



Town of Paradise Valley

6401 E Lincoln Dr
Paradise Valley, AZ 85253

Minutes – Draft

Hillside Building Committee

Wednesday, August 10, 2022

8:00 AM

Town Hall Boardroom

Committee Members

1. CALL TO ORDER

Present 5 – Chair Scott Jarson
Member Scott Tonn
Member Charles Covington
Member Kristina Locke
Member James Rose

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT

Hillside Development Planner Jose Mendez
Hillside Development Administrator Hugo Vasquez
Community Development Director Lisa Collins
Town Attorney Mike Goodman
Town Engineer Paul Mood

2. EXECUTIVE SESSION

3. APPLICATION REVIEW

A. 22-251 Concept review for a new single-family residence at 5204 E San Juan Avenue (APN 172-47-032).

Mr. Vasquez provided an overview of the item. In June 2018, the property received variance approval for encroachment into the setbacks on the corners. The applicant has submitted a new plan to maintain the same layout of the lot and driveway but has also proposed to reduce the walls on the property. The applicant has also submitted a safety improvement plan and is aware of the requirements to correct the issues with the walls. The property follows the code, but there is an issue with the property encroaching on the setback on the northwest corner of the lot.

Scott Marrot, an architect representing the applicants, explained that his team has adjusted the plans based on comments made during the preliminary review and that the main building area is very similar to the existing home built in 1956. They are trying to utilize the existing driveway and disturbance areas as much as possible. They are also working to restore some of the trails that have been developed over the years. They

have already done an erosion study and are being careful to maintain existing boulders and native areas. They are considering a combination of stone veneer, gray stucco, and dark gray metal for the material palette.

Chair Jarson noted that he attended a previous variance hearing for the lot and understood the hardship of the site. He praised the new construction approach, suggested that the team consider the paint colors in relationship to the natural site, and cautioned to be careful with the hue of the gray color. He also suggested that they consider naturalizing the flat roof with a ballast of some sort and removing any existing palm trees in the landscape plan. He asked about solar, which was not being proposed.

Member Rose asked about the location of the mechanical equipment for the negative edge pool and whether it will create noise that might reverberate on the mountain.

Mr. Marrot explained that the mechanical equipment is in a screened and gated area on the west side of the pool, out of view of the street and neighbors.

Member Tonn expressed concern about where the water will go through this lot if the rock area above San Juan is opened and asked if the road will be widened as part of the application.

Mr. Mood shared that the road would be widened to the extent possible and that the rock berm, which a previous owner added without permits, would be removed. Road improvements would then be required.

Member Locke expressed concern about the safety component of a rock berm that the property owner installed to prevent cars from driving off the road.

Mr. Mood explained that staff did not install the berm and the property owner was issued a notice of violation. However, staff did work with them to add a minimum and open the historic flow openings.

Member Tonn expressed concern about the design of intentionally taking water from the street and dumping it into the property for the homeowner. He asked about parking and construction, as it is a narrow road and might be a challenge even for a demo. He also mentioned that the lot above the property is under construction at the same time. He addressed landscape lighting, stone materials, and LRV requirements.

Chair Jarson noted that lighting comes down to placement and sometimes cans or other objects need to be moved from where they'd normally be placed to keep light reflection off vertical surfaces. He also mentioned that safety is important, but the Committee prefers less over more and urged that this be kept in mind when finalizing the design.

Member Covington confirmed there was one retention basin, and questioned what material would be used for the driveway. He suggested the applicant explore water permeable pavers.

Mr. Mood, Mr. Vasquez, and Mr. Marrot discussed widening the roadway

to accommodate parking during construction. Staff stated that a right-of-way permit could be done early, but applicants typically wait until the end because construction traffic can damage the road. The applicant is urged to remain mindful of this.

B. 22-252 Concept review for a new single-family residence at 4275 E Keim Drive (APN 169-22-044).

Mr. Vasquez provided an overview of the item, stating that the request is for a new single-family residence on this essentially undisturbed lot. Although there is an existing driveway on the west side, the new driveway is being proposed at the northeast corner of the lot. A pool and spa are also being proposed. The preliminary grading and draining plan will aim to maintain current storm water flows and the property will be on septic as sewer is unavailable here. He noted the applicant has already submitted a safety improvement plan, as well as material samples. Everything submitted has been extremely detailed and the applicant is in a good position for final review.

Brent Kendle, an architect representing the applicant, stated that the site has several challenges, including a driveway that runs along the west side, utility lines that run through the site, and the fact that the site is a bowl shape that slopes towards the southeast. He explained that they approached the design by working with the contours of the lot and positioning the main living space to look at Camelback Mountain and not towards the neighboring homes to the south. He also noted challenges they faced with retaining walls and drainage, but used architectural strategies such as outdoor rooms, courtyards, and boulder walls to minimize the amount of retaining walls needed. They also chose to use a warm gray block for the building and are considering a combination of split-face blocks for the home.

Chair Jarson praised the concept review presentation and ballasted roof. He also asked about plans for solar in the future.

Mr. Kendle stated that there were no plans for solar now, but it could be considered in the future.

Chair Jarson mentioned the Committee wants the landscape to be mostly natural desert. He appreciated the driveway issue being solved.

Member Tonn praised the design, stating it was perfect for the lot.

Member Covington asked if the existing driveway would be gone.

Mr. Kendle replied that the asphalt would be removed and restored to its natural grade and look. Neighbors would retain the easement to use it, but it wouldn't be paved. He added that they are hoping for shrubs and other plants to grow, making the area look natural.

C. 22-253 Concept review for a new single-family residence at 7941 N 55th Street (APN 169-06-076B).

Mr. Mendez provided an overview of the item. The proposed project is to

construct a new single-family residence, and pool, with a total livable area of 7,335 square feet. There is an existing disturbance on the property because of cutting done on the road, which encompasses 2,200 square feet. The proposed design includes a three-story home with an underground garage, but the lot is difficult to build on, so variances are requested. The diagrams submitted include variances for disturbance, height, retaining walls, and setbacks. There is a parking court and proposed solar which is not shielded from street view. Mr. Mendez emphasizes the code, stating that solar panels must be shielded at eye level. The applicant has been asked to raise the parapet to change the design.

Andy Byrnes, an architect representing the applicant, stated that this project is located on a tricky Hillside site. He explained that the variances being requested are forced by the site conditions, existing disturbance, and interpretation of the Hillside code. They're applying for variances in the front setback for retaining walls, but they don't think they will need them as the ground is likely to be hard enough for a natural rock cut. The garage has been lifted as high as possible to mitigate the cut, but at some point, the grade needs to accommodate normal car needs to be able to get into the garage. He mentioned the garage is 100% underground, other than the part made drivable. They've looked at staggering the project to make the vertical face shorter, but they would have to go outside and need a three-story tower to get vertical circulation from the garage level to the top level. He believes the variances requested are well defended.

Mr. Mendez stated that the building meets setbacks, but the home was shifted such to no longer surpass the 24-foot natural grade.

Mr. Byrnes stated that the Town separates each variance into individual pieces, however, they are interconnected; each one dependent on the other.

Chair Jarson expressed concern about the heights and third stories of the building, stating it's problematic to support for Hillside as it sets a bad precedent. He also mentioned the solar paneling needing to be screened as it is visible from other areas and reflective. Finally, he was concerned about the material palette and the scope of the requests.

Mr. Byrnes explained that the building is under the height allowed but the discussion of two or three stories is that the house will have to go 25 feet further up the hill to accommodate a car turning around and parking on the first level. He believes there is no two-story option which does not result in the house sitting further up on the hill.

Member Locke asked about the neighboring property to the south, if that property required variances, and the land's topography.

Mr. Vasquez stated he was unaware of any variances required for the neighboring property.

Mr. Byrnes explained that the neighboring property has a different topography, with a different elevation than the subject property, making it

difficult to access the house and requires a large retaining wall.

Member Tonn noted there may be a solution for the panel reflectivity from the road by using a matte finish, integrated solar system from a company called GAF Energy.

Chair Jarson asked if reducing the size of the house was explored to reduce the number of variances required.

Mr. Byrnes replied that reducing the size of the house does not solve the problem of accessing the garage. All options have been studied, and none of them are functional or reasonable.

Mr. Mendez mentioned some of the suggestions that staff has made, such as moving the mass of the building and flattening the roof but noted that they would still require variances and would not fully solve the issue. He added that they have looked at creating an underground garage, but it would be visible from the street and would require variances.

Chair Jarson discussed the practical considerations for the construction project and mentioned the need for balance on Hillside properties, including ballasted roofs and lighting. He noted the Committee may be limited on providing input due to the large number of variances required for the project. He asked for input from other committee members to see if there was any guidance they could provide.

Member Tonn presented the argument that this is the best solution for the project despite requiring a larger number of variances.

Mr. Byrnes explained that the company is hoping to receive input from the Committee on design-related issues that can be addressed before the final Hillside review.

Chair Jarson stated that the Committee can only give input on minimizing the number of variances and the final design may need to be smaller to fit the constraints of the site. He also mentioned that he, personally, would not support the variances because he believes there must be another solution, and a smaller house would fit.

Mr. Byrnes agreed that reducing the size of the house would not solve the problem and that the company has studied all possible alternatives.

Mr. Mendez clarified that after the project goes through the Board of Adjustment for variances, it would come back to the Committee in case anything changed at the Board meeting.

and that any changes based on that meeting will depend on the Committee and the Board. If the project gets approval for all variances and the design stays the same, it will go for formal review. Changes will have to be made if there are denials of certain variances, and it will come back to the concept.

Andy Byrnes expressed frustration with the long variance process. He wished the neighbors were present to understand the project and suggested impressing the project upon both the Committee and Board by

doing a more thorough drawing.

Mr. Mendez addressed the water retention under the driveway and noted staff is still waiting on a grading and drainage plan.

Member Tonn asked a question about timing, specifically when the applicant could apply or get into this group if all their variances are approved and there is no substantial change to the design.

Mr. Vasquez suggested that if the variances are approved and there is no substantial change to the design, the project could return to the Committee for formal review based on the feedback from the Board. If the variances are approved, and there are substantial changes, the project would have to come back for another concept review.

4. STAFF REPORTS

5. COMMITTEE REPORTS

6. NEXT MEETING DATE

Chair Jarson noted that the next meeting date would be September 21st, 2022.


7. ADJOURNMENT

Motion for adjournment made at 9:46 AM.

A motion was made by Chair Jarson, seconded by Member Covington, to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried with the following vote:

Aye: 5 – Chair Jarson, Member Tonn, Member Covington, Member Rose, Member Locke.

Paradise Valley Hillside Building Committee

By: 
Cherise Fullbright, Secretary