



San Mateo County
Bayside Design Review Board c/o Erica Adams
455 County Center
Redwood City, CA 94063

July 29, 2022

RE: 634 Palomar Dr. PLN-2020-00251

Dear Design Review Board,

The Palomar Park Owners' Association, (PPO), represents over 300 property owners within the subdivision of Palomar Park. In recent years many residents have completed remodels and they have all been complimentary to our community and residents have seen these as harmonious with the existing character and advantageous improvements to Palomar Park.

It is extremely unfortunate that the architect and owners of the 634 Palomar Dr. project have not followed any of the adopted Palomar Park Design standards and are presenting a design application that is completely unfitting and extremely disruptive to our neighborhood. The super modern design, outrageous roof line, site color contrast, hilltop monolith siting, overall bulk, roof deck and enormous size is a stark contrast to all existing homes in our community. The removal of so many mature oaks is not only an erosion danger to the hillside's multiple landslide repairs, it also obliterates privacy and native natural resources of the parcel. The design disrupts views of two homes, grossly shades two downhill properties, and invades privacy with its roof deck. A planning application with such severe impacts to the community and which so severely disrupts the harmonious nature of architecture, public health and safety, property values and enjoyment of existing residents is the exact reason the Palomar Park Design Review District was formed and to prevent such destructive assaults on our community.

Many residents are perplexed and feel the County planning process is in default when it was pointed out that the architect who designed the 634 Palomar project, Alpheus Jessup of M. Designs, sits on the Design Review Board and blatantly took an unprofessional and unethical path to abandon his duty as a Design Review Board member and purposely ignore the adopted Palomar Park Design standards, potentially negatively impacting all residents of Palomar Park. The adopted standards for Palomar Park are very clear, and the architect and owners seem to have no interest in following them. Residents within the 300' zone of notification have not received notices of the design review meeting and the site has no visible posting. It is the intention of the (PPO) to bring to the attention of the Board of Supervisors, who appointed Mr. Jessup to the Design Review Board, of this blatant, unprofessional, and unethical action relating to his specific public role on the Design Review Board and his actions relating to this project. This precedence cannot stand as acceptable within the SMC Planning Process and the (PPO) requests a copy of the Design Review Committee *Section 6565.2 A.5 (adopted rules for the conduct of business and conflict of interest code)*.

Furthermore, it is well known by many residents of Palomar Park that the vacant parcel at 634 Palomar Dr. and the neighboring parcels on Los Cerros, Loma Ct. and Loma Rd. have a long and

destructive history of major landslides and problematic hydrologic issues. The entire hillside is a landslide zone which has had multiple repairs to only slide multiple times again. Some of the landslides and water issues have caused major damage to structures, driveways, and multiple public roadways. Three separate homes over the years have been destroyed by landslides on the Los Cerros and Palomar Dr. hillside. I was a volunteer with the Palomar Park Fire Dept. when the third house slid down the hill and landed on Los Cerros Rd. within a few feet of 634 Palomar Dr. a mountain of mud came along with it and severely damaged a second home at 18 Los Cerros as well as Los Cerros Rd. The three most recent reoccurring landslides occurred in 2017 and 2018 at 634 Palomar Dr. and along contiguous adjacent vacant Los Cerros hillsides. The landslides were extremely large and again swallowed up an entire hillside and severely damaged yet another structure as well as Palomar Dr. which is our sole egress/ingress. Previous County Planning and Building officials and the County Geologist (which was not Cotton and Shires) had intimate historical knowledge of the volatile and severe instability due to the prolific spring that runs through this hillside. This spring has been tested multiple times as pure and was once the domestic water source for all the homes of Palomar Park. The magnitude of hydrological issues and historical knowledge of reoccurring landslides has not passed on to the new generation of County Planners nor the consultants utilized to form new opinions and ignore the past. In essence they have not witnessed any of the horrific damage or studied the magnitude of these reoccurring landslides or even corroborated with other knowledgeable professional peers on the reality of the hillside geology and large quantity of spring flow that continuously percolates through the entire hillside 365 days a year. It seems unconceivable that the County dismisses current and past professional reports and warnings to not disturb the hillside, maintain certain setbacks from current and past slides and to not remove significant vegetation (trees) near active and previous slide zones. The County's naïve dismissing of these warnings regarding the continued magnitude of instability, extreme volatility, and problematic hillside hydrology is very dangerous to our community with potentially catastrophic impacts.

The Palomar Park Owners' Association urge the Design Review Board to not approve this design and to respect, preserve and protect the community of Palomar Park.

Please send all communications to Palomar Park Owners' Association: email Palomarnews@gmail.com and by mail to 419 Palomar Dr. Palomar Park, CA 94062.

Sincerely,

Rich Landi

Rich Landi, President
Palomar Park Owners' Association

Cc.

Camille Leung, SMC Senior Planner
Steve Monowitz, Director of Planning
Don Horsley, SMC Board of Supervisors

To: Erica Adams (via eadams@smcgov.org)
Bayside Design Review Officer
From: Joann Landi
Date: 7/27/22
Subject: 634 Palomar Drive
PLN 2020-00251
Project Plans, page 17

I was among a committee of Palomar Park residents who crafted the design review standards for our community. Subsequent to the adoption of those standards, I served as the community representative for 12 years. The foregoing commentary is based on that experience, familiarity with and intent of San Mateo County Ordinance Code Section 6565.16. The premise of design review in San Mateo County unincorporated communities was to ensure that new development is compatible with the physical setting of the site and the visual character of the community. In establishing design review districts, the Board of Supervisors found that in some neighborhoods and areas of the County there were not proper design standards, there was erection of buildings and structures unrelated to the sites, incompatible with the character of the neighborhood and insensitive to the natural environment, especially in existing communities.

It is with that in mind that I have made the following assumptions based upon my knowledge of the standards:

- (1) Per Section 6565.5. there was no pre-design conference with the project designer and/or the owner(s). The intent of the pre-design conference is to assure that the designer and owner are aware of the design standards and expectations of the County prior to commencing design of a project.
- (2) The designer has no knowledge of the general standards in Chapter 28.1 Design Review Districts nor has that individual thoroughly read and understood Section 6565.16.
- (3) The designer has not visited the site nor taken the time to travel through Palomar Park in order to get a sense of the esthetics of the community.

Conversely, if my assumptions are incorrect the designer has consciously designed a structure that would not be compatible with neighboring homes anywhere in Palomar Park. Even Palomar Oaks, a relatively new subdivision for Palomar Park, dared not submit such an egregious design. The proposed design neither emulates or reflects the predominant architectural styles and the natural surroundings.

I have recently learned that the project designer sits as one of the architects on the Bayside Design Review Committee. That is a conflict that can only be resolved by his sitting in the audience and his place taken by the alternate architect. As a matter of fact based on this submittal, the designer neither understands nor applied the standards to this project and is unfit to sit on the Committee.

As of today there is no visible green Notice of Design Review posted.

Erica

I am writing regarding the following Design Review:

Owner: Anusha Thalapaneni and David E. Jackson

Applicant: Maurits de Gans, Architect

File No.: PLN2020-00251

Location: 634 Palomar Drive, Palomar Park

Assessor's Parcel No.: 051-022-380

I have lived in Palomar Park for almost 44 years & I love the area since it is largely open space with homes that are mostly ranch style or look appropriate for a hilly & tree covered area. The proposed house has a modern design which will look completely out of place in the neighborhood, & since it will be built on the top of a hill it will be a daily eyesore to the many Palomar Park residents who walk, bicycle or drive on the main road, Palomar Drive.

I am also concerned about the stability of the hill where the home will be built, since I remember that part of that hill gave way (I believe in the 1980's). I know work was done to help stabilize the hill (I'm guessing 5-10 years ago), but it is still a very steep hill & work on or close to the hill could cause instability which could eventually cause damage to Los Cerros & Palomar Drive, which intersect below the proposed construction site.

I am not against development in Palomar Park (3 houses have been built above, below & to the right of my house since I moved here in 1978) but the design of this home is completely out of character for Palomar Park.

Thank you,

Bob Guenley & Teresa McDaniel

1150 Palomar Drive, Redwood City, CA 94062

guenley@outlook.com

(650) 799-5516

Dear BDRC

My name is Terence Irwin and I am the owner of the neighboring property to 634 Palomar Drive. My address is 730 Loma Ct which sits directly behind and uphill of the subject property. We have lived here since 1994 and have subsequently seen many modifications to 634 specifically illegal grading. Currently there are shoddy plywood walls at 634 supporting an illegal cut at the toe of my property. These need to be corrected with concrete walls and drainage to re-support what was taken away. I am experiencing some slipping and soil cracking because of this unsupported condition. I do not see this addressed on the site plans?

The variance for a new 1500 gallon septic tank should not be granted as it is too close to an original wall that is supporting my property. If this wall is disturbed during construction I will have no option except a legal one. Adding additional water via septic will be detrimental to our fragile hillside this is not a good idea where we have experienced several slides so far. I would like to know how much water per day could actually be injected into the hillside from this new system? And proof that the hillside can actually absorb it?

The Architecture of this house is not in character with our rural neighborhood. We are much like Portola Valley here. I do not want to look at a white concrete monolith, walls and roof, when I am normally surrounded by nature! Colors need to be earth tones and wooded elements added to help it blend in. This modern design may be popular but our neighborhood was built as a retreat from denser urban areas and the homes here are rustic and integrated with nature not cement blocks.

Sincerely

Terence Irwin

Terence and Elaine Irwin
730 Loma Ct.
Palomar Park, CA. 94062
Terryirwin1@me.com
650-222-3990 cell

Terry Irwin
Irwin Fisher Inc.
Sent from my iPad.

Hi Erica –

Looks like the County has quite a conflict of interest as ARCHITECT M DESIGNS ARCHITECTS 4131 W. EL CAMINO REAL, STE 200 PALO ALTO, CA 94306 CONTACT: ALPHEUS W. JESSUP is the architect for 634 Palomar Dr. and he happens to also sit on the Bayside Design Review committee. His design is an ultra modern, extra large, stucco structure that is not harmonious with the 1940-50's bungalow & craftsman style community. The design does not complement the site and destroys the natural resources of the parcel and will reduce property values and leave residents wondering if an alien ship has landed in their neighborhood. This design is **the exact opposite** of what the County Bayside Palomar Park Design standards spell out. Are the Bayside Design Review Board individuals required to read and be knowledgeable about the design standards they are supposed to be enforcing or designing to? There seems to be some major disconnect between Alpheus Jessup, his role as a Bayside Design Review Board member and the County Planning Dept. Not sure if anyone in the planning department has even been to Palomar Park but I suggest someone take a field trip up there. What will be the process for this conflict of interest situation?

Denise Enea

July 25, 2022

ATTENTION: Erica Adams
Bayside Design Review Officer

RE: Public Design Review, 634 Palomar Drive (PLN 2020-00251)

Dear Ms. Adams:

As a long-time resident of Palomar Park, I must express my concerns about the above cited project, planned for the historically unstable vacant slope just up the road from my home.

In 1968, eminent domain forced my family out of our 200 acres that now form the heart of Edgewood County Park. My parents sought an area with comparable peace and beauty. Palomar Park was their choice, due to its rustic, bucolic ambience, large lots, and the endearing charm of its existing homes, many of which were built in the 1930s as modest weekend getaways from San Francisco's hustle and bustle.

This proposed design would represent an *extreme* departure from the architectural charm and laid-back atmosphere that attracted the vast majority of Palomar Park's current residents. Such a large, futuristic home would be an uncharacteristic visual assault in this precious, visually serene community. Its grossly stark, modern design would stand out as a severe departure from the more gentle, welcoming aspect of the other homes in Palomar Park that are nestled gently and discreetly among our lovely oaks and canyons. Construction of such a prominently situated, large, stark structure that is so inconsistent and incompatible with the designs of Palomar Park's existing homes *would be a travesty*. The proposed design neither would fit in, nor would it be welcome to its most proximate neighbors.

I urge you to send this proposed design back to the drawing boards, with the requirement that it be significantly reimagined to blend in more compatibly with—and to be more representative of—Palomar Park's existing ambience and architecture.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Respectfully,
Patricia Taylor
415 Palomar Drive

Dear Ms. Adams,

We own a home at 255 Montalvo Road, Palomar Park and are in favor of these new more modern homes being constructed or renovated in a healthy safe way which we feel enhances the community, visual aesthetics, design and value of the neighborhood.

There are currently multiple construction projects affecting the condition of upper Palomar and Montalvo roads so the county should address this, please.

Thank you,

Devon and Sam Crews

August 1, 2022

Dear Ms. Adams & Design Review Committee,

My husband and I live at 722 Palomar Drive in Redwood City. Our house is directly behind 634 Palomar Drive. We are writing to you as we have several serious concerns regarding the proposed design of 634 Palomar Drive. The first and foremost concern is the effects a structure built on that property will have on our property as well as the properties of our neighbors, to the sides and below us.

The fact that numerous professional reports have been done on the parcel at 634 Palomar and the findings determined the property for various reasons was not suitable for development and doing so, would have severe consequences for the surrounding homes, makes this proposed design incomprehensible to us!! The architect of this project holding a position on the Design Review Committee seems to be in direct conflict of interest, as the priority of the committee member should be to protect and respect the professional reports that have been obtained.

When we moved to Palomar Park in 2007, we fell in love with the rural setting. We found our own rustic retreat! One of the key factors in purchasing our home was the spectacular view and privacy our lot offered. The previous owner assured us that our view would never be obstructed as the parcel below (634 Palomar Drive) was not buildable do to many landslides.

If this design moves forward not only would we lose our view, experience a significant decrease in the value of our home, but most importantly we would potentially have major structural problems with our property.

The design that has been submitted looks totally out of place in the natural beauty of Palomar Park. The design resembles an institution or hospital and would be an eyesore for our neighborhood!!

We hope the Design Review Committee will revisit the reports on file and realize the extreme negative impact this would have on the Palomar Park community and reject this design.

Sincerely,

Kathy & Kent Fagliano

San Mateo County Board of Supervisors July 29, 2022
Supervisor Don Horsley
455 County Center
Redwood City, CA 94063
RE: Opposition of Design Review Board Appointment
Alpheus W. Jessup

Dear Supervisor Horsley,

The Palomar Park Owners' Association, (PPO) represents over 300 property owners within the subdivision of Palomar Park. This correspondence is a formal opposition to the reappointment of Alpheus W. Jessup to the Bayside Design Review Committee.

Palomar Park residents and the PPO Board are having numerous discussions regarding recent and very troubling, unprofessional and unethical actions by Design Review Committee member Jessup who is also currently employed as an architect with M Designs. Our community is very familiar with the Design Review process and many years ago we worked with the County Planning Department and Board of Supervisors to incorporate a separate Palomar Park Design Review District and specific design guidelines for development in our community. The Palomar Park District Design Guidelines were adopted by the Board of Supervisors to protect our small, fragile, older community from poorly planned projects which could easily disrupt or deteriorate the consistent character of the neighborhood, the erection of buildings and structures unrelated to the sites, incompatible and insensitive to the natural environment, disruptive to neighboring properties and which do not protect the native and natural resources. Palomar Park has maintained a resident and alternate resident member on the committee since the formation of the Palomar Park District and have not had any real issues with the Design Review Process or the Design Review Committee until now.

A recent new house application for 634 Palomar Dr. in Palomar Park is currently on the agenda for the August 3, 2022, Design Review meeting. The project was designed by committee member Jessup. The issue the PPO Board and Palomar Park residents have is not that Mr. Jessup is a member of the Design Review Committee and also the architect for this project. The issue is the unprofessional and unethical manner in which Mr. Jessup handled the conflict. Mr. Jessup designed the house at 634 Palomar Dr. without regard to any of the SMC adopted Palomar Park Design guidelines. In a purposeful offensive assault on all the residents of Palomar Park, Committee member Jessup designed an ultra-modern house, which possess none of the character attributes of the neighborhood. It disrupts and severely impacts the immediate neighbors, evokes privacy issues and destroys the natural environment of the site completely. The design exhibits absolutely none of the Palomar Park design standards instead violates the clearly spelled out design guidelines. This precedent of intentional malice and conflict of interest on a community by a Design Review Committee member is not acceptable. Any Board of Supervisor's appointed Design Review Committee member must possess an ethical and professional character to uphold the adopted standards in any situation. Committee members must be unwavering in following and utilizing the same design standards they are enforcing and imposing on other applicants who are mandated to submit their projects in front of the appointed committee member. Utilizing a position of power while on a municipal committee to advance a project for their personal benefit or equally unacceptable; purposely disregarding adopted design standards on a personal or business project invalidates the Design Review process and potentially impacts all the residents whose neighborhood is at risk of development that has been designed by an unethical committee member using an appointed position to push through a design that has no relationship with approved design standards. Committee member Jessup's actions have illegitimized part of the SMC Planning process and potentially impacted the entire community of Palomar Park. If reappointed as a Committee member Mr. Jessup likely has the aptitude to replicate his disloyal, undisciplined, unethical and unprofessional actions and potentially impact another sensitive community.

We understand the urgency of finding a replacement architect to serve on the Design Review Committee. The community of Palomar Park will work hard to facilitate a recommended replacement for the Design Review Committee and provide a name or names to the Director of Planning.

Sincerely,
Rich Landi, President
Palomar Park Owners' Association cc. Erica Adams, SMC Planner
Camile Leung, SMC Planner
Steve Monowitz, SMC Planning Director
PPO Board of Directors

San Mateo County
Bayside Design Review Board c/o Erica Adams
455 County Center
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It is extremely unfortunate that the architect and owners of the 634 Palomar Dr. project have not followed any of the adopted Palomar Park Design standards and are presenting a design application that is completely unfitting and extremely disruptive to our neighborhood. The super modern design, outrageous roof line, site color contrast, hilltop monolith siting, overall bulk, roof deck and enormous size is a stark contrast to all existing homes in our community. The removal of so many mature oaks is not only an erosion danger to the hillside's multiple landslide repairs, it also obliterates privacy and native natural resources of the parcel. The design disrupts views of two homes, grossly shades two downhill properties, and invades privacy with its roof deck. A planning application with such severe impacts to the community and which so severely disrupts the harmonious nature of architecture, public health and safety, property values and enjoyment of existing residents is the exact reason the Palomar Park Design Review District was formed and to prevent such destructive assaults on our community.

Many residents are perplexed and feel the County planning process is in default when it was pointed out that the architect who designed the 634 Palomar project, Alpheus Jessup of M. Designs, sits on the Design Review Board and blatantly took an unprofessional and unethical path to abandon his duty as a Design Review Board member and purposely ignore the adopted Palomar Park Design standards, potentially negatively impacting all residents of Palomar Park. The adopted standards for Palomar Park are very clear, and the architect and owners seem to have no interest in following them. Residents within the 300' zone of notification have not received notices of the design review meeting and the site has no visible posting. It is the intention of the (PPO) to bring to the attention of the Board of Supervisors, who appointed Mr. Jessup to the Design Review Board, of this blatant, unprofessional, and unethical action relating to his specific public role on the Design Review Board

and his actions relating to this project. This precedence cannot stand as acceptable within the SMC Planning Process and the (PPO) requests a copy of the Design Review Committee *Section 6565.2 A.5 (adopted rules for the conduct of business and conflict of interest code)*.

Furthermore, it is well known by many residents of Palomar Park that the vacant parcel at 634 Palomar Dr. and the neighboring parcels on Los Cerros, Loma Ct. and Loma Rd. have a long and destructive history of major landslides and problematic hydrologic issues. The entire hillside is a landslide zone which has had multiple repairs to only slide multiple times again. Some of the landslides and water issues have caused major damage to structures, driveways, and multiple public roadways. Three separate homes over the years have been destroyed by landslides on the Los Cerros and Palomar Dr. hillside. I was a volunteer with the Palomar Park Fire Dept. when the third house slid down the hill and landed on Los Cerros Rd. within a few feet of 634 Palomar Dr. a mountain of mud came along with it and severely damaged a second home at 18 Los Cerros as well as Los Cerros Rd. The three most recent reoccurring landslides occurred in 2017 and 2018 at 634 Palomar Dr. and along contiguous adjacent vacant Los Cerros hillsides. The landslides were extremely large and again swallowed up an entire hillside and severely damaged yet another structure as well as Palomar Dr. which is our sole egress/ingress. Previous County Planning and Building officials and the County Geologist (which was not Cotton and Shires) had intimate historical knowledge of the volatile and severe instability due to the prolific spring that runs through this hillside. This spring has been tested multiple times as pure and was once the domestic water source for all the homes of Palomar Park. The magnitude of hydrological issues and historical knowledge of reoccurring landslides has not passed on to the new generation of County Planners nor the consultants utilized to form new opinions and ignore the past. In essence they have not witnessed any of the horrific damage or studied the magnitude of these reoccurring landslides or even corroborated with other knowledgeable professional peers on the reality of the hillside geology and large quantity of spring flow that continuously percolates through the entire hillside 365 days a year. It seems unconceivable that the County dismisses current and past professional reports and warnings to not disturb the hillside, maintain certain setbacks from current and past slides and to not remove significant vegetation (trees) near active and previous slide zones. The County's naïve dismissing of these warnings regarding the continued magnitude of instability, extreme volatility, and problematic hillside hydrology is very dangerous to our community with potentially catastrophic impacts.

The Palomar Park Owners' Association urge the Design Review Board to not approve this design and to respect, preserve and protect the community of Palomar Park.

Please send all communications to Palomar Park Owners' Association: email Palomarnews@gmail.com and by mail to 419 Palomar Dr. Palomar Park, CA 94062.

Sincerely,

Rich Landi

Rich Landi, President
Palomar Park Owners' Association

Cc.

Camille Leung, SMC Senior Planner
Steve Monowitz, Director of Planning
Don Horsley, SMC Board of Supervisors

Dear Ms. Adams:

Having lived in Palomar Park for over 20 years, I have a strong interest in maintaining this neighborhood's character and charm.

The design that has been proposed for 634 Palomar Drive violates long-established design standards, and if approved, would destroy Palomar Park's character, *opening the door for others to further defile the charm and nature of our community.*

It has been brought to residents' collective attention that the architect on this project sits on the Design Review Committee, and therefore, has a **severe conflict of interest** in this matter. *He must recuse himself from ANY & ALL deliberations and decisions relating to this case.*

In addition, as a member of the DR Committee, this architect not only should be *intimately* familiar with Palomar Park's design standards--he should *implement and follow them* in his designs for this community. Clearly, neither is the case, leaving his clients victims of **gross professional negligence** by:

A) creating for the clients a design SO INCREDIBLY out of character with the existing neighborhood;

B) violating *numerous* County-regulated design standards, e.g.:

1) Design Standards for Palomar Park, Section 6565.16 B, Architectural Styles:

"Design new buildings that are architecturally compatible with existing buildings by requiring them to reflect and emulate, as much as possible, the predominant architectural styles and the natural surroundings of the immediate area."

2) Design Standards for Palomar Park, Section 6565.16 F, Roofs:

"Design buildings using primarily pitched roofs. Design buildings with roofs that reflect the predominant architectural styles of the immediate area."

3) Design Standards for Palomar Park, Section 6565.16 G, Materials and Colors:

"Make varying architectural styles compatible by using similar materials and colors which blend with the natural setting and the immediate area. Avoid the use of building materials

and colors which are highly reflective and contrasting by requiring them to blend and harmonize with the natural woodland environment and vegetation of the area...

Section 6565.16 G (continued): 2)Encourage the use of building materials that are compatible with the predominant architectural styles of the immediate area. In areas where a bungalow craftsman and ranch architectural styles are predominant, use real wood and stone building materials such as board and batten, wall shingles, fire resistant roof shingles, flagstone, and rock..."

The following is copied from the County's website (emphasis added):

*"The Bayside Design Review Committee is appointed by the Board of Supervisors to **ensure that new development is compatible with the physical setting of the site and the visual character of the communities of Palomar Park...** Specific design standards for each community have been adopted by the County (contained in the [Design Review \(DR\) Zoning Ordinance \(Chapter 28.1\)](#)) which are **used by the Committee to evaluate and take action on each application.**"*

Please reject the proposed design, and to instruct the architect and his clients to revise their design to comply with Palomar Park's Design Standards and blend in more appropriately with the existing, surrounding community.

Thank you,

Maya Dooley