



**Design Review Board  
Regular Meeting**

**Tuesday, November 8, 2022, 7:00 P.M.  
AGENDA**

**In-Person:**

**San Rafael City Council Chambers  
1400 Fifth Avenue, San Rafael, CA 94901**

**Participate Virtually:**

**Watch on Webinar: <https://tinyurl.com/drb-2022-11-08>**

**Watch on YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/cityofsanrafael>**

**Telephone: 1 (669) 444-9171**

**Meeting ID: 831 0781 8748#**

**One Tap Mobile: US: +16694449171, 83107818748#**

**CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) ADVISORY NOTICE**

In response to Assembly Bill 361, the City of San Rafael is offering teleconference without complying with the procedural requirements of Government Code section 54953(b)(3). This meeting will be held in-person, virtually using Zoom and is being streamed to YouTube at [www.youtube.com/cityofsanrafael](http://www.youtube.com/cityofsanrafael).

How to participate in the meeting in-person:

- Stay home if you are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms
- Face coverings are recommended for attendees
- Use the sign-in sheet (optional) which allows notification of potentially exposed individuals if contact tracing reveals COVID-19 transmission may have occurred in a given meeting.
- Attendance will be limited to 50 percent of room capacity (no more than 90 persons) and all in-person attendees should socially distance as recommended by public health authorities. If the Chambers are 50% occupied, please participate online instead, or utilize the audio feed in the lobby.
- All attendees are encouraged to be fully vaccinated.

How to participate in the meeting virtually:

- Submit public comment in writing before 4:00 p.m. the day of the meeting to [PlanningPublicComment@cityofsanrafael.org](mailto:PlanningPublicComment@cityofsanrafael.org).
- Join the Zoom webinar and use the 'raise hand' feature to provide verbal public comment.
- Dial-in to Zoom's telephone number using the meeting ID and provide verbal public comment.

Any member of the public who needs accommodations should contact the City Clerk (email [city.clerk@cityofsanrafael.org](mailto:city.clerk@cityofsanrafael.org) or phone at 415-485-3066) who will use their best efforts to provide reasonable accommodations to provide as much accessibility as possible while also maintaining public safety in accordance with the City procedure for resolving reasonable accommodation requests.

Members of the public may speak on Agenda items.

## **CALL TO ORDER**

## **RECORDING OF MEMBERS PRESENT AND ABSENT**

## **APPROVAL OR REVISION OF ORDER OF AGENDA ITEMS**

## **PUBLIC NOTIFICATION OF MEETING PROCEDURES**

### **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

Remarks are limited to three minutes per person and may be on anything within the subject matter jurisdiction of the body. Remarks on non-agenda items will be heard first, remarks on agenda items will be heard at the time the item is discussed.

### **CONSENT CALENDAR**

The Consent Calendar allows the Board to take action, without discussion, on Agenda items for which there are no persons present who wish to speak, and no Board members who wish to discuss.

- 1. Approval of the Design Review Board Meeting Minutes of May 17, 2022**  
*Recommended Action – Approve minutes as submitted*
- 2. Approval of the Design Review Board Meeting Minutes of September 7, 2022**  
*Recommended Action – Approve minutes as submitted*

### **ACTION CALENDAR**

- 3. 380 Margarita Drive – New Single-Family House**  
Request for an Environmental and Design Review Permit for a new single-family residence, pool, and detached garage with a guest unit on a vacant hillside lot; APN: 015-320-03; Planned Development District (PD) 1808-H; ED21-011, PLAN21-019  
**Project Planner:** Renee Nickenig ([renee.nickenig@cityofsanrafael.org](mailto:renee.nickenig@cityofsanrafael.org))  
*Recommended Action – Review and provide input on items discussed in staff report*
- 4. 275 & 281 Coleman Drive – Two New Single-Family Houses**  
Requests for a Lot Line Adjustment, Environmental and Design Review, Exception, and Variance to merge four vacant lots into two lots, construct a three-story 2,548 square-foot modular home and other site improvements on each consolidated lot; APN: 011-031-44 - 47; R10 Hillside Overlay District; LLA20-004; ED20-047/EX21-002/V22-002; ED20-046/EX21-001  
**Project Planner:** Monica Ly ([monica.ly@cityofsanrafael.org](mailto:monica.ly@cityofsanrafael.org))  
*Recommended Action – Review and provide input on items discussed in staff report*

## **STAFF COMMUNICATION**

## **BOARD COMMUNICATION**

## **ADJOURNMENT**

*Any records relating to an agenda item, received by a majority or more of the Commission less than 72 hours before the meeting, shall be available for inspection online. Sign Language interpreters may be requested by calling (415) 485-3066 (voice), emailing [city.clerk@cityofsanrafael.org](mailto:city.clerk@cityofsanrafael.org) or using the California Telecommunications Relay Service by dialing "711", at least 72 hours in advance of the meeting. Copies of documents are available in accessible formats upon request.*



**Design Review Board  
Regular Meeting**

**Tuesday, May 17, 2022, 7:00 P.M.  
AGENDA**

**Virtual Meeting**

**Watch on Webinar: <https://tinyurl.com/drj-2022-05-17>**

**Telephone: 1 (669) 900 6833**

**Meeting ID: 880 1015 0251#**

**One Tap Mobile: US: + 16699006833,,88010150251#**

**CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) ADVISORY NOTICE**

In response to Assembly Bill 361, the City of San Rafael is offering teleconference without complying with the procedural requirements of Government Code section 54953(b)(3). This meeting will be held virtually using Zoom.

How to participate in the meeting:

- **Submit public comments in writing. Correspondence received by 10:00 p.m. Tuesday the week before the meeting will be provided with the agenda materials provided to the Board.** Correspondence received after this deadline will be conveyed to the Board as a supplement. Send correspondence to the project planner or to [PlanningPublicComment@cityofsanrafael.org](mailto:PlanningPublicComment@cityofsanrafael.org); or send in writing to Planning Division, CDD; 1400 5th Ave. 3rd Fl.; San Rafael, CA 94901.
- Join the Zoom webinar and use the 'raise hand' feature to provide verbal public comment.
- Dial-in to Zoom's telephone number using the meeting ID and provide verbal public comment.

Any member of the public who needs accommodations should contact the City Clerk (email [city.clerk@cityofsanrafael.org](mailto:city.clerk@cityofsanrafael.org) or phone at 415-485-3066) who will use their best efforts to provide reasonable accommodations to provide as much accessibility as possible while also maintaining public safety in accordance with the City procedure for resolving reasonable accommodation requests.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Rege called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Chair Rege then invited Staff & Senior Planner Jeff Ballantine to call roll.

**RECORDING OF MEMBERS PRESENT AND ABSENT**

Present: Chair Sarah Rege  
Vice Chair Sharon Kovalsky  
Board Member Jeff Kent  
Board Member Larry Paul

Absent: Board Member Stewart Summers

Also Present: Jeff Ballantine, Staff, Senior Planner & DRB Secretary  
Tricia Stevens, Contract Planner

### **PUBLIC NOTIFICATION OF MEETING PROCEDURES**

Chair Rege invited Staff & Senior Planner, Jeff Ballantine, who informed the public that members of the public can provide public comment by telephone and via zoom and the raise hand feature. Written comments submitted prior to the meeting time would be read aloud into the record during the public comment portion of each item.

Chair Rege reviewed the procedures for the meeting.

### **URGENT ORAL/EMAIL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

Chair Rege called for any comments from the public on items NOT on the agenda. There were no public comments.

### **CONSENT CALENDAR**

Chair Rege invited public comment on the Consent Calendar. There was no comment on the Consent Calendar.

#### **1. Approval of the Design Review Board Meeting Minutes of March 22, 2022**

Member Kent moved and Member Paul seconded to approve the Minutes as submitted.

AYES: Members: Chair Rege, Vice Chair Kovalsky, Kent, & Paul

NOES: Members: None

ABSENT: Members: Summers

ABSTAIN: Members: None

Motion carried 4-0 Yes.

### **ACTION CALENDAR**

Chair Rege introduced the Action Calendar and invited staff to present the Staff Report.

- 2. Northgate Town Square Project.** Requests for a Rezone to the Planned Development (PD) zone, a Use Permit, an Environmental and Design Review Permit, and a Tentative Map to allow the comprehensive redevelopment of the existing mall at 5800 Northgate Drive into a new, phased mixed-use development with approximately 225,000 square feet of retail and 1,441 residential units on a 44.76-acre site. APNs: 175-060-12, -40, -59, -61, -66 & -67; General Commercial (GC) District; MeloneGeier Partners, owner/applicant; PLAN21-039, ZC21-001, UP21-007, ED21-024, TS21-002, IS21-002 & DA21-001

**Project Planner:** Tricia Stevens, Contract Planner [tricia.stevens@cityofsanrafael.org](mailto:tricia.stevens@cityofsanrafael.org)

Tricia Stevens, Contract Planner, presented the Staff Report on the project.

Applicant Team gave a presentation on the project.

Applicant Team and Staff responded to questions from the Board Members.

Chair Rege asked for public comments. Public Comment received about traffic, building heights, residential density, amount of open space, affordable housing need, sustainable

design, water conservation measures, impacts to local school capacity, and pedestrian and bicycle circulation.

Board Members provided comments.

Member Paul moved, Vice Chair Kovalsky seconded recommendation that the applicant address the following comments and return to the Design Review Board for consideration.

**1. Massing:**

- a. Seven-story apartment buildings appear out of scale for the site and the project is too dense in the south/middle portion of the site. Concern about pedestrian scale and a canyon effect. Consider spreading out density over the entire site (particularly to the north) and providing building stepbacks for upper floors.
- b. Existing parking garage could be better utilized. Consider densifying this area with residential development or a taller parking garage.

**2. Town Square:**

- a. Consider replacing the parking area to the west of the Town Square with open space or other active use.
- b. Relocate the dog park to more of a periphery location to minimize noise impacts of the dogs.
- c. Town Square should be more of a functional active park with amenities for all ages, including a tot lot, a playground for older children, and restroom facilities.

**3. Architecture:**

- a. Architecture is not cohesive throughout the project. DRB questions the use of red brick.
- b. Affordable housing design is not of similar quality as other residential uses with regards to setbacks in façade, variations in roof height, and overall quality of design and materials. Also, consider providing balconies since at grade open space is not provided.
- c. Need more information and detail on rooftop activities.

**4. Circulation:**

- a. Consider providing multi-modal paths around the entire site and stronger pedestrian pathways throughout the site.
- b. Consider providing a transit hub within the site

**5. Additional Submittal Materials**

- a. Applicant to prepare lighting plans for DRB consideration.
- b. Applicant to prepare fencing plans for DRB consideration.

Board Members discussed motion.

AYES: Members: Chair Rege, Vice Chair Kovalsky, Kent, & Paul

NOES: Members: None

ABSENT: Members: Summers

ABSTAIN: Members: None

Motion carried 4-0 Yes.

**INFORMATIONAL ITEM**

- 3. **Streamlined Review for Certain Residential Projects.** Senior Planner, Jeff Ballantine, provided a summary of the recently adopted Streamlined Review process for residential development projects with three to ten units.

**DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Staff did not provide any updates.

**BOARD COMMUNICATION**

Member Paul requested a status update on the 24 hour fitness project

**ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Rege adjourned the meeting at 10:47 p.m.

\_\_\_\_\_  
JEFF BALLANTINE, Senior Planner

APPROVED THIS \_\_\_\_ DAY OF \_\_\_\_\_, 2022

\_\_\_\_\_  
SARAH REGE, DRB Chair

DRAFT



**Design Review Board  
Regular Meeting**

**Tuesday, September 7, 2022, 7:00 P.M.  
AGENDA**

**Virtual Meeting**

**Watch on Webinar: <https://tinyurl.com/dr-2022-09-07>**

**Telephone: 1 (669) 900 6833**

**Meeting ID: 880 1015 0251#**

**One Tap Mobile: US: + 16699006833, 88010150251#**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Rege called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Chair Rege then invited Senior Planner Jeff Ballantine to call roll.

**RECORDING OF MEMBERS PRESENT AND ABSENT**

Present: Chair Sarah Rege  
Vice Chair Sharon Kovalsky  
Board Member Michael Alexin  
Board Member Jeff Kent  
Board Member Stewart Summers

Also Present: Jeff Ballantine, Staff, Senior Planner & DRB Secretary  
Donald Blayney, Alternate Board Member

**PUBLIC NOTIFICATION OF MEETING PROCEDURES**

Chair Rege invited Staff & Senior Planner, Jeff Ballantine, to inform the members of the public that they can provide public comment either in person in the Council Chambers, by telephone or via zoom with the raise hand feature. Written comments submitted prior to the meeting time would be read aloud into the record during the public comment portion of each item.

Chair Rege reviewed the procedures for the meeting.

**URGENT ORAL/EMAIL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

Chair Rege called for any comments from the public on items NOT on the agenda. There were no public comments.

**CONSENT CALENDAR**

Chair Rege invited public comment on the Consent Calendar. There was no comment on the Consent Calendar.

**1. Approval of the Design Review Board Meeting Minutes of May 17, 2022**

Board members indicated to Staff to bring consideration for approval of these meeting minutes for the next Design Review Board meeting since physical copies of the minutes were not provided to Board members.



## **ACTION CALENDAR**

Chair Rege introduced the Action Calendar and invited staff to present the Staff Report.

- 1. Selection of a Public Art Review Board Representative.** Request of the Design Review Board select a Public Art Review Board representative for a two (2) year term.

Jeff Ballantine, Senior Planner, provided background information on the Public Art Review Board.

Jeff Ballantine responded to questions from Board Members.

Vice Chair Kovalsky volunteered to be the Public Art Review Board representative.

Chair Rege asked for public comments. No public comment was received.

Member Kent moved, Member Summers seconded motion for Vice Chair Kovalsky to be the Public Art Review Board representative.

AYES: Members: Alexin, Kovalsky, Kent, Rege, Summers

NOES: Members: None

ABSENT: Members: None

ABSTAIN: Members: None

Motion carried 5-0 Yes

- 2. Objective Planning Standards.** Review draft “objective” planning design standards for multifamily residential buildings located outside the Downtown Precise Plan area  
**Project Planner:** Jeff Ballantine, Senior Planner ([jeff.ballantine@cityofsanrafael.org](mailto:jeff.ballantine@cityofsanrafael.org)) and Monica Ly, Senior Planner ([monica.ly@cityofsanrafael.org](mailto:monica.ly@cityofsanrafael.org))  
*Recommended Action – Review and provide input on draft objective planning design standards.*

Jeff Ballantine, Senior Planner, presented the Staff Report on the project.

Jeff Ballantine responded to questions from the Board Members.

Chair Rege asked for public comments. Public Comment received from Grace Geraghty indicating that she agrees with many of the DRB members that she does not want a one size fits all approach.

Board Members provided the following general comments.

1. General Comments
  - a. These standards shall only apply to SB 35 applications and not to all projects.
  - b. Include graphics to illustrate the proposed standards
2. Building Projections/Recesses
  - a. Propose a requirement for building projections/recesses that is scalable depending on the size of the building
  - b. The required projection/recess needs to more than 2 feet in depth

3. Transparency
  - a. Require 50% transparency for ground floor commercial, 30% transparency for ground floor residential and 30% transparency for upper floors.
  - b. This applies to all 4 sides of the building.
  
4. Additional Building Articulation Comments
  - a. Menu of Options. Consider offering a menu of options to achieve building articulation and requiring compliance with a certain number of any of those options
  - b. Vertical Articulation. Require vertical articulation in addition to horizontal articulation.
  - c. Materials. Require at least two different building materials
  - d. Ground floor parking. Include provisions specifically for ground floor parking. Consider utilizing example from Alameda that requires landscaping, green screens, and/or artistic elements. Also consider requiring that parking be setback from the front property line by a certain distance.
  - e. Height. Consider requiring buildings that exceed the height of their base zoning district to be setback further from the required setbacks of the base zoning district.
  
5. Future Focus Areas
  - a. Landscaping
  - b. Open Space
  - c. Lighting

#### **INFORMATIONAL ITEM**

#### **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

City Council intends to make cleanup changes to the Design Review Board bylaws. Staff will report back at the following meeting with additional information.

#### **BOARD COMMUNICATION**

No Board communication was provided.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Rege adjourned the meeting at 8:45 p.m.

\_\_\_\_\_  
JEFF BALLANTINE, Senior Planner

APPROVED THIS \_\_\_\_ DAY OF \_\_\_\_\_, 2022

\_\_\_\_\_  
SARAH REGE, DRB Chair



**REPORT TO DESIGN REVIEW BOARD**

**SUBJECT:** 380 Margarita Drive – ED21-011 (PLAN21-019) for construction of a new single-family home with a detached garage; APN: 015-320-03; Planned Development District (PD) 1808-H; Will Kelty, Owner and Applicant.

**SUMMARY**

This project is being referred to the Design Review Board to advise on the design of the single-family residence on a hillside property, which is defined as a minor physical improvement under San Rafael Municipal Code (SRMC) § 14.25.040. The design of the residence is consistent with most applicable development standards but deviates significantly from the *Design Guidelines to All Hillside Residential Development Projects*. Staff is requesting the Board review the proposed design and recommend approval, approval with conditions, redesign or denial to the Zoning Administrator.

**REQUESTED ENTITLEMENT**

The proposed project is subject to review, and approval of the entitlement described below. Staff request the Design Review Board (DRB) to provide design-related comments and recommendations to the Zoning Administrator on the requested Environmental and Design Review Permit.

- **Environmental and Design Review (ED21-011).** San Rafael Municipal Code (SRMC) § 14.25.040, specifies that new construction of a single-family residence is classified as a Minor Physical Improvement, which is subject to review and approval by the Zoning Administrator. Per SRMC § 14.25.070, the Design Review Board (DRB) is being asked to advise on the appropriateness of the development proposal and to recommend approval, approval with conditions, redesign or denial to the Zoning Administrator.

**PROPERTY FACTS**

The following table provides an overview of General Plan and Zoning designations for the project site and immediately surrounding area as well as existing developed land uses. In addition, this section provides an overview of the project’s compliance with applicable development standards set forth in Planned Development District (PD) 1808 and SRMC § 14.12.030.

**Table 1: Designations and Existing Uses**

Location	General Plan Designation	Zoning Designation	Existing Land-Use
<b>Project Site:</b>	<b>HRR</b>	<b>PD1808-H</b>	<b>Single-Family Residential</b>
North:	PROS	P/OS	Open Space
South:	HRR	PD1808-H	Single-Family Residential
East:	HRR	PD/R2a-H	Single-Family Residential
West:	HRR	R2a-H	Condominiums

HRR = Hillside Resource Residential; PROS = Parks, Recreation, and Open Space; PD = Planned Development; P/OS = Public/Open Space; R2a = Single-Family Residential; -H = Hillside Development Overlay District

**Table 2: Development Standards Summary (PD1808)**

Development Standard	Required/Permitted	Proposed	Consistent
<b>Minimum lot area</b>	12.83 acres	12.83 acres (no change)	Yes
<b>Maximum Height</b>	30 feet	16 feet	Yes
<b>Maximum Gross Building Area</b>	6,500 sq. ft.	5,507 sq. ft.	Yes
<b>Parking</b>	Two covered spaces Two guest spaces	Two covered spaces Two guest spaces	Yes
<b>Architectural Standards</b>	PD 1808 approved a residence specific to Lot B	The proposed residence does not comply with the approved residence.	No

**SITE DESCRIPTION & SETTING**

The project site is located north of Margarita Drive, from where the property is accessible. The property is bordered by single-family residential properties at the south, southwest, and southeast, and public open space and Harry Barbier Memorial Park at the north, northwest, and northeast. The majority of the property is undisturbed hillside, with an existing graded portion at the south designated for development.

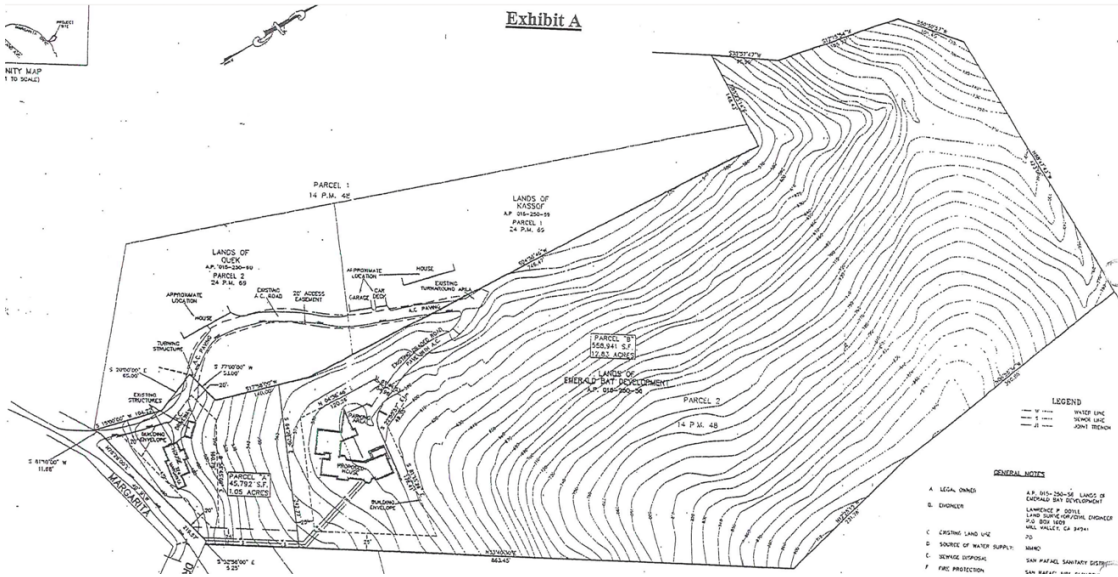
**Building Envelope**

Ordinance No. 1808 for PD 1808 (Attachment A) designates a “building envelope” in which all built features at the site must be contained:

*“Building Envelopes” and the open space reservation within Lot B are established on the Site Plan prepared by Lawrence Doyle and Associates. Structures requiring permits including buildings, accessory structures, pools, decks and similar facilities shall be constructed only within such “Building Envelopes.” No building or accessory structures shall be permitted outside the “Building Envelopes”. Landscaping, fencing, driveway and entryway improvements as defined under Section 7 below and indicated on the approved development plan and site utilities and fire protection facilities shall be permitted outside the “Building Envelopes.”*



Figure 1. Subject Property



**Figure 2. Recorded Map with "Building Envelope"**

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

### Site Plan

The project proposes to construct an approximately 3,990 sq. ft. single-family home with an accompanying approximately 1,296 sq. ft. pool, and an approximately 1,767 sq. ft. detached garage. Both structures are one-story tall with flat roofs and overhanging eaves. The project includes a new paved driveway and turnaround. Retaining walls that range in height from 4 feet to 9 feet tall are proposed in order to clear space for the proposed driveway.



*Figure 3. Proposed Site Plan*

**Floor Plan**

The proposed single-family residence includes a central dining and living area flanked by guest and master bedrooms and a separate closet. The detached accessory structure includes a two-car garage, a storage space, and an additional guest bedroom.

**Architecture, Colors, and Materials**

The project is designed in a Miesian style, as a single rectangular primary structure with predominantly glass walls and a flat roof. The glass walls are interrupted with dark mullions, and remaining wall surfaces appear as solid concrete. The flat roof extends to overhanging eaves with wide vertical fascias. A pool extends from the southeast-face portion of the residence supported by unarticulated retaining walls (maximum 17 feet tall). The non-glass surfaces are shown on the renderings in an off-white neutral color.

**Access and Circulation**

Vehicular access to the site would be provided via Grand Avenue and would use the existing, approximately 30-foot wide driveway, which provides access to two uncovered parking spaces, the passenger loading zone, and the covered parking area, which is located on the first floor of the proposed building as shown in Figure 2 above. From the covered parking area, access to the main portion of the first floor is provided via one set of interior swinging doors near the ADA parking stalls, and one interior swinging door at the southwest portion of the parking area. Bicycle and pedestrian access to the site is provided via existing and proposed facilities, including short-term bicycle parking on Lincoln Avenue, and long-term bicycle parking on the interior portion of the first floor. Access throughout the site is provided via interior and exterior stairs and an elevator.

**Landscaping, Lighting, and Fencing**

The proposed landscaping is currently proposed to be minimal at the site, with no current plan for fencing or additional retaining walls apart from those that surround the pool. A lighting plan has not been provided.

**ANALYSIS**

**San Rafael Municipal Code (Title 14 – Zoning)**

The property is consistent with all the property development standards set forth in SRMC Section 14.12.030.

**Table 3: Development Standards (SRMC § 14.12.030)**

Development Standard	Required/Permitted	Proposed	Consistent
	On any downhill slope a twenty-foot (20') height limit measured from existing grade shall be observed.		
<b>Building Stepback</b>	On non-downhill slope, walls facing front and side property lines shall have a twenty-foot (20') height limit measured from existing grade shall be observed within all areas within fifteen feet (15') of the maximum building envelope limit.	No wall on the project exceeds 20'	Yes

**Table 3: Development Standards (SRMC § 14.12.030)**

<b>Development Standard</b>	<b>Required/Permitted</b>	<b>Proposed</b>	<b>Consistent</b>
<b>Natural State</b>	A minimum area of twenty-five percent (25%) of the lot area plus the percentage figure of average slope, not to exceed a maximum of eighty-five percent (85%),	90%	Yes
<b>Gross Building Square Footage</b>	The maximum permitted gross building square footage of all structures (including garages and accessory structures over one hundred twenty (120) square feet) is limited to two thousand five hundred (2,500) square feet plus ten percent (10%) of the lot area with the maximum gross square footage set at six thousand five hundred (6,500) square feet.	6,500 sq. ft.	Yes
<b>Ridgeline Development</b>	Development of new structures within one hundred (100) vertical feet of a visually significant ridgeline.	Addressed via the "Building Envelope" in PD1808	Yes
<b>Parking Requirements</b>	Two covered spaces Two guest spaces	Two covered spaces Two guest spaces	Yes
<b>Street and Driveways</b>	New street and driveway grades shall not exceed eighteen percent (18%)	New driveway at 18% grade	Yes

**Design Guidelines Applicable to All Hillside Residential Development Projects**

While the proposed project is generally consistent with the *Design Guidelines Applicable to All Hillside Residential Development Projects*, the proposed colors and materials of the project do not reflect those recommended in said guidelines.

*General Site Design Criteria*

The proposed project is consistent with the general site design criteria as it:

- Contributes to the hillside character of the residential neighborhood as a unique design with a low profile
- Complies with the required hillside development standards, including containing the proposed structures within the established "building envelope"
- Does not have a significant impact on the existing natural features at the site
- Does not block or negatively contribute to any existing significant views, or impact the privacy of neighboring properties



*Preservation of Existing Natural Features*

The proposed new structures will be entirely contained within the established “building envelope”, and so there will be no additional impact on the existing natural features at the site.

*Hillside Architectural Character*

The DRB is being asked to comment on the proposed design features that do not align with applicable design criteria outlined below.

GUIDELINE	PROPOSED	STAFF ANALYSIS
<b>BUILDING FORM</b>		
New Hillside Residential Architecture in San Rafael should continue the dominant pattern of one- and two-story buildings with tree canopied spaces around them.	The project proposes two one-story structures with minimal landscaping.	<i>While little landscaping is proposed, there will not be a significant difference from the current state of the hillside.</i>
All buildings should have shadow reliefs created by modest overhangs, minor projections (greater on uphill elevations), recesses and plan offsets.	The building forms proposed are not articulated in shapes but include generous overhanging eaves.	
Large unbroken expanses of wall should be avoided	<p>The glass elevations of the proposed primary residence and accessory structure are articulated with differing materials and substantial mullions.</p> <p>The concrete portions of the primary residence and accessory structure and retaining wall of the pool are not articulated, creating large expanses of unbroken walls.</p>	<p><i>Textured materials or additional detailing could create more articulation on the solid portions of the structures and pool retaining wall.</i></p> <p><i>Additional landscaping could also provide screening of the more prominent walls.</i></p>



<b>ROOF FORMS AND PLAN OFFSETS</b>		
<p>Give careful consideration to views of rooftops from other hillside areas, adjacent roads and uphill properties.</p> <p>Flat roofs that require membrane or built-up roofing materials are discouraged except in small and non-visible areas or when approved by the Design Review Board.</p> <p>Allow small areas of flat roofs only in small less visible areas.</p>	<p>The two structures at the site are proposed with flat roofs and extended eaves. The presence of the flat roof will be minimally apparent from neighboring properties and public areas, and the eaves will provide articulation and partially shaded areas.</p>	<p><i>Materials and colors with complimentary earth tones could further minimize with roof plane.</i></p>
<b>BUILDING MATERIALS, TEXTURE AND COLOR</b>		
<p>Color selection should show evidence of coordination with the predominant colors and values of the surrounding landscape. This is to minimize contrast of the structure with its background when viewed from the surrounding community.</p> <p>Roof colors should tend toward darker earth tones. Darker colors are less conspicuous when viewed from a distance.</p>	<p>The project is currently shown with lighter colors, predominately at the exterior walls, retaining walls, and roof facias.</p>	<p><i>Darker colors or more neutral colors to complement the existing hillside would minimize the contrast of the design against the natural hillside</i></p>
<b>Encouraged Building Materials</b>		
<i>Exterior Walls:</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wood siding (fire resistance is an important consideration here)</li> <li>- Exposed wood structural members</li> <li>- Natural colored brick or stone masonry</li> <li>- Natural colored cement plaster</li> </ul>	<p>Glass and concrete</p>	
<i>Roofs:</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Fire resistant wood shakes with thick butts, with Fire Department approval</li> <li>- Flat Concrete Shingles of earthtone color</li> <li>- Flat Clay Tile of earth tone color</li> <li>- Composition shingles (with thick butts) of earthtone color</li> </ul>	<p><i>No roof material has been noted</i></p>	
<b>Discouraged Building Materials</b>		
<i>Exterior Walls:</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Large areas of glass.</li> <li>- Reflective glass.</li> <li>- Plastic materials made to resemble masonry or stone.</li> <li>- Wood shingles and shakes.</li> </ul>	<p>Large areas of glass</p>	<p><i>The specific glass type chosen should mitigate the effects of large glass planes as much as possible, including minimizing glare and nighttime light pollution</i></p>
<i>Roofs:</i>		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- High contrast or bright colors.</li> <li>- Built up roofing, if seen from above, except in small areas.</li> <li>- Highly reflective or shiny materials.</li> <li>- Non-fire-resistant materials.</li> </ul>	<p><i>No roof material has been noted</i></p>	<p><i>A dark or neutral colored roof would better compliment the hillside</i></p>
<p><b>Walls, Fences and Accessory Structures</b></p>		
<p>Downslope (from the structure) walls not to exceed three (3) feet in height unless approved by the Design Review Board. Where an additional retained portion is necessary due to unusual or extreme conditions (such as lot configuration, steep slope or road design), then the use of terraced retaining structures shall be considered on an individual lot basis. Terraced walls shall not exceed three (3) feet in height.</p>	<p>The proposed pool is designed with an approximately 17 ft. retaining wall at the southeast.</p> <p>The project also proposes 4-ft. to 9-ft. retaining walls along the proposed new driveway.</p>	<p><i>See below</i></p>
<p>All buildings should have shadow reliefs created by modest overhangs, minor projections (greater on uphill elevations), recesses and plan offsets.</p>	<p>Shallow eaves at the roof are proposed</p>	
<p>Retaining wall structures holding back grade to accommodate a patio or terrace shall conform to the natural hillside profile as much as possible. <i>Excessively high retaining walls are prohibited.</i></p>	<p>In addition to the proposed 4-ft. to 9-ft. retaining walls along the proposed new driveway, the proposed pool is designed with an approximately 17 ft. retaining wall at the southeast</p>	<p><i>Creating multiple and smaller terraced walls; or utilizing alternative siding and/or additional landscaping could improve the appearance of the wall(s).</i></p>

**NEIGHBORHOOD CORRESPONDENCE**

Notice of hearing for the project was conducted in accordance with noticing requirements contained in Chapter 29 of the Zoning Ordinance. A Notice of Public Hearing was mailed to all property owners and occupants within a 300-foot radius of the subject site and all other interested parties, 15 calendar days prior to the date of all meetings, including this hearing. Public notice was also posted on the subject site 15 calendar days prior to the date of all meetings, including this hearing. Staff have not received any public comments, as of the posting of this staff report.

**CONCLUSION**

Staff request input from the DRB on the issues raised in this staff report with regards to the consistency of the project with specific provisions in the Design Guidelines Applicable to All Hillside Residential Development Projects. The DRB may recommend approval, approval with conditions, redesign or denial to the Zoning Administrator for this Environmental and Design Review application.

**EXHIBITS**

1. [Ordinance 1808](#)
2. [Design Guidelines Applicable to All Hillside Residential Development Projects](#)
3. [Project Civil Site Plan](#)
4. [Project Renderings](#)



# SAN RAFAEL

THE CITY WITH A MISSION

Community Development Department – Planning Division

Meeting Date: November 8, 2022  
Case Numbers: LLA20-004; ED20-046/EX21-001; ED20-047/EX21-002/V22-002  
Project Planner: Monica Ly, Senior Planner,  
monica.ly@cityofsanrafael.org  
Agenda Item: 4

## REPORT TO DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

**SUBJECT: APNs 011-031-44 – 47 on Coleman Drive** – Request for a Lot Line Adjustment, Environmental and Design Review, Exception, and Variance for: a) lot line adjustment between four lots to create two consolidated lots; b) a new three-story 2,548 square-foot modular home, 465 square-foot carport, 1,339 square-foot roadway, rooftop decks, and other site improvements on the newly consolidated lot of 011-031-44 & 45; c) a new three-story 2,548 square-foot modular home, 368 square-foot carport, 1,641 square-foot roadway, rooftop decks, and other site improvements on the newly consolidated lot of 011-031-46 & 47.; and d) retaining walls up to 14'-8" in height, building stepback encroachment of up to 23%, a 4'-3" reduction in covered parking, and an encroachment into the required side and front yards; APNs: 011-031-46 - 47; Single-family Residential (R10) Hillside Overlay District; Glass Homes Inc., applicant – Will Hoskins, Spencer Rise Trust, Terry Kownack and River Landon LLC, owners; File No(s): LLA20-004; ED20-047/EX21-002/V22-002; ED20-046/EX21-001.

### SUMMARY

The proposed project is being referred to the Design Review Board (DRB) as it proposes a lot line adjustment between four lots to create two consolidated lots and on each lot, the applicant proposes to construct the following:

- On Lots 011-031-44 & 45 (Lots 44 & 45): a three-story 2,548 square-foot modular home, 465 square-foot carport, 1,339 square-foot roadway, retaining walls up to 14'-8", rooftop decks, and other site improvements.
- On Lots 011-031-46 & 47 (Lots 46 & 47): a three-story 2,548 square-foot modular home, 368 square-foot carport, 1,641 square-foot roadway, retaining walls up to 14'-8", rooftop decks, and other site improvements.

Pursuant to San Rafael Municipal Code (SRMC) Section 14.25.040, major physical improvements require Design Review Board recommendation to the Planning Commission for recommendation and final decision by the City Council. Staff is seeking feedback from the Board regarding applicable design guidelines and regulations and requests that the Board review this report, make a determination on the project's compliance with applicable design-related guidelines and regulations, and take one of the following actions based on the project consistency determination:

- Provide recommendations to the applicant and direct that the project return to the Board for additional review prior to scheduling the project for consideration by the Planning Commission; or
- Forward a recommendation of approval to the Planning Commission, with conditions of approval as applicable.

## REQUESTED ENTITLEMENTS

The proposed project is subject to review and approval of the entitlements described below.

- **Lot Line Adjustment (LLA20-004).** As specified in Chapter 15.05 of the SRMC, all requests to adjust or consolidate lot line(s) between or among four (4) or fewer adjacent parcels or lots shall require the filing of an application with the department of Community Development. Action on all lot line adjustment and lot consolidation applications shall be by the Community Development Director.
- **Environmental and Design Review (ED20-046; ED20-047).** Chapter 14.25 (Environmental and Design Review Permits) of the San Rafael Municipal Code (SRMC) sets forth regulations for types of development activities subject to environmental and design review within the City of San Rafael. As specified in Section 14.25.040, new construction on vacant property is classified as a Major Physical Improvement, which is subject to review and approval by the City's Planning Commission. As detailed in Section 14.25.070, the Board is responsible for reviewing and providing recommendations to the Planning Commission on all major physical improvements. The project proposes new construction on vacant property and as such is defined as a major physical improvement subject to review by the Design Review Board and approval by the Planning Commission.
- **Exception (EX21-001; EX21-002).**
  - As specified in Section 14.16.140.2.a of the SRMC, Retaining walls over four feet (4') in height on hillside parcels (i.e., property that contains a slope of twenty-five percent (25%) or greater or designated -H Overlay) may be permitted with environmental and design review subject to Design Review Board recommendation, if the Community Development Director finds it necessary to minimize grading and/or tree removal impacts. As proposed, the approximately 14'-8" retaining walls proposed on both lots will exceed four feet and is therefore subject to review and approval of an exception.
  - As specified in Section 14.12.030.A.2 of the SRMC, on a non-downhill slope lot, walls facing front and side property lines shall have a twenty-foot (20') height limit measured from existing grade that shall be observed within all areas within fifteen feet (15') of the maximum building envelope limit. To allow for design flexibility on non-downhill slopes, an encroachment into the street front, street side and interior side setback is permitted along twenty-five percent (25%) of the building length.
  - As specified in Section 14.12.030.B, structures may encroach into a required yard or setback for a distance of not more than one-half ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ) of the required yard or setback, subject to approval by the hearing body of an environmental and design review permit, with the recommendation of the Design Review Board that the decrease minimizes the impact of hillside development and grading. If such a reduction is granted, a compensating increase in setback is required in the opposing setback, i.e., a five-foot reduction in a front yard setback would increase the rear yard setback by five feet (5'). Exceptions to the property development standards of the Hillside Development Overlay District may be approved by the City Council, upon the recommendation of the Design Review Board and the Planning Commission.
- **Variance (V22-002) Lot 46 & 47.** As specified in Section 14.18.040 of the SRMC, single-family residences require two covered parking spaces per unit. The applicant is requesting a variance to allow one partially covered parking stall (15'-9" covered) + (4'-3" open) = 10'x20'. The zoning administrator shall hear all variance applications except variances applications that are a part of a project being heard at a higher level. Any matter that is judged not to be routine matter by the Community Development Director shall be heard by the Planning Commission.

## PROPERTY FACTS

The following tables provide an overview of General Plan and Zoning designations for the project site and immediately surrounding area as well as existing developed land uses. In addition, this section provides an overview of the project’s compliance with applicable development standards set forth in Table 14.04.050 of the San Rafael Municipal Code.

**Table 1: Designations and Existing Uses**

Location/APN	General Plan Designation	Zoning Designation	Existing Land-Use
<b>275 Coleman/ 011-031-44</b>	<b>Low Density Residential</b>	<b>R10</b>	<b>Vacant</b>
<b>011-031-45</b>	<b>Low Density Residential</b>	<b>R10</b>	<b>Vacant</b>
<b>North:</b>	Low Density Residential	R10	<b>Single-family Residence</b>
<b>South:</b>	Low Density Residential	R10	<b>Vacant</b>
<b>East:</b>	Low Density Residential	R7.5	<b>Single-family Residence</b>
<b>West:</b>	Low Density Residential	R10	<b>Single-family Residence</b>
<b>281 Coleman/ 011-031-46</b>	<b>Low Density Residential</b>	<b>R10</b>	<b>Vacant</b>
<b>011-031-47</b>	<b>Low Density Residential</b>	<b>R10</b>	<b>Vacant</b>
<b>North:</b>	Low Density Residential	R10	<b>Vacant</b>
<b>South:</b>	Low Density Residential	R10	<b>Vacant</b>
<b>East:</b>	Low Density Residential	R7.5	<b>Single-family Residence</b>
<b>West:</b>	<b>Low Density Residential</b>	<b>R10</b>	<b>Single-family Residence</b>

**Table 3: Development Standards Summary  
275 Coleman/011-031-44 & 011-031-45**

Development Standard	Required/Permitted	On Proposed Lot	Consistency
<b>Lot Requirements</b>			
<b>Minimum lot area</b>	10,000 sf	21,527 sf	Yes
<b>Minimum lot width</b>	75 feet	100.24 feet	Yes
<b>Minimum Yards</b>			
<b>Front</b>	20 feet	16.9 feet	Exception Requested
<b>Left Side</b>	10 feet	5.2 feet	Exception Requested
<b>Right Side</b>	10 feet	31.7 feet	Yes
<b>Side (Street)</b>	10 feet	N/A	N/A
<b>Rear</b>	10 feet	137.7 feet	Yes
<b>Maximum Height</b>	30 feet	30 feet	Yes
<b>Maximum Lot Coverage</b>	40% (8,611 sf)	8.5% (1,835 sf)	Yes
<b>Maximum upper story floor size</b>	50%/75% of lot coverage calculation		
<b>Parking (Vehicular)</b>	Covered Parking: 2 Guest Parking: 2	Covered Parking: 2 (10'x20') Guest Parking: 2 (9'x19')	Yes
<b>H Development Standards</b>			
<b>Building Stepback</b>	Walls facing downhill, front and side property lines within 15' of the building envelope are subject to 20' height limit	±20'-7"	23% Encroachment Requested
<b>Natural State Requirement</b>	69.09% (14,873 sf)	81.57% (17,561 sf)	Yes
<b>FAR</b>	10% of lot area plus 2,500 sf 2,153+2,500= 4,653 (0.216)	2,548/21,527 = 0.118	Yes

**Table 2: Development Standards Summary**  
**281 Coleman/ 011-031-46 & 011-031-47**

<b>Development Standard</b>	<b>Required/Permitted</b>	<b>On Proposed Lot</b>	<b>Consistency</b>
<b>Lot Requirements</b>			
Minimum lot area	10,000 sf	20,414 sf	Yes
Minimum lot width	75 feet	98.51 feet	Yes
<b>Minimum Yards</b>			
Front	20 feet	44.3 feet	Yes
Left Side	10 feet	10.0 feet	Yes
Right Side	10 feet	28.4 feet	Yes
Side (Street)	10 feet	N/A	N/A
Rear	10 feet	112.9 feet	Yes
<b>Maximum Height</b>	30 feet	30 feet	Yes
<b>Maximum Lot Coverage</b>	40% (8,166 sf)	8.75% (1,787 sf)	Yes
<b>Maximum upper story floor size</b>	50%/75% of lot coverage calculation		
<b>Parking (Vehicular)</b>	Covered Parking: 2 Guest Parking: 2	Covered Parking: 1 (10'x20') Partially Covered: 1 (15'-9") Guest Parking: 2 (9'x19')	Variance Requested
<b>H Development Standards</b>			
Building Stepback	Walls facing downhill, front and side property lines within 15' of the building envelope are subject to 20' height limit	±21'-9"	23% Encroachment Requested
Natural State Requirement	68.21% (13,925 sf)	77.02% (15,723 sf)	Yes
FAR	10% of lot area plus 2,500 sf 2,041+2,500=4,541 (0.222)	2,548/20,414 = 0.124	Yes

**BACKGROUND**

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### Site Description & Setting

The project site consists of four vacant lots located in the Lincoln/San Rafael Hill neighborhood within the R10 zoning district. The lots are located side by side with each lot having frontage on Coleman Drive. The lots are more than 500 feet away from the ridgeline. Since all four lots have average slopes greater than 25% they are also classified as hillside lots subject to hillside development standards as well as the R10 zoning district development standards.

Lots 44 & 45 are vacant lots with an average slope of 44.09%. On lot 44, there are several large trees located along the north. No significant trees will be removed. An easement over and across the lots is shown on certain maps entitled, "Map of Chula Vista Terrance," recorded in Book 4 of Maps, on page 27, Marin Counter Records.

Lots 46 & 47 are vacant lots with an average slope of 43.21%. There are a few trees located on the easterly portion of the lots. Two significant trees will be removed in order to construct the proposed improvements and 10 new 15-gallon trees will be planted on-site as a replacement (the required replacement is 6).

The houses in the surrounding neighborhood consist of a mix of traditional and contemporary style homes built in the late 40s, 50s, and 60s. The roof forms above these homes are mostly pitched roofs with a few homes having flat roof forms and some having a combination of both. Some of the homes have attached garages and others have no off-street parking.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

### Site Plan

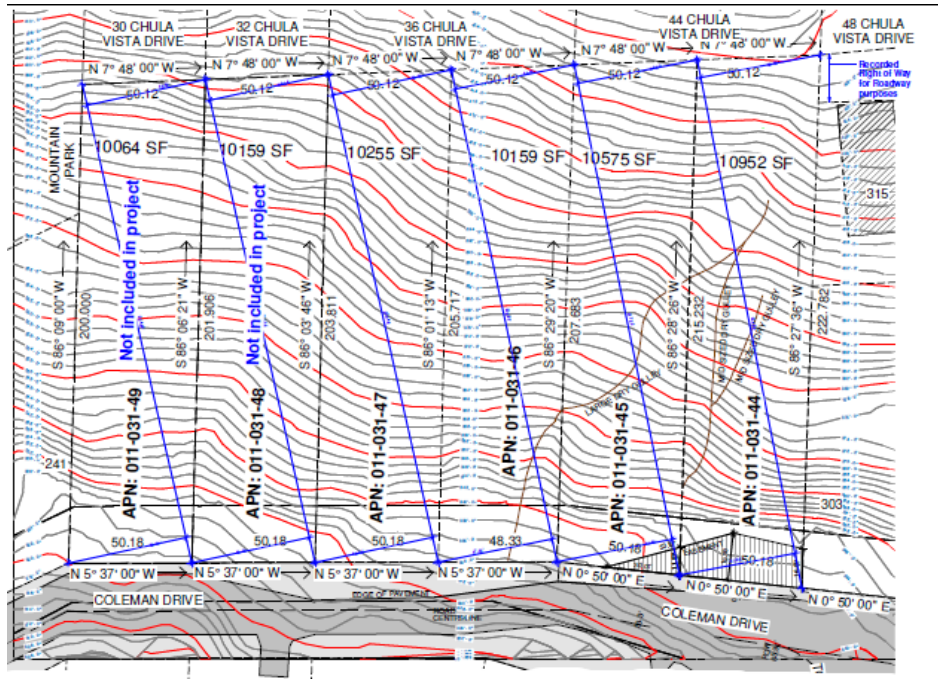
The applicant is proposing a lot line adjustment between four lots APNs 011-031-44 - 47 (Figure 2) to consolidate the lots, forming two lots: APNs 011-031-44 & 45; 011-031-46 & 47 (Figure 3). On each lot, the applicant proposes to construct the following:

- On Lots 011-031-44 & 45 (Lots 44 & 45): a three-story 2,548 square-foot modular home, 465 square-foot carport, 1,339 square-foot roadway, retaining walls up to 14'-8", rooftop decks, and other site improvements.
- On Lots 011-031-46 & 47 (Lots 46 & 47): a three-story 2,548 square-foot modular home, 368 square-foot carport, 1,641 square-foot roadway, retaining walls up to 14'-8", rooftop decks, and other site improvements.

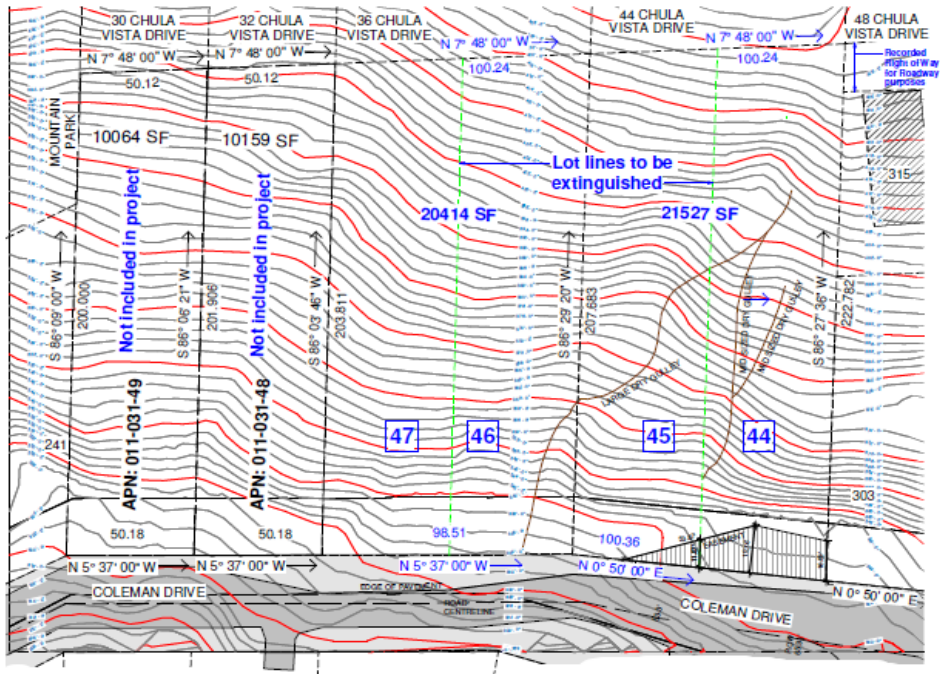
**Figure 1: Project Vicinity**



**Figure 2: Existing Lot Lines**



**Figure 3: Consolidated Lot Lines**





## Floor Plans

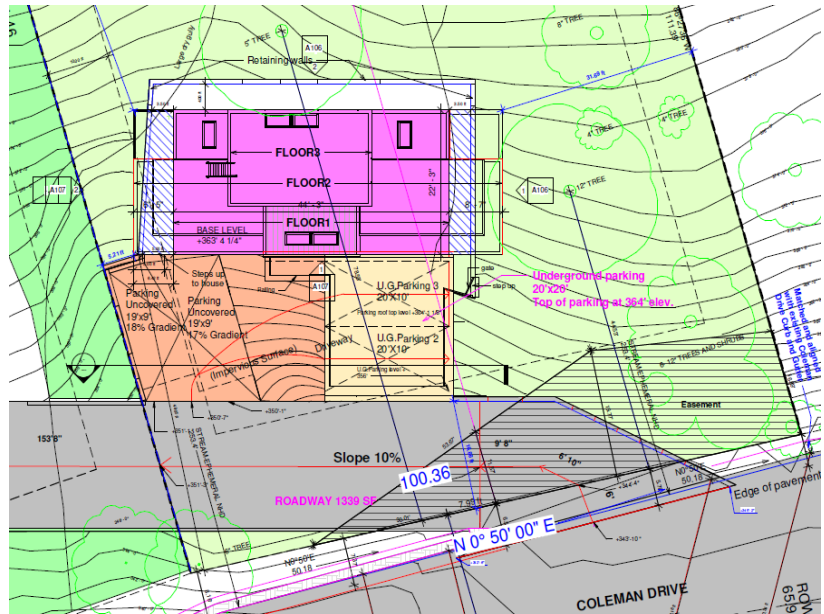
The project proposes the same floor plan for each home proposed to be constructed. The floor plan includes three levels with the living area, powder room, and kitchen on the first level; 3 bedrooms and 2 bathrooms on the second level; and a loft and rooftop decks on the third level.

## Architecture

The applicant is proposing to construct: a 30-tall, three-story 2,548 square-foot factory-built modular home on each consolidated lot. The buildings will feature:

- Flat roofs at varying heights.
- An attached carport on the front elevation. This area also functions as an upper-story deck.
- Entry stairs on the left elevation provide exterior access to the building, but also contribute to breaking up the mass on the left side of the buildings.
- The third floor will be stepped back by approximately 7'-4" from the first floor.
- Roof top decks with metal guardrails.

**Figure 4: Site Plan for Lots 44 & 45**

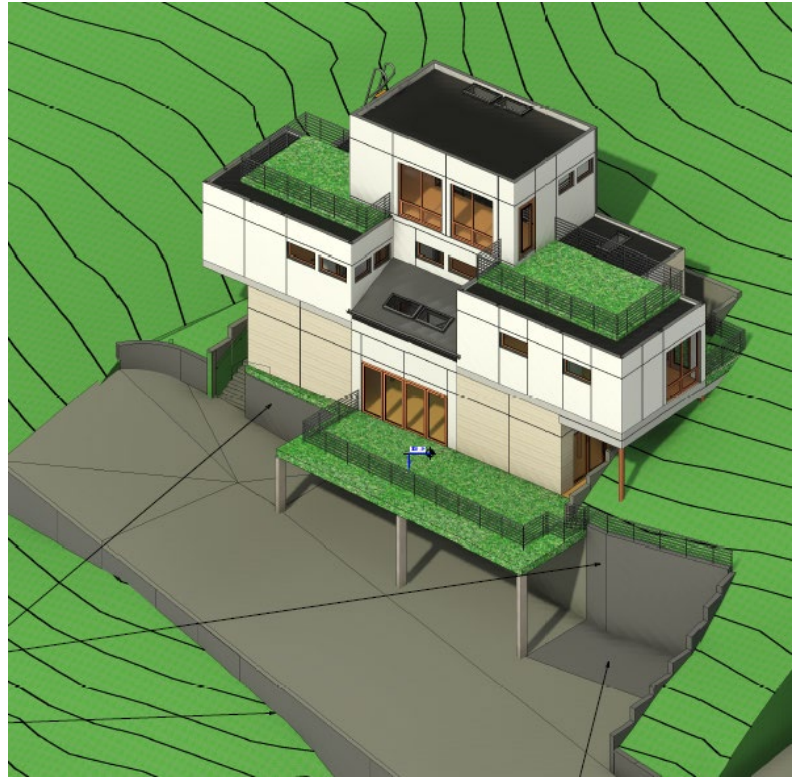


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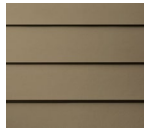



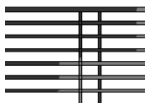
*Material and Colors*

**Figure 5: Building View**

The materials and colors for the proposed homes are the same on both consolidated lots. There will be alternating uses of colors and materials on each elevation including James Hardie siding in Woodstock Brown; concrete boards in Antique White; James Hardie siding in Gray Slate; and James Hardie Night Gray accent. The guardrail along the roof deck will be constructed of grey metal. The roofing materials will be composed of a white TPO membrane. The doors and windows will be constructed of white aluminum frames. Staff believes that the proposed materials and colors are generally consistent with the Hillside Design Guidelines which state that materials and colors should be consistent with the context of the surrounding area. Although flat roofs that require membranes are discouraged in the Hillside Design Guidelines, they may be approved by the Design Review Board. Additionally, there is a property nearby at 241 Colman Drive that appears to have a mostly flat roof with TPO membrane roofing materials.



Although flat roofs that require membranes are discouraged in the Hillside Design Guidelines, they may be approved by the Design Review Board. Additionally, there is a property nearby at 241 Colman Drive that appears to have a mostly flat roof with TPO membrane roofing materials.

Table 3: Materials and Colors				
Roof	Siding	Body Color	Accent Colors	Railings
White TPO Membrane	James Hardie Woodstock Brown	James Hardie Artic White	James Hardie Night Gray James Hardie Gray Slate	Metal Grey
			 	

*Access, Circulation, and Parking*

Vehicular access to the site will be provided through the installation of a new 150 feet long by 20 feet wide roadway off Coleman Drive across all four lots along the front of the lots. Vehicular access to Lots

44 & 45 is provided by an east-west oriented driveway measuring approximately 9'-6" in width and 20'-0" in depth. There will be a 20' x 20' double carport and two 19' x 9' uncovered guest parking stalls. Vehicular access to Lots 46 & 47 is provided by two driveways. One will be located at the end of the new road on the south side of the lot and the other driveway will be located on the north side. There will be a 10' x 20' covered parking stall, a 10' x 20' partially covered parking stall (15'-9" covered; 4'-3" open), and two 19' x 9' uncovered guest parking stalls.

### *Walls, Fences, and Screening*

The retaining wall behind the building will be approximately 14'-8" in height. The retaining wall on the front elevation will be up to 14'-0" in height and will form the wall of the parking stalls. A trellis attached to the retaining walls will support creeping plants. As mentioned previously, because the height of the retaining wall exceeds 4'-0", they will require DRB recommendation. There will be a 2'-0" tall off-red color-treated pressure-treated pine fence located along the front and side property lines in the front yard.

### *Landscaping*

On Lots 44 & 45, no significant trees will be removed but ten 15-gallon trees, 200 plants, and 13 vines will be planted. On Lots 46 & 47, two significant trees will be removed in order to construct the proposed improvements and 10 new 15-gallon trees will be planted. Additionally, 268 plants and 5 vines will be planted on site. The focus of the landscape design is to make small enhancements to the natural environment, water efficiency, and preserve the natural state. Staff believes that the proposed landscape plan is generally consistent with the Hillside Design Guidelines as it states that natural landscape will be preserved as practically feasible by minimizing grading, and tree and rock removal. Additionally, the plants were selected to recognize the importance of water conservation, fire resistance, and erosion control.

### *Grading/Drainage*

As proposed, the project includes grading mostly on the east side of the lots and is estimated to result in a net export of 998.22 cubic yards from Lots 44 & 45, 891.51 cubic yards from lots 46 & 47, and 77.65 cubic yards from the proposed roadway.

## **ANALYSIS**

Staff is seeking feedback and recommendations from the DRB on the following design-related standards of review. A complete analysis of both design and non-design-related standards of review will be included in the staff's report to the Planning Commission:

- San Rafael Hillside Design Guidelines
- San Rafael Municipal Code
  - Title 14 – Zoning
  - Title 15 – Subdivisions

### **Hillside Residential Design Criteria**

A new hillside residential development should:

- Contribute to the hillside character of San Rafael's residential neighborhoods.
- Reflect the City's design goals and policies as expressed in the General Plan.
- Preserve or protect unique or special natural features of the site, such as land forms, rock outcroppings, mature trees and vegetation, drainage courses, hilltops and ridgelines.
- Avoid the highly visible open hillside areas.
- Be compatible with the natural features, building location and existing open spaces of neighboring properties.

- Respect the existing views, privacy, access to light and safety of neighboring properties
- Avoid the unstable or hazardous portions of the site.
- Minimize the removal of natural vegetation.

According to the Hillside Design Guidelines:

*San Rafael's Hillside Residential Architecture should develop a semi-rural character with a strong relationship to the natural setting. New buildings should be simple one- and two-story buildings in recessive colors with pitched roofs and buildings and roof forms should be "broken" into compositions of smaller components to reflect the irregular forms of the hillside setting.*

The proposed three-story modular style buildings have flat roof forms and do not break up into smaller components to reflect the irregular forms of the hillside setting. However, architectural elements that are characteristic of rural buildings are preferred and are not necessarily mandatory. Staff has conducted a site visit and found that the homes in the neighborhood are mostly traditional and contemporary style homes with pitched roofs with some homes having flat roofs. Staff requests the Board's feedback on whether the building's modular design contributes to the hillside character of San Rafael's residential neighborhoods.

### **San Rafael Municipal Code (Title 14 – Zoning)**

Staff would like input regarding the following requested exceptions and variance:

#### Section 14.12.030 - Property development standards (-H)

As specified in Section 14.12.030 of the SRMC, walls facing downhill, and front and side property lines within fifteen feet (15') of the building envelope are subject to twenty-foot (20') height limit (unarticulated wall plane) measured from existing grade. On consolidated Lots 44 & 45, a portion of the height of the building ( $\pm 20'-7"$ ) will encroach approximately 23% into the front building stepback height limit of 20'-0". Additionally, on consolidated Lots 46 & 47, a portion of the height of the building ( $\pm 21'-9"$ ) will encroach approximately 23% into the front and left building stepback height limit of 20'-0". Under Section 14.12.030 of the SRMC, to allow for design flexibility on non-downhill slopes, an encroachment into the street front, street side and interior side stepback is permitted along twenty-five percent (25%) of the building length. Staff is seeking the Board's recommendation for the exception.

#### Section 14.04.030 - Property development standards (R)

As specified in Table 14.04.030 of the SRMC, the front setback requirement is 20 feet, the rear setback requirement is 10 feet, and the side setback requirement is 10 feet. On Lots 44 & 45, the proposal will not comply with the front setback requirement of 20 feet because the proposed carport will be setback approximately 16.9 feet to avoid excessive grading, additional cut removal from the site, a steep gradient to the driveway and parking, and the creation of a large underground drainage system. Per Section 14.12.030.B, structures may encroach into a required yard or setback for a distance of not more than one-half ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ) of the required yard or setback, subject to approval by the hearing body of an environmental and design review permit, with the recommendation of the design review board that the decrease minimizes the impact of hillside development and grading. If such a reduction is granted, a compensating increase in setback is required in the opposing setback, i.e., a five-foot reduction in a front yard setback would increase the rear yard setback by five feet (5'). Staff believes that the reduction is necessary to decrease the impact of hillside development and grading. A compensating increase in the rear setback will be provided as the proposed rear setback will be 137'-8.4". Staff is seeking the Board's recommendation for the exception.

Additionally, Lots 44 & 45 will not comply with the left-side setback requirement of 10 feet because the building will be situated approximately 5.2 feet from the left property line. The applicant indicated that a significant increase in excavation would be needed to meet the 10 feet required setback. Per Section 14.24.020.B of the SRMC, the minimum front and side setbacks may be decreased by not more than five

feet (5') in the R10 district. Setback exceptions shall only be allowed where the proposed setback area or yard is in character with the surrounding neighborhood and is not required as an essential open space or recreational amenity to the use of the site, and where such decrease will not unreasonably affect abutting sites. Staff believes that the proposed setback is in character with the surrounding homes in the neighborhood as the homes within the vicinity have side setbacks ranging from 0 to 10+ feet. Additionally, the setback is not required as an essential open space or recreational amenity to the use of the site; and the decrease will not unreasonably affect the abutting site as the abutting building will be setback 28'-4.8" from the property line. Staff is seeking the Board's recommendation for the exception.

#### Section 14.16.140 - Fences and walls

As specified in Section 14.16.140.2.a of the SRMC, retaining walls over four feet (4') in height on hillside parcels (i.e., property that contains a slope of twenty-five percent (25%) or greater or designated -H Overlay) may be permitted with environmental and design review subject to design review board recommendation, if the community development director finds it necessary to minimize grading and/or tree removal impacts. As proposed, the approximately 14'-8" retaining walls located on the rear of both of the proposed lots and the 14'-0" retaining walls located on the front of both the proposed lots will exceed 4' and is therefore subject to review and approval of an exception. The applicant indicated that the exception was necessary due to the natural slope gradient of the lot and to minimize grading. Staff is seeking the Board's recommendation for the exception.

The above requests for exceptions require Board recommendation to the Planning Commission for recommendation and final decision by the City Council. Findings for approval of these exceptions include the following:

- A. That there are special circumstances applicable to the property or land use, including but not limited to the size, shape, topography, location or surroundings that warrant granting of a minor exception from the strict application of the standards in this title;
- B. That granting the exception will not be detrimental or injurious to property or improvements in the vicinity of the development site, or to the public health, safety or general welfare.

#### Section 14.18.040 - Parking requirements

Per Section 14.18.040 of the SRMC, single-family residences require two covered parking spaces per unit. Additionally, on streets less than 26 feet wide, a minimum of two additional on-site parking spaces shall be provided (not on the driveway apron) per unit. The two newly consolidated lots will have four parking stalls on each lot. On Lots 46 & 47, the applicant is requesting a variance to allow one partially covered parking stall (15'-9" covered) + (4'-3" open) = 10' x 20' in order to significantly reduce excavation as the entire parking area would be required to be much lower to accommodate the entrance. Staff believes that there will be a sufficient number of on-site parking. Staff is seeking the Board's recommendation on the requested variance to allow a partially covered parking stall in order to significantly reduce excavation. The above request for a variance requires Planning Commission recommendation with a final decision by the City Council.

#### Title 15 – Subdivisions

Upon the Board's recommendation, staff shall prepare a report indicating that the application is consistent with the San Rafael general plan, is in conformance with the Zoning Ordinance (Title 14), and is in conformance with the Uniform Building Code (UBC) then proceed to take action on the application.

#### **NEIGHBORHOOD CORRESPONDENCE**

Notice was sent to property owners and occupants within 300 feet of the site within 15 days of the board meeting. Notice was also posted on the site a minimum of 15 days prior to the meeting. Correspondence that has been received to date is attached to this report and summarized below.

The property owners at 234 Coleman Drive had four major concerns regarding the proposed project including: unstable soil and mudslides; whether the foundation would be adequate to prevent mudslides; whether there will be enough drainage pipes to support adequate drainage, and the removal of on-street parking.

The property owners at 264 Coleman Drive had four major concerns regarding the proposed project including: the removal of on-street parking and insufficient on-street parking; whether the drainage would be adequately designed; whether the mudslides have been taken into account in the drainage design; and fire risk to the neighborhood.

The property owner at 5 Fair Drive had five major concerns regarding the proposed project including the project's contribution to climate change; disruption of the ecosystem; construction safety hazards, insufficient parking; and emergency vehicle access.

## **CONCLUSION**

Staff recommends that the Board review the project and determine whether the project design is appropriate given the proposed use and setting and should determine if any additional recommendations should be incorporated into the project design. If the Board determines that recommendations and revisions to the proposed project are minimal, the Board should provide a recommendation to the Planning Commission on the project. If revisions to the project would require additional review prior to Planning Commission review of the project, the Board should provide detailed and targeted recommendations to the applicant, and direct staff to return to the Board for review of the project. Staff requests that the Board provide recommendations, and conditions, if deemed appropriate related to the following:

- Building design
- Exception for retaining walls over four feet
- Building stepback encroachment of 23%
- Front setback exception on Lots 44 & 45
- Left side setback exception on Lots 44 & 45
- Variance for covered parking

The Board's recommendations will help with a formal recommendation to the Planning Commission and a final decision by the City Council

## **EXHIBITS**

1. [Architectural Plans: Lots 011-031-44 & 45](#)
2. [Architectural Plans: Lots 011-031-46 & 47](#)
3. [Civil Plans: Lots 011-031-44 & 45](#)
4. [Civil Plans: Lots 011-031-46 & 47](#)
5. [Lot Line Layout](#)
6. Public Comment

**From:** [Robert](#)  
**To:** [Monica Ly](#)  
**Subject:** Lot line adjustment 275& 281 Coleman Dr San Rafael  
**Date:** Thursday, October 27, 2022 12:33:48 PM

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Request for lot line adjustment. --our comments: Four major concerns:: If the proposed two homes are built. (1) Unstable soil causing mud slides. The lots listed, during heavy rains, are subject to mud slides. We have lived on Coleman Dr for over 57 years and this hillside. soil has caused extensive mud slides which blocked the water flow on Coleman Dr and caused some damage to homes on the down side of Coleman. (2) because of the above concern the foundations for the homes must be built on cement pilings drilled to bedrock to prevent the houses from sliding down the hill and damaging the homes below. This is Critical. (3) Allowance must be made by the contractor to provide sufficient drainage of water flowing from the hill. In addition, adequate drainage pipes must be purchased and installed to capture the water flow from the hill and flow of water from upper and lower Coleman. (4) On street public parking. Currently there are 5 designated parking spaces on the street next to the hill. If the parking spaces are eliminated because of the two new homes being built where will these parking spaces be relocated? Currently designated public parking is very limited on Coleman Drive

In conclusion our major concern is the unstable soil on the existing hill.

Thanks for your consideration: [REDACTED] Coleman Dr  
San Rafael phone [REDACTED] or cell [REDACTED]

**From:** Brad [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Monica Ly](#); [Planning Public Comment](#)  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** 275 & 281 Coleman Drive Comments  
**Date:** Friday, October 28, 2022 1:21:54 PM

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Hi Monica,

We are the homeowners at [REDACTED] Coleman Drive, across the street from the proposed development at 275 and 281 Coleman Dr. Please see the following comments:

1. We wanted to alert you that the public notice poster has been erroneously placed further south on Coleman Drive, over a quarter mile from the effected parcels. I request that this sign be moved to give the neighborhood appropriate notice.
2. The plans do not show the projected impact to street parking on Coleman Drive. The project narrative in the architectural plans state "Preserves the 300' unique street parking at Coleman Drive." In actuality, only 120ft of street parking is currently provided within parking boxes on Coleman Dr with 30ft on the east side and 90 feet on the west side. This is typically sufficient for 6 vehicles to park legally and these spaces are filled nightly with a few extra illegally parked. The new driveway appears to cut at least 34 feet out of the middle of the west side parking box which will result in 3 parking spots remaining on Coleman (2 on the west, 1 on the east). The reduction of parking will likely cause more illegal parking out of necessity which is a hazard for emergency vehicle access. So we request the following:
  - a. The plan should clearly show where street parking boxes will be provided.
  - b. We would like to request additional road width for parking boxes along the 275 Coleman frontage to mitigate parking lost due to this development.
3. To expand on comment two, our home has never had off-street parking so we are very sensitive to the impact on our family certainly during construction, but also in the final built state. Before the parking boxes were added in 2021, there was parking for 9 vehicles at this intersection. With a reduction to 3 total spaces, we foresee the future scenario in which parking creates undue stress on our family with three little kids. Is there a way to ensure one parking space is made available for our vehicle? Can the east side of Coleman Drive be improved for parking under the scope of this project?
4. We wanted to ensure that drainage was adequately designed off the new driveway so that it does not have enough velocity to bridge over the crest of Coleman Drive in the direction of our property.
5. The proposed parcels have had significant mudslide events that have spilled into the roadway during previous rainy seasons. We would like to ensure that this has been taken into account in the drainage design to ensure mudslides do not compromise the site drainage or encroach onto our property.





**From:** [Elisa \[REDACTED\]](#)  
**To:** [Monica Ly](#)  
**Subject:** Nov. 8th design review meeting  
**Date:** Wednesday, November 2, 2022 8:43:18 AM

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**Hi Monica,**

**Concerned neighbor**

**Elisa [REDACTED] at [REDACTED] Fair Drive**

**Issues to follow. I will attend via zoom.**

**Thanks!**

I understand this meeting is about zoning and design. But if the project goes into the permit phase, here are my concerns:

I'm writing in expectation that my concerns will be addressed in the Nov. 8th hearing about proposed construction of 2 three story single family homes at 275 and 281 Coleman.

I am very concerned about the loss of raw open space. This is a climate change issue. We are paving over planet earth one acre at a time and it is taking its toll. Less soil to absorb heat. Less mature trees to create oxygen and neutralize carbon monoxide. Suffocating any microbial species in the earth; fungi, bacteria, etc., that are necessary for the health of all living things, now and in the future.

I walk by this piece of land multiple times a day. It is home to many deer, squirrel, coyote, rabbit, fox, multiple species of bird, insects, etc. All will be displaced and the natural order will be disrupted.

Will the findings of the environmental impact study be readily and easily accessible by the public? When is this study set to begin?

I am very concerned about the impact on traffic and safety. This stretch of road is very narrow and windy with no shoulder on either side. It is already very difficult to navigate as two cars try to pass each other in opposite direction. One car will need to back to an area of road that has a shoulder, or to a residential section and back into a driveway, so the other car can pass. I cannot imagine that construction on this section of road wouldn't create a dire safety hazard if there were a life threatening emergency, or a fire, on Lincoln Hill. The fire department has

been on Lincoln Hill marking "white boxes" where cars can legally park to keep our neighborhood safe. This particular stretch of road has very few "white boxes" i.e. no safe legal parking within a reasonable proximity to the proposed construction for even a single civilian vehicle.

Added, we residents really on the very limited "white boxes" for us to park near our homes. If those are taken by construction vehicles, or possibly removed due to where the property being discussed is, this is a major inconvenience to those of us who already live here. This will turn into an unpleasant experience for all involved.

What has been looked into and guaranteed as to where the construction vehicles and workers will be parking to ensure that this construction is not a hazard? Let alone a simple traffic nightmare for all those who use this road to go to and from work, and town.

Are we assured that all laws and ordinances have been or will be properly researched and permitted for this construction regarding emergency vehicle accessibility during the build and will be complied with?

Lastly. There is no lack of multi million dollar single family homes in San Rafael or Marin. I find this to be a money grab with grotesque consequences that will be irreversible. Is there any data that shows the benefit of the addition of two multi story detached single family homes to our neighborhood?