Planning Comments and Responses: 3328 Verdun Ave

1. Call out the setback from the second story addition to the left side property line on Sheet A1.3. **This is called out on sheet A1.5; the Site Plan. Numbering of the sheets has been corrected for clarity purposes, and A1.5 was labeled as A1.3 at initial submission.**

2. Locate the approximate location of windows on the adjacent residence to the west of A1.3. **The closest windows have been located on sheet A1.5; the Site Plan. Numbering of the sheets has been corrected for clarity purposes, and A1.5 was labeled as A1.3 at initial submission. More information can be found in the view diagrams relating to comments 11 and 12.**

3. Records on file with the City indicate the lot size is 7,310 sf with a corresponding maximum allowable floor area of 3,262. Please revise the plans or provide a survey as to the origin of the 7,316 sf lot size indicated on the project plans. Additionally, a note on sheet A1.3 indicated the lot size is 7,307 sf. Please clarify/revise accordingly. **Lot size, floor area, and the note on the site plan (A1.5) have been corrected to show a lot size of 7,310 sf.**

4. Sheet A1.1 indicates the balcony is 166 sf, but sheet A1.3 indicates the balcony is 116 sf. Please clarify. **The balcony has been adjusted in size due to the changes in the floor plan that have been made to reduce cantilever mass and eave height. All references to the balcony now are consistantly labelled as 132 sf.**

5. The following items must be provided on the plans.
Building Sections Showing (1/4" scale preferred):
1. the existing and proposed additions
2. Existing and proposed grades
3. Total height (measured from the existing grade to the highest point of roof).
4. Finished floors and interior heights for all levels.

Building Sections have been added to the planning set, pg A4.1.

6. Complete the Single Family Design Review Guidelines Checklist on pages 28-33 on the planning application guide for single-family dwellings (attached). **Completed and attached.**

7. Provide a materials board showing proposed color, roofing material, other exterior materials (clear photos or manufacturer's brochures may suffice). **Completed and attached.**

The following pages address comments 8-14, which relate to compliance with the City's Single Family Design Guidelines. Each question is stated, and then addressed with diagrams to help understand the project.

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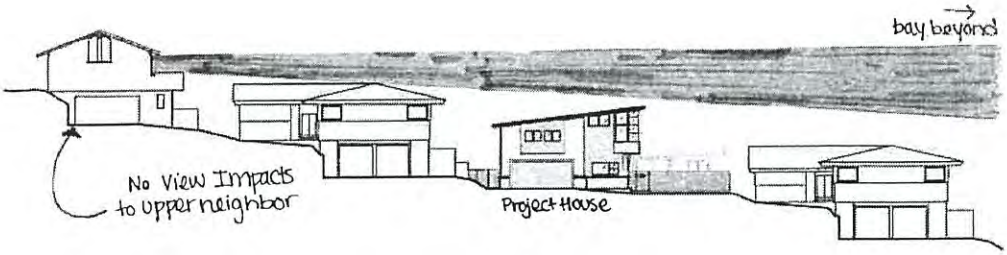
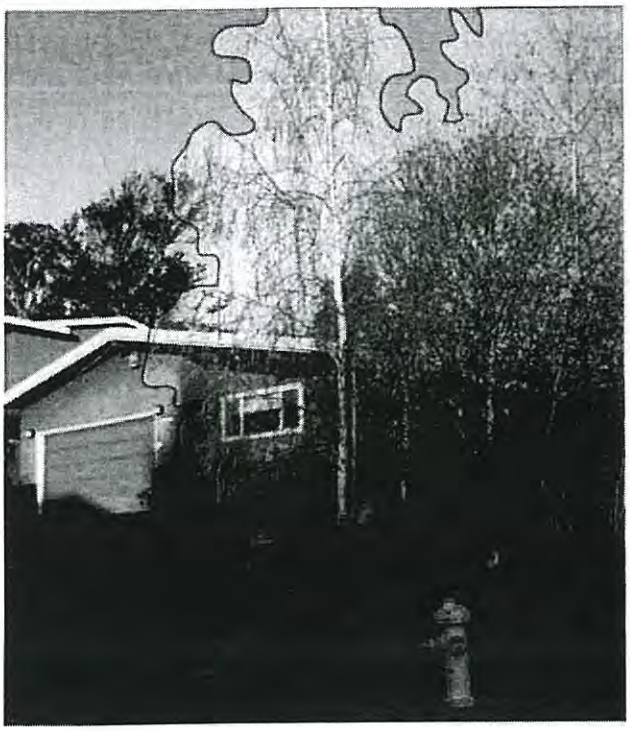
8. Lowering the Eave Lines. To the greatest extent possible lower the eave lines to minimize view impacts and reduce the apparent mass of the two-story building wallls (see attached page 19 of the Design Guidelines).

By lowering the eave height by 1 ft, we've mitigated concerns from the upper uphill neighbor. Their view is not affected by the addition at all. And extreme measures have been taken to not affect the view as much as possible of the immediate uphill neighbor. This diagram shows the views of the upper uphill neighbor.





One of the helpful factors to reduce apparent mass is the current tree cover that exists on the project site, downhill of the home. This tree coverage, which we are willing to add to in order to make denser, prevents a direct view at the addition when coming up the hill, which reduces the apparent mass signi-figantly from that direc-tion. This photo, taken in winter when the foliage is least effective, shows that the trees directly block views of the corner where the highest eaves will be.

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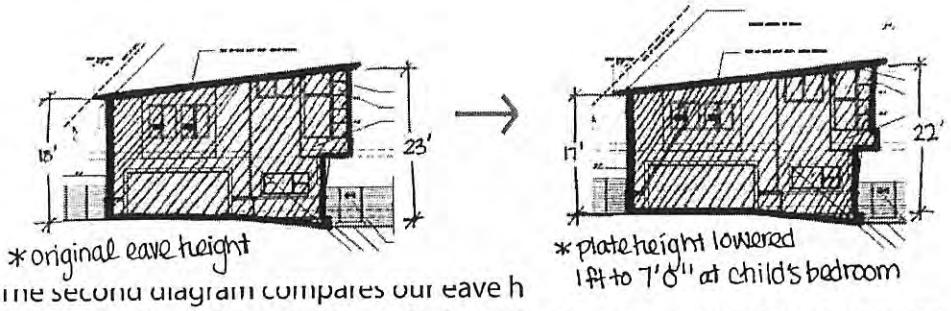
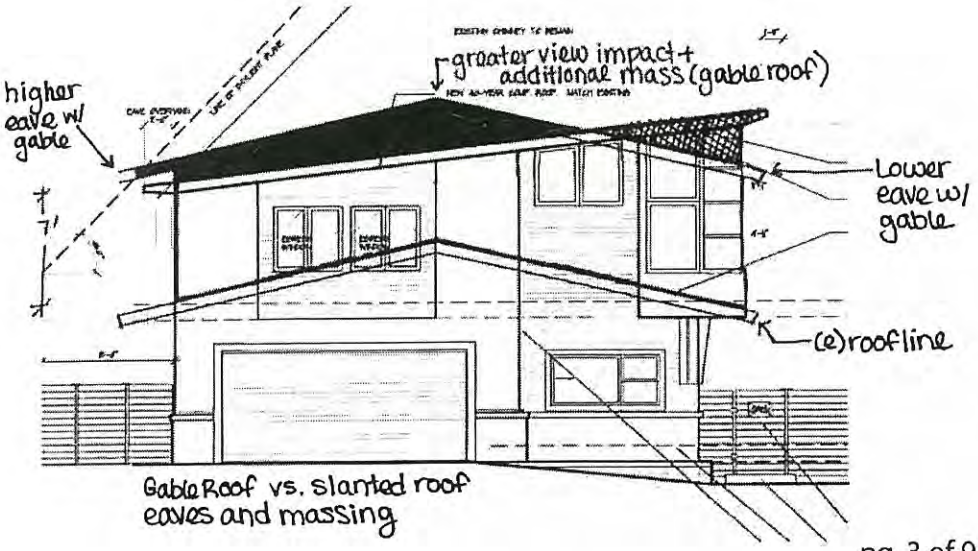
8. continued...

We will lower the eave height by 1 ft, making it 17' on the uphill side and 22' at the downhill side. This gives the uphill side of the house a 7' plate height (substandard to today's typical 8' and 9' plates), and it cannot go lower than this without negatively affecting the use of the space.



The second diagram compares our eave h
typical gable roof. The gable roof is less ideal than the slanted roof because:

1) The eave is higher at the uphill neighbor side
2) The overall mass of the front facade is greater
3) The ridgeline creates more view blocking than the slanted roof



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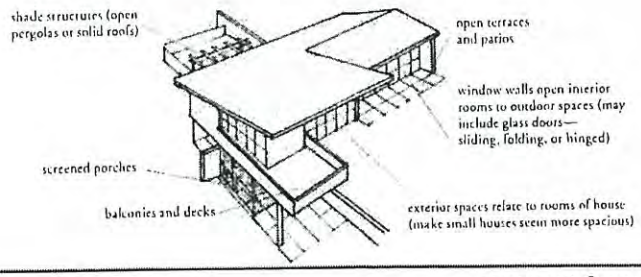
9. Roof Design Compatibility: The proposed roof form for the second story addition is not compatible with the roof form of the existing structure. The proposed project illustrates the attached "what-not-to-do" sketch by using two different roof forms on page 21 of the City's Design Guidelines.

The proposed roof form is not identical to the existing roof, but is an acceptable solution and is compatible with the contemporary ranch style, according to the Second Edition of the Field Guide to American Houses, quoted below with their relating diagram:

Contemporary

ca. 1945–1990

BUTTERFLY AND SLANT ROOFS—This subtype of less common roof types includes a slanted roof (with more reliable drainage than a flat roof), an upside-down gable called a butterfly roof (this creates a flat valley prone to leaking), and exaggerated gable roofs that might extend even to the ground. All of these could be combined with flat or gabled roofs, but the eye-catching butterfly- or slant-roof element tends to dominate visually.



excerpt from pg. 629-630

This roofline is also more in keeping with the neighborhood in that it mediates the different roof types found locally. Please note the following examples:

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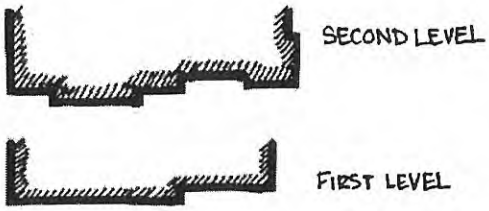
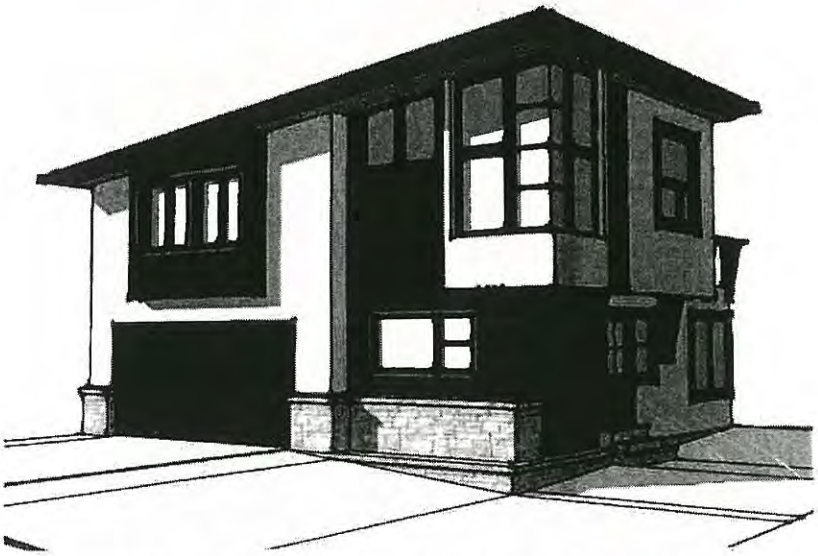
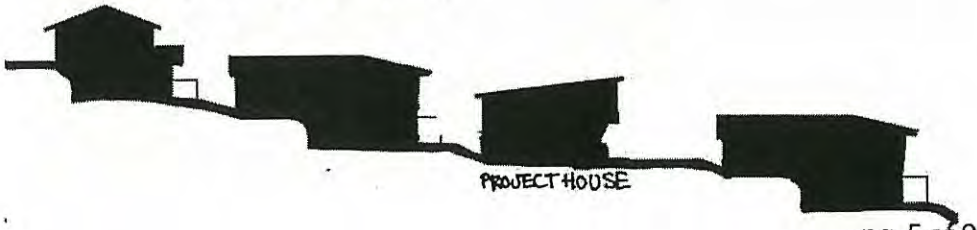
10. Wall Articulation: The addition appears massive from the street with overhanging, cantilevered portions, and two story walls with little to no wall articulation on the facade. See page 23 of the City's Design Guidelines for suggestions to avoid long tall walls.



The diagram to the left show the articulation of the facade from the first to the second level. The rendering show how material and cantilever is used to create articulation.



The diagram below shows the comparable mass between the project house and the neighbor houses as viewed from the street. This mass is further visually decreased from the downhill side because of the trees that are on the project property, as you can see in response to #8 about views.



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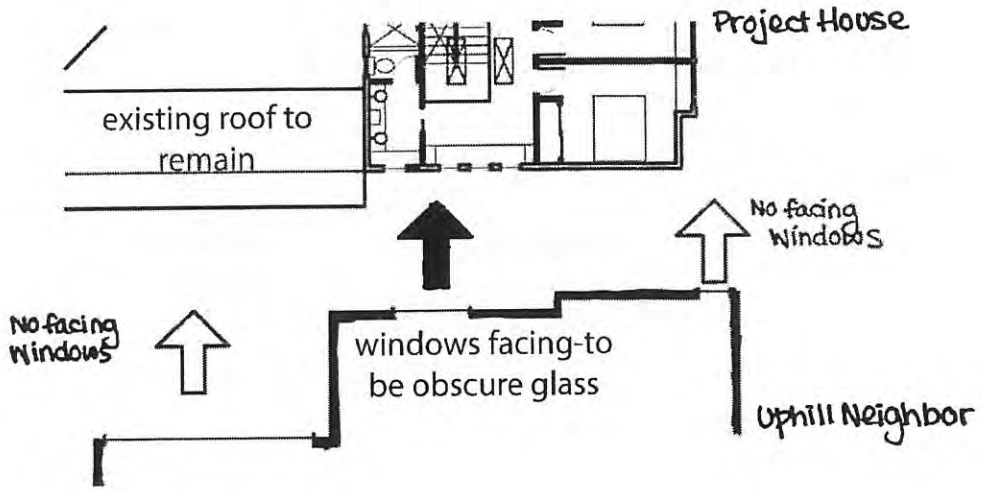
11. Privacy: Are planned windows aligned with the neighboring windows or offset? Please provide an exhibit similar to the example in the Design Guidelines on page 24.

View Diagrams have shown that the neighbor's bedroom window can see down into the proposed bathroom and hallway windows, so these windows have been changed to be obscure clerestory windows, which will be better for the privacy of the children's spaces.

The existing roof is maintained in front of her main view, the large windows in her living room.

The views from her guest bedroom is directed to the front corner of the property, missing the addition and maintaining her view across the street and down towards the bay.

The addition's public windows are at the downhill, front corner of the home. This means the main views are of the street, the trees at the corner, and the bay below. This maintains privacy with the immediate neighbors.



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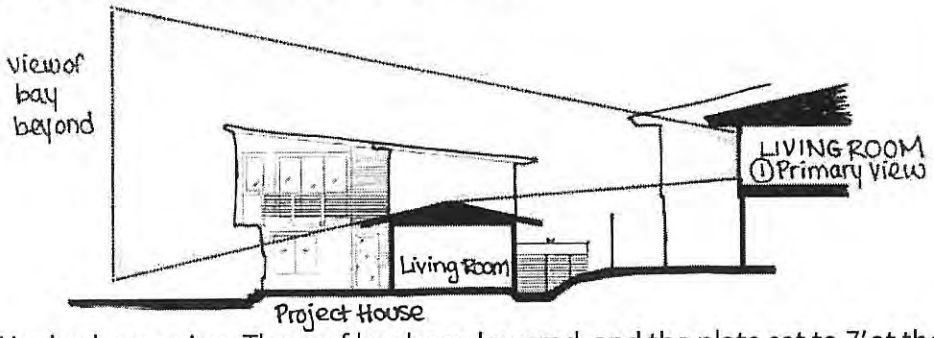
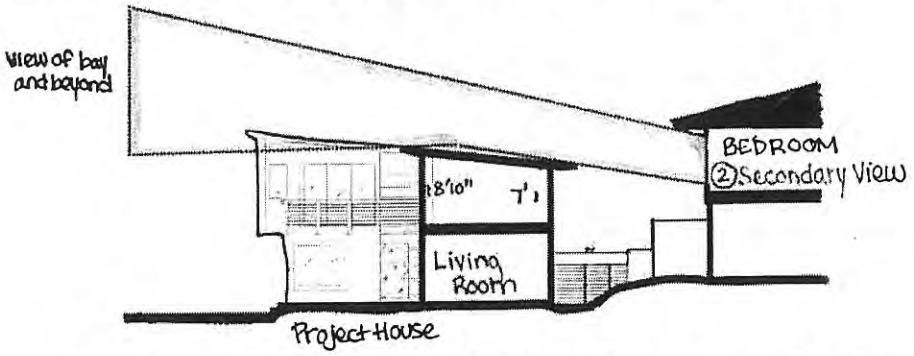
12. View Impacts: Label and minimize interior ceiling heights on the building section. Pursuant to the City's Design Guidelines a method of minimizing view impacts is to lower roof plate heights. See page 27 of the attached Design Guidelines.

As shown in the second diagram, the interior ceiling height is 7' at the uphill corner, in order to minimize the effect of the addition on the view of the uphill neighbor. The uphill neighbor, has three views she wishes to maintain:

1) Her main view, is from her large living room windows. The addition has been moved forward on the house to avoid impacting this view at all, and her line of sight goes over the existing living room roof.



2) Her bedroom view. The roof has been lowered, and the plate set to 7' at the close side, so as to maintain as much of this view as possible. The roof has also been cut back, uncovering the porch. The porch is still private to the neighbor, but her view is improved because of that roof elemeent being reduced.



3) Her other bedroom view. This window is right at the front edge of the house, and is not affected by the addition.

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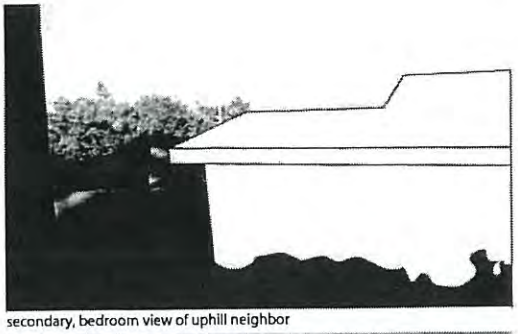
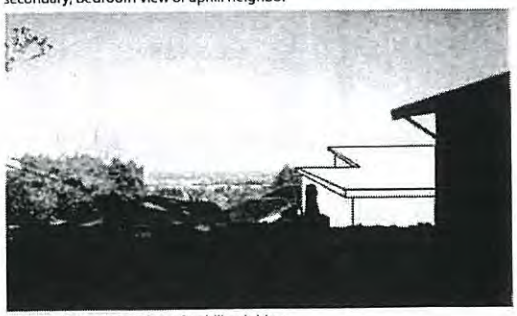
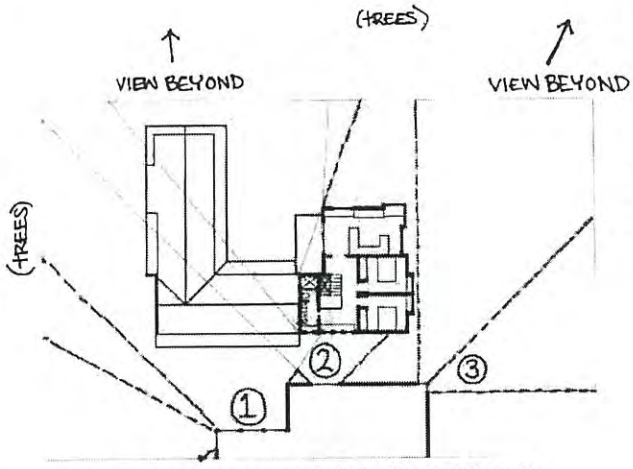


secondary, bedroom view of uphill neighbor



primary, living room view of uphill neighbor

12. continued...The photos above show the placement of the addition as seen from the uphill neighbor. The uphill neighbor's house looks over the whole project house, so in deciding on a placement for the addition, it was discussed with her and she prefered her panoramic living room view to be maintained, meaning the addition would have to be in front of her bedroom. By lowering the plate height and reducing the roof coverage, we have tried to maintain as much of her view from that room as possible, and not block her daylight at all. The below diagram displays her views in plan.



IMPACT ON VIEWS FROM UPHILL NEIGHBOR WINDOWS

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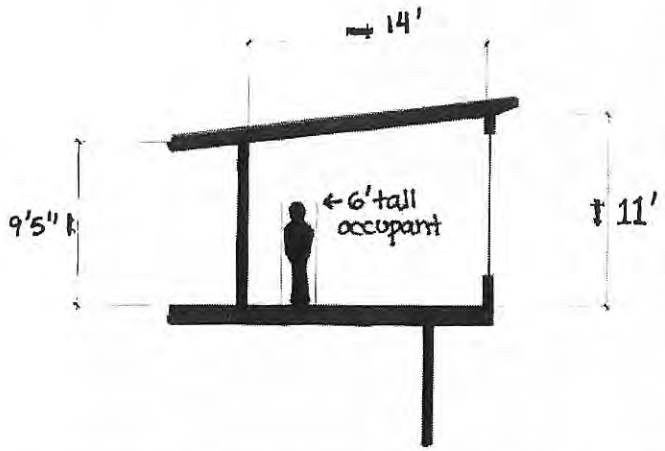
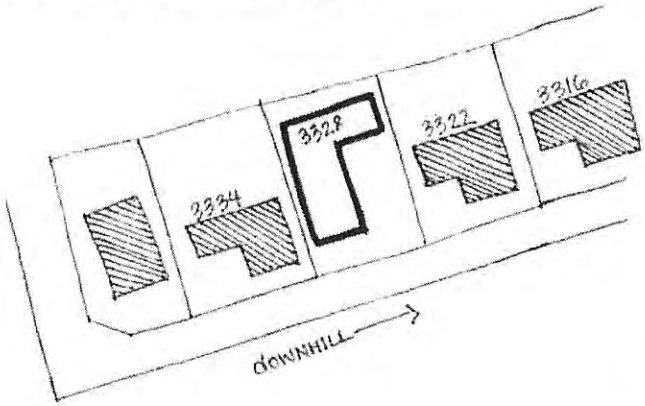
13. Roof Design Massing: The proposed roof design creates large volumes of living areas beneath the "up-slope" of the roofline which contributes negatively to the mass and view impacts.

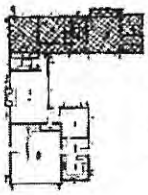


This diagram is of the family room space under the highest point of the "up-slope." At this point the ceiling height is 11' tall. This is not a large volume as a public space, and has been lowered 1 ft to help the eave height be as low as possible.

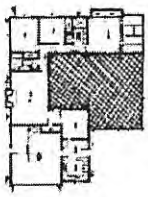
14. Home additions on sloping lots should step with the slope of the lot to avoid tall walls.

The diagram below shows that the existing project house does not step with the slope as the other homes on the street do. With this in mind, the series of diagrams to the right illustrate the reasons the addition was chosen to be where it is, and why putting it either on the rear of the house or in the yard isn't a good choice.

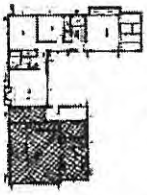




Addition over rear of house: blocks neighbor's main view, overlooks downhill neighbor's windows and yard.



Addition over yard: Doesn't conform to site coverage limits, crowds downhill neighbor, creates unfavorable view fom uphill (large expanses of roof).



Addition over front of house: preserves neighbor's main views, matches neighborhood pattern of second story over garage, doesn't increase site coverage.

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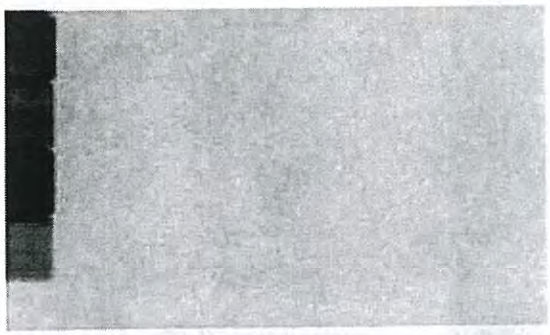
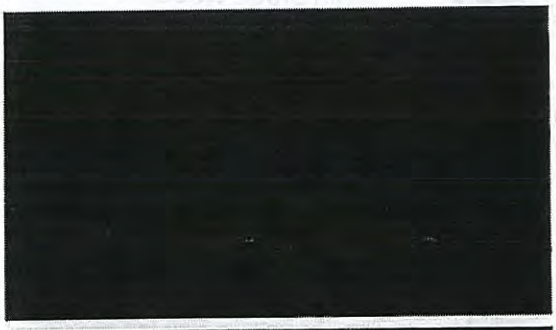
Materials Board: 3328 Verdun Ave.

Black/Bronze aluminum clad exterior, painted interior.



Painted Stucco-color light gray/tan



Painted Wood Trim

Cedar board siding, stain TBD -mid brown/red tone

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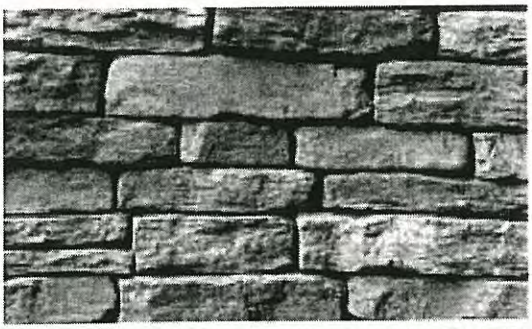
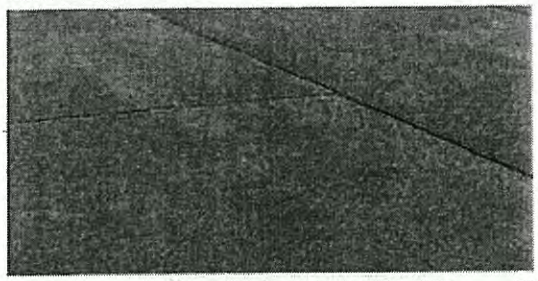
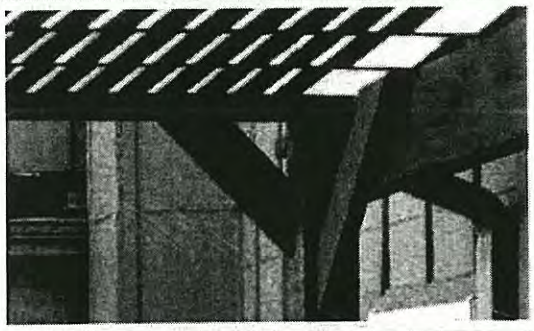
Materials Board: 3328 Verdun Ave.



Stacked Stone Base in neutral colors



Roof to match existing-asphalt/comp. roof



Stain grade wood corbels/trim/exposed rafters

Cedar spaced board fence

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How are you? My name is Siu-Ping and I am writing this letter in regards to the 2nd floor addition that our neighbors, Terri and Michael Schmier, have recently submitted for approval.

The purpose of this email is to give the City another neighbor's perspective toward their renovation project. Our house is directly across the street from their house.

San Mateo is a beautiful city with a thriving community. Owning a house is the quintessential American Dream. Most people will develop connections and relations to their community and often like to stay in their own house but their needs may have evolved over time. The Bay Area is one of the most expensive residential areas in the US. Most of us work diligently to become more financially secure to improve our everyday life and surroundings. This may mean better yard landscaping, larger living space for a growing family, more functional floor plan, updated appliances and so forth. Our neighbors are at this junction of their life and I would like to support them in this endeavor.

Here are the following points in support for their renovation:

1. This is their house. They have the right to build and expand following the guidelines of what the City of San Mateo have wisely established. They are not breaking any laws. Neighbors will have different opinions regarding their project but we shouldn't impose on their rights to their property if done in a lawful manner.

2. Neighbors do not own other people's property. If we do not like someone's dress or fashion style, we cannot forbid her to wear it if it is not against the law. Neighborhoods, just like fashion, will change over time. Change may be hard to accept but we cannot dictate others' action simply because we don't like it.

3. Change is not necessarily negative. Most of the houses in our neighborhood were built in the 40's and 50's. That is over sixty years ago. I believe that upgrading, while keeping the stylistic integrity of the community, will benefit the neighborhood in the long run. Home values will increase in our community.

4. If laws were written to prevent any 2nd story additions, this would hurt our economy. Instead of spending money to create more renovation jobs in our community, residents may take their money and go elsewhere. In preserving the status of some homeowners, others will be prevented from realizing the full potential of their house.

I hope the City of San Mateo will continue to support the homeowner's rights to their own property. It is not true that every house on Verdun Avenue has a view. There are houses on Verdun which do not have views. Please do not write any ordinance which **forever** decides who can or cannot have a view by not allowing any future 2nd story additions at all. Please give this option to the people who actually own their house. I believe the City of San Mateo will do their best to decide with objectivity and wise counsel in each individual case seeking approval.

Thank you for hearing my views regarding this issue.

Sincerely,

Siu-Ping Wong

3328 Verdun Ave, Neighbor Notice Mtg (dated 30 Oct 2023)

I have looked over the plans presented here today and DO NOT have concerns in relation to the scheme proposed:

Name:	Address:	Signature:
J. Brian French	10 Cragmont Ct.	
Dan and Lauren Oliver	3107 Verdun Ave	
Mike Margolis	3317 Verdun Ave	
MATTHEW McMULLEN	3230 Verdun Avenue	
SCOTT LORING	3209 VERDUN AVE	
Milo Lochbaum	3321 Verdun	
Gerry Mulligan	3323 Verdun	
JoAnne Flowers	908 W. HILLSDALE	
Jenifer Ransom	916 W. Hillsdale	
Barbara Intrace	9 Cragmont Ct	
Doris Abouar	5 Cragmont Ct	

If you would like to submit a concern to the building division of the city of San Mateo, please go to:

City Hall, 330 West 20th Avenue, San Mateo, CA 94403

From:	Paula Finley
To:	Christine "Christy" Usher; Darcy Forsell; Ronald "Ron" Munekawa
Subject:	Planning Application #13-074 - Comment Letter for Planning Commission Hearing on June 10, 2014
Date:	Friday, May 30, 2014 8:25:34 AM
Attachments:	Planning Commission Letter.docx

Dear Christy, Please forward attached letter to each Planning Commissioner regarding Planning Application #13-074 - Schmier Residence for the proposed hearing on June 10, 2014. Thank you for your help on this.

Sincerely,

Paula Finley

May 30, 2014

City of San Mateo Planning Commission

330 W. 20th Avenue

San Mateo, CA 94403

Subject: Planning Application #13-074: Schmier Residence,

Planning Commission Hearing Date: June 10, 2014

Attention: Planning Commission Chairperson: J. Christopher Massey; Commissioners: Hugg, Bonilla, Drechsler and Whitaker:

I am writing this letter to express my opposition to Planning Application #13-074, whereby Mike and Terri Schmier are requesting approval for a second story addition on their residence at 3328 Verdun Avenue. This application will greatly impact the pre-existing views of their uphill neighbor, Karen Trudell as well as impact surrounding properties and is causing great discord in the neighborhood. I am respectfully requesting that the Planning Commission **deny** this application as it is inconsistent with the City's Single Family Design Guidelines and City Ordinance and is not in the best interests of the City.

As Planning Commissioners for the City of San Mateo, it is your duty to look at the totality of the facts and circumstances of this application. As you review this application, ask yourselves: Is this application in the best interests of the residents of the City of San Mateo? Is protecting the long established pre-existing views of these hillside homes an important feature to the attractiveness and desirability of living in San Mateo? Is it OK to disrupt the harmony of established neighborhoods by approving a second story addition that allows the applicant to gain a view and add value to his home at the expense of impacting the pre-existing view of his uphill neighbor? Has this application really designed the best addition under the circumstances when there is a reasonable alternative to allow the Schmiers to utilize their property which doesn't affect their neighbor's view? And lastly and most important, has this application successfully met the criteria and ordinances set forth by the City of San Mateo that would allow the Planning Commission to give it an unconditional approval? For reason stated below, the Planning Commission will see that this application does not meet these requirements and therefore **must be denied**.

1) A Pole Study has not been completed. *The Planning Commission does not have adequate information to make an informed decision.* As in past applications involving similar view impacts, pole studies have been required and completed. To be consistent and fair in reviewing the view impacts with this application, the Planning Commission *must require that a Pole Study be completed* before any decision can be made on the application.

2) This application is not in alignment with the City's Single Family Dwelling Design Guidelines, Section IV (8) Views:

Paragraph A – Respect Established Views: This application *does not respect* the established views of the neighboring houses as stated in the guidelines:

1) Guidelines state: *To minimize the view blockage, consider lowering the roof plate height.* The proposed addition has designed nearly a 12 foot high view window at the south-eastern corner of the second story addition. This 12 foot height is excessive and creates an unnecessary view impact to Karen Trudell's residence. This additional height does not contribute to the additional square footage of living area, therefore a lower height would be reasonable and could restore some of the view impact to the Trudell's residence. (A pole study would confirm and support this) At a minimum, the Commission should require this ceiling/view window height be lowered to a minimum ceiling height of 8 ft.

2) Guidelines state: *Would the proposed addition create a greater view blockage than other homes on similar parcels in the neighborhood?* YES!!! Originally these homes were designed on their lots with floor plans to maximize the views from these homes. This application will interrupt this original design and create a greater view blockage than just one house. It will impact several views. However, staff has only considered the view from Karen Trudell's residence – which undoubtedly has the greatest impact - however, there also is a cumulative impact as this second story addition also affects views from the surrounding neighborhood homes at 928 W. Hillsdale Blvd, 3331 Verdun Ave. and 3323 Verdun Ave. As stated in the Single Family Design Guidelines, a neighborhood is defined as "a group of houses that can be seen together". The view impacts to the surrounding neighborhood "group of houses" have not been included in the evaluation by City staff. Therefore, this application should be considered **incomplete and denied until further evaluations** of view impacts on the neighborhood take place.

Paragraph B – View Equity: This point is paramount in consideration of this application. The Guidelines state: "Neighboring *views should be maintained to a similar level as that enjoyed by the proposed house addition. Balance the private rights to views from all parcels so that no single parcel should enjoy a greater view right than other similar parcels, except for the natural advantages of each site's topography"*

This application *does not conform to this section* at all. The Schmier application proposes to build a second story addition onto their existing single family home *that currently does not have a view.* Their home was originally designed without a view and the Schmiers accepted this fact when they bought the house many years ago. However – now with this addition, the Schmiers will GAIN a whole new view, to the detriment and loss by the blockage of the Trudell's pre-existing view. This second story addition is not "maintaining views to a similar level or balancing the private rights to views from all parcels" and it certainly *does not comply with* "no single parcel should enjoy a greater view right than other similar parcels." With this addition, the Schmier application will enjoy a greater view than other similar parcels (i.e. Trudell residence and other homes on the street). There is no view equity in this application and for this reason alone, ***this application should be denied*** as it is *not consistent* with the Single Family Design Guidelines.

You might be aware that this issue has previously occurred on Verdun (3205 Verdun) a few years back. It created great ill will in the neighborhood to the point that the impacted neighbor sold his home and left San Mateo. The neighbors do not want to see this happen again to our neighborhood. Studies have shown that a view can influence the value of a property by $100,000 - $300,000 or even more which causes great concern with residents about the future potential for these types of applications. Other Cities on the Peninsula have addressed these same concerns and have adopted View Protection Ordinances to protect pre-existing views. They understand the value and importance of view sheds in

our communities. It would be in the City of San Mateo's best interest to also consider creating and adopting a view preservation ordinance in the near future, as it is in everyone's interest to work to resolve issues with these types of applications with reasonable solutions and minimal impacts.

3) This application is not "Categorically Exempt" under CEQA. While the Planning staff would say that this application is "Categorically Exempt" under CEQA, it should be reviewed again as this application is not just making a minor modification to an existing facility, but adding nearly 800 square feet or about 50% more of existing living space to this property - inclusive of a second story. This is not a minor alteration to the proposed residence and alternatives must be explored. The view impacts to the neighborhood, including lighting impacts to the uphill neighbor, and the overall view sheds of the hillside leads to the fact that the City should do a cumulative analysis of the potential overall impacts of these types of residential additions and the overall impacts to the view sheds of San Mateo as part of the CEQA review. Also under CEQA alternatives to the proposed addition would be looked at. This has not been done – even though an alternative does exist that would remove the view impacts (detailed below). Therefore, this part of the application is incomplete and therefore **must be denied.**

4) There is a reasonable alternative for the Schmier application: I respect the right for a property owner to improve/add to their property, however, I also believe that when alternatives exist that create less or eliminate impacts it is the Planning Commission's responsibility to encourage the applicant to consider those alternatives. This second story addition is needless and is causing undue stress on the part of the neighbors, applicant and City staff, because another design alternative was not considered initially.

There is a reasonable alternative that would remove impacts to the pre-existing views while still allowing the Schmiers to expand their living spaces. This solution is that there is a sizable area on the ground level of the Schmier's property that could be designed for expansion that is now used as an exterior patio and landscape area. This is a reasonable alternative that creates a win/win for all. Denial of this application does not leave the Schmiers without an ability to expand their home.

5) And lastly, this application does not comply with City Code Section 27.08.032. As explained in the points described above, this application does not comply with the City Code. The application is *not consistent with the Single Family Design Guidelines* (i.e.- Section IV (8) Views: the application does not respect established views, and does not maintain neighboring views to a similar level or balance the private rights to views from all parcels so no single parcel enjoys a greater view than another*);the application is detrimental to the harmonious and orderly development of the City (it* creates great neighborhood ill will); *and it impairs the desirability of investment or occupation in the vicinity (*impacting the view and loss of value to impacted homeowner as well as threatens the future real estate marketability of these properties*).*

All of these reasons lead to one result and that is that this application does not comply with the City Code Section 27.08.032, and **it must be denied.**

In closing, on a personal note as a co-homeowner on Verdun, I too am very concerned about any proposal that would allow the construction of an addition to another house which would impact in any way the pre-existing views of uphill properties. My family has owned our home at 3126 Verdun for over 56 years – my parents bought it in 1958 and I grew up in it with a view of the Bay Area – a view that I cherish to this day. Verdun was a wonderful street to grow up on – where lifetime friendships were made. And the City of San Mateo was a great place to live - as it still is today. Our family grew up

watching San Mateo grow up too from our view windows – we saw the construction of the Hillsdale Mall, Hillsdale High School, Beresford Park, the construction of the "new" San Mateo Bridge, Highway 92, complete development of Foster City, lived with the bright lights of Bay Meadows and were saddened when those lights were distinguished forever and historic Bay Meadows was torn down. We saw new high rise apartment houses develop, the addition to City Hall, and the growth of business parks - to name a few. If our view was destroyed it would be heartbreaking as well as economically devastating. This is what it will also mean for the Trudell view to be impacted by this application or anyone else that may have to face this same situation in the future. These are views that cannot be replaced and are why my family and others chose to live on this street.

As long time residents, our family participated in that growth to build a community that would be a great place for our children to raise their children in. My father was actively involved in City government for 28 years, and I too worked for the City for over 12 years. Our extended family of close friends held positions in the City such as Mayor and Vice Mayor for over 20 years and worked hard to build a strong foundation for a City that can be enjoyed for generations. I dare say that if these "forefathers" of the City knew that issues like this one was causing such great discord between the City processes and the residents, they would be very concerned. I would hope that those of you that have the responsibility to continue to keep this City a great place to live, would protect and continue to uphold those values that the City grew upon and the forefathers worked so hard to build for us.

And ask yourselves one final question: How would *you feel* if *your view* was *being taken away* by *your neighbor's proposed second story addition?* – Particularly if there was an option for that expansion without adding a second story! And it is also important to remember that just because an applicant submits their project for City approval, the applicant does not have *the automatic right* to approval by the Commission for the addition they request.

As I said before, denial of this application does not leave the Schmiers without the ability to expand their home. There are other reasonable alternatives to allow the Schmiers to utilize their property which do not affect their neighbor's views. The Planning Commission can end this issue at this hearing by denying this application and encouraging the Schmiers to explore other reasonable alternatives to add onto their home.

Therefore, based on reasons outlined above, it is the Planning Commissions duty to take action now and **deny this application**. There is no other choice.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Respectfully,

Paula Finley

Paula Finley (co-owner of 3126 Verdun Avenue)

509 Winchester Court

Roseville, CA 95661

(916) 716-5883

From: Toni Dicapua
To: Christine "Christy" Usher
Subject: FW: URGENT - RE: Planning Application #13-074 - Schmier Residence
Date: Friday, May 30, 2014 8:21:35 AM
Importance: High

From: Jennifer [mailto:jennifer@deutschergroup.com]
Sent: Thursday, May 29, 2014 5:56 PM
To: Planning Commission
Subject: URGENT - RE: Planning Application #13-074 - Schmier Residence
Importance: High

As you have become aware, several people in our neighborhood, including myself, are not supportive of the Schmier's Planning Application #13-074 for a view blocking addition and are hoping that the Schmier's request be denied.

My husband and I purchased our home on Verdun, 15 years ago and we paid a premium for the beautiful view our home has. Verdun was built as a "stair step" neighborhood allowing each home a different, yet awesome view of the Belmont Hills, San Francisco Bay, Mt. Diablo, San Mateo Bridge, San Francisco Bay Bridge, San Francisco, Coyote Point, etc. My husband and I, when we first purchased our home, were immediately hit with a view blockage situation when the owners of 3205 Verdun Avenue (Patrice Lilly and James Morris) decided to put a "box shaped" addition over their garage which completely blocked the bay view at 3209 Verdun Avenue, our view of the Belmont Hills at 3206 Verdun Avenue, as well as the Belmont Hills view of Mr. Finley at 3126 Verdun Avenue, and Peter Ryan at 3120 Verdun Avenue. This situation was brought to the City Council but was approved and allowed to be completed. This eye sore of an addition with its two different colors of green roofing shingles (addition vs. non-addition) and, after 14 years since construction, still has an unpainted, grey stucco patch. Mr. and Mrs. Mark Spence (3209 Verdun Avenue) were so frustrated with the San Mateo City Council that they moved out of San Mateo and into Hillsborough. San Mateo lost an amazing family, and quality City of San Mateo resident - Stanford graduate and local business owner. A mistake like this should not be repeated.

This current project #13-074 adversely impacts the desirability of investment in the neighborhood, creates uncertainty in the real estate market, and interferes with reasonable investment-backed expectations of those of us who purchased property and paid a view premium. A view adds value, and interfering with a view destroys value. If the City approves this project, the value of every property on Verdun and in the San Mateo Hills with a view is at risk and will have to be disclosed to any new potential buyers.

My husband and myself put $400,000 into our home in 2008. When, and if, the

Finley's sell their home located directly below our home, under the current rules, the new owners could build up and totally block our view of the San Francisco Bay, Mt. Diablo, and San Francisco. After all of the taxes we have paid, City Permits we obtained and paid for, all of the rules that we have abided by and the Financial Advisor business we run in San Mateo for the past 28+ years, would this be fair? Would the City of San Mateo permit this?

I have always believed that theft was a crime. How can the City Council or Planning Department allow the Schmiers (3328 Verdun) to take or steal several thousand dollars from their neighbor's home (Karen Trudell - 3334 Verdun Avenue) in view premium and add it to **their** home by enhancing **their** view? I would trust that each and every one of you, if put in the same situation as Karen Trudell, would be outraged and would rely on the City Council and Planning Department, that we have supported for years, to protect us and our rights. Furthermore, as more and more original owners pass away and sell their homes, this is becoming an epidemic involving thousands of homes here in the San Mateo Hills. It is time that the City of San Mateo adopt a View Preservation Ordinance for San Mateo. We live in one of most precious and glorious spots in the State of California – please, let's preserve it! The pre-existing viewscape should be given priority!

The Schmiers' project is opening up old wounds here on Verdun and is detrimental to the harmony of this neighborhood. It destroys the integrity of a long-established view, and fails to take into account the original intent and design of the neighbor's house, which was built with the view as its central design feature. The project adversely impacts the desirability of investment in the neighborhood, creates uncertainty in the real estate market, and interferes with reasonable investment-backed expectations of homes purchased and view premiums paid. A view adds value, and interfering with a view destroys value. If the City approves this project, the value of every property on in the San Mateo Hills with a view is at risk.

I look forward to meeting you at the hearing scheduled for June 10, 2014 at 7:30 p.m. at City Hall.

A Loyal San Mateo Resident and San Mateo Business Owner,

Jennifer Deutscher – 3206 Verdun Avenue, San Mateo, CA 94403
(650) 573-8428

From: Lauren Oliver
To: Christine "Christy" Usher; Darcy Forsell; Ronald "Ron" Munekawa
Subject: 3328 Verdun Ave new house plan
Date: Thursday, May 29, 2014 3:50:05 PM

Dear Christy Usher, Darcy Forsell, and Ron Munekawa,

We are writing on behalf of the Schmier's new house plan proposal at 3328 Verdun Ave. We are neighbors of the Schmiers and we feel their new house plan proposal has been thoroughly thought out and we are very impressed how much time and effort has gone into their plans to help preserve their neighbor's views. We have talked with the Schmiers and they are very conscientious in doing what it takes to work with everyone. As a neighbor, we have no problem with their proposed plans and we hope you consider an approval for them to move forward.

Respectfully,

Dan and Lauren Oliver
3107 Verdun Ave.

From:	SCOTT FINLEY
To:	Christine "Christy" Usher
Subject:	Planning Application No. 13-074--Schmier Residence SFDDR
Date:	Wednesday, May 28, 2014 10:17:39 AM
Attachments:	SMPC.I05-28-14.ver1.pdf

Christy--

Attached please find my comments on the proposed Schmier addition to distribute to the Planning Commission for their review in conjunction with the hearing on June 10.

Please let me know if you have any questions, or if you wish to discuss these comments further.

Thank you for your assistance with this matter.

Sincerely,

Scott Finley
3215 Kensington Drive
El Dorado Hills, CA 95762
916-933-1219

SCOTT H. FINLEY
3215 Kensington Drive
El Dorado Hills, CA 95762-6927
(916) 933-1219
sbgfinley@sbcglobal.net

28 May 2014

J. Christopher Massey, Chair
Planning Commission
City of San Mateo
330 W. 20th Ave.
San Mateo, CA 94403

Re: Planning Application #13-074, Schmier Residence
Planning Commission Hearing Date: June 10, 2014

Dear Honorable Chair Massey, and Commissioners Hugg, Bonilla, Drechsler and Whitaker:

I am co-owner of a home located at 3126 Verdun Avenue. My parents bought this home in 1958 specifically because of the panoramic view. For over fifty-six (56) years our family has owned this property and enjoyed a spectacular unimpeded view of the San Francisco Bay area from the City of San Francisco to the Belmont hills. I believe most, if not all, of the other homeowners on Verdun Avenue purchased their homes because of the views. As a homeowner on Verdun Avenue, I am very concerned about any proposal to construct an addition to a single family residence which would impede in any way the pre-existing viewscape of the uphill property.

I am writing to express my opposition to the request of Michael and Terri Schmier to construct a second story on their residence at 3328 Verdun Avenue which will substantially obstruct the pre-existing view of their uphill neighbor, Karen Trudell, and to respectfully request the Planning Commission **deny** this application. For the reasons stated below, the Schmier's request is not in the best interests of the City, is contrary to the City's Single-Family Dwelling Design Guidelines, and does not conform to the requirements of the City's ordinances, and therefore must be denied.

A) The Planning Commission has inadequate information to make an informed decision in this matter. A pole study must be required.

There is no dispute that the Schmier proposal will substantially impact the pre-existing view of their uphill neighbor, Karen Trudell. She will lose all of the view from her bedroom window and a considerable amount of the view from her living

room. There is still uncertainty, however, on the true full extent of the impact, and no construction in her view shed should be approved until that uncertainty can be resolved.

While the Schmiers' consultant has generated a computer rendition of his perspective of the obstruction, there is no "ground truth" verification of the amount of view lost. A pole study is the most accurate way to preview the true and actual impact of the proposed structure. Without a pole study, the amount of view blockage is conjectural—it could, in fact, be much worse than shown in the renditions. Before an informed decision can be made, a pole study delineating the proposed additional structure must be required.

It is important to remember that other proposals for second story additions performed pole studies to determine the impact of the addition on the neighbor's view—most recently the addition of current council member David Lim. Reference Planning Application #12-060, decided by your Commission on April 9, 2013. There is no justification for not requiring a pole study in this case.

Once this proposal is approved, there will be no opportunity to modify the structure if the computer model proves inaccurate. It would be irresponsible of the Commission to approve this proposal without requiring a pole study.

B) <u>The Schmiers' proposal does not conform to the City's Single-Family Dwelling Design Guidelines</u>

(1) The City's Single-Family Dwelling Design Guidelines state that a proposed addition must respect established views. See Section IV(8)(A). Schmiers' proposal does not respect the established views of Ms. Trudell. <u>Ms. Trudell will lose all of the view from her bedroom and a considerable portion of the view from her living room.</u> While a view from a bedroom is deemed by the Guidelines to be "secondary", its value should not be disregarded entirely. In total, Ms. Trudell will lose well over 50% of the pre-existing and long-established views from her residence.

Moreover, should this proposal be approved, it will set a precedent as to how views may be obstructed for subsequent additions on Verdun Avenue. Ms. Trudell's house--like most of the houses on Verdun and many elsewhere in San Mateo--was explicitly built to take advantage of the views. Approval of the Schmier proposal will send a message that it is acceptable to substantially eliminate pre-existing views.

(2) The City's Single Family Dwelling Design Guidelines state that pre-existing views should be maintained similar to that enjoyed by the proposed addition. See Section IV(8)(B). Ms. Trudell loses a significant portion of her view, and the Schmiers gain a full, new, unobstructed view. There is no "view equity" in the Schmiers' proposed design.

Exacerbating the problem is that the eastern elevation of the proposed addition—with a height of almost twelve (12) feet—is simply excessive and unnecessarily blocks Ms. Trudell's view. It is far more than the minimum necessary to provide the Schmiers with additional living area, and is designed to allow the Schmiers to take full advantage of the new view. (Note: If a pole study were done, the height of the eastern elevation could be studied to determine if there is a lower building height which might be feasible and not block Ms. Trudell's view.)

C) The Schmiers' proposal does not comply with the requirements of City Code section 27.08.032.

In order for your Commission to approve the Schmiers' proposal, your Commission must make the affirmative findings set forth in subsection (d) of Section 27.08.032 of the City Code. As explained below, because the Schmier's proposal is flawed, the findings of subsections (d)(1), (d)(2), and (d)(3) of Section 27.08.032 cannot be made, so the Schmiers' proposal must be denied.

(d)(1) A finding must be made that the proposal conforms to the City's Single-Family Dwelling Design Guidelines. As explained in depth in Section (B), above, the Schmiers' proposal does not so conform.

(d)(2) A finding must be made that the proposal will not be detrimental to the harmonious and orderly development of the City. The Schmiers' proposal constitutes new development within an already well-established neighborhood. As such, it must be consistent and harmonious with the existing neighborhood. The proposed addition—most notably, the ascending twelve (12) foot high eastern elevation—is not visually compatible with the neighborhood. Reference page A1.3 of the Plan Set dated 03-24-14, which shows the dissonance in the street slope view of the proposed addition in the context of its neighbors. There is nothing even remotely architecturally similar to the Schmier proposal anywhere on Verdun Avenue.

Allowing for new development of this nature to adversely affect an established neighborhood destroys the integrity of the neighborhood and results in ill will. Moreover, impacting the long-established and pre-existing view of one property owner can result in a cascade of proposals, each affecting another party, as each affected owner engages in a height development "arms race" to grab the best view. A pre-existing viewscape should always be given priority since it recognizes the harmony of the status quo.

The Schmiers proposal is detrimental to the harmonious and orderly development of the Verdun neighborhood, and therefore of the City.

(d)(3) A finding must be made that the proposal will not impair the desirability of investment or occupation in the vicinity, and otherwise is in the best interests of the public health, safety, or welfare. By obstructing pre-existing views, the Schmier proposal destroys the desirability of investment in the neighborhood,

creates uncertainty in the real estate market, and interferes with reasonable investment-backed expectations of those who have paid the premium to purchase a home with an unobstructed view.

There is absolutely no disputing that having a view of the San Francisco Bay from one's home in San Mateo adds considerable value to the property, and that interfering with a pre-existing view devalues that home's value. The loss to the property with the affected view can exceed $100,000, and may actually be considerably more. By approving a second story on a residence that was originally built without one, and by impacting the pre-existing view, the City is in effect devaluing one property to enrich another--not creating new value, but transferring it between property owners. To be bluntly honest, by approving the Schmier proposal as it is currently designed, the City will be enriching the Schmiers' property by devaluing Ms. Trudell's property.

Allowing the destruction of a long-standing view creates uncertainty in the marketplace. Are realtors disclosing to buyers of homes in San Mateo with such views the potential that the view may be lost? More importantly, one of the features that makes San Mateo such a desirable place to live is its aesthetics. It is not in best interests of the City that it gains a reputation that it will allow such views to be lost--not to mention the diminution in property value and loss of tax revenue which would occur.

Furthermore, approving proposals which block an uphill property owner's pre-existing view only serves to disrupt a neighborhood. You need look no further than down the street on Verdun to see how such scenarios can play out. While I do not recall the exact year that this incident occurred, the owner of the house at 3205 Verdun constructed a second story addition to their home which almost entirely blocked the easterly view from the uphill residence at 3209 Verdun. (This occurred before there was any type of ordinance or guidelines. The current ordinance and guidelines were adopted in response to this earlier incident.) The uphill owners purchased a house with outstanding views and made considerable improvements to the house. They were extremely upset that there was nothing they could do to stop the construction of the addition by their downhill neighbor. Eventually, they sold their house in which they had invested a lot of effort and love and moved out of the City. If you are not already familiar with that sad affair, I recommend you acquaint yourself with it.

The Schmiers' proposal will impair the desirability of investment or occupation in the Hillsdale vicinity, and is not in the best interests of the public health, safety, or welfare of the citizens of the City.

D) The Schmiers' proposal is not exempt from review under CEQA.

Your Planning staff will request your Commission find that this proposal is categorically exempt from analysis under the California Environment Quality Act ("CEQA"—Public Resources Code section 21000 et seq.) While in some cases a

minor modification to an existing facility may be exempt, the exemption does not apply where significant cumulative impacts could occur from successive projects of the same type in the same area. See 14 Cal. Code Regs. 15300(b).

There are many properties just on Verdun Avenue whose views could be affected by proposals for second additions, and probably hundreds more in the Hillsdale area. I am not aware of any analysis of how many homes with views could be affected by a second story addition. Therefore, before approving this proposal, the City needs to do analysis of how many other properties in the Verdun/Hillsdale area could be affected by second story additions, and then do a cumulative analysis of the potential overall impact to the view sheds of the City, which is one of its most desirable features.

E) Conclusion

In closing, I wish to state for the Commission that my opposition to the Schmiers' proposal, and I believe the opposition of the neighborhood, is not based upon any animosity towards the Schmiers. Though I respect their right to request an approval of an addition to their home, it is important to remember that the Schmiers do not have the right to automatic approval by your Commission of anything they request.

Before approving this application, each commissioner should ask himself or herself the following questions:

If it were your view being blocked by your neighbor's proposed second story addition, knowing that once the new addition is constructed it is permanent, wouldn't you expect the City to require the neighbor to demonstrate just how extensive the blockage would be by conducting a pole study <u>before</u> the addition is approved? And wouldn't you expect the City to require any impact be minimized to the greatest extent possible, even if it means the neighbor doesn't get the full addition that they wanted?

What is in the best interests of the citizens of the City? To protect the long-established, pre-existing scenic views of homeowners that is a feature that makes San Mateo such a desirable place to live? Or to disrupt the harmony of established neighborhoods by approving a second story addition that exceeds what is needed to allow the property owner to utilize their property and which appropriates the views of their neighbors?

I think the answers to these questions are self-evident.

Your Commission is compelled to view the totality of the facts and circumstances, considering both the greater public interest of the citizens of the City in protecting view sheds and the impacts of the proposal on Ms. Trudell's property, and apply the foregoing facts to the controlling regulatory structure. For the reasons stated above, based upon the preponderance of the evidence showing the failure of the

Schmiers' proposal to comply with City own ordinances and guidelines, your Commission is left with only one choice: Planning Application #13-074 must be denied.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely yours,

Scott H. Finley

Scott H. Finley

From:	Julie Kaprielian
To:	Christine "Christy" Usher; Darcy Forsell; Ronald "Ron" Munekawa
Cc:	Terri Schmier; michaelschmier@yahoo.com
Subject:	Letter of support for project at 3328 Verdun Avenue
Date:	Tuesday, May 27, 2014 9:21:15 AM

Dear Ms. Usher, Ms. Forsel, and Mr. Munekawa,

After reviewing the plans of the proposed renovation at 3328 Verdun Ave., we think the proposal has been very carefully thought out and effectively balances the Schmier's need to expand their home while still preserving their uphill neighbor's primary view.

While we completely understand the issue being brought forth by the uphill neighbor, it seems unfair to the Schmiers that there has been so much neighborhood discord about their proposed addition. The Schmiers are in no way trying to be bad neighbors, or deprive anyone of a view. They are simply exercising their right as homeowners to make an investment in their home which will also enable them to provide their parents a place to stay in the near future. They have a right to stay in the neighborhood they love and raise their children in familiar surroundings.

Michael and Terri have worked hard to raise two lovely daughters who have been attending our local public schools for many years. During that time both Michael and Terri have been generous with their support of our public schools, while working full time and managing a full schedule of family activities. If they were forced to move because of this I feel that our neighborhood would lose valuable members of our community and the children would endure a hardship losing friendships and starting over at new schools.

The Schmiers have been good neighbors in San Mateo and to our family. In addition to their support of our public schools, they also support local programs like the Park and Rec Department and the Peninsula Humane Society. In fact, we adopted a pet from PHS based in large part on their encouragement. They are the kind of people who will help you out in a pinch and lend a hand where it is needed. We are lucky to have them in San Mateo.

After careful review of the drawings we feel that the Schmiers have been both fair and generous in their accommodations of their uphill neighbor's concerns. In addition, we feel that they are not being recognized for the trees that they cut down many years ago on their property at the uphill neighbors' request, which improved her view and home value considerably.

In our opinion, the proposed design is in keeping with the neighborhood and would not be an eyesore. We hope you will approve these plans in support of Terri and Michael's family needs and desire to make a positive investment in their neighborhood.

Sincerely,

Julie and Andre Kaprielian
28th Avenue, San Mateo

From: Tamara Tompkins
To: Christine "Christy" Usher; Darcy Forsell; Ronald "Ron" Munekawa
Subject: 3328 Verdun Ave
Date: Monday, May 26, 2014 5:10:03 AM

To Whom It May Concern:

We have reviewed the plans of the proposed renovation at 3328 Verdun Avenue and find the proposal to be very carefully conceived and thought through. We believe it effectively balances the Schmier's need to expand their home while still preserving their uphill neighbor's primary view. We also believe it will enhance the overall appeal and value of the neighborhood. We hope you will approve these plans in support of Terri and Michael's family needs. They are a very nice family - exactly the kind of people the City of San Mateo wants to attract and retain.

Thank you and regards,

Tamara L. Tompkins, Esq.
Christian L. Schin

From: Tamara Tompkins
To: Christine "Christy" Usher; Darcy Forsell; Ronald "Ron" Munekawa
Subject: RE: 3328 Verdun Ave
Date: Monday, May 26, 2014 5:13:28 AM

In case needed, our address is 608 Hurlingham Ave, San Mateo, 94402. Home phone 650-315-2190.

From: tammy_tompkins@hotmail.com
To: cusher@cityofsanmateo.org; dforsell@cityofsanmateo.org; rmunekawa@cityofsanmateo.org
Subject: 3328 Verdun Ave
Date: Mon, 26 May 2014 05:09:58 -0700

To Whom It May Concern:

We have reviewed the plans of the proposed renovation at 3328 Verdun Avenue and find the proposal to be very carefully conceived and thought through. We believe it effectively balances the Schmier's need to expand their home while still preserving their uphill neighbor's primary view. We also believe it will enhance the overall appeal and value of the neighborhood. We hope you will approve these plans in support of Terri and Michael's family needs. They are a very nice family - exactly the kind of people the City of San Mateo wants to attract and retain.

Thank you and regards,

Tamara L. Tompkins, Esq.
Christian L. Schin

From:	Jennifer Yan
To:	Christine "Christy" Usher; Darcy Forsell; Ronald "Ron" Munekawa
Cc:	Terri Schmier; Jennifer Yan
Subject:	Support for Mr and Mrs. Schmier (3328 Verdun Avenue renovation)
Date:	Friday, May 23, 2014 9:34:39 AM
Attachments:	Schmier.docx

To the Planning Dept Representatives:

Please see attached letter in support of Mr. and Mrs. Michael Schmier's Verdun renovation.

Sincerely,
Jennifer and Edward Yan

May 23, 2014

To the Planning Department Representatives of San Mateo:

As friends of the Schmier family for over 10 years and fellow San Mateo residents for over 15 years, we are writing in support of their proposed home renovation. We have reviewed their plans for which we feel has been very well thought out with much consideration given to their surrounding neighbors.

Clearly, family and the community are important to the Schmiers. It is evident in their support and involvement with the schools their two daughters attend in San Mateo and their dedication and time put into the many activities they participated in locally. It is also evident that spending time with their families is a priority to them and that they cherish the opportunity to have their girls see their grandparents as much as possible. This proposed plan will allow Terri and Michael to sufficiently accommodate their aging parents during their visits with the possibility of a multi-generation living situation which should be valued and respected.

It is evident that the Schmiers have reached out to their neighbors with much effort to find a reasonable compromise. This renovation would not only be a positive investment for this San Mateo neighborhood, but it will also allow Terri and Michael to continue raising their children in the best city in Northern California.

Thank you for allowing us to voice our support of the Schmier proposal for renovations to 3328 Verdun Avenue. They love living in San Mateo, and we would hate to lose a family like this one! Simply stated, these are good people with good intentions...

Respectfully yours,
Jennifer and Edward Yan
1498 Ascension Drive
San Mateo, CA 94402

From: Marni Sloves
To: rmunekawa@cityofsammateo.org; Darcy Forsell; Terri Schmier; Christine "Christy" Usher
Subject: Schmier renovation project
Date: Tuesday, May 20, 2014 5:41:21 PM

After reviewing the plans of the proposed renovation at 3328 Verdun Ave., we think the proposal has been very carefully thought out and effectively balances the Schmier's need to expand their home while still preserving their uphill neighbor's primary view. We hope you will approve these plans in support of Terri and Michael's family needs."
The investment in our neighborhood is positive. The Schmiers are good neighbors and great San Mateo citizens and we hope the city will support their desire to stay in San Mateo.

Marni and Evan Sloves
621 29th Avenue
San Mateo, CA 94403

From: Karen
To: Christine "Christy" Usher; Darcy Forsell
Subject: Re: yesterdays meeting
Date: Thursday, May 15, 2014 12:28:26 PM

Hi Christy and Darcy,
I wanted to follow up from yesterdays meeting.

First I want to thank all of you for meeting with the concerned neighbors. From what you shared this is the first time you have held a meeting like this and we all really appreciate the time you gave to meet with us.

I also want you to know that the negative comments are not directed at you personally. I know mine were not and I feel many of the other people are just very concerned.

You all have spent many hours on this project and I really appreciate that. I understand that you are trying to reach a compromise between the Schmiers and me. Sadly, no matter the compromise if they build up, I will loose much of my view and a significant amount in the value of my home. And other neighbors will loose some of theirs too.

I completely understand you have to follow the guidelines. But again I am asking that a pole study be done so we can get a better idea of the impact on our homes.

-----Original Message-----
From: Michael Schmier <michaelschmier@yahoo.com>
To: Christine Christy Usher <cusher@cityofsanmateo.org>; Darcy Forsell <dforsell@cityofsanmateo.org>
Cc: Jennifer <jennifer@deutschergroup.com>; Terri Schmier <miles_terri@yahoo.com>; Karen Trundell <kkaren1210@aol.com>; wayne <wayne@deutschergroup.com>; Bess <bess@studio-three.com>
Sent: Sat, May 3, 2014 4:53 pm
Subject: Stretch the truth

Christy and Darcy,

I would like to put on the record (since this is now an email to you) that Jennifer is spreading half truths about our project and refuses to engage in any dialogue with us. First, of all, what she failed to tell you is that my post was a response to Karen's post (see below) which is totally making us look like bad guys and did not present our side of the story at all:

I am new to the neighborhood but wanted to post this message because I feel more people need to be made aware that they may one day loose a big portion of their view. If you currently enjoy a beautiful view in San Mateo, one day your neighbor could build up and potentially block a big portion of it. Not only will the value of your home go down quite a bit but your quality of life will suffer too. I know, because this is happening to me right now. I have lived in my home for 20 years, enjoying a wonderful view. My neighbors, who bought their home without a view, have submitted plans to add on a huge second story addition (with 12 foot ceilings).

Many of my neighbors are quite upset about this because it could very easily happen to them. The City of San Mateo's Building Codes are very weak and in all cases of view blockage, the City Council has voted to approve the building of the second story addition.

Myself and several of my neighbors have appealed to the Planning Dept. to not approve these plans. We were just notified that we have a 10 day appeal period to voice our concerns and objections.

We need your input and help. If you are interested in learning more about how this could one day effect you, please contact the San Mateo Planning Dept. and ask them to explain how the view ordinance works in our city. The more people who voice their objections to allowing additions that will block another homes view may help to change the current view ordinance. Many other Cities already have view ordinances that do not allow one neighbor to build and block another neighbors view. The City of San Mateo needs to put in place ordinances that will help protect homes that currently have views.

I would be more than happy to discuss this further with anyone that is interested.

Also, if you want to help make a very significant change in our building code in regards to view blockage, please contact the Planning Dept.

If you have a view, fight to keep it, or one day you may loose it.

Thanks,
Karen

Second, while we are clearly blocking park of Karen's view the idea that we're destroying the value of her property is absolutely ridiculous for anybody that knows anything whatsoever about the San Mateo real estate market. Also, Jennifer is spreading misinformation about how we don't many city guidelines (see below) and make it look like your process was somehow cavalier and gave us a free pass.

THIS IS FRUSTRATING to have people like Jennifer not willing to engage in dialogue and just stroking the fears of the neighborhood. Please forward me any email communication regarding our house.

Thanks, Michael.

1) The issue of view impairment from new second story additions potentially affects hundreds, if not thousands, of homes in the San Mateo hills. There are many millions of dollars of property values potentially at jeopardy. Before proceeding with this application (or any other application), the City needs to do a comprehensive cumulative impact study to determine how many properties could be affected and whether the citizens support a stronger view ordinance

This project does not comply with the City's Single-Family Dwelling Design Guidelines. (1) The roof design, and specifically the family room pop-up eave feature, is not architecturally compatible with the style of roof in the neighborhood. (2) The family room pop-up feature is excessive,

unnecessary, and does not respect the long-established views of Karen's residence. (3) The project violates the principle of view equity. The Schmiers will be creating a new, unobstructed view with an almost 12 foot elevation that interferes with a substantial portion of Karen's pre-existing view.

5) The project adversely impacts the desirablity of investment in the neighborhood, creates uncertainty in the real estate market, and interferes with reasonable investment-backed expectations of Karen who purchased her property and paid a view premium. A view adds value, and interfering with a view destroys value. By approving a second story on the Schmiers' residence that was originally built without one, and impacting Karen's pre-existing view, the City is substantially devaluing Karen's property and enriching the Schmiers. If the City approves this project, the value of every property on Verdun with a view is at risk, as well as any every other view property within the City.

From: Karen
To: Christine "Christy" Usher
Subject: Sorry sent
Date: Thursday, May 15, 2014 12:35:46 PM

Hi Christy
I meant to send the last email last week. Sorry I just saw it in my draft box.

I just wanted to thank all of you for putting so much time and thought into this project.

I am still hoping story poles will go up.

Is it possible to have Mr. Cannon come to my home? I feel the photos are not quite accurate.

I really appreciate all you have done.

Sincerely,
Karen Trudell

Sent from my iPhone

From: SCOTT FINLEY
To: Christine "Christy" Usher
Subject: 3328 Verdun Avenue
Date: Sunday, May 11, 2014 12:05:10 PM

Dear Christy--

I am currently out of the country and have limited access to email. Please accept this as my preliminary comments to the Schmier application. I will be submitting additional comments when I return late in the week. Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

1) There is inadequate information for the ZA to make an informed decision. A pole study is necessary. Without a pole study, the amount of view blockage is conjectural, and the Schmiers agent's modelling is insufficient and should not be relied upon. Once the proposal is approved, there is no opportunity to modify if the model is inaccurate. My catchwords are: Measure twice, cut once.

2) The proposal does not conform to the Design Guidelines: (a) The proposal does not respect established views. Karen's house--long with many of the houses on Verdun and in SM, were explicitly built to take advantage of the view, and others--i.e., the Schmiers--were not. Karen's bedroom view is as important as her living room view, but both are being substantially impacted; (b) The proposal does not result in view equity. Karen loses a significant portion of her view, and the Schmiers' gain a new, unobstructed view. The Schmiers' eastern elevation is excessive to simply provide them with additional living area, and unnecessarily blocks Karen's view. If approved it should be no more than 8 feet, including the architectural features.

3) The proposal is detrimental to the harmonious and orderly growth of the City. Allowing for new development to adversely affect established neighborhoods destroys the integrity of a neighborhood, and results in ill will. Impacting the long-established and pre-existing view of one property owner can result in a cascade of proposals, each affecting another party, prompting an "arms race" to grab the best view. A pre-existing viewscape should always be given priority since it recognizes the harmony of the status quo.

4) The proposal will destroy the desirablity of investment in the neighbor, create uncertainty in the real estate market, and interfere with reasonable investment-backed expectations of those who have purchased properties with a view. There is no disputing that a view adds value, and interfering with a view destroys value. By approving a second story on a residence that was originally built without one, and impacting a pre-existing view, the City is in effect devaluing one property to enrich another--not creating new value, but transferring it between property owners.

5) Before approving this proposal or any other proposal, the City needs to do an analysis of how many other properties in the Hillsdale area could be affected, and in conjunction with this proposal, then do a cumulative analysis of the potential overall impact to the viewsheds of the City, which is one of its most desirable features.

6) This is a controversial proposal, with the potential to set precedent on the Hillsdale hillside area. The ZA should refer the matter directly to the PC so the neighbors can directly address their appointed peers without having to pay a $500 appeal fee.

Sincerely,

Scott Finley

From: Lesli Young
To: Christine "Christy" Usher; Darcy Forsell; Ronald "Ron" Munekawa
Subject: Objection to Planning Application 13-074 at 3328 Verdun Avenue
Date: Friday, May 09, 2014 6:47:43 PM

Greetings to Christine Usher, Darcy Forsell and Ronald Munekawa,

I am writing to voice my objection to the Planning application 13-074 to add a 2nd story addition to 3328 Verdun. My husband and I have been residents of San Mateo on W Hillsdale Blvd since 1994. We purchased our home for it's yard size and beautiful view on the hill part of W Hillsdale. We have done remodeling to our home and have gone through the permit process. The value of our home would be adversely impacted if the house on the lower side of us were to build a second story. This is the same thing that is happening to the neighbors of the Verdun project. I am all for residents improving their homes but never to the point that it negatively impacts the surrounding neighbors. It should not be allowed that any residential project being built should be allowed to block the view of any of the surrounding neighbors. If an application is received that does not negatively impact any neighbor (views, sunlight, landscaping, etc), which are usually 1 story homes, then they should be allowed to go through the application process while all neighbors affected should be notified of the pending project so that they may voice any of their personal objections should there be any.

{Example in point: At our home, we went through the planning process to add a sun room, we notified all the neighbors in the area. These pre-fab sun rooms are built with roofing material that reflects the sun, which is the whole point to keep the room itself from turning into an oven. A neighbor complained (which was her right) that sun might reflect/shine into her house. There was no way that this could have happened due to the pitch and distance from her house. This was explained away by our project engineers but your department chose to side with the neighbor (who by the way was a former City Counsel member, slightly suspicious). This unfairly effected our project. The solution that your Planning department decided was that we had to put a 'tar' roof onto the sun room. This totally defeated the whole purpose of this sun room and it was basically a total waste of money as this room is now unusable in the summer due to the high heat and then unusable in the winter due to the extreme cold. BUT, we didn't block anyone's view.}

There is nothing wrong with someone doing their remodeling to improve the value of their home but never to the point of it devaluing the home of the surrounding neighbors. This will also create ill will in that neighborhood which is never a good thing.

Before this project application is approved, all involved (project requester and effected neighbors) should be advised of what is being proposed and if there is significant opposition, then this project should not be allowed to move forward and the application should be denied. If this 2nd story addition and view is something the owner must have, then they need to sell their home and find one that exactly fits their needs. Other owners should not have to 'settle' for 2nd best and be forced to lose their views for the sake of one person.

Please reconsider this application for denial and consider instead an Ordinance that would preserve views and sunlight in any instance where it could be lost due to a building application request.

Sincerely,
Lesli M. Young
San Mateo resident

From: csully335@aol.com
To: Christine "Christy" Usher; Darcy Forsell; Ronald "Ron" Munekawa
Subject: Planning Application13-074 SchmierResidence 3328 Verdun Ave, San Mateo
Date: Friday, May 09, 2014 12:28:15 PM

Attention Planning Department:

This email is in regards to the proposed addition at 3328 Verdun Avenue. We have recently been informed by neighbors that this second floor addition is in the process of being approved. We are shocked that a project like this which affects existing properties can be considered without a "pole study" or concern for the neighboring homes. You are setting a **dangerous precedent** for people who have the money to move into this area, tear down a home, build a "mini mansion" and devalue the property value of neighboring homes. The current system of approval opens the door to speculators to invest in our neighborhood, devalue the property of other homeowners, and then move on to other ventures.

We have lived on 28th Avenue between 31st Avenue and Sunset Terrace for over 30 years. We strongly feel that our neighborhood should have **a view preservation ordinance.** Our property has a lovely view which is enjoyed by us and also by our neighbors who regularly walk by, often standing or sitting on our brick wall to relax and enjoy the beauty of this area. My point is that when the original developers built these homes, the view was taken into account for homeowners and the community. Lots were cut out and floor plans were designed to offer a view and enhance the value of the property and the desirability of our hillside area. The houses that offered a view were sought after and have sold at a premium. These houses were built to accommodate the neighborhood, ensuring that as many homes as possible were able to enjoy views. Houses are predominately ranch style, nestled into the hillside, hence the fitting name of **Hillsdale**, which is the name of our beloved high school, library, shopping center, train station and main drive. Our neighborhood needs a **responsible** City Planning Department that will protect our property values, preserve our views, along with our incredible "sun footprint" that will enable the future installation of solar power in our neighborhood.

One further point to consider when approving addition projects is that along with larger homes come more people who drive. This brings additional street traffic and parking issues to our community. Over the past 30 years, we have seen numerous cars, homes, street poles, and fire hydrants hit by vehicles losing control on the hilly streets. We consider this to be a safety issue that should be taken into account.

In conclusion, we **strongly oppose** the manner in which the San Mateo Planning Department has handled this second story addition project. We feel the preservation of the existing views of our neighborhood should be a prime consideration because of devaluation of their property value, quality of life issues, and impact on our hillside community. There is need of a **pole study, which is required in other cities such as Carmel, CA**, which protects its homeowners' coastal views. The process of "rubber stamping" second story addition plans which adversely affect established neighborhoods is detrimental to community development. Therefore, we feel our neighborhood needs a clearly stated View Preservation Ordinance that will protect our property value and preserve the integrity of our neighborhood.

Sincerely,

David & Carol Sullivan

From:	Paula Finley
To:	Christine "Christy" Usher
Cc:	Paula Finley; SCOTT FINLEY
Subject:	PA 13-074 - Schmier Residence - Comments from Scott Finley
Date:	Thursday, May 08, 2014 10:30:14 AM

HI Christy - Thank you arranging the opportunity for the neighbors to meet with you, Darcy and Ron yesterday regarding the Schmier Residence addition. I do think it was helpful, even though as you saw there is quite a concern from the neighbors regarding this addition.

This e-mail is a follow up to our conversation yesterday regarding Scott Finley's comments which as I indicated will be late, due to the fact that he is out of the country until May 14th. He said in his e-mail to me that he was going to e-mail you to tell you that his comments would be late - however you indicated you have not received that e-mail.

Therefore, as his sister and co-owner of the house at 3126 Verdun, I am notifying you that he would like to reserve the right to submit his comments after the 10 day period, due to unforeseen timing of the review period and personal circumstances beyond his control and that he will be submitting his comments to you as soon as he returns.

Thank you for your help on this.

Paula Finley

From: Gary Germano
To: Ronald "Ron" Munekawa; Christine "Christy" Usher; Darcy Forsell
Subject: PA 13-074 Schmier
Date: Thursday, May 08, 2014 8:03:36 PM

ATTN: 05/08/2014
Christine Usher
Darcy Forsell
Ronald Munekawa
Reference: Planning Application 13-074 Schmier Residence 3328 Verdun Avenue

Dear City of San Mateo Planning Department personnel,

We have owned our home on Caxton Court, one street south of Verdun, for 32 years.

We received notification of a building application to add a second story addition to the residence at 3328 Verdun Ave.

This addition would diminish, eliminate, or obscure the views of several existing neighbor's homes, resulting in devaluations to both their properties, other properties in the neighborhood, as well as the fabric of the neighborhood in general.

The "Western Hills" of San Mateo is a very beautiful and desirable area, especially due to the spectacular views designed into many of the homes in the neighborhoods. The original developer of this area had the foresight to "step down" the homes on a number of the streets so that each of those home owners would have a beautiful view from their individual residence. This was excellent planning and design, and a win/win" situation for both the developer and the homeowners.

<u>It is in no way fair that one home owner can "steal" his neighbor's views to create or add to his own views.</u>

Setting this type of precedent devalues the worth of all properties in the area,

because it opens the door to anyone building and stealing their neighbors views away. It disrupts the harmonious continuity of design well planned by the original developer. It makes the whole area less appealing to future buyers.

If the property owners at 3328 Verdun simply need more space, then they should submit a new addition proposal that will not negatively affect their neighbor's views and property values.

If they need more views, and are truly not interested in stealing their neighbors views for their own pleasure and monetary gain, then they should find another home (or trade homes with someone on the block) for one that meets their needs.

Sincerely,

Gary Germano
Janet Germano

From:	Q444frontdoor@aol.com
To:	Christine "Christy" Usher; Darcy Forsell
Cc:	Ronald "Ron" Munekawa
Subject:	Re: PA13-074 - Schmier second story addition 3328 Verdun
Date:	Thursday, May 08, 2014 4:59:26 PM

Hello Darcy and Christy,

I received a neighbor's flyer alerting me to the proposed second story addition at 3328 Verdun Ave. Unfortunately, I was unable to attend the meeting on Wednesday.

Verdun Ave. is a prime example of a street where the city needs to be very careful in approving second story additions. Our south and west part of town has many similar streets. A major factor in property value, residents' enjoyment of their homes and the desirability of our neighborhood is tied up in our views.

I believe there is sufficient community concern about this specific proposal, and about the value of residential views in general, to warrant having the Planning Commission hear this item. Prior to that hearing, erecting story poles would be especially helpful in evaluating the impact of the proposal.

Although I am signed up for just about every "listserv" distribution known to man, I do not seem to be on one that includes notice of this application. Please add me to the interested parties list.

Thank you.

Karen Herrel
West Hillsdale Boulevard
q444frontdoor@aol.com

From:	Timothy Stevens
To:	Christine "Christy" Usher
Cc:	Darcy Forsell; Ronald "Ron" Munekawa
Subject:	PA 13-074 / Schmier Residence SFDDR
Date:	Wednesday, May 07, 2014 4:29:14 PM

Our home at 4 Cragmont Court is not immediately affected by this proposed 2-story addition however we are opposed to it on the basis of precedent. People who have purchased a home with a view have paid a premium. Those without a view have been able to pay less. It is inherently unfair that an object of value should be taken away without just compensation. It is essentially a form of "taking" by a private citizen against another private citizen. While the City of San Mateo may not have any view protecting ordinances, the City Planners have the duty to protect the integrity of neighborhoods.

We urge the Zoning Administrator to deny this application.

Tim & Judy Stevens
4 Cragmont Court
San Mateo, CA 94403