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March 4, 2015

Santa Barbara City Council
City of Santa Barbara
735 Anacapa Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Dear Mayor Schneider and Council Members,

We are submitting this appeal letter to you regarding a decision made by the Single Family Design Board on Monday, February 23, 2015.

At their February 23, 2015 meeting, the Board voted to give 'Project Design Approval and Final Approval' to a proposed new home at 2405 State St.

The project includes a proposed 2,101 square foot, two-story single-family residence with an attached 505 square foot, two-car garage. The project includes a new driveway, walkways, curb cut, patios, site walls, fencing, an outdoor fireplace, and the removal of front setback trees. It also includes 2,825 cubic yard of cut and fill grading, of which 235 cubic yards will be exported. The proposed total of 2,606 square feet on a vacant lot is 85% of the required maximum floor-to-lot area ratio (FAR).

We are appealing this decision because we believe the project has several significant elements that we feel are not in alignment with the City's Single Family Residence Design Guidelines.

The proposed house is out of character with the neighborhood, incompatible with the neighboring property at 2401 State (which was built in 1948), and runs counter to what is suggested in the guidelines including the items listed below:

- For new construction, garages should not be the pre-dominant feature of the front elevation.
- Minimize grading both underneath the main building footprint and on the entire site. Only rarely do projects need to approach 500 cubic yards of grading, not including grading under the building footprint, to achieve reasonable development of a property.
- Avoid crowding or overwhelming neighboring residences.
- Avoid a "vertical canyon effect" between homes. The space between a proposed two-story home adjacent to one-story homes is important. Space between homes should increase as wall height increases. Consider set-backs greater than those required by the Municipal Code to avoid bulky structures.
- Set back taller portions of structures from the lot lines to reduce the appearance of height.

- Structures are sited such that they do not block light and views for other existing homes.
- Locate areas that require more privacy away from your neighbors. Avoid placing windows into locations that would look into adjacent windows.

Thank you for your consideration,

 

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