few other requirements were included in the motion; they were not. Therefore, we are asking that the Board approve the following items and direct Planning Department staff to include these requirements for all new development applications immediately.

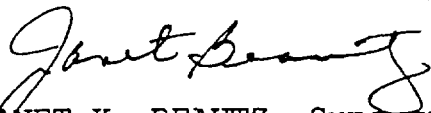
1. Due to the recent controversy with the Rio Highlands development in Aptos, Supervisor Symons requests that all new development plans be submitted with either 3-Dimensional drawings or computer models. These drawings should not only reflect the development itself but the look of it relative to existing neighborhoods.
2. In light of changes that were made to the Rio Highlands development after the Board approved it--changes that appear to have been approved at a staff level--Supervisor Beautz requests that all land divisions and residential developments provide complete elevations and site designs of all buildings to be built on the

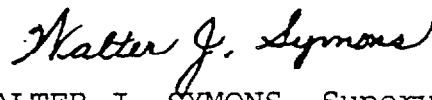
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
November 23, 1998
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property, including the placement of all windows. Any changes between the approved Tentative Map, including all preliminary improvement plans and design plans, and the parcel or final map and final plans, must be reviewed and approved by the decision-making body at a public hearing. Further, any changes that are on the final plans that in any way do not conform to the project conditions of approval shall be specifically illustrated on a separate sheet and highlighted in yellow on any set of plans submitted to the County for review.

We, therefore, recommend that the Board approve the above recommendations and direct the Planning Director to implement them immediately.

Sincerely,


JANET K. BEAUTZ, Supervisor
First District


WALTER J. SYMONS, Supervisor
Second District

JKB/WJS:ted

cc: Planning Director

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County of Santa Cruz

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

701 OCEAN STREET, 4TH FLOOR, SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060
 (831) 454-2580 FAX: (831) 454-2131 TDD: (831) 454-2123

ALVIN D. JAMES, DIRECTOR

Aaenda Date: December 15, 1998

December 4, 1998

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
 County of Santa Cruz
 701 Ocean Street
 Santa Cruz CA 95060

Subject: Requirements and Procedures for Projects Subject to Design Review

Members of the Board:

As your Board is aware, recent development projects approved by the County may not have met with the expectations of the original approvals. Concerns expressed include the loss of privacy of adjacent residents and the visual impact of the development from surrounding neighborhoods.

To insure that these issues are addressed and fully understood in the future, and to improve the quality of information pertinent to land use decision-making, we are recommending revisions to submittal requirements for projects subject to Design Review. We are also recommending revisions to the process of approving changes to approved plans, as well as mechanisms to heighten awareness of the terms of project approval on the part of developers. Finally, we are recommending increased coordination between the Planning Department and the Department of Public Works to insure conformity between tentative and final land division approvals.

The regulatory mechanism for project design is found in the County's "Site, Architectural and Landscape Design Review" ordinance. Section 13.11.040 of the County Code specifies which projects are subject to Design Review. Included are projects within coastal special communities, all commercial projects, County-sponsored projects, all subdivisions, and minor land divisions within the Urban Services Line. Sections 13.11.05 1 and 18.10.2 10 of the County Code, lists the submittal requirements for projects subject to Design Review. Specifically, Section 18.10.2 10(a)9., requires the submittal of a "(f)ull set of construction drawings (building plans) if appropriate: Scaled architectural drawings showing all structural details and all elevations of the proposed structures." Further, Section 13.11.05 1, specifies that the Planning Director may request "other information deemed . . . necessary for a complete design analysis."

In the past, the Planning Department, has required the submittal of preliminary architectural plans in addition to a tentative map for all proposed divisions of land. It was believed that this approach to the approval of the preliminary plans would allow a project sponsor some degree of flexibility to provide for custom home designs in response to market demands or design changes to fit sites specific conditions. This concept had worked reasonably well in the past when new development was proposed on vacant parcels surrounded by little or no existing development. Many new developments, however, may currently be characterized as "in-fill projects" and are proposed for vacant sites typically surrounded by existing development. When such projects are proposed, they are often accompanied by such issues as loss of privacy, adverse visual impact, inadequate buffering etc., as efforts are made to fit the new development in and make it compatible with existing development. Evidence of such has occurred in connection with recently approved projects presently under construction such as the Rio Highlands and Pacific Pointe developments.

In response to the concerns noted above, Planning staff has recently developed a more comprehensive list of submittal requirements for projects subject to Design Review. Staff believes that enhanced submittal requirements will lend to increased comprehension of issues that are often nor readily apparent. They will also provide greater opportunity to ensure that conditions of approval are properly depicted for subsequent inspections and evaluations. If your Board agrees, we will begin to implement this requirement for more detailed plans including perspective drawings to better gauge the impact of new development on surrounding neighborhoods (Attachment 1). As in the past, the plans will become exhibits to project approvals. Any proposed changes as described in the Conditions of Approval (Attachment 2, page 4), would be placed on the Consent Agenda of the decision making body at its next available meeting in the form of a public hearing setting letter. The letter would describe the change and staffs' evaluation and recommended response to it. If necessary, the decision making body could pull the item, discuss it and if deemed appropriate, vote to set the matter for hearing; otherwise, it would via action on the Consent Agenda, vote not to set it for hearing the effect of which would be to treat the matter as an information item.

Land divisions are occasionally submitted and guided through the planning process by the owner or their representative and subsequently sold to a developer or contractor after project approval. The new owner then proceeds with preparation of the final building plans and commences actual project construction. To insure full notification to potential buyers of approved projects, we are recommending that conditions of approval be required to be recorded by the property owner in the Office of the County Recorder (Attachment 2, page 1). Recorded conditions would serve as constructive notice during any future title search of the property. Planning staff will work with representatives of the Recorder's Office to decide recordation format.

We are also recommending that the conditions of project approval be revised to require that the set of conditions be included on all construction plans (Attachment 2, page 7). This should alert contractors and develop&s to be more conscious of their responsibility for compliance.-with project conditions specified by the decision-making body. It will also facilitate the efforts of inspectors to ensure full compliance with all approved conditions.

Finally, Planning and Public Works management staffs, in conjunction with the CAO's office, have held a meeting to review County procedures during that period of time when a Tentative Map for a land division is approved to the point when construction of subdivision improvements begin. A subsequent meeting has been scheduled with relevant review staff from both Public Works and Planning to work out the specific coordination details required to ensure conformity between final and tentative land division approvals.

It is therefore, RECOMMENDED, that your Board take the following actions:

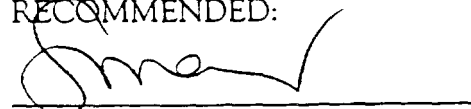
1. Direct Planning staff to immediately begin requesting from applicants, the materials specified by the "Submittal Requirements: Design Review," form (Attachment 1). These items shall be deemed the ~~minimum submittal requirements~~ for a project to be deemed complete for processing,
2. Following project approval, require the recordation of permit conditions in the Office of the County Recorder,
3. Require that any changes to approved projects be returned to the decision-making body in the form of a hearing setting letter and placed on such body's Consent Agenda for appropriate consideration and action,
4. Require that the final Conditions of Approval be included on all construction plans. A complete set of plans including the final Conditions of Approval shall be provided by the project sponsor prior to issuance of building permits, and
5. Direct the Planning Director and the Director of Public Works to continue working together to improve coordination and condition compliance relative to tentative and final land division review and approvals.

Sincerely,



Alvin D. James
Planning Director

RECOMMENDED:



SUSAN A. MAURIELLO
County Administrative Officer

Attachments:

1. Submittal Requirements: Design Review
2. Conditions of Approval (Boilerplate)

SAM/ADJ/MJJ C:\Core\WP\Board Letters\BoardLetterDesignReview.wpd

**RICHARD BEALE**Land Use Planning
Incorporated100 Doyle Street • Suite E
Santa Cruz, CA 95062
(831) 425-5999
FAX (831) 425-1565Masters of Architecture
Univ. of CA, Berkeley

January 20, 1999

Mr. Alvin James
Planning Director
Santa Cruz County Planning Department
701 Ocean Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060**RE: NEW DESIGN REVIEW REQUIREMENTS**

Dear Mr. James:

Forwarded to you by attachment are comments from several planning consultants regarding the new County Design Review requirements. We hope that you will review these and be able to make some suggestions to the County Board of Supervisors regarding changes that could possibly be made to these requirements.

Sincerely,

Richard Beale

Attachments: comments

cc: planning consultants

**RICHARD BEALE**Land Use Planning
Incorporated100 Doyle Street • Suite E
— Santa Cruz, CA 95062
(831) 425-5999
FAX (831) 425-1565Masters of Architecture
Univ. of CA, Berkeley

January 20, 1999

Alvin James
Planning Director
Santa Cruz County Planning Department
701 Ocean Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060**RE: NEW DESIGN REVIEW REQUIREMENTS**

Dear Mr. James:

Our firm currently has several projects which are subject to the new Design Review requirements. We are concerned with the level of detail required prior to a project being declared complete, architectural plans being **required** for lot subdivisions, and the amount of time it could take to get a minor variation to plans after approval.

One of our projects is a **Coastal** Zone Permit for a large house. This project is being required to submit final plans regarding architectural elevations and floor plans prior to the project being deemed complete. We are also told **that these** plans will not be able to have any minor variations later even to the extent of moving a window location without going back to the hearing body. As the house is not able to be seen from any public road or viewpoint, and has only one neighbor, whose house will not be affected by anything done with our client's house, this kind of detail and restriction on minor variations could be very onerous, and is in fact already very costly and very time consuming. The elevation and **floor plans** are having to be completed at a stage where no environmental review and no development permit recommendations have yet been done. The level of detail required at this stage is very costly, especially if the plans must be revised several times during the permit process. Preliminary plans, which are then finalized at building permit stage and **competently** review by staff, were much the more reasonable way to go.

Another project involves a lot subdivision inside the Urban Services Line. We had submitted examples of the type of house that could be built within the design guidelines we had suggested, but now we are having to have our client prepare actual plans for each house in the subdivision. Since each lot is


different in terms of size and topography, this is very costly and time consuming, and future buyers of the lots may not be interested at all in the plans which are being required now.

~~We suggest that~~ perhaps the Board of Supervisors could require in house/staff design review prior to obtaining a building permit on the exterior lots of a subdivision if these lots would affect any existing neighboring houses. These lots could be designated on the subdivision map.

We also suggest that staff be trusted to review final plans and to administer adequate minor variation review after a project has been approved. If a change goes beyond a minor variation, then it could be set on the consent agenda of the hearing body which approved it.

Sincerely,

RICHARD BEALE LAND USE PLANNING, INC.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Betty Cost".

Betty Cost, AICP

cc: Planning consultants



STEPHEN GRAVES & ASSOCIATES

Environmental and Land Use Consulting

MEMO

To: Betty Cost (Richard Beale Land Use Planning) VIA fax 425-1565

From: Steve Craves (Stephen Graves & Associates)

Re: Comments on New **Application** Requirements for Design Review

Date: January 18, 1999

Betty: I have the following comments related to the new design review application submittal requirements.

1. **The submittal requirements should not be a blanket requirement for all projects subject to design review and should not be a requirement for initial submittal.** Clearly this level of review is not necessary or appropriate for all projects subject to design review. The design review requirements should be reviewed on a case-by-case/project specific basis (as it is currently done). The requirements now listed as "mandatory" requirements for submittal, should merely be listed as possible items which could be required by the project planner pending initial project review. This would allow the project planner - at anytime during the process - to **respond to project specific issues** - and ask for additional information at that time which is appropriate in order to respond to specific design issues. Clearly, larger parcels (zoned R-1-10, R-1-15) and some smaller parcels are situated such that neighboring properties are not impacted as acutely by design issues. The blanket requirement results in an enormous expense required upfront, before the project is even reviewed.

- An initial project review process should identify what design or neighborhood compatibility issues exist. Staff should then work with the applicant to determine what level of appropriate additional information is needed to address the specific issues.

2. **The new requirements virtually eliminate the ability to subdivide lots and to build custom homes, and will dramatically impact the smaller land owner.** The new requirements for full architectural plans as a requirement for all subdivisions and MLD's in the urban services line greatly impacts the smaller "non-developer" land owners who are simply trying to allow development of their **property** consistent with General Plan and zoning standards. What these requirements will do is eliminate the ability of smaller land owners to subdivide, creating a situation where only larger developers can afford to subdivide land. This will result in a proliferation of monotonous

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Sequoia, CA 95073

Phone (408) 465-0677 Fax (408) 465-0678

1

developments and a lack of diversity of housing stock and greatly increase the cost of housing.

- Full architectural plans should not be required for the vast majority of minor land divisions. The requirement for full architectural plans for minor land divisions should be limited to lots that are 5,000 square feet or less in size, and should only be required if there are a sufficient number of design issues that cannot be addressed by more issue-specific mitigation (i.e. building scale, window placement, siting, views, etc.). Prototypical house designs for subdivisions should suffice, unless there are specific lots (most likely those lots which are adjacent existing residences), which warrant a greater level of design review.

- For subdivisions and minor land divisions which have significant design issues that are not fully addressed during the tentative map Process, future design review can be required at the building permit stage [assuming that the current system of design guidelines or prototypical house designs continues to be an acceptable practice].

3. **The new requirements will result in a lack of diversity in housing and in poor designs.** The ability of individuals to purchase a new lot and design and build their own home is a valuable asset to both the individual and the community. This situation allows for a great deal of diversity, interesting architectural variations, and in most cases a superior level of architectural integrity and construction. Under the new requirements, the smaller subdividers will be forced to submit architectural plans for homes they don't intend to build. Therefore, they will likely resort to generic design, catalog plans, or other means to minimize the potentially enormous expense of custom architectural designs. This will result in a proliferation of poor design, reduce flexibility and an unnecessary review process for minor, non-significant changes.

4. **The new requirements create an excessive bureaucratic burden to both the applicant and staff.** Staff is required to evaluate detailed architectural design at the time of application submittal, prior to public review of the project, which will not allow for sufficient time to gauge public opinion or to assess the level of controversy or specific neighborhood concerns. Even minor changes to plans during the building permit stage would have to be re-reviewed and approved by the Planning Commission and/or Board of Supervisors. This will create an excessive and unreasonable level of review and processing, allowing for subdivision issues to be reviewed and potentially reopened after a Parcel Map or Final Map has been recorded, increasing the chances for litigation between buyers and sellers of lots, and dragging out the approval process potentially for years.

- Additional design review requirements should be deferred at least until the project has been reviewed by the public and adjacent neighborhoods. This will allow the applicant and staff to generate additional information as necessary to address any valid concerns.

- Final architectural plans should not be required, unless their are very specific concerns, on each lot which cannot be addressed by refining the design guidelines or prototypical house designs. For example if privacy is an issue, the specific lot can be conditioned for design review as part of the building permit, or a refined design criteria can be developed (specific window location, size, etc.). In this manner, the site specific design concerns can be met while still allowing a custom site design and flexibility.

- An administrative review of any changes to design ~~may~~ suffice, unless they are of a significant nature to require re-review by the decision-making body.


5. **The requirements are unclear, and will not be equally applied by one staff person to the next.** The requirement for an "axonometric view" and 3-D perspective is extremely nebulous and could be interpreted to mean a range of things, many of which may not even address the relevant issues at hand. This could result in a particular staff person envisioning the creation of a 'work of art' which is neither appropriate or necessary. The ability to get an application deemed complete will be significantly complicated, surely resulting in an increase number of conflicting opinions frequently requiring Planning Director or even Planning Commission interpretation. These requirements are significant and vague enough, that they will be subject to interpretation and strongly debated by project applicants who feel they are being subjected to unreasonable requirements.

- Develop an applicant's design review handout/booklet which describes approaches that can be utilized to address specific design issues. These could range from simply showing the outline of each structure to more detailed design elements. The particular method for demonstrating design issues must be tailored to specifically address each particular situation and developed after sufficient review of the project (after public input, environmental review, etc.). Develop a matrix which defines what can reasonably be required for each type of project based upon number of lots, size of lots, and location.

In summary, I feel that the existing Design Review process is adequate without these new requirements are which excessive and not necessary in the vast majority of projects. Perhaps a more formalized design review criteria could be developed that would further define design issues and inform applicants that, if certain issues arise a range of additional information could be required depending upon the extent of the issues and the appropriate level of information needed for adequate analysis.

I would like to attend the meeting with Planning Director Alvin James to further discuss our concerns with these requirements and assist in developing an acceptable and more reasonable approach to dealing with the problems that have triggered the adoption of this new directive.

Sincerely,



Stephen P. Graves



Land Use & Development Consultants
December 14, 1998

Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors -
701 Ocean St.
Santa Cruz, CA 95060
Re: Design Review; Item 46, December 15 Agenda

This letter concerns the proposed change in the Planning Department policy regarding the requirement to submit designs of houses for every lot within a proposed subdivision prior to application completion.

As I understand, this change is being initiated due to several recent subdivisions for which the subsequent design of the houses did not adequately fulfill the objective of the design review guidelines or prototypical house designs that were approved with the subdivision.

This seems to be a valid concern for "small lot", infill subdivisions where the density and proximity of dwellings to adjacent properties require greater scrutiny. However there are some projects which are either proposing lots large enough such that conflicts are minimized by the existing zoning setback, lot coverage and FAR standards, or are sufficiently isolated by topography, streets or other characteristics to adequately eliminate these conflicts with surrounding properties. It would seem that staff should be able to evaluate the need for full architectural plans during the DRG process based on criteria established by the Board of Supervisors. If the proposed lots of a subdivision are shown to have minimal to no impact to surrounding properties, full plans should not be necessary. It may be that proposed parcels at the periphery of the subdivision may need closer scrutiny while parcels in the interior of the project do not warrant the same level of design review.

The unfortunate result of the proposed policy will be to substantially increase the up front costs of a subdivision and to decrease the uniqueness and individuality of residential design on lots that have previously been considered custom lots. There are currently several subdivisions in the initial planning stages that I am familiar with, which will have lots ranging in size from 10,000 - 20,000 sf. The owners of these subdivisions are planning to sell these lots to individual builders/owners who would design unique homes for each lot. There are numerous examples of rural subdivisions with lots from 1 acre to 10 acres+ which would have little if any effect on surrounding properties.

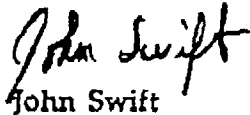
Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors
Re: Design Review; Item 46, December 15 Agenda
Dec. 14, 1998
Page 2

If it is decided that the **Planning** Commission must have design review **authority**, for each and every parcel within a custom lot subdivision, it would be preferable to allow the option of a separate **Design/Review Process** for each lot after the subdivision is approved. This would allow each lot owner to **creatively design** his/her unique residence as opposed to a subdivider **speculating on** a marketable design that may not be built for several years in the future.

I suggest that the County consider distinguishing between **infill, small lot subdivisions** and larger custom or **semi-custom** lot subdivisions. Even on these custom subdivisions where conflicts with adjoining properties may arise due to topography or location, full plans could be required at the discretion of **Planning** Staff during the DRG or 30 day completeness review.

The proposed change proposed by staff is a significant change to the Design Review Process that has had little if any input from the design and real estate community. I hope that this process can be discussed more thoroughly prior to a decision being made. It appears that in the attempt to deal with a legitimate concern, a process may be established that is costly to both the County and consumer and will ultimately result in less attractive large lot, custom subdivisions.

Sincerely,


John Swift

cc: Alvin James

JS/db



BOONE/LOW ARCHITECTS & PLANNERS

ATTACHMENT 5

January 15, 1999

Betty Cost
Richard Beale, Land Use Planning
100 Doyle Street, Suite E
Santa Cruz, C A 95062

Dear Betty:

I have review& the new design review requirements and am already working with them on two projects. I have the following comments:

The intent of the requirements is good but there are two items which are problems as presently written.

1. Site Analysis Diagram.

The requirements for location of improvements including landscaping on adjacent parcels and for perspective drawings which include this information is unrealistic at the development plan review phase: To comply with the requirements will require applicants to survey and/or measure adjacent properties, prepare detailed designs and spend large sums on presentation drawings all before the applicant knows whether his project will be approved.

2. The requirement for location of windows to be fixed at the initial application phase will require that building designs be completed substantially beyond the normal conceptual design wrk performed at this time again resulting in additional costs to the applicant before approval.

I urge that a way be found to defer these requirements until after development plan approval and before building permit approval. In my opinion we will achieve bet& design solutions if applicants know they have project approval before investing large sums on detailed design issues, I would be concerned that if these issues are not addressed applicants will find a way to circumvent them and the objectives of the new requirements will not be achieved.

Sincerely,


David C. Boone

David C. Boone FAIA Jacquelyn Low AIA
157 Van Ness Ave., Santa Cruz CA 95060 408/423-1316 Fax 408/423-1386

CASEY CONSULTING

Land Use Planning • Building Design
 1677 Wilshire Drive • Aptos, CA 95003
 phone/fax: 831/688 7104

Post-It Fax Note	7671	Date	1-14-99	# of pages	2
To	Betty Cost	From	Kathy Casey		
Co./Dep.	Richard Beale	Cn.	Casey Consulting		
Phone #	425-5999	Phone #	688-7104		
Fax #	425-1565	Fax #	688-7104		

January 13, 1999

Betty Cost
 Richard Beale-Land Use Planning, Inc.
 100 Doyle Street, Suite F
 Santa Cruz, CA 95062

Subject: Design Review Requirements

Dear Betty:

Thank you for taking the time to collect everyone's comments. My concerns and suggestions follow:

Concern: The Tentative Map submitted for a land division is still in a very conceptual form. Many County Departments must review and comment on the configuration of the proposed lots. This process often results in many changes to the original tentative map; lots may be reconfigured or removed altogether. Designing final architectural plans for lots that may change or be deleted is an inefficient approach for creating well-planned projects. The final design of each residence cannot really be completed until the size, number and location of each lot is determined.

Suggestion: If the Board of Supervisors wants public review of design, then a design review process should be established where upon approval of a Tentative Map, the applicant must prepare final architectural plans and return to the approving board or commission for review.

Concern: Code Section 13.11 040(d) states "For all subdivisions where actual construction of homes is not part of the application, design guidelines for development shall be required as part of the application submittal package. For all subdivisions where actual construction of homes is part of the application, both design guidelines and prototypical house and landscape design plans shall be required..." The new changes to the design review guidelines do not distinguish between land divisions that do not include the construction of homes and land divisions that do include the construction of homes.

January 13, 1999
Design Review Requirements
Page 2

Suggestion: These two types of projects should not be treated in the same manner. Design guidelines should be sufficient when the applicant is not proposing any construction; once the land is sold, the new owner (as a condition of approval) could be required to return to the approving board or commission with final architectural plans for his/her residence.

I spoke to Aaron from Walt Symon's office today. She stated that at Tuesday's Board meeting, the Board discussed our proposal to meet with Alvin James and to bring our comments back to the Board. The Board and Alvin James agreed to do this, but they have not set the date. The date will be set after the meeting with Alvin James.

I hope my suggestions help with your preparation of the letter to Alvin James. Please call me if you have any questions.

Since&y,

Kathleen Allen Casey
Kathleen Allen Casey

MEMORANDUM /

Date: January 13, 1999
To: Rich Beale
From: Tom Thacher
RE: Atherton Place

The new **County design** review requirements are **excessive** and unreasonable for some of the obvious reasons we've already discussed. **It** is unreasonable for the County to require an applicant to spend tens of thousands of **dollars** (or more) on the design of **structures** before having any **assurance** that their projects will be approved or **even** heard.

The Atherton **Place project** we have been working on with you is a **case** in point. This site **has** slopes and adjacent riparian areas which **will** make the project **difficult** and expensive. **It** does not lend itself to a more **conventional** subdivision with only a few unit types and variations and a lot of duplication. **We will** be designing at least **10** different unit types **for** this project and almost **every unit** will have some variation in foundation design: The **up-front** costs for the applicant for designing every unit on every lot without any County **assurances** of approval are unreasonable.

Atherton Place Memo

Page Two

As the project goes through the review process it is likely that changes **will** be made. **If**, for instance, the County wants to see even a slight **increase** in density we might **be** starting over **with** unit designs to fit new lot dimensions. The same might be **true if the** neighbors **prevail** in lowering the **density** by even a few lots. **I** am afraid **the** County **staff** may not be aware of the **costs** for re-designing 63 units complete with perspective drawings, sections, landscaping and color boards.

We're also **concerned** that the County **staff**, the Board of Supervisors and the neighbors may be **overwhelmed** with the repetitive and overly technical submittal **materials** they are requiring. **The** voluminous application materials will likely bewilder rather than reassure the **reviewers**. We suspect these **costly** new requirements will not produce **better** building **but will only** increase the **cost** of housing.

ATTACHMENT 5

Pacific Rim Planning Group
Land use and Development Consultants
206 Morrissey Blvd.
Santa Cruz, CA, 95062
ph: (831) 423-3235
Fax: (831) 471-2137
pager: (831) 685-4466

MEMO

Date: January 11, 1998
To: Richard Beale and Betty Cost
From: Jim Weaver
RE: Response To New Design Review Requirements

Rich and Betty; HAPPY NEW YEAR

In response to your request for comments, I offer the following:

For major subdivisions which include residential development, it may be appropriate to require plans containing building footprints, floor area ratios, **setbacks**, **square** footage of floor area, elevation drawings, landscaping, exterior building materials and colors, bulk plain analysis and **preliminary** window locations. **In fact** it **is** my understanding that this **information** is currently on the list of required information (**Design Guidelines; Chapter 13.11 & Section 18.10.210 (e)**). The **requirement** for floor plans is overly **burdensome** and is **not necessary** at the **subdivision map** stage of the process. The time **and** cost of producing **these** plans is **considerable, especially given no clear indication** if the proposed project will be approved. In a large subdivision it is **conceivable** that there may be three to five **different models**. To produce **plans** for each model **prior** to any potential **redesign** by staff, **Commission** and/or **Board** is a waste of **the** applicant's time **and** money and a **waste of the** planning staffs time.

If (**emphasis on "if"**) this information is **necessary**, it should be required **after** environmental review and prior to the public hearing. At **this stage**, hopefully **most of the** redesign work

ATTACHMENT 5

has occurred, there is some indication that the project is approvable and the applicant and staff have a solid understanding of the site and surrounding neighborhood.

The necessity of the proposed Design Guideline amendments is suspect. If implemented correctly, the existing Design Guideline Ordinance has sufficient requirements to establish an understanding of the proposed project and to determine if the project will be compatible with the surrounding neighborhood. This may be a situation where either the existing Design Guideline Ordinance is not being used to its fullest extent or the staff does not have the expertise to administer the Ordinance.

The proposed amendment to the Design Guideline Ordinance does not recognize the amount of redesign that a project in the Santa Cruz County planning process undergoes. The proposed amendments will likely result in a variety of staff and decision makers playing the role of designer with decisions being made based on personal taste. Further, the proposed amendment requires returning to the decision maker for the slightest change to the project. This will add even more time to the permit process.

In the case of minor subdivisions where development is not proposed, the proposed Design Guideline amendments are clearly unreasonable. Many of these projects are undertaken by non-developer applicants. They are interested in subdividing the property and have no intention of building. Any drawings would be conjecture on their part and most certainly would be changed with the new property owner. If the County is searching for a method to further complicate the planning process, the proposed amendments to the Design Guidelines will be successful. Again, a well written Design Guideline Statement (currently required), made a part of the approval record, would accomplish the County's goal of insuring that new development is compatible with the existing neighborhood.

Thank you for orchestrating these comments. I am interested in assisting you however I may and would be happy to accompany you when you meet with Alvin James.





ROSE MARIE MCNAIR • BROKER

December 14, 1998

Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors
701 Ocean Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

via fax to 454-3262

RE: New Design Review Guidelines, Agenda 12/15/98

Dear Members of the Board of Supervisors:


In reviewing tomorrow's agenda, I noticed proposed regulations regarding the Design Review process. A new subdivision application (by this proposal) would require full sets of plans including all design specifications when applying for a tentative map. This will add confusion, unnecessary delays, and extraordinary costs to our already less than affordable residential market.

When a developer submits a plan, he has no idea whether the plan will be approved. To add costs varying several thousand dollars per residence--without even knowing how many units will be approved does not follow linear thinking. How many designs will a developer have to submit before a project gets final approval? Pretty expensive and time consuming!

It would seem that design criteria will lose any quality of being refreshingly different--due to the cost involved in this requirement. Santa Cruz County is a very unique area due to its varying topography and geography. To set one standard is really not warranted; rather the design review process can stipulate its requirements prior to obtaining a final map.

Please do not accept this proposal; we really must look at ways to provide new housing that is cost-effective and therefore affordable.

Very truly yours,


Rose Marie McNair



SHERMAN & BOONE
ASSOCIATES
 A Real Estate Corporation

December 14, 1998

Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors
 701 Ocean Street
 Santa Cruz, CA 95060

TRANSMITTED VIA FACSIMILE #454-3262

RE: Design Review; Item 46, December 15 Agenda

Dear Board Members:

I just received the proposed changes to the subdivision application policy which is scheduled to come before the Board of Supervisors at tomorrow's meeting. The new policy would essentially require fully designed plans for each home as part of the application for tentative map. I believe there are some significant problems with this policy and I would like to request that the Board continue this item for further public input. If the Board elects not to continue this item, I would request that you consider the following issues and exceptions:

1. This policy should not apply to subdivisions such as Tan Heights in Soquel which had large lots that were not in proximity to neighbors or existing roads. It was more suited to custom homes rather than cookie cutter designs that would result from this policy.
2. The policy would restrict an individual's ability to purchase a lot and design their own home. The County would lose creativity and variety in our home designs.
3. Housing costs would be increased dramatically and unnecessarily. A developer of a large rural subdivision such as Seascape Uplands which had a large variety of lots would be required to produce many different custom plans even on lots which can not be seen by the public. The plans described in this policy would run between \$2,000 - \$5,000 per lot. This is even considering a fewer number of plans but having to customize them to each lot. When original applications are submitted it could be for 200 lots and during the process, this number may be cut to 100 lots which may have to be redesigned. Therefore, it is quite feasible under the proposed policy that someone submit 200 plans and then during the process have to toss half of them and modify or redesign the balance. Therefore, what starts as a \$2,000 - \$5,000 per lot cost, more than doubles and in this example would be an additional up front cost of over \$500,000.

I believe that in 90% of the cases it would be sufficient in the initial planning process for developers to submit three-dimensional building envelopes. This would show the maximum potential area involved with each lot and the envelope could then be adjusted to address concerns. This way developers would be controlled within a vertical envelope just as they currently are by a building pad envelope.

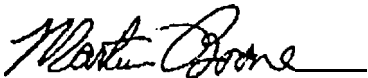
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Board of **Supervisors**
December 14, 1998
Page 2

If the Board decides to require detailed plans, please consider making it as a condition of the tentative map to have a design **review** prior to recording the final map just as you currently do with improvement plans. This design review could then be limited to those lots the approving body held in question leaving the remainder: of the lots available for buyer designed homes.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sincerely,



Martin Boone

Direct Phone: 831-464-5021

Direct Fax: 831-462-1618

jw

Sunset Realty ATTACHMENT 5

SALES AND DEVELOPMENT

4630 SOQUEL DRIVE • SOQUEL, CA 95073
(408) 476-1204 (408) 684-1103

February 2, 1999

Mr. Alvin James
Planning Director
Santa Cruz County Planning Department
701 Ocean Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Dear Mr. James:

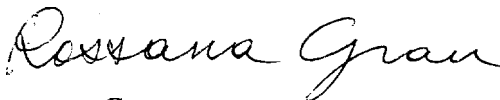
I am writing this letter in response to the recently passed County Design Review requirements. I presently have an application being processed for a 10 lot subdivision in Soquel which was submitted in September of 1998. I was surprised to find that this application would not be deemed complete until the submission of this very detailed and expensive new design requirement.

My firm prides itself on the flexibility of working with potential buyers and custom designing homes that meet the general design guidelines created during the planning process. This new requirement has forced me to come up with individual plans for each lot. My vision for this subdivision is not to create a monotonous look with the same design on each lot, but to vary the designs and let the creative process develop as each home is built. This new requirement makes it difficult for a buyer to come in before the houses are started and work with me on a custom design.

I am not opposed to a conceptual design review however, I don't believe the type of detail required in the new ordinance is necessary in all land divisions. It can be used as a tool in certain developments where the design of the new homes would greatly impact surrounding neighbors. Also this requirement is being required before the final map is approved. This could mean there might be changes in the layout of the lots and require amendments to the design at additional cost and time delays.

I understand there has been a public meeting scheduled with the Planning Department on February 8 which I will be looking forward to attending. Maybe some reasonable adjustment can be made to this Design Review Ordinance that will maintain the opportunity for small builders like myself to continue creating attractive and well designed homes for our local community and maintain affordability and architectural flexibility.

Sincerely,



Rossana Grau
Grau Development, Inc.

orig. - ADJ
copied to: Oher
Martin

VIEW FROM NORTHEAST

