

May 18, 2005

Ms. Lindy Coburn  
Assistant Planner  
City of Lafayette  
Planning Services Division  
3675 Mt. Diablo Boulevard, Suite 200  
Lafayette, CA 94549-1968

*Re: HDP72-04 Tim Ward, Ward-Young Architects (Applicant), Barry Haji (Owner)*

Dear Ms. Coburn:

The City of Walnut Creek appreciates the opportunity to review and provide comment on the above application. As you may be aware, we are currently preparing a new General Plan, and a staff recommendation to the General Plan Steering Committee was to include this parcel within the City's Planning Area Boundary. Staff made this recommendation because this parcel forms a potential link between the City's north and south Acalanes Ridge Open Spaces, and because it is visible from many locations within the City including the open space lands. In December, 2003, we wrote to your Planning and Building Manager informing her of our interest in this parcel (December 3, 2003, letter to Ms. Niroop Srivatsa).

Additionally, the City commented on a previous version of this proposal (August 25, 2005, letter to Ms. Lindy Coburn). Those comments are still valid and have been incorporated into the following for your consideration in reviewing this project.

1. The proposal still appears to be inconsistent with the Hillside Development ordinance of the City of Lafayette and the City of Walnut Creek's Hillside Performance Standards. Both sets of regulations prohibit development on slopes of 30 percent or greater, yet the grade at this site appears to be over 30%.
2. Section 6-2048 of Lafayette's Hillside Development ordinance (Off-Site Visibility) requires structures to be located away from open slopes and to be concealed by vegetation or terrain when viewed from open space, parks and trails. As noted above, this building site is highly visible from the Acalanes

Ridge Open Space and trails. Consideration should be given to siting the structure on a flatter, less visible part of the site.

3. The size of the proposed project, at 5,985 sq. ft., does not appear to be compatible with the scale of the surrounding development, which increases the concerns over visibility and impact to the hillside.
4. The Environmental Information Form needs clarification. Question 23 shows no impact to views, question 24 shows no impact to the scale of the area and question 29 shows a slope lower than 10%. The plans do not appear to agree with those answers.
5. Erosion and runoff associated with grading and development in the proposed location should be studied closely. This area drains towards the City's open space and storm drainage facilities.
6. Previous site plans (November 25, 2003) showed oak wood lands in the area where the road is proposed. The number and types of trees proposed for removal as part of the project is not clear.
7. Because of the visibility of this parcel, the City is requesting that a scenic or conservation easement prohibiting further development of the parcel be recorded on this property in order to retain the balance of the parcel in an open and natural state.

Again, thank you for considering our comments in your review of this application. Please keep me informed on the project's progress.

Sincerely,

Terri Hansen Payne, AICP  
Associate Planner  
(925) 943-5834 x. 243  
[tpayne@walnut-creek.org](mailto:tpayne@walnut-creek.org)

- c. Sandra Meyer, Planning Manager  
Dan Cather, Public Services Manager