



THE CITY OF
NOVATO
CALIFORNIA

Design Review Commission Meeting

Location: Novato City Hall, 901 Sherman Avenue

September 20, 2017

MINUTES

922 Machin Ave
Novato, CA 94945
415/899-8900
FAX 415/899-8213
www.novato.org

Present: Marshall Balfe, Chair
Patrick MacLeamy, Vice Chair
Michael Barber
Joe Farrell

Mayor
Denise Athas
Mayor Pro Tem
Josh Fryday
Councilmembers
Pam Drew
Pat Eklund
Eric Lucan

Absent: Beth Radovanovich

Staff: Steve Marshall, Planning Manager
Hans Grunt, Senior Planner
Michelle Johnson, Planner II

City Manager
Regan M. Candelario

CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL:

APPROVAL OF FINAL AGENDA:

M/s: Farrell/MacLeamy – amend Agenda, move General Business up as agenda item 2

Passed: 4-0-1

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

CONSENT CALENDAR:

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 6, 2017 (MBal,PM, MBar,JF,BR)

M/s: Balfe/MacLeamy – Approve minutes

Passed: 4-0-1

GENERAL BUSINESS:

2. ELECTION OF DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION CHAIR AND VICE

CHAIR

M/s: Farrell/MacLeamy – to elect Commissioner MacLeamy as Chair and
Commissioner Barber as Vice Chair
Passed: 4-0-1

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

Interested persons may speak on any of the below-noted CONTINUED or NEW ITEMS up to three minutes per individual; 20 minutes for applicant; 10 minutes per recognized group. Speakers are limited to one opportunity per item, so please be thorough and to the point. Prior to speaking please submit a speaker card to the Meeting Recorder.

CONTINUED ITEMS: None

NEW ITEMS:

PROJECT DESIGN WORKSHOP:

3. **REBELO SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENCE
DESIGN REVIEW WORKSHOP
FILE: P2017-033; DESIGN REVIEW
APN 132-211-48; 2 THOMAS COURT**

Conduct a public workshop to review and provide comments regarding the site design, building massing, architecture, and landscaping for a proposed 3,818 square-foot single-family residence with a 1,097 square-foot attached garage located at 2 Thomas Court.

Planner II Michelle Johnson presented the staff report.

Applicant Frank Rebelo, representing himself, presented a conceptual drawing of his original plans that included dormers to demonstrate consideration taken for the surrounding neighbors; the submitted plans omitted the dormers reducing the massing of the structure. Frank referred to his project as the “Cinderella Slipper” because of the parcel dimensions only one design will work. Frank discussed the reasoning behind the design of the large garage and the issue of no on-street parking available on Thomas Court. Frank explained that the large garage will provide parking for his personnel vehicles; allowing more off street parking for his guests. Frank described his project as traditional and pointed out the color and style are conforming to the existing neighborhood. Frank closed by saying he planned to lower the existing height of the overall building by grading the property.

Commissioner Farrell: asked staff what the ceiling heights were and what is the first floor sf? Johnson responded - height is 10’, first floor is 2,577sf and lot size is 10,405sf.

Commissioner Marshall: No questions.

Commissioner MacLeamy: asked Mr. Rebelo if he had walked around and talked to the neighbors discussing the plans for his proposed project?

Applicant Frank Rebelo: stated that no; he really had not.

Public Comment

Ruthie and Gary Valentine - neighbors to the west at 784 Eucalyptus Avenue; corner of Eucalyptus and Thomas. Mrs. Valentine stated the proposed home would be immediately behind her home and loom over her house and garage. Mrs. Valentine has concerns that sun exposure she receives will be gone and it will have a huge impact on her quality of life.

Sondra Oczkus has lived at 7 Gum Tree Court for 44 years. Mrs. Oczkus stated that the current homes in the neighborhoods surrounding Thomas Court are single story with a max FAR of 21%. Mrs. Oczkus made reference to the 1,100 sq. ft. garage and that the proposed project had an overwhelming size and scope would dramatically change the characteristic of the existing neighborhood.

Jeff Cavener, Architect spoke on behalf of 7 Gum Tree Court. Made reference to the vacancy of the lots since inception that the neighbors were accustomed to the aesthetics. The proposed home at 2 Thomas Court was twice the existing FAR and building coverage of neighboring homes. Mr. Cavener made reference to when he was on the DRC and the commission treated the standards as the minimum; and that typically it was not a good fit to develop to the maximum limits of development standards (setbacks). He believed the issues with the project included privacy, shadowing, vehicle headlights, and that mitigation should be considered in line with dense landscaping or increased fence heights.
her Thomas project.

Commission Comment

Commissioner Farrell:

- 1.5 stories is a great technique to mask floor area; however, proposed building had excessive coverage and maxed out the lot reducing opportunity for outdoor space/landscaping.
- The 28ft wide garage was excessive and perceives the 75ft of house side wall as also excessive when viewed by the neighboring home.
- It is a simple house on steroids; needs to be “deflated” or reduced in mass overall, to be more consistent with the neighborhood scale.
- Suggest break up the mass could include stepping back the side walls.
- A revised/smaller garage is recommended – does not agree with the rationale for a larger garage is warranted to provide more parking for guests because guests don't park their cars in the garage.

Commissioner Barber:

- The house and garage were massive and needed to be minimized.
- A reduced mass could be achieved by changing the pitches on the roof; reducing the opening of the garage and its overall mass and thus afford space for uncovered parking.
- The stone veneer and siding looked artificial and recommended having the stone wrap around the house to a purposeful point.
- Recommend changes to the landscaping - arrange the plants in a more natural way and less systematic.
- Would like to see the trellis match the columns in the back to appear more substantial/architectural.

Commissioner Balfe:

- Stated he agreed with Commissioner Barber about the siding materials, size of the garage and trellis.
- The square footage of the garage didn't bother him but feels that by changing the roof slope and reducing the height of the garage the applicant could maintain the size needed for cars and reduce massing.

Commissioner Barber and Commissioner Farrell:

- Shared sketched up alternative roof and upper wall plane designs for consideration to reduce the mass in introduce more architectural interest to the home's design.

Chair MacLeamy:

- Generally agrees with Commissioner feedback and encourage the applicant to reach out to his neighbors for input on the home's design.

4. BOWSER SINGLE FAMILY HOME P2017-054; DESIGN REVIEW APN 132-211-49; THOMAS COURT

Conduct a public workshop to review and provide comments regarding the site design, building massing, architecture, and landscaping for a proposed two-story, 2,265 square-foot single-family residence with a 543 square-foot attached garage and 144 square foot cabana located at the south end of Thomas Court - Assessor's Parcel No. 132-211-49.

Planner II Michelle Johnson presented the staff report.

Commissioner Barber: asked staff if the height of the cabana exceeded 8 feet in the rear setback.

Johnson: confirmed it did; and that it could be allowed through Design Review approval.

Chair MacLeamy: confirmed with staff that the expectations of the Design Review Commission tonight were to review and provide comment to the applicant and staff regarding design, scale and

mass of the project.

Applicant Brad Bowser, representing himself, provided a detailed power point presentation that included concepts of LEED homes with photo examples materials and design, and examples of existing homes in Novato with non-traditional designs. He provided information on pans to include panels (Tesla Solar Panels) and a water reclamation system.

Commissioner Marshall: No questions.

Commissioner Barber: Asked the applicant what the use of the shed would be. Applicant replied for sports equipment; bicycles and camping supplies and the cabana would provide for poolside activities.

Commissioner Farrell: asked the applicant what the required north setback was. Applicant replied 10ft.

Commissioner Farrell: asked the applicant what the neighbor's yard home design to the north is; Applicant stated it was a side yard and provided a picture on the PowerPoint identifying the shade study as is related to the adjacent home to the north.

Chair MacLeamy: asked Mr. Bowser if he had walked around and talked to the neighbors discussing the plans for his proposed project? Applicant stated that he had and provided his plans.

Public Comment

Jeff Cavener, Architect spoke on behalf of 7 Gum Tree Court. Stated he appreciated the smaller scale of the home; however, has concerns with the effects of headlights and loss of privacy in backyards for the existing homes and impact of view to the north.

Sondra Oczkus, 7 Gum Tree Court. Stated that she has concerns about the view of the second story windows into neighboring backyards; that existing views would no longer be available of the hills and that the project was not characteristic of the existing neighborhood.

Bob Sadalski, 11 Gum Tree Court. Stated that he was in support of the home; however, has concerns with the noise generated from the cabana and pool equipmant.

Commission Comment

Commissioner Barber:

- The house is much more appropriately scaled with existing buildings in the neighborhood.
- Concerns with the proposed height and location of the cabana within the rear setback given its proposed use for teenagers is too close to the neighboring house; the use of the shed is quiet and would be more appropriate in the location of the cabana and would like to see them "flipped". Applicant: would like to keep the cabana location, but is agreeable to providing a higher fence in that location along the property line.

- Questioned use of corrugated fiberglass over the windows – seems cheap; would prefer corrugated metal. Also asked what the plan was for the one existing tree on the property. Applicant: the corrugated fiber awnings are not final, in favor of an alternative material. The one existing tree was not actually a tree – is a sapling and would be removed and replaced with better more appropriate trees.

Commissioner Farrell:

- Appreciated applicant's PowerPoint and it demonstrated his design motivation.
- Understands the constraints of a flag lot but liked the size and layout of the home.
- The square footage is reasonable and appropriate for the parcel.
- The driveway worked well and was ok with the cabana structure at 10 feet max in the rear setback. Noted that the majority of homes in Novato have pools and noise is not overly disruptive.
- Supports the project design, but would like to see a landscaping plan.

Commissioner Balfe:

- Agreed with Commissioner Farrell's comments, added he wouldn't mind seeing additional trees along south property line.

Chair MacLeamy:

- Has some concern with the cabana location and supports a look at switching locations with the shed.
- Overall believes the project demonstrates a sound design and well thought out site layout.

GENERAL BUSINESS:

4. — ELECTION OF DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

ADJOURNMENT:

M/s: Farrell/Barber – to adjourn at 8:35.

Passed: 4-0-1