

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF
THE TORRANCE PLANNING COMMISSION**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Torrance Planning Commission convened in a regular session at 7:02 p.m. on Wednesday, July 19, 2006, in City Council Chambers at Torrance City Hall.

2. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Horwich.

3. ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioners Browning, Busch, Gibson, Horwich, Uchima and Chairperson Faulk.

Absent: Commissioner Drevno.

Also Present: Planning Manager Lodan, Planning Associate Hurd, Planning Associate Kevin Joe, Plans Examiner Noh, Fire Marshal Carter, Associate Civil Engineer Symons, and Deputy City Attorney Whitham.

MOTION: Commissioner Browning, seconded by Commissioner Horwich, moved to grant Commissioner Drevno an excused absence from this meeting; voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

4. POSTING OF THE AGENDA

MOTION: Commissioner Uchima, seconded by Commissioner Horwich, moved to accept and file the report of the secretary on the posting of the agenda for this meeting; voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: Commissioner Browning moved for the approval of the June 7 and June 21, 2006 Planning Commission minutes as submitted. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Busch and passed by unanimous roll call vote, with Commissioner Horwich abstaining on the June 21 minutes (absent Commissioner Drevno).

6. REQUESTS FOR POSTPONEMENT

Planning Manager Lodan relayed the applicant's request to continue Agenda Item 10B (PRE06-00010: Tracy Underwood) to August 2, 2006.

MOTION: Commissioner Gibson moved to continue Agenda Item 10B to August 2, 2006. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Busch and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Drevno).

Chairperson Faulk announced that the hearing would not be re-advertised as it was continued to a date certain.

Chairperson Faulk reviewed the policies and procedures of the Planning Commission, including the right to appeal decisions to the City Council.

7. **TIME EXTENSIONS** – None.

8. **CONTINUED HEARINGS** – None.

9. **WAIVERS**

9A. **WAV06-00008: ARTID SOOREECHINE**

Planning Commission consideration of a Waiver to allow less than the required front yard setback for a new two-car detached garage in conjunction with one-story additions to an existing one-story, single-family residence on property located in the R-1 Zone at 1836 Sepulveda Boulevard.

Recommendation

Approval.

Planning Assistant Hurd introduced the request.

Artid Sooreechine, applicant, voiced his agreement with the recommended conditions of approval.

MOTION: Commissioner Uchima moved for the approval of WAV06-00008, as conditioned, including all findings of fact set forth by staff. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Busch and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Drevno).

Planning Assistant Hurd read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution No. 06-078.

MOTION: Commissioner Busch moved for the adoption of Planning Commission Resolution No. 06-078. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Browning and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Drevno).

9B. **WAV06-00009: SONIA RODRIGUEZ (SCOTT MCGREW)**

Planning Commission consideration of a Waiver to allow one-story additions to an existing one-story, single-family residence to exceed the maximum building height limit on property located in the R-1 Zone at 5312 Sharynne Lane

This item was deferred until later in the meeting as no representative was present.

10. FORMAL HEARINGS

10A. PRE06-00008, PRE06-00009: JEFFREY A. DAHL

Planning Commission consideration of two Precise Plans of Development in conjunction with the demolition of an existing single-family residence located on a parcel of land consisting of two existing lots, and the development of a new two-story, single-family residence on each lot on property located in the Hillside Overlay District in the R-1 Zone at 3874 Newton Street.

Recommendation

Approval.

Planning Associate Hurd introduced the request and noted supplemental material available at the meeting consisting of correspondence received subsequent to the completion of the agenda item.

Chairperson Faulk announced that he was abstaining from consideration of this item due to a past relationship with some of the people involved and exited the dais.

(Commissioner Busch chaired this portion of the meeting)

Steve Nordel, owner of the subject property, voiced his agreement with the recommended conditions of approval. He reported that he discussed the project at length with 40 of his neighbors and all of them signed a petition in support of it. He reviewed the changes made in response to concerns raised at the previous hearing, including eliminating rooftop decks and associated stairs, modifying the pitch of the roof, and lowering the building pad of the northwesterly residence by approximately 1.5 feet. He explained that 11 out of 20 mature trees on the site will be retained to maximize privacy and contended that the size of the homes was consistent with the average size of new homes built over the past 30 years in this area. He noted that there have been several design changes to accommodate neighbors and requested approval of the project as submitted.

Commissioner Browning stated that he had hoped to see more significant changes and asked about the possibility of reducing ceiling heights on both floors from nine feet to eight feet to achieve a further reduction in height.

Mr. Nordel reported that he considered reducing the ceiling heights but rejected the idea because he strongly believes it would detract from the value of the homes. He stated that he felt he had made significant changes to the project to the point where it is no longer visible from the south side of Bluff Street and noted that neighbors who were formerly opposed to the project have now signed the petition in support of it.

Commissioner Browning questioned whether the Harts, the immediate neighbors to the east, now support the project. Mr. Nordel responded that he made every change the Harts requested, but was notified last Tuesday night that they were still not satisfied and wanted a reduction in the height of the residence next to them.

Commissioner Browning related his understanding that the pitch of roofs was not changed and remains 4 in 12.

Jeffrey Dahl, project architect, clarified that ridge height of the southeasterly residence was slightly reduced when the roof was reconfigured, but the pitch remained the same. He suggested that an additional 6" reduction could be achieved by changing the pitch to 3½ in 12.

Commissioner Browning questioned why the second-story deck was not moved to the other side of the structure when the roof was reconfigured to address the Harts' privacy concerns.

Mr. Dahl explained that this would create a privacy breach between the two new residences and related his understanding that the Harts no longer object to the deck since a privacy wall was added.

After a show of hands of those who wished to speak, Commissioner Busch, with the concurrence of the Commission, requested that speakers limit their remarks to five minutes.

Gary Hart, 3868 Newton Street, stated that he was very pleased with the changes that have been made but was still concerned about the size and the height of the southeasterly structure. He asked to see the geological report to confirm that the proposed basement will not create problems in this area which is prone to slippage.

Christine Quinlan, 24243 Ocean Avenue, reported that condominiums recently built next to her have completely taken away her privacy and urged the Commission to protect the privacy of those who live around this project by enforcing the Hillside Overlay Ordinance.

Jane Aull, 3908 Newton Street, echoed concerns about the loss of privacy due to new construction. She called for the preservation of mature trees on this site because they add to the beauty of the neighborhood and their root system stabilizes the hillside.

Janice Tylke, 24244 Ocean Avenue, voiced support for the proposed project, stating that she believed it would be a welcome addition to the neighborhood.

Cheryl Gutierrez, 3869 Bluff Street, reported that she submitted a petition with the signatures of 65 neighbors who are opposed to the project and that some of those who signed Mr. Nordel's petition have asked to have their names retracted. Using photographs to illustrate, she disputed the statement in the staff report that the project is compatible with recently approved residences in the immediate area in terms of height and FAR, explaining that she visited the three residences used to make this determination and all have extenuating circumstances not applicable to this site. She expressed disappointment that Mr. Nordel neglected to contact neighbors on Bluff Street because they have a lot of concerns about the project.

Diana Thacker, 22410 Palos Verdes Boulevard, voiced support for the project, stating that she is a business owner familiar with the neighborhood and believes it will increase property values.

Sam Mardello, 4536 Green Meadows, stated that he believes the Nordels have complied with the spirit of the Hillside Overlay Ordinance and that the proposed project is the highest and best use for this site. He read a letter from Robert Hoffman, 109 Via Sevilla, in support of the project.

In response to Commissioner Browning's inquiry, Mr. Mardello confirmed that neither he nor Mr. Hoffman can see the project's silhouette from their homes.

John Heuer, 3855 Bluff Street, voiced his opposition to the proposed project, contending that it violates TMC § 91.41.6 subsections (a) through (g), because it would adversely impact the view, light and privacy of surrounding homes and it is not in harmony with other properties in the vicinity. He pointed out that the guidelines in the Hillside Overlay Ordinance do not mention "highest and best use." He reported that his 2500 square-foot home was built three years ago without impacting views and doubted that anyone would be opposed to the project if a similar design had been used. He maintained that the large basement, which is not counted in the FAR because it is not considered livable space, will be included in the listing when the home is marketed.

Deputy City Attorney Whitham noted that § 91.41.6 was amended a few years ago and currently has subsections (a) through (f) and offered to meet with Mr. Heuer to point out the subsection that was deleted.

Gina Stunkard, 3889 Bluff Street, stated that she was still opposed to the project due to the impact on her privacy, submitting photographs to illustrate. She noted that the plans she viewed in the Planning Department showed the elimination of the trees that currently block her view of the silhouette.

Lee Ann Hart, 3868 Newton Street, reported that the proposed project would block the view from her living room and bedroom, as well as the ocean breeze, and that her privacy will be impacted if the trees bordering her property do not survive the construction process.

Mr. Nordel stated that he had tried very hard address neighbors' concerns and had made changes he really didn't want to make, such as eliminating the rooftop decks and reducing the size of his basement workshop. He expressed frustration that he was spending a lot of time and money and felt like he wasn't making any progress.

Commissioner Browning stated that his primary concern was that the project stands out tremendously when approaching the site from the west and he would be more inclined to support it with a reduction in its height and FAR.

Commissioner Gibson commended Mr. Nordel for his efforts to address the concerns of neighbors.

Commissioner Uchima noted that he considers each project on its own merits and gives no credence to how many people support or oppose it. He reported that most of the concerns he heard from neighbors were related to the project's height and the impact on privacy, and while there were complaints of view blockage, he did not believe there was enough of an impact to deny the project. He explained that he could support the project with the following modifications: 1) an additional 1-2 foot reduction in height, 2) the conversion of the large second floor decks to balconies, and 3) the retention of

certain trees to protect privacy. He agreed with Mr. Nordel that eight-foot ceilings were not appropriate for a home in this price range and proposed a combination of reducing the pitch of the roof and lowering the grade to achieve a height reduction.

Mr. Nordel asked to retain the deck on the southeasterly residence as privacy concerns have been mitigated, and Commissioner Uchima confirmed that the privacy impact he observed was related to the deck on the northwesterly residence.

Wilson Budde, owner of 3875 and 3883 Bluff Street, expressed disappointment that the accessory building originally used to house a chinchilla farm cannot be saved.

MOTION: Commissioner Uchima, seconded by Commissioner Gibson, moved to close the public hearing; voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

A brief discussion ensued and Commissioners discussed possible ways to achieve a height reduction. The public hearing was reopened to allow Mr. Nordel to provide input.

A recess was called so Mr. Nordel could discuss proposed modifications with his architect.

The Commission recessed from 8:25 p.m. to 8:35 p.m.

Following discussion, Mr. Nordel agreed to change the roof pitch from 4 in 12 to 3½ in 12 and reduce second-floor plate heights from 9 to 8 feet in both residences; to lower the building pad of the southeasterly residence by 2 feet; to eliminate the second-floor deck from the northwesterly residence; and to retain two trees at the southeast corner of the property.

Commissioner Uchima expressed concerns about the proposed reduction in plate height. Mr. Dahl explained that he could use vaulted ceilings on the second floor so the 8-foot plate height would be adequate.

MOTION: Commissioner Horwich, seconded by Commissioner Uchima, moved to close the public hearing; voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

MOTION: Commissioner Horwich moved for the approval of PRE06-00008 and PRE06-00009, as conditioned, including all findings of fact set forth by staff with the following modifications:

Add

- That the pitch shall be reduced from 4 in 12 to 3½ in 12 for both residences.
- That second-floor plate heights shall be reduced from 9 feet to 8 feet in both residences.
- That the building pad of the southeasterly residence shall be lowered by 2 feet.
- That the second-floor deck shall be eliminated from the northwesterly residence.
- That the 2 trees at the southeast corner of the property shall be retained.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Uchima and passed by unanimous roll call vote, with Chairperson Faulk abstaining (absent Commissioner Drevno).

Planning Assistant Hurd read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution Nos. 06-057 and 06-058.

MOTION: Commissioner Uchima moved for the adoption of Planning Commission Resolution Nos. 06-057 and 06-058 as amended. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gibson and passed by unanimous roll call vote, with Chairperson Faulk abstaining (absent Commissioner Drevno).

Chairperson Faulk returned to the dais.

Agenda Item 9B was considered out of order at this time.

9B. WAV06-00009: SONIA RODRIGUEZ (SCOTT MCGREW)

Planning Commission consideration of a Waiver to allow one-story additions to an existing one-story, single-family residence to exceed the maximum building height limit on property located in the R-1 Zone at 5312 Sharynne Lane.

Recommendation

Approval.

Planning Assistant Hurd introduced the request.

Sonia Rodriguez, applicant, voiced her agreement with the recommended conditions of approval. She explained that the Waiver was necessary to match the existing ridge height so that the addition will look like part of the original structure.

MOTION: Commissioner Uchima moved for the approval of WAV06-00009, as conditioned, including all findings of fact set forth by staff. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Browning and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Drevno).

Planning Assistant Hurd read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution No. 06-079.

MOTION: Commissioner Uchima moved for the adoption of Planning Commission Resolution No. 06-079. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Horwich and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Drevno).

10B. PRE06-00010: TRACY UNDERWOOD (RON BALLESTEROS)

Planning Commission consideration of a Precise Plan of Development to allow the construction of first and second-story additions to an existing two-story, single-family residence on property located in the Hillside Overlay District in the R-1 Zone at 3208 Carolwood Lane.

Continued to August 2, 2006.

10C. PRE06-00017: VIJAY B. PATEL

Planning Commission consideration of a Precise Plan of Development to allow the construction of a new one-story, single-family residence on property located in the Hillside Overlay District in the R-1 Zone at 26102 Delos Drive.

Recommendation

Approval.

Planning Assistant Hurd introduced the request.

Vijay Patel, owner of subject property, voiced his agreement with the recommended conditions of approval.

MOTION: Commissioner Horwich, seconded by Commissioner Uchima, moved to close the public hearing; voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

Commissioner Busch voiced support for the proposed project.

MOTION: Commissioner Busch moved for the approval of PRE06-00017, as conditioned, including all findings of fact set forth by staff. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Uchima and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Drevno).

Planning Assistant Hurd read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution No. 06-081.

MOTION: Commissioner Busch moved for the adoption of Planning Commission Resolution No. 06-081. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Browning and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Drevno).

10D. CUP06-00011, TTM066741: DOUG BRAWN (MADRONA MEDICAL PLAZA)

Planning Commission consideration of a Conditional Use Permit to allow an existing commercial center to be converted to medical and professional office condominiums and a Tentative Tract Map for condominium purposes and the merging of two parcels into one parcel on property located in the C-3 Zone at 3220-3246 Sepulveda Boulevard.

Recommendation

Approval.

Planning Assistant Hurd introduced the request and noted supplemental material available at the meeting.

Commissioner Busch announced that he was abstaining from consideration of this item because he lives within 500 feet of the subject property and exited the dais.

John Kamus, marketing agent for the property, voiced his agreement with the recommended conditions of approval with the exception of Condition No. 6, which requires that the existing cross easement with the property to the west (China Tea House) be maintained. He explained that the applicant believes this easement is redundant and would like to close it off and use the area for parking.

Planning Manager Lodan advised that it was staff's opinion that the easement is more valuable than the three parking spaces that would be gained by eliminating it because the subject parcel is long and narrow and the easement provides for better traffic circulation.

Tim Miller, 3120 Sepulveda Boulevard, expressed concerns that the proposed condominiums could be converted for residential use in the future and lead to more traffic congestion in the area.

Planning Manager Lodan clarified that the project would simply convert existing office space into condominiums, which would allow doctors and other professionals to own their office space rather than leasing it, and that the office condominiums could not be converted to residential use in the future without Planning Commission approval.

David Chu, owner of China Tea House, voiced objections to the proposed project, explaining that converting the property to medical use would increase traffic between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., while the current mix of uses provides for a better distribution of traffic and makes for a better neighbor. He related his experience that the cross easement was necessary for safety reasons. He suggested that merging two lots into one would violate Resolution No. 2004-129 because it states that no variances or zone changes shall be granted until the General Plan update has been completed.

Planning Manager Lodan clarified that the proposed project does not include a request for a Zone Change or a Variance.

Chairperson Faulk stated that he supports retaining the cross easement because the site was not well designed in the beginning and has very poor traffic circulation.

Using renderings to illustrate, Mr. Kamus briefly described the proposed project, explaining that a completely new façade will be constructed and that the existing height will be maintained except for a cupola, which will be added to give the office complex an identity.

Commissioner Uchima expressed concerns about the impact of having a large volume of patients entering and exiting this property and asked if the applicant would be amenable to a condition prohibiting clinics, HMOs and surgery centers.

Mr. Kamus reported that the offices will be sized to accommodate a sole practitioner or two doctors who share a practice and the applicant does not intend to sell to HMOs, clinics or surgery centers.

Commissioner Browning voiced support for the project and commended the applicant for an excellent design.

Commissioner Gibson noted that it's difficult to make a left turn from this property onto Sepulveda Boulevard due to heavy traffic and questioned whether the driveway would include a separate left-turn lane to avoid back-ups.

Mr. Kamus explained that the driveway could not be widened to accommodate a separate left-turn lane without losing a significant number of parking spaces.

Commissioner Uchima suggested the possibility of prohibiting left turns out of this property.

Commissioner Browning expressed concerns about restricting turns out of this property when there are other offices/businesses along this stretch of Sepulveda that have similar driveways where left turns are permitted.

Commissioner Uchima suggested that left-turn restrictions may be warranted in this case due to unique conditions, such as the site's mid-block location and the fact that medical offices could generate a high volume of patient traffic.

Doug Brawn, representing the applicant, related his experience that it is not difficult to make a left turn out of the property due to the way the traffic signals are timed and because Sepulveda has a center lane where motorists can wait until they're able to merge into traffic.

MOTION: Commissioner Uchima, seconded by Commissioner Horwich, moved to close the public hearing; voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

The Commission briefly entertained the idea of prohibiting left turns out of the driveway onto Sepulveda due to concerns about elderly or infirm patients. Commissioner Horwich suggested that the Commission direct staff to monitor the traffic situation and impose turning restrictions if it turns out that medical uses are creating a problem, and it was the consensus of the Commission to do so.

MOTION: Commissioner Uchima moved for the approval of CUP06-00011 and TTM066741, as conditioned, including all findings of fact set forth by staff, with the following modification:

Add

- That Transportation Planning Division shall monitor ingress/egress at this location for six months after completion of the project and left hand turns shall be prohibited if staff determines that it is warranted.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Horwich and passed by unanimous roll call vote, with Commissioner Busch abstaining (absent Commissioner Drevno).

Planning Assistant Hurd read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution Nos. 06-082 and 06-083.

MOTION: Commissioner Uchima moved for the adoption of Planning Commission Resolution Nos. 06-082 and 06-083 as amended. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Horwich and passed by unanimous roll call vote, with Commissioner Busch abstaining (absent Commissioner Drevno).

The Commission recessed from 9:35 p.m. to 9:40 p.m.

**10E. CUP06-00009, TTM61985R: MICHAEL MULLIGAN DEVELOPMENT
(MICHAEL BIHN)**

Planning Commission consideration of a Conditional Use Permit to allow the construction of a mixed-use development consisting of seven live-work condominium units and a Vesting Tentative Tract Map for condominium purposes on property located in the Downtown Redevelopment Project Area, Commercial Sector at 1620 Gramercy Avenue.

Recommendation

Approval.

Planning Associate Kevin Joe introduced the request and noted supplemental material available at the meeting.

Michael Bihn, representing the applicant, voiced his agreement with the recommended conditions of approval.

Mary Ann Reis, 1333 Engracia Avenue, stated that this site is located on one of the quaintest streets in old Torrance and suggested that existing buildings should be renovated rather than demolished.

Gene Higginbotham, 2114 Arlington Avenue, voiced support for the proposed project, commending the applicant and City staff for thinking "outside the box." He indicated, however, that he did not favor the project's Mediterranean-style exterior and believed an understated, simple design would better complement historic structures in the area. He expressed concerns about the potential for vacancies in the first-floor commercial space and recommended that parking requirements be relaxed in the downtown area in order to attract businesses that are more viable.

Debbie Hays, 1538 Post Avenue, commended Mulligan Development for listening to residents and incorporating commercial uses into the project, but expressed concerns about Condition No. 9, which prohibits the leasing or subleasing of commercial space on the first floor. She suggested that a condominium owner could purchase a business license each year, but never actually open a storefront and use the space for storage, and voiced her opinion that traditional commercial space which could be sublet would be a better solution. She reported that someone from Los Angeles Conservancy, who is very familiar with the downtown area, reviewed the project and recommended that the building be less assertive and free of ornamentation to better complement the area.

Ms. Hays read a letter from Janet Payne, 1318 Engracia, urging the developer to come up with an architectural design that echoes the simplistic lines of the Gill buildings on the other two corners of the triangle. She suggested that the Clinker bricks be saved when the existing structure is demolished.

Don Barnard, 2028 Gramercy Avenue, stated that he supports the idea of residences above commercial uses but believes the project's architectural design needs to be modified so that it fits with the character of the neighborhood. He noted that the live-work condominium is a new concept and expressed concerns that the City could end up with a bunch of vacant storefronts with people living above them.

Bonnie Mae Barnard, representing Save Historic Old Torrance, stated she believed the proposed project was "in the ball park," however, the commercial portion was too small and she was concerned that it would be used for storage. She contended that the building's pseudo-Spanish design was completely out of character with the area and recommended an Irving Gill-type design. She noted that Torrance has the second largest collection of Irving J. Gill buildings in the world and that Mr. Gill favored simple cement buildings enhanced with foliage.

Charles Reis, 1333 Engracia Avenue, voiced his opinion that too many condominiums, in too many different styles, were being built in the downtown area.

Mr. Bihn stated that the applicant believes the proposed design is a good design, which fits well within the neighborhood, however, he is willing to modify the design but needs to know what the City wants. He noted that there is no predominant architectural style in the downtown area and staff had indicated that they did not want rectangular structures built lot line to lot line with no articulation. He reported that the applicant initially had reservations about the live-work condominium concept but became convinced of its viability after looking at successful projects in other cities. He suggested that owners were unlikely to use the commercial space for storage because they will be paying a premium for this space.

Commissioner Horwich indicated that he did not favor the live-work condominiums because while it's not uncommon to have residences over commercial space, he felt it would be awkward to require someone to own both.

In response to Commissioner Uchima's inquiry, Mr. Bihn explained that he envisioned that professionals, such as attorneys, architects and accountants, would purchase the condominiums.

Commissioner Uchima asked about the enforcement mechanism should a business fail.

Planning Associate Joe advised that Code Enforcement would be in charge of handling compliance issues; that the unit owner would be given an opportunity to restore the space back to commercial use; and that he did not believe the City would have the ability to force someone to sell the property.

Responding to questions from the Commission, staff provided information regarding the modifications that would be necessary should the commercial and residential components of the project be separated, including the elimination of connecting stairways, the addition of handicapped-accessible restroom facilities in each commercial unit, and approval of a parking variance.

Commissioner Uchima indicated that he favored relaxing parking requirements to enable the commercial and residential components to be separated because he feared the live-work condominiums could be an enforcement nightmare.

Mr. Bihn expressed the applicant's willingness to make the necessary modifications to separate the residential and commercial uses.

Commissioner Busch questioned whether there would be restrictions on the type of businesses that could occupy the space due to concerns about noise.

Mr. Bihn advised that there is a mechanism in place that limits the types of businesses that may go into commercial spaces in the Downtown Redevelopment Project Area.

Following a brief discussion, it was the consensus of the Commission to allow the applicant to redesign the project with separate commercial and residential components.

Chairperson Faulk suggested that the design be more compatible with other buildings in the immediate area, and Commissioner Busch recommended that the applicant work with Save Historic Old Torrance to arrive at an acceptable design.

MOTION: Commissioner Uchima moved to continue this item indefinitely. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Busch and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Drevno).

Planning Manager Lodan announced that the hearing on the revised project would be re-advertised.

10F. CUP06-00004, DIV06-00005, PRE06-00011: MIKE ADLI

Planning Commission consideration of a Conditional Use Permit to allow a four-unit condominium development, a Division of Lot for condominium purposes and a Precise Plan of Development to allow the construction of four two-story units with semi-subterranean parking on property located in the Hillside Overlay District in the R-3 Zone at 332 Paseo de la Playa.

Recommendation

Denial.

Planning Assistant Hurd introduced the request and noted supplemental material available at the meeting.

Mike Adli, applicant, stated that he believed the proposed project would have very little impact on the view, light, air and privacy of neighbors and contended that the silhouette was misleading because it does not reflect the opening between the buildings, which will create a view corridor for residents on Paseo de la Concha. He explained that he developed the only new buildings on the street, 320 & 328 Paseo de la Playa, 30 years ago and the street is becoming tired and rundown. He reported that letters sent to surrounding neighbors were met with negative responses and a lack of cooperation and that he was invited to visit two units in the building at 157 Paseo de la Concha, after

which side yard setbacks were increased to mitigate the view impact. He submitted photos taken from the unit directly behind the project, maintaining that some of the photos in the staff report appear to have been taken with a zoom lens. He suggested that objections from surrounding neighbors should not be considered if they will not allow him to visit their property to evaluate the impact.

Keith Brothers, 150 Paseo de la Concha, stated that the proposed project would eliminate between 75 and 90% of the ocean view from his kitchen, living room and bedroom. He explained that he didn't discuss the project with Mr. Adli because of threats that those who did not cooperate with him would be giving up their right to object.

Leon Kuczynski, owner of 154 and 156 Paseo de la Concha, voiced objections to the proposed project, stating that it would block 100% of the ocean view from one unit and 50% from another, thereby decreasing the value of his property and making the units harder to rent.

Jane Harris, 328 Paseo de la Playa, requested that the project be modified to preserve the ocean view from her rear bedroom, noting that she has discussed her concerns with Mr. Adli, but wanted to make a more formal request.

Edwin Hess, owner of 321 and 325 Calle Miramar, reported that ocean views from his property would be obstructed by the proposed project and voiced his opinion that it was bad planning policy to replace middle-class housing with million-dollar condominiums. He expressed concerns that only those with ocean-front property will have views if taller buildings continue to be approved and called for the new structure to be limited to the same footprint and height as the existing buildings. He suggested that some people might have been discouraged from appearing at this hearing because a letter from the applicant indicated that those who did not cooperate with him would not be able to speak.

Pari Adli, 325 Paseo de la Playa, wanted to dispel any idea that the project was being built by developers for profit, explaining that her elderly parents have lived on the site for many years and the buildings are beyond repair and that they plan to live in one of the units and rent the others.

Nicole Adams, 157 Paseo de la Concha, reported that the proposed project would completely diminish the ocean view from the first story of this five-unit building and the white water view from the second story and that it would also block light from the complex. She called for the project's height to be limited to the height of the existing buildings.

Treva Merritt, 163 Paseo de la Concha, stated that she strongly opposes the proposed project and expressed concerns that ocean-front development was taking away the ocean view from her condominium where she has lived since the 1970s.

Minoo Hart, owner of two units at 328 Paseo de la Playa, voiced support for the project, stating that the street is in need of improvement.

Charles Belak-Berger, project architect, stated Mr. Adli is genuinely concerned about neighbors' views and very receptive to working with them to arrive at an acceptable project.

Susan Butler, 336 Paseo de la Playa, stated that she supports the project even though she would lose more view than anyone because aging properties need to be improved along this street, which is one of the premier streets in Torrance. Noting that she is in the process of trying to obtain approval for a project on her property, she suggested the possibility of trimming or removing one of her trees to open up a view corridor for 157 Paseo de la Concha.

Kavon Adli, 3910 242nd Street, reported that he was responsible for the objectionable statement in the letter sent to surrounding property owners; that it was meant to encourage people to allow his father to observe how their views would be impacted; and that it was not intended to stop them from speaking at this hearing.

Mr. Belak-Berger discussed his strategy for addressing view issues, reporting that side yard setbacks will be increased and the project will be lowered an additional 2 feet, which will bring the height down to within 18-24 inches of the existing ridge height. He stated that he is trying to reduce the project's FAR, however, the building must be equipped with elevators to accommodate Mr. Adli's parents and the elevator shafts significantly add to the FAR.

Commissioner Busch noted that the units lack the required 200 cubic feet of storage space, and Mr. Belak-Berger advised that overhead storage would be included in garages to meet this requirement.

Commissioner Busch stated that he believes the project as proposed violates the Hillside Overlay Ordinance; that he was particularly concerned about the view impact and the FAR; and that there would have to be significant changes before he could support it.

Commissioner Uchima noted his agreement with the statement in the staff report that recommends that the applicant bring forth a proposal that meets all R-3 requirements, that is within the existing building envelope, and that is in harmony with the scale and character of properties along Paseo de la Playa.

MOTION: Commissioner Uchima moved to continue this item indefinitely. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Horwich and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Drevno).

Chairperson Faulk requested that those with concerns about the project leave contact information with staff.

Commissioner Horwich stated that contrary to statements contained in letters from Mr. Adli to his neighbors, he does not consider anyone to be waiving their right to object to the project if they fail to respond within a certain timeframe, noting that people retain this right throughout the public hearing process.

Planning Manager Lodan announced that the hearing on the revised project would be re-advertised.

11. **RESOLUTIONS** – None.

12. **PUBLIC WORKSHOP ITEMS** – None.

13. MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

(It was the consensus of the Commission to consider Item 13A at this time, even though the Commission has a policy of not considering new items after 11:00 p.m.)

13A. KREBS HILLSIDE REQUEST

Planning Commission consideration of a citizen's request to include additional properties within the Hillside Overlay District for properties in the general vicinity of Ruby Street and Palos Verdes Boulevard.

Planning Manager Lodan introduced the request.

Richard Krebs, 5206 Ruby Street, explained that a second-story addition on his street has had a devastating impact on views and asked that the Commission direct staff to study the feasibility of expanding the Hillside Overlay District to prevent this from happening in the future.

A brief discussion ensued, and Commissioners expressed support for the idea of taking another look at the boundaries of the Hillside Overlay District.

Planning Manager Lodan offered to have staff prepare an agenda item exploring various options because the Commission may wish to take a look at the Hillside Overlay Ordinance in general, in terms of boundaries and standards. He noted that only the City Council has the authority to amend the Hillside Ordinance so any action by the Commission would be in the form of a recommendation to the Council.

Hearing no objection, Chairperson Fauk so ordered.

Susan Butler, Paseo de la Playa, noted that she has done extensive research on the Hillside Ordinance and urged the Commission not to expand the overlay area because it pits neighbor against neighbor, creating hostility and ruining longtime friendships. She recommended that Torrance do what other cities have done and devise very rigid rules for building so everyone will understand exactly what is and is not allowed.

14. REVIEW OF CITY COUNCIL ACTION ON PLANNING MATTERS

None.

15. LIST OF TENTATIVE PLANNING COMMISSION CASES

Planning Manager Lodan reviewed the agenda for the August 2, 2006 Planning Commission meeting.

16. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

16A. Commissioner Busch stated that he was pleased that the Hillside Overlay District was in place to protect people's views as opposed to neighboring cities where there is no such protection.

Chairperson Faulk agreed, stating that he believed looking at each project on an individual basis was the right approach.

16B. Commissioner Browning suggested moving agenda items that can be quickly dispensed with to the beginning of the meeting.

Planning Manager Lodan noted that staff must list items according to agenda order, however, the Commission does have the discretion to consider an item out of order.

16C. Commissioner Horwich requested an excused absence from the August 2 meeting as he will be out of town.

Hearing no objection, Chairperson Faulk so ordered.

16D. Commissioner Gibson congratulated Mayor Scotto and his wife on the birth of their granddaughter Abigail Ann Scotto.

17. ADJOURNMENT

At 11:30 p.m., the meeting was adjourned to Wednesday, August 2, 2006, at 7:00 p.m.

Approved as Submitted August 16, 2006 s/ Sue Herbers, City Clerk
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