

hearing of February 21, 2006 at the applicant's request.
Project Planner: Lindy Coburn

7. **SIGNS** - None

8. **CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS**

A. **HDP18-05 WARD-YOUNG ARCHITECTS (APPLICANT), PAUL & ALISON COCOTIS (OWNERS) R-20 ZONING**: Request for: (1) Hillside Development Permit pursuant to Section 6-2015 of the Lafayette Municipal Code (LMC); (2) An exception to permit development within a Class II Ridgeline Setback pursuant to Section 6-2027; (3) Design Review approval pursuant to Sections 6-1903 & 6-271; and (4) Grading Permit pursuant to Chapter 3-7, to construct a one-story, single-family residence in the Hillside Overlay District, located on a vacant lot at 11 Hawk Canyon Place. APN 238-190-002.

Recommendation: Consider the application, take public comment and recommend approval to the Planning Commission with conditions.

Project Planner: Glenda Warmoth

Ms. Warmoth referred the Commission to the staff report dated January 3, 2006, and a recently received comment letter. Ms. Warmoth reported that in its last review of the application, the Commission offered the following guidance to the applicants:

- ❖ Demonstrate sufficient landscape screening for house and outdoor areas.
- ❖ Address comments regarding appearance of excessive grading as it pertains to the manipulation of the promontory point of the private driveway to the garage.
- ❖ Formally define the current and future outdoor living spaces and demonstrate necessary landscape shield.
- ❖ Address planting going up the driveway and around the house.
- ❖ Eliminate driveway lights or demonstrate their need.
- ❖ Demonstrate how the house size works with the site, vistas and potential offsite views.
- ❖ Address the Planning Commission's concerns regarding size and request to demonstrate that the propose home offers no greater impact from offsite views than a 4,000-sq.ft. house.

In response, the applicants have revised the model and prepared a view analysis. Staff found the low rooflines, proposed colors and materials appropriate for hillside development. The changes made are in keeping with the recommendations of the City Landscape Consultant. The applicants have removed driveway lights and much of the landscaping that was proposed on the downhill side. Ms. Warmoth noted the addition of a pedestrian bridge that links the southern edge of the building site to the knoll. She had not seen the actual design for the bridge but suggested finding a solution without the bridge or additional grading. Ms. Warmoth further noted the addition of a landscape berm on the west side just above the driveway, which would be a helpful feature in providing for outdoor living space. However, she recommended that the applicants review the slope on the downside of the berm with their geotechnical consultant. Ms. Warmoth requested the Commission's comments on the view analysis and feedback on whether the analysis sufficiently demonstrates there would be no additional impact by the proposed house size versus a 4,000-sq.ft. home.

Mike Mussano, of Ward-Young Architects, was present at the meeting with property owners, Paul and Alison Cocotis, and Landscape Architect Ted Sutton. Mr. Cocotis reviewed the changes to the model. He noted that the hills were made steeper and the model taller to correct the vertical scale. The size of the new trees has been modified to reflect a 5-year growth. He confirmed that all landscaping lighting has been eliminated from the plan, as well as the 18" retaining wall at the driveway. Mr. Cocotis reported that the driveway width has been reduced to 16 feet. In response to the Commission's comments regarding the knoll, the driveway approach has been realigned to come straight in, which would allow them to fill in the knoll and grade according to previous grade lines in that area. The landscape berm has also been extended to the north end of the property. Mr. Cocotis spoke to the City Engineer regarding drainage and felt he has addressed all of his concerns. He stated that drainage from the house and house area would be disbursed to the north end of the property. The City Engineer had recommended that driveway runoff be allowed to spill over the edge. However, Mr. Cocotis was concerned about run-off on the hill because of debris slides that occurred on his downhill neighbor's property during the heavy rains. Therefore, they have kept the curb along the driveway and catch basins.

Mr. Cocotis stated that water lines would be obtained through the rear of the property on Lucas Circle because that is where existing EBMUD water lines are located, while PG&E lines would run off Lucas Court up the driveway. He said that the Fire District requires a water tank for the sprinklers because of low water pressure. The water tank will be buried and screened. The revised plans show 150 yards more fill than cut, but they anticipate that will come from the spread footings that were not included in their calculations. Referring to the soils report submitted, Mr. Cocotis noted that it anticipated using onsite soil for fill. The soils report also recommended slopes up to 2:1 to the west. This is the same as the existing slope, which is stable and has no history of slides.

Mr. Sutton confirmed that the new trees shown on the model have been adjusted to show a 5-year growth size. He reported the addition of different types of Oaks, with lower canopies, have been added to screen the approach. All deciduous trees have been eliminated and the proposal now contains a general combination of Live Oak and Valley Oak. Mr. Sutton identified the proposed outdoor living areas, which include a play area behind the house. He noted that the landscape berms have been extended and all planting along the driveway edge eliminated. The knoll area will be seeded with native grasses to produce a California golden brown look in the summer. Mr. Sutton stated that Circes has been added to the plan on the west side for spring color.

Commissioner Hertel asked if there were any changes to the driveway grade. Mr. Sutton advised that the grade remains unchanged except where the driveway was realigned on top.

Commissioner Blodgett questioned the need for a guardrail along the driveway edge. Mr. Sutton indicated that the landscape berm provides a rolled edge along the driveway as well as a drainage curb.

Referring to staff's comments, Mr. Cocotis stated that the bridge was added to connect the yard areas divided by the realignment of the driveway. He indicated a willingness to flatten out the pedestrian bridge and to erect story poles to demonstrate its visibility; however, he was certain that the bridge as proposed would not be visible from offsite.

Commissioner Hertel was concerned about the hammerhead turnaround requiring a lot of fill. He would like to see other options that would not increase grading in this area.

Mr. Cocotis felt the gate was necessary to provide privacy and security because the land has been used as a public space for a long time. He noted there is no fencing attached to the gate and felt there was sufficient room for a vehicle to turn around.

Responding to further questions from the Commission, Mr. Cocotis advised that the idea of a pool has been abandoned at this time.

Commission Chair Cleaver asked about the detailing of the stonework at the turnaround. Mr. Cocotis described it as a stacked rock look. Commission Chair Cleaver also asked about the bridge design. Mr. Cocotis thought the bridge would be wood, matching the eaves on the house. Commissioner Blodgett anticipated that the Planning Commission would question the necessity of the bridge and asked the applicant to explain it. Mr. Sutton explained that, without the bridge, access stairs would be needed on both sides of the driveway. He felt a wooden bridge with an open rail was a better alternative and would only be visible from the subject property itself.

Commissioner Hertel asked about moving the gate down closer to Lucas Circle. Mr. Cocotis explained that the gate could only be moved about 60-70 feet due to another driveway location. Ms. Warmoth expressed concern that delivery trucks would have a difficult time turning around in this space. She felt there were other alternatives that would alert the public that it is private property.

Planning Commission liaison Mitchell questioned the size and number of existing trees shown on the west side of model compared to the photos submitted. Mr. Sutton reviewed the locations of the trees.

Mr. Mussano reviewed their view analysis exhibits. He commented that the site is a unique hillside property in that it is flat on top with a well-defined site and steep sides. As a result, there is little close-up view of the property and most off-site views of the property are from far away. Mr. Mussano referred to

an exhibit showing the view angle from Sandalwood and Merriewood showing both a 4,000-sq.ft. home and the proposed home. Pointing out that the distance is about 1,500 to 2,000 feet away, the difference in viewing the homes was almost indistinguishable.

Commissioner Hertel commented that the story poles shown in the photos would be even less visible with the additional landscaping and berm. Mr. Mussano explained that the comparisons had been done using existing features, and confirmed that the photos depict more than would actually be visible once the proposed landscaping and berms are installed.

Commission Chair Cleaver opened the hearing to public comment. Hearing none, the public hearing was closed and Commission Chair Cleaver called for Commission comments and recommendation.

Planning Commission liaison Mitchell felt the model with regard to the tree screen on the west side was inaccurate and misrepresented the existing conditions. He would like to see an independent review done. Planning Commissioner Mitchell commented that the proposed house uses virtually all of the level area on top of the hill. While he understood the applicants' argument about viewing angles and that the landscaping and berms would be helpful, he stated that the Planning Commission had received a lot of public input about the development of this property. Staff worked to determine three possible locations, two of which were lower down. The Planning Commission concluded that the site on the top of the hill was most appropriate based on a reasonably sized home of about 4,000-sq.ft. As proposed, Planning Commissioner Mitchell felt the house was too big and would be highly visible.

Commissioner Blodgett offered a different opinion from Planning Commissioner Mitchell. He believed that square footage depended on the application, and that the bulk, mass and square footage as presented in this application would not be more visible than a 4,000-sq.ft. home. He appreciated the applicant's model revision to show a more appropriate growth scale for the new trees. Commissioner Blodgett was concerned about the gate and the ability for delivery trucks to turn around. He commented that while he liked the concept of the bridge, he was concerned about an additional horizontal element on the hill and its overall importance to the property development.

Commissioner Hertel really liked the design, commenting there was no better architectural style or solution for this site. He felt the colors and materials were good choices, although he thought the stone color was too light. With regard to Planning Commissioner Mitchell's comment that the house will take up all the flat area, he noted there was a lot of level site to be added and Commissioner Hertel thought Planning Commissioner Mitchell may find it a better situation following grading. Commissioner Hertel agreed that the visual difference in between a 4,000-sq.ft. and the proposed house was minimal given the view distance. However, he noted that the property is currently vacant and any development will act as a lightning rod to the public. Commissioner Hertel was not troubled by a small view of such a nicely designed building. Commissioner Hertel was more concerned by the grading that was pushing the natural boundaries and fall line of the hill. He would like to see less grading at the turnaround and extra parking stall. He also commented that the water tank was padded out on the outboard side and thought it should be cut in more. Commissioner Hertel thought the rebuilding of the prow in a more natural state was a much better solution. He recommended the applicants rework the turnaround and bridge and agreed that the bridge should utilize the same materials as the house. He could only support the bridge if it faded into the background as a landscape element. He cautioned that the outdoor areas behind the landscape berm would need to remain passive activity areas that are native in appearance due to their hillside location. Commissioner Hertel supported the applicant's approach.

Commissioner Lee commented that the architect has demonstrated very well that only the roof, and not the walls, would be visible. He acknowledged that the roof creates a hard horizontal line and raises the question whether the hard line up against the tree line actually announce itself in a certain way. Commissioner Lee's concern was how the house affects the rest of the site development. He stated that the house takes up a large portion of the level area and that begins to affect its transitions back into the natural environment. The grading, wall, foundations and bridge shown to provide access start to make the site feel heavily developed. He noted that currently the access road has a more natural and less manipulated feel, but commented that the addition of the bridge begins speaks to too much development and manipulation on top. He felt the correct solution would be to relax the cut in the hilltop and not create the perfect circle turnaround, but to find the minimum that it takes to achieve Fire District approval,

thereby reducing the amount of cut. Commissioner Lee was unconcerned about the non-public side of the landscape berm. Commissioner Lee did not support the idea of a gate and suggested that once the property is developed it would become known that it is no longer the "party place." He further noted that if a permanent trash/mail structure is planned at the bottom of the hill, it should be acknowledged on the plans.

Commission Chair Cleaver liked the house design and materials. His concern was not in the house square footage but how its relationship to the bridge and walls and their expansion in terms of offsite views. He commented that the current configuration of the stonewalls and bridge looked pretty expansive and extended the development on the top of the hill. He supported Commissioner Hertel's comments stating that reducing the scale of the turnaround would go a long way to soften the impact. He was not against the walls and a defined causeway crossing from the public parking to the private garage but suggested constricting it further using a single rather than double wall. Commission Chair Cleaver did not support the bridge in its current configuration but suggested if it were light and airy and did not appear from offsite as a bridge it could be used. He commended the landscape architect for a planting plan that works. However, he commented that the landscape screening was crucial to the success of the project and was concerned that the plan depended on the success of each and every tree. He suggested a fallback plan adding additional 15-gal. trees and plants might provide some insurance that the proposed screening is provided. He thought the gate could be more rustic and rural.

Ms. Warmoth suggested the Design Review Commission provide direction to the applicant as to the changes the Commission would like to see, and the application could be forwarded to the Planning Commission with a list of the areas to be addressed further.

Commissioner Blodgett asked for the Planning Commission liaison's thoughts about moving the application forward. Planning Commission liaison Mitchell understood the Design Review Commission's comments regarding the bulk and mass of the house and liked the house design but remained concerned that the house utilizes the available space and leaves nothing left to develop. He was also not convinced about the accuracy of the western tree screen shown on the model. His opinion was that the home would have a visual impact. However, he suggested that the Design Review Commission could offer its comments and send the application along to the Planning Commission. Commissioner Blodgett asked whether suggested changes to the retaining walls, the bridge and the extra parking space would sway Planning Commissioner Mitchell's opinion. Planning Commissioner Mitchell said it would not.

Commission Chair Cleaver suggested that the Design Review Commission forward its comments and list of further considerations and leave the decision regarding house size to the Planning Commission. He was not comfortable asking the applicant to consider redesign and make changes if the Planning Commission was ultimately going to be unhappy with the house size.

Mr. Wolff suggested that the Design Review Commission was 90% satisfied with the project, with the exception of the turnaround, retaining walls and bridge. The Commission could recommend approval of the house to the Planning Commission with the condition that the application return for further review and resolution of the remaining 10% of issues. The advantages of this approach would be that the applicant need not address those issues pending size approval by the Planning Commission, and would come back for ultimate resolution of the Design Review Commission's concerns.

Commissioner Blodgett moved to recommend approval of HDP18-05 to the Planning Commission, subject to the following areas of concern:

- ❖ The perceived over development of the site with regard to the upper turnaround, the knoll and additional parking space/hammerhead
- ❖ Landscape materials and density along on the public view side of the berm around the private space of the building site
- ❖ Use of darker retaining wall materials
- ❖ If a bridge is desired, revise materials and reduce the bulk and mass
- ❖ Eliminate entry gate or a building standard shown to provide an adequate turnaround

Commissioner Lee added to the list the following:

- ❖ Application to return to Design Review Commission for finalization of design

- ❖ Effort be made to reduce retaining walls

Commissioner Hertel added the following:

- ❖ Water tank be cut more into hill
- ❖ Prior to the Planning Commission presentation, extend grade lines on building elevations and sections to show how the context of how the house fits on knoll, and include both existing and finished grades

Commissioner Blodgett accepted the amendments to his motion and added to the list:

- ❖ Independent third party review and validation of model before presentation to Planning Commission

Ms. Warmoth requested clarification of the comments about retaining wall reduction and the water tank. Commissioner Lee requested less formal development whether a combination of reduced height, length and darker colors. Commissioner Hertel stated that the water tank, as shown on the engineered fill section, is actually on fill and he suggests that the tank could be cut in and terraced up rather than filled.

Ms. Warmoth also confirmed that the Design Review Commission would prefer the application come back to this Commission after Planning Commission review.

Mr. Wolff requested clarification of Commissioner Blodgett's motion regarding the perceived over-development of the site, stating his understanding that it was a combination of the house occupying a majority, if not all, of the flat area and the driveway cut, turnaround, hammerhead, etc., and that one or the other, or both, would have to be managed to result in an apparent reduction of the site development. Commissioner Blodgett confirmed that was the intent of his motion. Commission Chair Cleaver emphasized that it was the "apparent" part that was most important.

Commissioner Lee seconded the motion as amended, which carried by unanimous consent. (4-0-0)

The Commission took a short recess before proceeding with the agenda. The Commission reconvened at 9:40 p.m.

B. DR24-05 FREDERICK C. MAIDA (APPLICANT & OWNER), R-10 ZONING: Request for (1) Design Review pursuant to Section 6-1905 of the Lafayette Municipal Code (LMC) and (2) Category II Tree Permit pursuant to Section 6-1707 LMC to construct a new two-story single-family residence totaling 3,850 sq. ft. in gross floor area and to remove two protected trees on a vacant lot located at 3626 Brook Street. APN 243-090-020.

Recommendation: Adopt Resolution 2006-04 approving DR24-05 subject to attached conditions.

Project Planner: Glenda Warmoth

Ms. Warmoth reported that the Commission last reviewed the application on December 6, 2005. At that time, the Commission requested the applicant respond to the following items:

- ❖ The deck and/or patio around the oak tree be more defined per Commission comment that it becomes a patio
- ❖ A deck or patio area be created on the lower portion of the property off the media/playroom that is a generous size
- ❖ The applicant move the access to the lower deck/patio towards the creek as opposed to the side yard
- ❖ The applicant further define the exterior elevation in terms of how the transition from stucco to siding is handled
- ❖ The front elevation be slightly reworked to resize or reconfigure the dormer over the front door to be in a more appropriate scale
- ❖ Submit a stamped grading of the drainage plan
- ❖ Submit a formal landscape and irrigation plan
- ❖ Submit an exterior lighting plan and fixture cut sheets

Ms. Warmoth advised that the applicant has responded to all of the concerns except the submittal of a stamped grading and drainage plan. Staff found the revised design consistent with the Design Review