

To: Planning Commissioners July 31, 2014
cc: Jennifer Wallis, Associate Planner
From: Dolores Bengtson, 568 Hamilton Way
Subject: P-14-0829, Application of Greg Munn for George Schmitt - addition to 554 Hamilton Way

Planning Commissioners and Staff:

I am writing to you without benefit of the staff report as I will be away until August 10th. After I return home and have the chance to review the staff report I may update this communication.

Background

May 15th. I received a notice regarding the Schmitt's application to remodel their home. Mr. Schmitt had mentioned to me a few days prior that they were planning an addition but noted it would just be a few feet higher. When I saw the application notice which clearly stated there would be a 614 square foot second story addition with rear deck I asked Mr. Schmitt if I could review the plans. He graciously agreed to allow me and my neighbors to review the plans.

Upon review of the plans it appeared to me the proposed addition would essentially block my open view west to Pleasanton Ridge. That view would be replaced with a sea of sloped roof. I doubted my grim assessment of the addition and asked staff if it would be possible for story poles to be placed on the home to provide an accurate picture of the remodel. The Schmitt's agreed to arrange for the placement of story poles on their home marking the outline of the roofline of the proposed remodel. The story poles confirmed my earlier grim assessment.

I have lived in my home since 1986. One of the primary reasons I purchased my home was the west facing back yard and my bedroom have a great open view featuring Pleasanton Ridge. Over time I have landscaped my garden to provide privacy to the one bedroom window of the Schmitt home facing my deck as well as to mask the storage shed on Schmitt's property located about one foot from our common fence. I left the view to Pleasanton Ridge open. Any visitor to my garden can clearly attest to that.

It is unfortunate neither the Schmitt's nor the project's architect have taken enough interest in the impact of the proposed addition on my property to visit my back yard and home. I have invited them to do so. In an email to me Mr. Schmitt states the remodel impacts only "a small percentage" of my view – clearly, he has no idea of the impact.

All the homes in the neighborhood were constructed in the late 60's and early 70's. They are one story ranch style typical of that era. The neighborhood has made repeated efforts to maintain the character of the single story ranch style homes. The Planning Department will be able to verify previous applications for two story homes in the neighborhood that were changed to one story remodels due to neighborhood involvement. The developer of the homes backing up to the north east end of Hamilton Way was required to limit those few homes to one story in keeping with the character of the one story homes on Hamilton Way behind them. The proposed remodel is not only two stories, it is of contemporary design.

18.20.030 Scope of Review – Criteria

I understand staff will be providing a number of exhibits displaying the proposed remodel, homes in the neighborhood and views from my yard. I plan on attending the meeting and will also have exhibits to display. I urge you to carefully examine the exhibits keeping in mind the criteria for scope of review. I hope some of you have driven on Hamilton Way to become familiar with the neighborhood and the architecture and harmony of the existing homes. While it is never easy to evaluate the potential impact of proposed remodels on surrounding neighborhoods and adjacencies, I urge you to do so keeping in mind the following criteria:

The scope of review permits you to evaluate the scale of the building within its site and the adjoining buildings. *I believe an evaluation of the proposed Schmitt remodel confirms it is not in scale with the adjoining buildings.*

The scope of review permits you to evaluate the compatibility of architectural styles, harmony with adjoining buildings and consistency with neighborhood character. *I believe an evaluation of the Schmitt remodel shows it is not compatible nor in harmony with the architectural style of the adjoining buildings, and is inconsistent with neighborhood character.*

The scope of review permits you to evaluate the preservation of views enjoyed by residents. *I believe as you consider the negative impact of the proposed remodel on my property, the complete loss of my open and lovely view, to be replaced by massive sloped shingled roof, you will agree my property and its residents will have suffered considerable loss of view.*

Mitigation of Loss of View

So often in cases such as this, landscaping is looked upon as the answer to buffer the area and provide visual relief. The distance from the Schmitt house to the common fence is very narrow maintaining the seven foot minimum distance in places. Any landscaping done to significantly mask the proposed roof line to any extent would no doubt have to be on my property. I resent the fact that should you approve this application not only will I have loss of view, loss of property value due to the loss of view replaced by a sloping roof wall, I will also have to assume the financial and physical burden of landscaping my back yard in an attempt to mitigate the mass of roof that will be so highly visible from my garden and home. To achieve any buffering of the roof mass will take considerable time for plant material to mature. That buffer will likely not be effective during my occupancy.

Conclusion

I believe the criteria for scope of review provides ample reason for you to deny this application. The Schmitt's have a large lot providing space for an extensive one store remodel. Such a remodel could blend with the character of, and be in harmony with, the existing homes in the neighborhood while not impacting my open view. Such a project would no doubt enjoy the support of the neighborhood.

I urge you to deny this application and support my appeal.

Jennifer Wallis

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, August 03, 2014 4:54 PM
To: Jennifer Wallis
Cc: Barron, Beverly
Subject: Notice of Public Hearing: P14-0829, Greg Munn, Design Tech Associates/George and Mary Schmitt

Ms. Wallis,

If the proposed additions are made to the dwelling at 554 Hamilton Way, Pleasanton, CA, it would fundamentally detract the views of neighboring residences, my own, included. The proposed additions are extraordinary, and should not be undertaken by the owner of said dwelling.

The proposed additions are the following:

- (1)- Construct an approximately 781-square foot single story addition to the rear of the house.
- (2)- Construct an 88-square foot, 6" tall covered front porch.
- (3)- Construct an approximately 614-square foot second story addition with an approximately 177-square foot second floor deck.
- (4)- Change the overall roof pitch of the home, including raising the height of the ridge line and peaks by 1' 9" to 7' 4".

Zoning of this property is specified in: R-1-6,500, "One Family Residential District."

Sincerely,
John P. Barron, Beverly H. Barron
6479 Randall Court,
Pleasanton, CA 94566-7725

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