

OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

DATE: December 11, 2006
TO: City Council
FROM: City Manager
RE: Call for Review of Tentative Parcel Map #061676 and Hillside Development Permit #4395 for 720 South San Rafael Avenue (725 Hillside Terrace).

On September 26, 2005 and November 7, 2005 the City Council conducted a Call for Review of Tentative Parcel Map #061676 and Hillside Development Permit #4395 for 720 South San Rafael Avenue. The applications include: 1) a Tentative Parcel Map application to allow a lot split of the existing 110,642 square foot (2.5 acres) lot into two lots of 86,172 square feet (Parcel A) and 24,514 square feet (Parcel B), respectively, 2) a Hillside Development Permit application to allow a subdivision in the Hillside Overlay district, 3) a Hillside Development Permit application to allow the construction of a new 5,328 square foot single-family house on Parcel B (725 Hillside Terrace); and 4) a private tree removal application for the removal of one Toyon (*Heteromeles Arbutifolia*) tree.

The applications were initially approved by the Hearing Officer on August 3, 2005 following a recommendation of approval by staff. The applications were continued indefinitely by the City Council to allowed time for an additional study of the site to determine if the proposed house would pose a safety hazard to the neighborhood. Specifically, the study was to examine slope stability, soils, and hydrology (surface and sub-surface) of the site for the proposed single-family house as well as an examination of the existing retaining wall on the eastern property line. Finally, staff was directed to re-circulate the environmental documents with all technical studies and re-notice a continued public hearing.

The City contracted with Arroyo Geotechnical of Anaheim, California to perform the requested analysis. Staff from Arroyo Geotechnical visited the site and performed a geotechnical reconnaissance of the site and surrounding areas and excavated four exploratory trenches on-site. In addition, city staff provided Arroyo Geotechnical with the geotechnical report performed by the applicant's engineer (Cousineau, 2004) as

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well as the analysis of that report by the neighbor's engineer(Sassan, 2005). Arroyo Geotechnical's report is attached as Attachment B to this memorandum.

In summary, Arroyo Geotechnical determined that the existing site conditions (slope stability, soils, etc.) would not compromise the structural integrity of the proposed house or result in unsafe conditions for the neighborhood, provided the recommendations in the report are followed. These recommendations include proper sloping or shoring of all temporary excavations, design parameters of the building's footings and floor slabs, and measures to accommodate water run-off both during and after construction. The project architect has reviewed the report and has confirmed that the project as designed meets the recommendations of the Arroyo Geotechnical report. Additionally, the Building Official has reviewed the report and found that none of the recommendations are in conflict with the Building Code.

Arroyo Geotechnical noted that none of the boring samples revealed evidence of sub-surface water flow. Therefore, if there is any sub-surface water flow on this site, it is intermittent. Further, any sub-surface water flow is unlikely to be significantly disrupted by the proposed development as water will find a way to flow downhill.

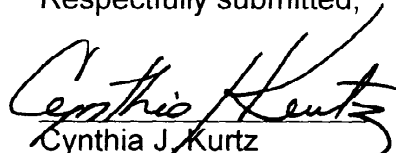
Arroyo Geotechnical examined the existing retaining wall along the east property line at Hillside Terrace. The report notes that while the wall does appear to be quite old and therefore no design details are available, the proposed house will not be structurally supported by the retaining wall. Further, because the weight load of soil and earth travels downwards at a 45 degree angle the increased weight load on the wall will be none to minimal as a result of the overall project.

Based on the results of the Arroyo Geotechnical study, City staff has updated the Initial Environmental Study accordingly (Attachment C). The additional information from the Arroyo Geotechnical study did not result in any impacts being determined to be significant. The City's environmental staff has reviewed the revised Initial Environmental Study and concurred with determination. It was also noted that the analysis completed for the Initial Environmental Study was above and beyond what is typically required by the California Environmental Quality Act.

Conclusion

Based on the additional analysis performed by Arroyo Geotechnical, as well as compliance with the Zoning Code, and specifically the Hillside Ordinance, staff continues to recommend approval Tentative Parcel Map #061676 and Hillside Development Permit #4395 for 720 South San Rafael Avenue (725 Hillside Terrace) with the findings and conditions as attached to the September 26, 2005 staff report, except with the replacement of the conditions of approval for Hillside Development Permit #4395 with Attachment A to this memorandum as the proposed conditions relating to the geotechnical study and the existing retaining wall have been completed.

Respectfully submitted,


Cynthia J. Kurtz
City Manager

Attachments:

- A. Conditions of Approval for Hillside Development Permit #4395
- B. Report from Arroyo Geotechnical, September 29, 2006
- C. Revised Draft Initial Environmental Study
- D. Draft Negative Declaration