

**CORRESPONDENCE
RECEIVED FOR MEETING OF
NOVEMBER 14, 2005**

BUFF, SMITH & HENSMAN
A PROFESSIONAL CORPORATION
ARCHITECTS & ASSOCIATES

November 10, 2005

Pasadena City Council
City Clerk
117 East Colorado Blvd.
Pasadena, CA 91105

Re: Tentative Parcel Map #061676
720 South San Rafael Avenue
Hillside Development Permit #4395
725 Hillside Terrace

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CITY CLERK
CITY OF PASADENA

Dear Council Members:

Attached are four photographs of nearby properties on Hillside Terrace. These are submitted as additional information to illustrate that tall or three level structures on Hillside Terrace exist and our two-story house with basement (more than 50% of walls below grade) would not be incompatible with them.

777 Hillside Terrace is the neighboring house south of our proposed project. It is a two-story house but it has a tall underfloor space with a blank wall facing the street plus two tall retaining walls for the driveway. It is taller in overall height than our project.

The retaining wall in the backyard of 808 San Rafael actually fronts on Hillside Terrace adjacent to 777 Hillside Terrace. It is over 15 feet tall with a 4 foot chain link fence on top. Above and beyond this, you can see the back of the two-story house on this property.

810 Hillside Terrace is three lots south of our project on the opposite side of the street. It is clearly three stories with the garage on the lowest level.

830 Hillside Terrace is adjacent to 810. It has a garage at street level, 10 feet back from the curb, plus a tall stairway/retaining wall leading up to a two story house above.

We hope these photographs will show anyone that has not visited our site and nearby properties, that our proposed project would be compatible with other houses in the neighborhoods.

Sincerely,



Dennis G. Smith, A.I.A.
Enclosure



BACKYARD OF 808 SAN RAFAEL
(ACTUAL FRONTAGE ADJACENT TO
777 HILLSIDE TERRACE)



777 HILLSIDE TERRACE



810 HILLSIDE TERRACE



830 HILLSIDE TERRACE

November 11, 2005

Pasadena City Council
City Clerk
117 East Colorado Blvd.
Pasadena, California 91105

**RE: Lot split, Tree Removal and House Development
720 South San Rafael, Pasadena 91105**

Dear City Council Members,

This is the fourth letter which we have written and presented in opposition to the proposed development at 720 South San Rafael. The continued participation and interaction by us and with our neighbors indicates that we are deeply interested in and concerned about this project.

We would like to thank the Council for their continued interest in this project, but are somewhat confused about the progression of events during this one week continuation. We know that new issues and suggestions have been made about the project, but are uncertain as to where these documents are made available for our review.

In this fourth letter, we would like to take this opportunity to re-state our concerns and opposition to this project. Perhaps a chronology of events (from our perspective) would be in order.

We, the neighbors opposing the project, first learned of the project in late July 2005, when CITY signs were hung on the property alerting us to the permit application/hearing. Up until that time, we had received no communication from Mr. Chris Madison or his representatives in either 1993 or 2005. As a result of the City notice, concerned neighbors banded together to protest the project. The end result is that the City Council has wound up reviewing the matter.

In September 2005, the city council heard Mr. Chris Madison state that he had contacted the neighbors in 1993 and again in 2005 about the project. **He had not!!!** The Council then suggested, and rightly so, that Mr. Chris Madison should attempt to communicate with his neighbors. (Thanks to Mr. Steve Madison and his office who arranged a meeting on October 12, 2005.) The time and date for that meeting (a Wednesday, in the middle of the afternoon) was arranged for the convenience of Mr. Chris Madison's schedule only. When many of the neighbors indicated that the time/date was inconvenient, Mr. Chris Madison offered **NO** other time and date for the meeting. This forced neighbors to rearrange their schedules, come late or just miss the meeting altogether. At that meeting, Mr. Chris Madison basically informed the concerned neighbors that he was proceeding with his plan and was unwilling to make any amendments to the project. This meeting was not viewed as constructive or successful by the concerned neighbors.

Our letters of opposition to the project have not diminished nor have our concerns. We cite them below.

1) Protected tree to be removed. We ask the Council these questions. How much time and effort went into designating this tree as protected? What does "protected" really mean? If this tree has been deemed so valuable (we are sure that it has added to the value of Mr. C. Madison's property), then how does one development plan erase the validity of this protection?

2) The Hillside Ordinance and its intent. Just as with the protected tree, but on a much grander scale, the time, effort and intent involved in the development of the ordinance by the Council is now being challenged. If Pasadena's hillsides are deemed worthy of protection (as the ordinance mandates), how can the Council permit this exception? Either the ordinance is enforced or it is not. We believe that the primary reason that Mr. Steve Madison has brought this project before the Council is that it represents the first major challenge to the Hillside ordinance and that he is looking to his fellow council members to help maintain the integrity of the ordinance. If this project is permitted, it will set a precedent which will be cited in every future case of development in Pasadena's hillsides. We ask this question. Does the City enforce its ordinances or not?

We are also curious about the current project, in that Mr. Chris Madison had permission to build this project in 1993 and didn't. How then is he allowed to submit the **exact same 1993 design** for current approval with no modifications or changes mandated by the Hillside Ordinance?

3) Stability of the Hillside. At the Council meeting on Nov. 7, 2005, the council heard from other concerned citizens about proposed development on the West slope of this same hill. Our neighbors from the La Loma, Laguna, Lagunita area, cited all of the same concerns which we have offered repeatedly. Several years ago, 917 La Loma slid down onto 911 La Loma. 2004-2005 saw mud slides, trees toppled and severe drainage and stability problems with this Hillside. As concerned neighbors, we have all offered proof of existing underground springs which constantly affect our properties. The Council needs to understand that we consider the excavation of and construction on this hill to be a major risk to the safety of ourselves and our property.

The bottom line is that this project seeks to place a house, which does not meet the Hillside Ordinance, on a hill which has repeatedly demonstrated itself to be problematic and unstable. **We continue to oppose this project and urge the City Council to deny this subdivision.**

Sincerely,



James R. Parks, MD.
Lee Miller Parks, Ph.D.
640 Hillside Terrace
Pasadena, CA 91105