

TOWN OF SAN ANSELMO  
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES OF APRIL 1, 1991

The meeting was called to order by Chair Julin at 8:00 p.m. in the Council Chamber. Commissioner's present were Sias, Mihaly, Yarish, and Kroot, with Hayes absent. Staff present: Planning Consultant Delvin Washington and Planning Intern Neil Whitbeck.

B. CONSENT AGENDA

1. Minutes: March, 1991 - Continued to 4-15-91
2. DR-9101 - W.B. Savage, 607 - 615 San Anselmo Avenue, A/P 7-212-28, design review of:  
1) an awning; and 2) exterior building color change.

M/S Yarish/Sias, to remove item B-2 from the consent agenda for further discussion at the end of the meeting. Motion unanimously passed.

C. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. V-9023/U-9013/DR-9005 - Jean Brunswick, 22 Magnolia Avenue, A/P 7-212-34, 1) a 5' east sideyard variance to construct a column and beam structure over a driveway within 0' of the east side property line; 2) a height variance of 2.5'; 3) a lot coverage variance of 10%; 4) a use permit for one residential living unit; and 5) design review of a two story parking, residential, and office structure on property, located within the P zoning district - CONTINUED TO APRIL 15, 1991
2. AR-9005 - Th. F. Posthuma, 379 Oak Avenue, A/P 7-241-61, architectural review of a living addition to the existing single family residential dwelling and a second garage on property located within the R-1C zoning district - CONTINUED TO APRIL 15, 1991
3. Robert M. Yeakey, 80 South Oak Avenue, A/P 7-241-50, request for extension of time to begin construction of a single family dwelling on property located within the R-1 H zoning district (precise development plan and architectural review approved December, 1988).

D. PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. AR-9101 - Mary Ann Buxton and Thomas M. Barthold, 156 Broadmoor Court, A/P 5-112-28, design review of a second story living addition on property located within the R-1 zoning district.

Mr. Washington presented the staff report. stating that staff could make the findings of approval for this project. He also provided a letter from the Administrator's Office that stated the Council's directive that this project be expedited as quickly as possible because of the length of time it has taken for this project.

Ms. Buxton presented several photographs and a letter to the Commission stating the reasons she felt their project should be approved. She stated that there are parts of her house that are less than 150 feet above sea level and there is a question in her mind as to whether a design review should even be considered. She said that they have planted additional trees in the rear of the property to provide additional screening for the neighbors at 4 Indian Rock Road. She did not feel that light would be taken away for the owners at 4 Indian Rock Road because of the location of the addition. She did not agree with staff's recommendation to reduce the numbers of windows facing Indian Rock Road or that the bathroom window be frosted. The design of their addition is such that they want it to be energy efficient. There is currently a lot of natural light filtering into the house and they want to continue to enjoy that with the addition. She stated that she has support from all her neighbors except the ones at 4 Indian Rock. She stated that she has given a lot of thought to these plans and has tried to provide a nice design with the least amount of impact.

Mr. Barthold stated that there was a letter in the staff report addressed to him dated 3/28/91, and he never received the letter. He felt the sun exposure was very minimal and that the neighbors at 4 Indian Rock have cut down trees which has reduces their privacy. He stated that the addition was 20' across and 6'7" higher than the existing roof height. He did not think the second story could be moved closer to the street because of the engineering requirements. He stated they have met with all their neighbors that stated concern from their last variance application and have tried to address all their concerns. With respect to the statement that the drawings were incorrect, he stands corrected, that they forgot to include one small window in the basement. They do not want to move, they enjoy their surroundings and this will more than likely be their last home. Their addition will enhance the neighborhood. He stated that if the Commission requires that they plant additional they will however, the five trees he planted are already closer together than required by the nursery.

Ed Silvia, 150 Broadmoor Court, stated that all the neighbors have been kept informed of the proposed addition. He felt this would be an improvement in the neighborhood and had no objection to the project.

Blake Rogers, 152 Broadmoor Court, stated that part of his bedroom window will be impacted by the addition of his neighbors but he still approves of the project.

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Selene Philpot, 4 Indian Rock Road, objected to the addition because it will cause loss of light and privacy of her property. She felt it would have a negative affect on the property value of their home.

Glen Axthworthy, 4 Indian Rock Road objected to the addition because of the reasons listed in his letter dated March 28, 1991. He also stated that his house was already dark and the addition of his neighbors would only add to the darkness of the house.

Herb Blades, 116 Saunders, stated he is the contractor for this project. He stated that much of San Anselmo was already developed and the natural course for homeowners that want additional space would be to "add up". He stated that every property in San Anselmo will have neighbors bordering the property, and it is natural for everyone to form their own opinion. He hoped that the Commission would not weigh heavily the opinions of one neighbors in preventing the project to continue.

Warren Chaplen, 79 The Alameda, had no objection to the project.

Commissioner Sias stated that although he was sympathetic to the neighbors at 4 Indian Rock Road, he supported the project. He felt that the applicants have done all they can to buffer the property. He did not feel that the second story would block the sunlight because the addition is only 6'7" higher than the existing house. He did not feel the bay tree should be removed, nor did he feel that windows needed to be removed or shaded. He felt the project was an improvement to the neighborhood and that the addition would not increase traffic. Although a color chart of the proposed exterior colors has not been submitted, he had no objection to the exterior colors and textures remaining the same as those currently on the house.

Commissioner Mihaly supported the application, stating that there have been many changes since the original proposal. This design was interesting. He was impressed by the amount of effort put into this project by the applicants. He felt the issue of light was a disputed issue although in this case, the impact was minimal. He did not object to the windows in the rear because they helped provide additional natural light for the study. He did not think it was necessary to shade the bathroom window.

Commissioner Harle approved of the project.

Commissioner Yarish was concerned about the neighbors to the north, suggesting that the mitigating factor could be windowing the tree. He otherwise felt the design of the house was fine.

Mr. Barthold stated that in his conversations with other neighbors along The Alameda, they stressed that the tree not be removed because it will screen the addition.

Commissioner Kroot supported the application, adding that he was not convinced that the addition will shadow the house at 4 Indian Rock Road. He did not think windows should be removed or the bathroom window should be frosted

Chair Julin supported the application as proposed.

M/S Kroot, Sias, to approve AR-9101 - Mary Ann Buxton and Thomas M. Barthold, 156 Broadmoor Court, A/P 5-112-28, design review of a second story living addition on property located within the R-1 zoning district on the basis that the design : 1) Is functionally and aesthetically compatible with the existing improvements and the natural elements in the surrounding area in that the siding, doors, windows and roof will match the existing residence; 2) Provides for protection against noise, odors, and other factors which may make the environment less desirable in that it will not create any of the above; 3) Will not create unnecessary traffic hazards due to congestion, distracting of motorist, or other factors and provides for satisfactory access by emergency vehicles and personnel; and 5) Will not adversely affect the health or safety of persons using the improvement or endanger property located in the surrounding area; 6) Is in conformance with the approved precise development plan (this does not apply); 7) Is adequately screened; and 8) Contains a selection of architectural features that enable the structure to blend with its environment and which results in a low visual profile. This is based on plans dated March 25, 1991.

Motion unanimously passed. Audience advised of a ten day appeal period.

2. V-9101/DR-9103 - Ongaro Brothers, 14 Ross Avenue, A/P 7-282-11, parking variance for the construction of a new commercial building; and design review of a new commercial building, on property located within the C-2 zoning district.

The applicants and their architect, Jim McDonald, were present.

Neil Whitbeck presented the staff report, stating this was a continuation from the meeting of March 18, 1991. The changes made are from a flat roof to a 5 in 12 pitch roof and the addition of landscape as suggested by the Commission.

Mr. McDonald stated that this is the same building envelope as the one presented last meeting and the treatment of colors were the same. He has added additional landscaping to soften the wall and the proposed building will be set back farther from the street than the current building. He suggested pittosporum maximum which reaches a height of approximately 12 feet in a few years. He stated that he did not intend

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to plant any landscaping at the rear of the building because they have talked about putting the condensing units for air conditioning at the rear or possibly on the roof. However, if the Commission wanted landscaping also at the rear of the building he would be willing to do that, as well as a treatment to break up the expansiveness. Perhaps a shade variation in stucco. He stated that the purpose for the metal roll up garage door was for longevity. He also stated that the change in the roof to the 5 in 12 pitch was to soften the exterior look, and he was able to do that without losing interior storage space.

Mr. McDonald stated that since the last meeting, his clients have had the opportunity to purchase 15 Ross Avenue, the building directly behind 243 San Anselmo Avenue. Although it is currently not part of this application he wanted to let the Commission know that there is a possibility to temporarily store the commercial vehicles from 14 Ross on this site. That may take away the need for the parking variance. Chair Julin stated that since the parcel has not been noticed, it would not be open for discussion at this meeting. Commissioner Mihaly stated that if Mr. McDonald wanted to pursue the project along those lines, the course of action would be to withdraw this current project and resubmit the two as a new application. Mr. McDonald did not want to withdraw the current proposal, but did want to inform the Commission of the additional purchase.

David Bell, 25 Tamalpais, felt the proposal for the building at 14 Ross Avenue was a big improvement over the original design presented at the last meeting.

Commissioner Mihaly felt the size of the peaked roof was out of scale for the building. He also felt that there were too many textures being used, such as wood, metal and shingles for such a small building. He preferred that the building be of one type of exterior product, perhaps stucco. He also would like to see a sketch of alternative garage doors, and at least a plaque on the building that suggests the history of the site. Although the building may not be of historical significance to the applicants or the Architect, many residents of San Anselmo take pride in the history of their Town and a plaque or some recognition should be required.

Commissioner Harle felt the original design was fine and that this design is also fine.

Commissioner Yarish felt that this design was a vast improvement over the original design and did not have an objection to the mix of exterior materials used. He would be able to support the design review and had no objection to the parking variance because of the size of the lot.

Commissioner Kroot concurred with Commissioner Yarish and added that horizontal banding might lower the building.

Commissioner Sias felt that this building will be quite noticeable because of its location. He felt that the 20' high rear wall is quite massive and would like to see some kind of relief that presents a horizontal look. He stated that he could support the parking variance because the type of business is such that most of the business is off-site. Mr. McDonald stated that he would be happy to band it, using three different colors and will bring the color samples with him to the next meeting.

Chair Julin stated that based on her information from the Historical Society, the building was part of a livery stable that was constructed circa 1903 and moved to the current location circa 1911. She concurs with Commissioner Mihaly that some recognition, perhaps a plaque should be placed on the new building. She agreed with the Commission that the current proposal was of a better design than the last submittal but that this proposal introduces a Grecian plan that does not exist in San Anselmo. Many of the buildings in Town have a false front and flat roof and she would like that rather than presenting a Grecian look to the Town. She did support the parking variance.

Mr. McDonald asked if the Commission could vote on the parking variance tonight and continue the design review to the next meeting to allow him to make the necessary changes.

M/S Sias/Mihaly, to approve V-9101 - Ongaro Brother, 14 Ross Avenue, A/P 7-282-11, parking variance for the construction of a new commercial building on property located within the C-2 zoning district on the basis: 1) Due to special circumstances applicable to the property including size, shape, topography, location, or surroundings, the strict application of the controlling zoning ordinance or regulation deprives such property of privileges enjoyed by other property in the vicinity and under an identical zoning classification, and granting of a variance will not constitute a grant of special privileges inconsistent with the limitations upon other properties in the vicinity and zone in which such property is situated, specifically the existing floor plan permits parking of 7 vehicles in tandem inside the building and the use of the structure is for plumbing and most of the business will be conducted off-site, therefore parking will not be a detriment, and; 2) The granting of the variance is necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of substantial property rights of the petitioner; and 3) the granting of such a variance, under the circumstances of the particular case, will not materially affect adversely the health and safety of persons residing or working in the neighborhood of the property of the applicant and will not be materially detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to property or improvements in such a neighborhood, specifically the use of this business is such that most of the business will be conducted off-site. Also the property is quite small and there is no other place for parking. This approval is based on drawings dated revised 3/28/91.

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Motion unanimously passed. Audience advised of the ten day appeal period.

M/S Mihaly, Sias, to continue DR-9103 - Ongaro Brothers, 14 Ross Avenue a design review of new commercial building on a property located within the C-2 zoning district . This will be continued to the meeting of April 15, 1991, to allow the applicant additional time to make necessary revisions to the plans.

Motion unanimously passed.

3. V-U-9102/DR-9104 - Ongaro Brothers, 243 San Anselmo Avenue, A/P 7-284-13, use permit to allow living quarters; parking variance; design review of a new commercial and residential building; and environmental review on property located within the C-3 zoning district.

Neil Whitbeck presented the staff report and stated that this differs from the original by the addition of details on the facade and additional landscaping.

Mr. McDonald stated that the profile definition and signage has been amplified on this current plan. He stated that the original building is 20 feet in height and the proposal for the new building is 30', with the second story stepped back. He stated that they were within the allowable height limits however if necessary, he could reduce some of the roof height by truncating the roof by 2'. They are proposing down lighting on the columns and are introducing wood above the area of the windows. His preference for the windows is aluminum rather than wood because it is more practical and more permanent. The roof treatment will be terra cotta mission tiles, more on the red side.

Commissioner Yarish stated that he prefers a bernardo blend with a patina finish.

David Bell, 25 Tamalpais, stated that he presented a letter to the Commission addressing his thoughts on the project. He felt that the detailing looks flat and uninteresting. The proposed sings look like those at Monticito Shopping Center in San Rafael. He would suggest more stucco, and more patina. He also had several photographs that show various architecture around California that he thought were aesthetically pleasing.

Commissioner Mihaly asked if staff or the applicant had received a copy of Mr. Bell's letter? Mr. McDonald nor staff had received a copy of the letter and therefore were unable to respond to the statements in the letter.

Commissioner Kroot stated that he would like to see the number of parking spaces reduced from 24 on-site to perhaps 20 or 22, to allow wider spaces. He did not think the use would have a need for the entire 24 four. He understood the reason of using metal windows although he would prefer wood. He would like to see stucco treatment around the doors and windows.

Commissioner Sias was hopeful that Mr. McDonald would get a copy of Mr. Bell's letter and be able to respond to it. He would like to see patina, verigated tiles, rounded edges, and smoother stucco to suggest an older building. He would like also to see inset windows which will make the walls appear thick.

Commissioner Mihaly stated that he agreed with many of the comments referred to in Mr. Bell's letter is dated 3/28/91. He also suggested that the applicants and their architect review some of the photographs that depict the Spanish influence. He understands that metal windows would last longer, his preference is still wood but would go with colored metal. He wanted Mr. McDonald to respond to all comments brought up, and present the pros and cons of the comments. He also would like to have drawings present at the next meeting to be able to see what the rear of the building will look like.

Commissioner Harle stated that in his opinion the Commission was using the design review process. The Commission is not comprised of design consultants and is also not in the business of designing the projects for the applicants.

Commissioner Yarish wanted to see clarity in the eaves, windows, doors, signage and stairs. He suggested corner conditions be some structure of stucco to suggest permanency. He thought the corners should be beefed up and recessed. There should be more use of concrete or a heavy material for the rails, windows and stairs.

Chair Julin stated that she wanted to know the location of the standpipe and whether or not this building has water meters to adequately handle all the commercial and residential units. She would like additional information on the history of the site, and input from the Town's Tree Committee regarding the type of street trees required. She would also like to see more details and a design that doesn't look so flat.

M/S Yarish, Sias, to continue DR-9103/V-9101 Ongaro Brothers, 243 San Anselmo Avenue, A/P 7-284-13, 1) use permit to allow living quarters; 2) parking variance; 3) design review of a new commercial and residential building; and 4) environmental review on the property located within the C-3 zoning district. This meeting is continued to April 15, 1991.

Motion unanimously passed.

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E. GENERAL DISCUSSION

Chair Julin suggested that a special subcommittee be formed to help identify the criteria for Design Review. This would assist applicants if there were specific requirements from the Town. There was mixed feeling among the Commissioners. Commissioner Harle felt the reason San Anselmo is so special is because the Town was built without any design review and people were allowed to be creative. Commissioner Sias did not feel this was a high priority at this time based on the current staffing of the Planning Department. Commissioner Mihaly agreed with Chair Julin that there should be some standards although he was not sure at what level. Commissioner's Yarish and Kroot did not want to get into designing projects for the applicants.

Staff asked if the Commission would be able to hold a special meeting later this month to help accommodate the backlog of work. The Commission was agreeable to that and also felt that the meeting time should start at 7:00 p.m. for the meeting of April 15, 1991 and the Special Meeting on April 22, 1991.

F. ADJOURNMENT

The regular meeting was adjourned at 11:50 p.m. to the next regular meeting of April 15, 1991.

BARBARA CHAMBERS  
ASAI