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November 10, 2006

Attn: Planning Commission
City of Santa Barbara
630 Garden Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93102

Re: Schechter Residence

Dear Planning Commissioners:

The current submitted design for Gene Schechter's proposed residence at 1575 La Vista Del Oceano Road incorporates responses to concerns raised by the Planning Commission regarding a previous design submitted by a prior architect.

One of these concerns dealt with the vertical massing of the project on this somewhat steep slope. The previous scheme presented a 3-story structure, with garage / entrance on the top floor, and 2 additional floors below. Our current design lessens the vertical aspect with a revision to a 2 story, split-level organization. Half of the residence consists of the top floor garage/entrance with a master suite below. The other half, in a split-level arrangement, is comprised of common living areas above and two bedrooms with bathroom below. The overall effect of this revision is to compress the massing vertically, while somewhat elongating it in the horizontal direction. The long, narrow aspect of this and the neighboring parcel encourages this strategy of slight horizontal extension. While the new design extends slightly into the south setback yard at the southeast corner, the structure remains completely to the west of the point where the intersecting north and south setback lines meet, similar to the original design. The square footage of this new design is essentially the same as the previous one: the previous design's total area was 2715 square feet including garage, this new design's area is 2783 square feet including garage.

The current design also employs hipped roofs throughout, rather than the gable roofs of the previous scheme. These roofs typically have a more horizontal aspect to them, with the ridge line angled at the ends, and the end walls without the somewhat more vertical gable-roof profile. There has been an attempt to break these roof forms into smaller-scaled elements, with these reduced-mass pieces conforming more gently to the hillside topography and landscape.

Another expressed concern was regarding the quantity and appearance of site retaining walls in the previous design. We are continuing to explore methods to reduce the extent of such walls, both vertically and horizontally across the site. With Planning's conceptual approval of moving

guest parking from the parallel street arrangement previously shown to a perpendicular space adjacent to the proposed driveway, we will be able to eliminate the site walls necessary to accommodate this longer plateau at the street. Additionally, in response to a comment by ABR described below, we have eliminated one full layer of retaining walls by significantly lowering half of the building. It is our intent to further use any needed site walls as more deliberate landscape elements relating the house to surrounding gardens and landscape. We will avoid continuous serpentine forms extending unbroken horizontally, and facet them into smaller-scale geometries, with landscape elements incorporated to further minimize their visual impact.

Reviews by the ABR raised concerns regarding the project's conformance with the hillside's topography. They felt that the profile of the project, as presented primarily on the south elevation, needed to be further modulated to better relate to the landforms. A suggestion was made to lower half of the split-level on the east side by several feet. Our current proposal incorporates this revision: the east half of the building has been lowered by five feet, thereby creating a building form which follows the slope of the hillside, and lowers the overall height of the building in that area. This revision is also responsible for the previously-mentioned elimination of one layer of retaining walls.

Other ABR comments were addressed through appropriate revisions. The cantilever of the upper living area was greatly reduced, again to better conform to accepted hillside design parameters. We have reduced the apparent height of the balcony on the west side, in part by breaking up the mass of the lower supporting portion. Upon lowering the east portion of the building the opportunity arose to create a small roof terrace without adding any significant floor area or other modifications. Per the ABR's suggestion, we've incorporated an iron railing in the parapet that encloses this terrace. Other more "fine tuning" comments by the ABR have been incorporated in this current submittal, such as correcting the previous double-cantilever look of the southeast corner, and the massing of the chimney on the west elevation. Also, we have revised the pattern of wall materials to provide more variety and a better scale to the building. The stone is to be expressed as a horizontal zone on the lower half, while plaster walls will occur at the level above. We've also indicated that the site retaining walls will have more variety in their materials, with plaster wall surfaces and stone caps, again addressing comments to that effect by the ABR. The site walls will be earth tone in color to harmonize with the landscaped hillside. The vast majority of these walls are no more than approximately 4' high, with significant planting on the downhill side to further minimize their apparent height. Further development of the design has indicated that two short retaining walls on the west side of the structure can be eliminated. One short retaining wall on the east side has been added.

Through the DART review of the project, the Engineering Division determined that the proposed road improvement project for La Vista Del Oceano (under separate approval and permit) could not utilize the retaining wall proposed for the residence for support of the roadway. It was determined that an additional wall, to be ultimately within the city's purview, would be required in order to construct the residence tucked into the grade as designed. Through discussions and meetings with Engineering, we have arrived at a proposal that has met their conceptual approval. The current design includes an additional retaining wall adjacent to the road's right-of-way, which can be transferred to the city via granting of an easement once it has been constructed. The major portion of this wall is completely buried within the site; a small portion emerges on

the east side of the residence, and is not visible from the street. The tallest exposed portion of this wall is approximately 7', which is visible primarily from the residence itself. A recent ABR review of this proposal found that it had an insignificant architectural impact on the site. The review did suggest that a pedestrian guardrail would likely be required at a portion of the top of the wall. In discussion with Building and Safety, it was confirmed that such a guardrail would be required. This 42" high railing has been included in the current proposal, and has been designed per the ABR's recommendation as matching the decorative iron railings employed in the residence. Planting areas between the road's required vehicular guardrail and this proposed pedestrian guardrail have been included, again per ABR recommendations.

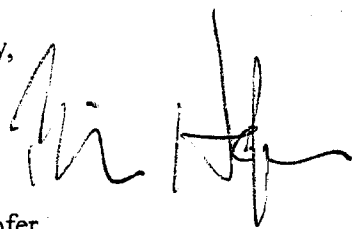
Our guiding intent has been to create a design that has a comfortable relationship to its site, while creating stronger links between indoor and outdoor spaces. We believe that this design approach enables the residence to better conform to the site's natural forms.

In consideration of our mitigation of concerns expressed by the Planning Commission, and responsiveness to comments issued in three ABR reviews, we request approval of the submitted discretionary applications:

- Modification to allow encroachment into north and south front yard setbacks as indicated.
- Modification to allow guest parking in north front yard setback.
- Modification to allow retaining walls higher than 3'-6" in north and south front yard setbacks, as well as a 42" high guardrail in the north front yard setback.
- Modification to allow waiver of 1250 SF open yard requirement for western parcel 035-170-230.
- Lot merger of APN 035-170-230 and 035-170-220

Thank you for your constructive review of our project. We continue to look forward to producing a project that will be an asset to the neighborhood, as well as satisfying any concerns expressed by the reviewing agencies.

Sincerely,



Brian Hofer

cc: Gene Schechter