

**TOWN OF SAN ANSELMO
PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT**

For the meeting of August 18, 2014

Agenda Item D-2

Owner and Project Address:

Case No.

Kaveh Alizadeh
531 Oak Avenue
San Anselmo, CA 94960
APN 007-201-17

GP-1403

Applicant

Jim Catlin
1501-A San Anselmo Avenue
San Anselmo, CA 94960

Request

A grading permit for the construction of new retaining walls to create three level terraces in the backyard of a single family residence. The project includes excavation of approximately 65 cubic yards of dirt and 166 cubic yards of fill. There is a net on-haul of 101 cubic yards of material.

Recommendation

Conditional approval.

I. PROJECT SUMMARY

Environmental Determination

Categorically Exempt: Section 15303 (e): new construction or conversion of small structures.

Authority

San Anselmo Municipal Code Title 9 Chapter 18 - Excavation, Grading and Erosion Control.

Timing

A determination must be made within 60 days of the project application being deemed complete which is October 8, 2014.

Previous Action

In 1993 the Planning Commission approved a permit for painting the exterior of the house.

II. STAFF ANALYSIS

Project Description

The proposed project includes excavation and fill to add three level terrace areas behind seven (7) new concrete retaining walls. The walls range in height from 1.5' to 6.0' and are outside of the property setback areas. Fieldstone walls will be used as retaining structures along pathways and stairways connecting the new level areas. Proposed grading volumes amount to excavation of 65 cubic yards of dirt and 166 cubic yards of fill. The majority of the grading work is fill for the creation of level terraces behind the new retaining walls. 101 cubic yards of soil will be imported for structural fill for the terraces and retaining walls. The owner is primarily using pervious materials such as decomposed granite, permeable artificial turf and wood chips as surface treatments for the new terrace areas. A rain garden is provided for bio-retention for the proposed increase in impervious surface areas associated with the stone paver patio and stairways. New site landscaping, drainage and lighting will be installed.

The primary area for excavation is in the northeast corner of the property for creation of the new terraces, pathways and retaining walls. Access to the excavation can be provided directly from the driveway and private access road around the southern and eastern side of the house.

There will be no excess material off hauled from the site. Imported material will use Sir Francis Drake Boulevard, Bolinas Avenue and Oak Avenue as the primary haul route. Assuming the truck to be used can carry 8+ cubic yards of material, approximately 13 trips will be required.

Cut and Fill Calculations

Location	Purpose	Material	Volume, cubic yards (cy)
CUT			
Area 1	Excavation for terrace 3; children's play area and stairs	Dirt and stone	25
Area 2	Excavation for terraces 1 and 2; patio, stairs and landscape areas	Dirt and stone	38
Misc.	Excavation for stairs at-grade in front of home	Dirt and stone	2
		Total Cut:	65 cy

FILL			
Area 1	Fill for terrace 3; children's play area and stairs	Dirt	61
Area 2	Fill terraces 1 and 2; patio, stairs and landscape areas	Dirt	104
Misc.	Fill for stairs at-grade in front of home	Dirt	1
		Total Fill:	166 cy
		Import Volume:	101 cy

III. REQUIRED FINDINGS

Grading Permit

1. *The health, welfare, and safety of the public will not be adversely affected.*

All work is proposed within property line boundaries and respects all established setbacks.

2. *Adjacent properties are adequately protected by project investigation and design from geologic hazards as a result of the work.*

The geotechnical report (SalemHowes Associates Inc.; Report Geotechnical Investigation, AP 007-201-12, Oak Avenue, dated 7 June 2001 and amended per Geotechnical Design Memorandum, 531 Oak Avenue, dated 10 July 2014) states no geologic hazards to be aware of as a result of this work and the design has been completed in accordance with the geotechnical report findings and recommendations. As a condition of approval, the geotechnical engineer must be retained to oversee construction to ensure they conform with the recommendations in the geotechnical report.

3. *Adjacent properties are adequately protected by project design from drainage and erosion problems as a result of the work.*

All site drainage is designed for onsite retention and dissipation. The rain garden has been designed per Town of San Anselmo requirements. There is no potential erosion increase as a result of the project.

4. *The amount of excavation, grading, or fill proposed is not more than is required to allow the property owner reasonably beneficial use of his or her property.*

There is approximately 101 cubic yards of net material imported for creation of new level terraces on the property for a new patio, children's play area, landscape areas and stairs. There are no other suitable level areas provided on the property for these features.

5. *The visual and scenic enjoyment of the area by others will not be unreasonably adversely affected by the project.*

The retaining walls will sit on the uphill side of Oak Avenue. Wall heights are considered reasonable and will be screened and softened by the new landscaping installed with the project.

6. *Natural landscaping will not be removed by the project more than is necessary and any removed vegetation will be replanted in a timely manner.*

Design has been completed to accommodate existing vegetation wherever possible. No significant trees over 6" diameter will be removed. All new planting as per Planting Plan will address revegetation and will be drought tolerant. RVFD will review the plans for vegetation management for the building permit submittal. Planting will be completed at the end of the project to prevent erosion.

7. *The time of year during which construction will take place is such that work will not result in excessive siltation from storm runoff or prolonged exposure of unstable excavated slopes.*

The Town will require excavation and planting to be done before winter rains begin in earnest by October 15. If excavation and planting cannot be completed prior to October 15, an erosion control plan will be required to prevent siltation and storm runoff. Work after October 15 is subject to approval by the Public Works Director.

8. *The proposed excavation, grading, or fill does not violate the Town's General Plan or Zoning Codes.*

The proposed grading work is consistent with the Town's General Plan and Zoning Code.

9. *Sufficient erosion control measures will be employed to offset any impact by the proposed excavation, grading, or fill.*

All erosion control measures will be employed. Erosion control measures and/or permanent landscaping will be required to be in place by October 15.

IV. CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

Staff recommends that the Commission approve the grading permit application with the following conditions:

1. All conditions of approval shall be printed at the top of Sheet 1 of the building permit drawings.
2. Planning Commission approval is based on the plans and materials titled Alizadeh Residence, date stamped received July 28, 2014 by the San Anselmo Planning Department.
3. A building permit must be obtained prior to the start of any construction work that requires a permit per Town of San Anselmo regulations. A building permit and structural engineering analysis is required for construction of retaining walls greater than 4 feet high and for the

terraced retaining walls. Please contact the San Anselmo Building Department at 415-258-4616 or townofsananselmo.org/building for requirements and further information.

4. If a complete building permit application has not been submitted to the Town within one year from the date of final action, the planning action becomes null and void. However, this discretionary action may be renewed by the Planning Director for a maximum period of one (1) year provided the applicant places such a request in writing to the Planning Director and shows good cause prior to the expiration of the discretionary action.
5. The property owner shall indemnify and hold harmless the Town of San Anselmo and its officers and/or employees in the event of any legal action related to or arising from the granting of this approval and shall cooperate with the Town in the defense of any such action, and shall indemnify the Town for any award of damages and/or attorneys' fees and associated costs that may result.
6. Grading shall adhere to the recommendations presented in the SalemHowes Associates Inc.; Report Geotechnical Investigation, AP 007-201-12, Oak Avenue, dated 7 June 2001 and amended per Geotechnical Design Memorandum, 531 Oak Avenue, dated 10 July 2014.
7. The applicant shall submit an erosion control plan with the building permit application to be reviewed and approved by the Public Works Director. The plan shall sufficiently outline erosion control measures to be taken in order to prevent sediment runoff from the parcel, including landscape planting prior to October 15.

Prepared By:

Dan Blomquist
Senior Engineer

Attachments:

1. Application
2. Geotechnical Investigation; 7 June 2001
3. Geotechnical Design Memorandum; 10 July 2014
4. Project Plans

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