

CORRESPONDENCE

From: Christopher Peck

Sent: Sunday, December 04, 2005 5:53 PM

To: 'David Sinclair (dsinclair@cityofpasadena.net)'; 'erikaoller@earthlink.net'; 'Madison, Steve'

Cc: 'Bogaard, Bill'; ' (tsuzuki@ci.pasadena.ca.us)'

Subject: 1147 La Loma

Dear David,

I put together a letter and a plan and section diagram for the council regarding the 1147 La Loma Call for Review, which is coming up on December 12th. I am not sure the information I am presenting has been seen.

I will not be there to present this information, as I have a conflict, so could you make sure that the council members receive a copy?

Thanks

ps. I have included a pdf file which contains the letter and the diagram. I have also attached the jpg image file of the diagram, in case you need to print it to scale. At 8.5 x 11 it should be roughly 1" = 50'.

Chris Peck

CMPeck architecture and engineering

25 South El Molino Avenue

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December 4, 2005

Reference: 1147 La Loma Road – Hillside Development Permit

Dear Members of the Pasadena City Council:

As a favor to Ms. Oller of Laguna Road, one of my neighbors, I prepared the attached diagram showing the adjacency of her lot to the property in question. It shows the footprint of the proposed residence at 1147 La Loma superimposed on the footprint of the existing residence. In addition there is a rough site section – showing the approximate relationship of Ms. Oller's house and the proposed residence. I would estimate its accuracy to be plus or minus 2 feet.¹ It also shows the trees to be removed that are considered by staff to be significant. I understand from staff that the two mature oak trees near the front of the residence are "protected" trees.

The sketch plan is sufficient to clear up a few alleged mis-statements. Ms. Oller told me that the applicant stated that there is no difference between the proposed footprint and the existing. She also said that the applicant stated that her property was not adjacent to the applicant's property. Clearly, the properties are adjacent to each other, and the proposed house footprint is larger and different than the original house's footprint. The section and the adjacency of the properties have not been seen by staff to date.

It is not within the city's purview to conduct design review of single-family residences, however the City, in the hillside overlay legislation, states as its goals:

" To provide development standards that promote orderly development consistent with the natural scale and character of the community, and that preserve privacy and views."

" Preserve and protect existing natural resources . . . including . . . mature trees"

"Prohibit features that would create or increase fire, flood, landslide, or other hazards. "

As part of the discretionary approval of a hillside development permit, staff should consider the scale of the residence, as defined in the neighborhood compatibility criterion, the protection of oak trees, and the clearance between the proposed residence and the crest of the slope to the West. The current plot plan shows the house footprint overlapping the slope, rather than being set back the required distance.

I believe that staff has provided an appropriate review, with the exception of the review of the setback to the descending slope to the west and the approval of the removal of the oak trees. The property is large enough to achieve an appropriate design without removing protected trees, without blocking the neighbor's access to sunlight, and without building close to the descending slope. Compliance with the neighborhood compatibility criterion would make all of the goals easier to achieve.

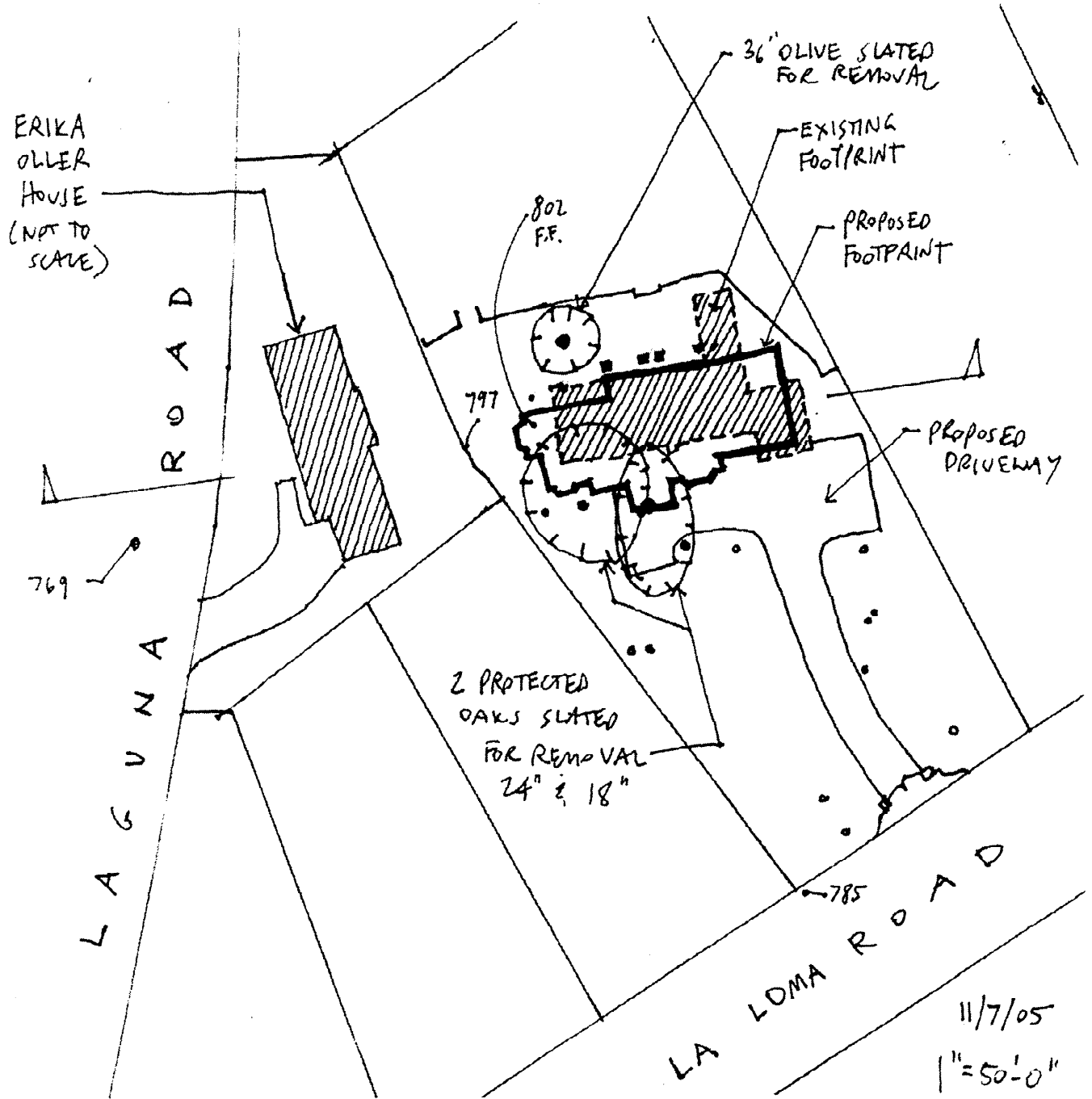
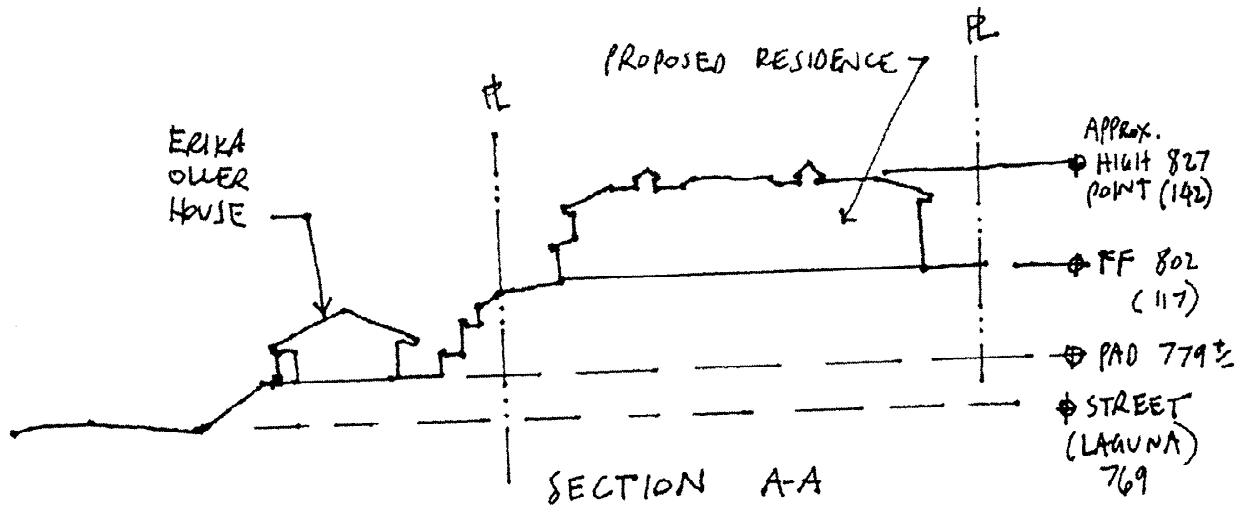
¹ I obtained the information shown on the diagram from the applicant's submittal on record at the Hale Building, spoke with David Sinclair of the Planning Department, downloaded the property boundaries from the Tax Assessor's web site, reviewed aerial photos of the area, and determined relative elevations from City Street Profiles at Public Works.

I do not believe that staff has had quantifiable information to back up Ms. Oller's statements that the hillside is quite steep between the houses, or even that the houses are adjacent. I hope that this effort will add to the Council's understanding of the issues at hand.

Sincerely,

Chris Peck

Member of Design Commission – (writing as a neighbor)
1211 Romney Way
Pasadena, CA 91105



Rodriguez, Jane

From: Sue Mossman [smossman@pasadenaheritage.org]
Sent: Thursday, December 08, 2005 2:41 PM
To: Bogaard, Bill; Streator, Joyce; Madison, Steve; Little, Paul; Tyler, Sid; Holden, Chris; Haderlein, Steve; Gordo, Victor
Cc: Rodriguez, Jane; erikaoller@earthlink.net; Sinclair, David
Subject: 1147 La Loma Road



508 Laguna
Road..doc (38 KB)

Dear Mayor Bogaard and Council Members. Attached is a letter regarding the project at 1147 La Loma Road which you will consider on Monday evening. We hope to have a representative at the hearing, but wanted to be sure that you had our comments in writing for your consideration as well. Thank you.

**Pasadena Heritage
651 South St. John Avenue
Pasadena, California 91105
626 441-6333**

December 8, 2005

Mayor Bill Bogaard and Members of the City Council
City of Pasadena
100 North Garfield Avenue
Pasadena, California 91109

RE: Appeal for 1147 La Loma Road

Dear Mayor Bogaard and Council Members:

On behalf of Pasadena Heritage, I am writing to express our concerns regarding the project at 1147 La Loma Road. We very much appreciate Vice Mayor Madison's calling up the project and the support of council members for its consideration. There are a number of important issues at stake with this project that, we believe, deserve your attention, including application of the Hillside Ordinance, the size and siting of the proposed new house, and the loss of mature oak trees that are visible from the street.

Support for Staff Recommendation

Pasadena Heritage supports the original determination by planner David Sinclair, and supported by the Zoning Hearing Officer, that sets the acceptable size of the new house at 3,699 square feet. We believe that the correct procedures were followed to arrive at this size, which allows for a substantial increase in square footage over the existing structure. Taking all appropriate considerations into account, including various slopes of the land and house-size averaging according to the neighborhood compatibility section of the Hillside Ordinance, we believe this is a fair and correct assessment of what should be permitted. We are confused by the actions of the Board of Zoning Appeals which allowed for a much larger house.

Neighborhood Compatibility

This is a critical issue and one where we believe the city should apply the rules in the Hillside Ordinance carefully and consistently. There is no compelling reason to allow the construction of a larger house on this property than the average allows. The neighborhood has a wonderful and eclectic mixture of houses – some large, historic estates; some good examples of modern architecture just becoming eligible as historic properties; and many vernacular homes from the 1940s, 50s and 60s on lots obviously subdivided from estate properties through the decades. The lush landscape, mature trees and winding roads also contribute of the neighborhood's sense of place. Pasadena Heritage does not contest the demolition of the existing house, although it fits the development pattern of the neighborhood, but we do think it is very important that a new house be a compatible contributor to the neighborhood.

Endangered Neighboring Property

Pasadena Heritage is very concerned about the impacts of the proposed new construction on the adjacent site at 580 Laguna Road. This small but charming California ranch house is not an impressive historic structure, but it nicely designed, well-built by its original architect owner, and part of the immediate neighborhood's era, style, and development pattern. 580 Laguna Road is

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immediately east of the property in question and sits against a very steep hillside. In fact, the rear “yard” of 580 is a narrow patio – less than four feet in places – with an elegant fifteen-foot tall retaining wall holding up the hillside which rises almost vertically above it to the property at 1147 La Loma. We are aware that 508 was inundated by a serious mud-slide several years ago from the 1147 property which ran into the rear yard and house, itself, and necessitated the building of the retaining wall at the owner’s expense.

The proposed new house is nearly twice as large as the existing house on the 1147 property, is twice as tall (two stories rather than one), and is shown on the plans to be closer to the lot line of this very steep slope than the existing house. It is unclear from the drawings how the side-yard setback was measured, but it appears to be much too close to the precarious and steep drop to the adjacent property. In addition to the setback issue, the height of the proposed new house will tower over the adjacent property (approximately 50 feet above it) and will virtually block rear patio, kitchen and studio exposure from sunlight.

Trees

The property at 1147 La Loma Road has many mature trees, including native oaks. We believe that the size and siting of the new house unnecessarily require that oak trees be removed that could be retained with a smaller house and redesign of the site plan. This is a large property with substantial flexibility in terms of where the new house is placed.

Conclusion

Pasadena Heritage urges you to consider that the proposed new house is larger than what is allowed under the Hillside Ordinance neighborhood compatibility calculation, poses unfair and even dangerous hazards an adjacent property due to the slope of the hillside, would deprive the neighboring property of sunlight, and unnecessarily sacrifices protected trees. Alternately, a 3,699-square-foot house as recommended by staff, set back further from the property line shared with 508 Laguna, and placed more sensitively on the site could eliminate all these risks.

Thank you in advance for upholding the Hillside Ordinance and protecting and enhancing the quality of life for current residents as well as allowing for an appropriate new house to join the neighborhood.

Sincerely yours,

Susan N. Mossman
Executive Director