

**SAN ANSELM PLANNING COMMISSION  
MINUTES OF JANUARY 19, 1999**

The regular meeting of the San Anselmo Planning Commission was convened at 7:30 p.m. in the Council Chamber by Chair Zwick.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Commissioners' present: Vice Chair Cronk, Commissioners Harle, Wittenkeller, Dowd, and Israel

Commissioner absent: Chair Zwick and Commissioner House

Staff present: Senior Planner Wight and Associate Planner Griffin

**OPEN TIME FOR PUBLIC EXPRESSION**

No one spoke during this time.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

1. Minutes – December 21, 1998 and January 5, 1999

2. V-9901 – Lois Richards, 15 Sturdivant, A/P 6-181-15, Variance to extend the height of an existing 4' high retaining wall to 7' in height. The portion of wall to be extended is approximately 100' long and is within 0' of the front property line (20' required), on property located within the R-1 Zoning District. (Staff person: Griffin)

M/s Dowd/Wittenkeller and unanimously passed (5-0), to approve the Consent Agenda based on the findings and conditions as set forth in the staff report.

The audience was advised of the ten-day appeal period.

**PUBLIC HEARING**

1. V-9861/DR-9850 – Jeff & Diane Ramsey, 14 Spruce Avenue, A/P 7-024-05, Design Review and Variance to build a new 2,014 square foot, three-story house and a 423 square foot attached garage. Variances are requested as follows: 1) To build the house and garage within 11' from the front property line (20' required) this request also includes the allowance of all parking spaces within the front setback area, 2) to allow a 36'-5" building height (35' allowed), and 3) build an elevated driveway within 0' of the front property line, on property located within the R-1 Zoning District. (Staff person: Griffin)

Mr. Griffin presented the staff report.

Dan Thomas, Architect representing the applicant, stated there have been two soils reports of the area. The road was essentially of fill and there was a slide on the road last year. The road required 34 piers and the tiebacks went 45 feet back into the hill. Most of the topsoil has moved off the site and it is the opinion of the soils engineer that the soil is stable in the area of development. They wanted to step the house down the hill but the more it is stepped, the larger the house would be. The Zoning Ordinance is punitive also because of some of the unused space. The peak of the roof could be removed to meet the height requirements but it is a design feature. They pulled the garage to the street to keep the house from stepping it down the site and they have adequate parking. He presented photographs of various homes in the neighborhood that also have carports within the setbacks. The applicants want to stay away from wood products with the exception of a wood trim.

Commissioner Israel wondered if this house was subject to the calculations of the Bald Hill Plan. Mr. Griffin responded that because this house is not within the Bald Hill area, the method was not used. However, the Bald Hill calculations probably would work better for this site because they would have been able to take the advantage of stepping the house down the hill.

Commissioner Wittenkeller stated that this house would work well on the site but he is concerned about the geology and wants assurance that the surrounding homes were protected. Based on the vegetation, he did not think there was a need to step the house down the hill. He would like to see an added condition that a survey be submitted and the corners be staked and laid out. He also wanted the drainage plan to encompass the down hill properties and would like a dispersal drain. The green color is too light and too reflective.

Commissioner Harle was favorable to the application even though there is the uncertainty about the stability of the site. He is not competent to make a decision about the site stability and will leave that up to the professionals.

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Commissioner Israel stated that this is a great case where the architect should be able to build according to the Bald Hill Plan so they would not be forced to build into the vertical situation. Also, the understory space is calculated under certain situations. He would probably support the variance to the height using the Bald Hill alternative if it reduced the mass, although he does support the application as is. The proposed green exterior color is a little light but he supports the white trim because it articulates the detail. He noted that an ejector pump or an easement through another site is required from Ross Valley Sanitary District. He would rather support the variance.

Commission Dowd had nothing further to add.

M/s Wittenkeller/Harle, and unanimously passed (5-0), to continue the application to the meeting of 2/16/99 to allow the project to be peer reviewed. Once the peer review is complete, the application can be placed on consent for approval with the following additional conditions: 1) a complete survey shall be required, including corners to be staked and laid out; 2) On condition 8, include that the plan may include on site retention or dispersal devised for roof and drain water; 3) approved color is 3B; and 4) the preference of the Commission is that the project have a gravity sewer and this shall be communicated to the Ross Valley Sanitary District.

2. DR-9903 - Robert and Sheri Riedel, 66 Grove Lane, A/P 7-161-33, Design Review of a second story bath expansion within 5.5' of the south side property line (Code setback: 8'), on property located within the R-1 Zoning District. (Staff person: Wight)

Ms. Wight presented the staff report.

Robin Poppers, 52 Grove Lane, stated that the bathroom window would look right into her window and she would like to have the applicant consider a smaller window.

Mr. Riedel stated that he did not consider obscure glass for the bathroom window but would have window coverings for privacy.

Commissioner Harle stated the addition would be considered deminimus but recommended obscure glass be used on the bathroom window.

Commissioner Israel commented that his initial concern was the added bulk to the neighbor but it is a very small addition. The glass window goes over two garage structures and obscure glass may not be necessary in this case.

Commissioners' Wittenkeller, Dowd, and Vice Chair Cronk concurred with Commissioner Israel.

Ms. Israel/Harle, and unanimously passed (5-0), to approve the application based on findings and conditions as set forth in the staff report.

Conditions of approval are as follows:

That the approval is based on the plans date stamped received by the Town of November 20, 1998; 2. Applicant shall apply for and pay all appropriate fees for building permits, plan checks and inspections for the approved project; 3. This permit and each condition contained herein shall be binding upon applicant and any transferor, or successor in interest; and 4. Should construction not commence within one year from the date of this action, the variance becomes null and void. However, this discretionary action may be renewed by the Planning Directory for a maximum of one year provided the applicant places such a request in writing to the Planning Director showing good cause prior to the expiration of the discretionary action.

The audience was advised of the ten-day appeal period.

3. Z-9901/DR-9901/V-9902 - Ned MacDonald, 14-20 Greenfield Avenue, A/P 6-251-04,06-08 - Study Session to discuss the following: 1) Zoning Map Amendment changing 7,050 square feet of property zoned C-2 to C-3; 2) Design Review for new 32,535 square foot, three-story commercial building; 3) Variance for the following: a) reduce the onsite parking requirement from 68 spaces to 55 spaces including 32 "compact" spaces & 7' x 16'); b) increase the maximum building height from 30' to 40'; c) increase the maximum stories allowed from 2 to 3 d) increase the maximum FAR from 1.0 to 1.27; and e) reduce the amount of parking at 324 Sir Francis Drake (Tam Theater) from 18 to 4. (Staff person: Griffin)

Mr. Griffin presented the staff report.

Commissioner Wittenkeller asked about the abandonment of the right-of-way. Mr. Griffin responded that it was originally a 20' wide right-of-way, of which 15' is owned by the Town. The Town Council will decide on the abandonment issue at their next meeting.

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Commissioner Israel wondered about the Town Policy for PUD zoning. Mr. Griffin stated that there is a SPD that is in the Zoning Ordinance, but no PUD.

In response to Commissioner Israel, Mr. Griffin clarified that Downtown Commercial is zoned C-2, not C-3.

Steve Murch, Architect representing the applicant, stated they have requested the study session to get input from the Commission. They want the building to be similar with what is happening in the neighborhood and this building is in a prominent location in San Anselmo. It is also important for the applicant because of the window of opportunity for the office boom that is taking place now. The building will be designed with care. They want to have the architecture wrap around the corner from Sir Francis Drake Boulevard and fill in the area and greeting people as they approach Sir Francis Drake from Red Hill Avenue. The difference between the C-2 and C-3 zoning district is distinct because of FAR. They wanted to look for a way to have the building looked at for its merits and they have come up with a building design that shares resources with the Tam Theatre. They have proposed a lot line adjustment with the Tam Theatre. They wanted to get an urban building that does stand out and they want parking as far away from Red Hill as possible. They want to create parking under the building to get easy access to the site from the front and rear. The old Tam Theatre is under developed for C-2 and that is another reason they wanted to share resources.

Mr. Murch went on to explain that the building uses many materials from the Tam Theatre. They proposed parking under the building because if they had parking on one level they would require retaining walls because there is a 3'6" drop. Although they could have had subterranean parking, it does not work on Greenfield. The addition of commercial/retail takes some parking spaces away. They felt it was a more than good trade. They have studied parking at the Tam site and there is ample parking there. They have targeted a specific market, by having small offices, where the tenants are local and they walk, ride their bicycles and many will not require parking.

They are proposing a wood frame above the parking deck because they want to maintain an eclectic façade. They are planning a very flexible floor plan. Building a retail establishment would not be viable. There are currently 22 parking spaces for Tam Theatre and 17 for Greenfield Motors. They have shown the security gate for the underneath parking only.

Commissioner Wittenkeller wondered if 10 Greenfield was contacted to be part of this project. Ned MacDonald responded that it is owned by an elderly couple who are not willing to sell.

In response to Commissioner Wittenkeller, Mr. Murch stated that a traffic study has not been done to address parking.

In response to Vice Chair Cronk, Mr. Murch stated that the façade would really not be any higher than the Tam Theatre, although it might look a little larger because the street elevation is a little higher on Greenfield Avenue. Also, there is no provision for bike racks at this time.

Steve Sibley, co-owner of 42 Greenfield, stated his big concern is off street parking. The design is great but their building is the only building that has sufficient off street parking. He strongly felt that parking should be closely reviewed.

Eric Rosenquest, 18 Lincoln Park, stated he likes the concept of the project but is very concerned about the parking. The configuration of traffic is very difficult and traffic is increasing. The Stapleton School on Greenfield Avenue has also increased traffic. He disputes the use of compact parking spaces because people in Marin do not drive compact cars. He does not even think there would be adequate parking for the tenants. Therefore, the building would be a little large for the amount of parking spaces available.

Roger Bettini, Bank Street, stated that the charm of San Anselmo is not urban and this building is urban. The main problem is traffic and parking and the building is over built. The compact parking is not good – they are door dingers.

Resident, 15 Bank Street, stated his biggest issue is light and the Commission needs to consider the change in the look of San Anselmo.

Ned MacDonald stated that they have taken a long time in designing the building and hoped this is what is the vision for San Anselmo.

Commissioner Israel stated that he supports the notion of continuing the development from Sir Francis Drake around the corner to Greenfield. The subcommittee of the two Commissioners and two Council members asked the applicant to reduce the parking because they wanted to bring the building to the front of the street. He also wanted to

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make sure there were no gaps in Greenfield to continue pedestrian traffic down Greenfield. He is not completely certain that the project should not be up zoned, rather than down zoned and might be able to support that thinking. He felt that the employee parking could be at Creek Park rather than on site. It would be nice if the front door were set back but it would be okay if that can not be achieved. The compact car ratio is a little too high and he would like blended stalls. He supports more articulation to the rear of the building facing Smyth Lane; agrees that this is a window of opportunity and beneficial to the Town. The west facing elevation shows small windows, which might be problematic. He would like story poles erected to generalize the building mass. The backside of the building would benefit with a set back to the building. The entire site is taken up with building and therefore cannot be that screened with landscaping. Parking is a huge issue on this site. Staff points out a General Plan Policy which is in the way, and he would be willing to work with the Town Council to make it work for the applicant and the Town. He commented that the backside of the building that faces Smyth Lane is open to the cars and would suggest a visual screen. He was a little nervous that some of the column bays would need to be solid and it might be a problem. He would like to see a plan of the relationship between the Tam Building versus the new project and would like to see it in the context of Greenfield and how it responds to the rest of the buildings. A traffic study will probably be necessary and wants staff's feed back on that.

Commissioner Dowd said the design is beautiful and ties into the other buildings on Sir Francis Drake. He generally is in support of the height. The rear elevation needs help and would like to see articulation. He wanted a traffic study and further information on the parking situation.

Commissioner Wittenkeller stated he is generally enthused about the project. The broad scope issue is that he too, is concerned that there is no redevelopment agency for the applicant to go to. He stated that the Town would get the benefit of the property taxes and he would strongly suggest the Town Council look into a redevelopment agency so that tax funding can come back to the town. There is a parking problem in the area and he would like to see a focused EIR, at least to focus on the parking and traffic. The concept of eliminating the existing public right-of-way that allows pedestrian access to Greenfield from Smith Lane and Bank Street is valuable to maintain and should not be lost. They might entertain including 10 Bank Street, which would help in the parking situation. He supports the idea of raising the sill heights of the rear windows to protect the neighbors' privacy but still maintain the view of the hills.

Commissioner Harle was deeply concerned about the parking and about the distribution of parking requirements. This is a big building and has inadequate parking. He also has problems with a three-story building when the town limits themselves to two story buildings.

Vice Chair Cronk was generally in support of the project and in continuing the feeling of the Tam Theatre and the gateway to San Anselmo. It is a big wide building but the tying into the Tam Theatre helps. She does not think the small windows were appropriate and perhaps setting them back to get more glass might help. It might also help the articulation on the back of the building. There are neighborhood concerns that need to be taken seriously. She is very concerned about parking and noted that compact cars are not the norm anymore. Even with compact, the numbers are too low and cannot be justified. She suggests that this project could be used to help participate in a long-term plan for creating a parking fund that can help elsewhere in the Town.

Commissioner Wittenkeller stated that there is an opportunity to include the Greenfield right-of-way; perhaps reconfigure parking on Greenfield, and he would want them to extend they're thinking across Greenfield Avenue.

Commissioner Israel concurred, noting that it might be a way to come up with additional parking.

Commissioner Harle seconded the idea of having story poles, particularly in light of the impact on the residents on Smyth Lane.

Commissioner Israel stated he would like a site plan that shows the residents on Smyth Lane and a section of the building.

**CONTINUED ITEMS**

1. DR-9842/PDP-9805 – Chris Albrick, 370 Redwood Road, A/P 7-360-05, (Old Lot A) Precise Development Plan building envelope amendment and Design Review of a single family residential dwelling, on property located within the R-1-H Zoning District (above 150' msl) (Staff person: Wight) **CONTINUED TO 2/2/99**
2. DR-9843/PDP-9806 – Chris Albrick, 376 Redwood Road, A/P 7-360-06, (Old Lot B) Precise Development Plan building envelope amendment and Design Review of a single family residential dwelling, on property located within the R-1-H Zoning District (above 150' msl) (Staff person: Wight) **CONTINUED TO 2/2/99**

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3. DR-9844/PDP-9807 – Chris Albrick, 398 Redwood Road, A/P 7-360-07, (Old Lot C) Precise Development Plan building envelope amendment and Design Review of a single family residential dwelling, on property located within the R-1-H Zoning District (above 150' msl) (Staff person: Wight) **CONTINUED TO 2/2/99**
4. DR-9845/PDP-9808 – Chris Albrick, 392 Redwood Road, A/P 7-360-01, (Old Lot 1) Precise Development Plan building envelope amendment and Design Review of a single family residential dwelling, on property located within the R-1-H Zoning District (above 150' msl) (Staff person: Wight) **CONTINUED TO 2/2/99**
5. DR-9846/PDP-9809 – Chris Albrick, 394 Redwood Road, A/P 7-360-02, (Old Lot 2) Precise Development Plan building envelope amendment and Design Review of a single family residential dwelling, on property located within the R-1-Zoning District (above 150' msl) (Staff person: Wight) **CONTINUED TO 2/2/99**
6. DR-9847/PDP-9810 – Chris Albrick, 396 Redwood Road, A/P 7-360-03, (Old Lot 3) Precise Development Plan building envelope amendment and Design Review of a single family residential dwelling, on property located within the R-1-H Zoning District (above 150' msl) (Staff person: Wight) **CONTINUED TO 2/2/99**
7. Master Plan Amendment – San Francisco Theological Seminary, 2 Kensington Road, - Proposed revisions to the Master Plan, on property located within the SPD Zoning District (Staff person: Chaney) **CONTINUED TO 2/2/99**
8. ER/DR-9848/U-9810 - Safeway Store, 838 Sir Francis Drake Boulevard, A/P 6-061-23, review of traffic study and use permit/design review amendment to the Redhill Shopping Center to expand the existing 27,492 square foot Safeway Store to 37,699 square feet, a fenced trash enclosure and new retaining walls in the rear for the loading area, and additional parking spaces in both the front and east side of the store on property located within the SPD Zoning District. (Staff person: Wight) **CONTINUED TO 2/2/99**
9. Amendment to PDP-9314/DR-9902 – Mohamad Sadrieh for Gerry Hines, 1 The Alameda Knolls, A/P 5-320-01, Precise Development Plan building envelope amendment and design review of a new single family dwelling, on property located within the R-1-H Zoning District. (Staff person: Wight) **CONTINUED TO 2/2/99**
10. PDP-9505/Parcel Split-9503/V-9549/DR-9525 - Carlos Castro, 444 Redwood Road, A/P 7-191-10, 1) Land Division, Precise Development Plan, Density Determination, and Design Review to split an existing property currently developed with a single family residence in order to construct a new house; 2) a Variance to construct a retaining wall a total of 60' long along the uphill side of Redwood Road (within 0' of the property line) in order to widen Redwood Road to 15' of paving for fire safety reasons; and 4) remove one heritage tree (30" bay) on property located within the R-1-H Zoning District (above 150' mean sea level) (Staff person: Griffin) **CONTINUED TO 2/16/99**
11. DR-9851 - Andronico's Market, 631 Sir Francis Drake Boulevard, A/P 6-101-05, Design Review of proposed parking lot and landscape plan, which includes a fountain, and 'Welcome to San Anselmo' sign, on property located within the C-3 Zoning District. (Staff person: Wight) **CONTINUED TO 2/2/99**

**GENERAL DISCUSSION**

1. Election of Planning Commission Chair and Vice Chair for 1999

M/s Wittenkeller/Dowd, and unanimously passed (5-0), to extend Marty Zwick's term as Chair.

M/s Wittenkeller/Dowd, and unanimously passed (5-0), to extend Susan Cronk's term as Vice Chair for one year.

**REPORT OF UPCOMING APPEALS TO TOWN COUNCIL**

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:15 p.m. to February 2, 1999.

**BARBARA CHAMBERS**