

June 18, 2009

VIA HAND DELIVERY

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Honorable Mayor Blum and Members of the City Council
City of Santa Barbara
735 Anacapa Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Attention: City Clerk

RE: 415 Alan Road (MST2009-00083)
Appeal of Planning Commission Decision

Dear Mayor Blum and Members of the City Council:

This appeal letter is submitted on behalf of the applicants, Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Seybold, and requests the City Council reverse the Planning Commission's June 11, 2009 decision and grant initiation of a General Plan Amendment, Local Coastal Plan Amendment and zone change for 415 Alan Road.

The proposed amendments and zone change would allow for a lot split and construction of a new modest-sized single-family home in this nearly built-out neighborhood. The Seybolds plan to build a one-story, three to four bedroom home that is compatible with the character and scale of surrounding homes. This would be a "smart home," showcasing the most current home automation technologies and including solar power and many other energy efficient and sustainable features.

On June 11, 2009, the Planning Commission denied the request by a vote of 3-2. We respectfully request the City Council reverse this decision and direct staff to:

1. Initiate a General Plan Amendment changing the land use designation for a portion of 415 Alan Road (proposed Parcel B) from "Residential, One Dwelling per Acre" to "Residential, Five Dwellings per Acre."
2. Direct staff to investigate the desirability of initiating a General Plan Amendment for the so-called "Braemar Tract" which is immediately north of 415 Alan Road, changing the land use designation from "Residential, One Dwelling per Acre" to "Residential, Five Dwellings per Acre," so that the General Plan land use designation is consistent with the existing zoning and reflects the existing development pattern of the neighborhood. This General Plan Amendment could be undertaken as part of the general plan update process in which the City is currently engaged.
3. Initiate a Local Coastal Plan Amendment consistent with the General Plan land use designation change described above.
4. Initiate a zone change for the proposed Parcel B from A-1/S-D-3 to E-3/S-D-3, consistent with the proposed General Plan designation and the current zoning of the Braemar Tract.

Reasons to Support the Proposal

1. **The proposed amendments would facilitate better use of an odd-shaped lot and more efficient use of scarce vacant land in the City.** The proposed new parcel already appears to be a separate lot because it is physically separated from the existing house and yard area. The established infrastructure and lack of significant natural resources on the property make this an ideal location for infill development that fits with the existing scale and character of the neighborhood. The enclosed visual simulation shows a bird's eye view of the neighborhood as it exists today and as it would appear with the additional home.
2. **Santa Barbara needs housing and this proposal will create an additional modest-sized residential unit.** The City is suffering from a severe shortage of middle-class housing opportunities, which is one of the reasons for the high cost of housing. Infill sites, such as this one, offer the opportunity to fit new housing into the City without expanding its boundaries or converting dedicated open space.
3. **The proposal takes advantage of an infill housing opportunity while not changing the character of the neighborhood.** There are relatively few places in the City where additional housing can be provided without changing the character of the neighborhood, and this is one of those places. The proposed new 12,709 square foot parcel is similar in size to surrounding properties and conforms to slope density standards.
4. **The proposed General Plan Amendment corrects a discrepancy between the land use designation and zoning for the Braemar Tract that has lingered for too long.** California planning law requires general plans to be consistent with all other land use regulations, including the zoning ordinance (Government Code §65860). While Santa Barbara is exempt from this legal requirement because it is a charter city, general plan and zoning consistency is nonetheless good planning practice. The General Plan change would also reflect the actual density and development pattern of this fully built-out neighborhood. Only one parcel, 53 Vista Del Mar Drive, would have the potential to be further subdivided to create an additional developable lot. This property is currently developed with a single-family home.
5. **The proposal is consistent with the principles of Plan Santa Barbara.** The Plan SB "Policy Preference Report," issued in January 2009 puts forth the following sustainability principle:

"Living Within Our Resources" means effectively managing growth and in-fill development to conserve the community's natural, physical and historic resources for present and future generations. Challenges between future development and resource use must be met with creative solutions that meet the multiple objectives of preserving historic resources and community character, retaining a diverse population and culture, and allowing sufficient growth to propel a steady economy" (page 19).

Further, the report calls for incentives to encourage smaller, 'affordable-by-design' homes:

"Incentives for Affordable-by-Design Units. Prepare design standards and codify incentives for market rate developers to build smaller, 'affordable-by-design' residential units that better meet the needs of

our community. Incentives could include higher allowable densities, less required parking, etc." (Housing Policy H5, page 54).

This proposal affords the opportunity to put these stated goals into action. We respectfully suggest that the City should support this type of infill project, unless there are compelling reasons to say no.

Conclusion

Based on the foregoing, we respectfully request you overturn the Planning Commission's decision and grant initiation of a General Plan Amendment, Local Coastal Plan Amendment and zone change.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

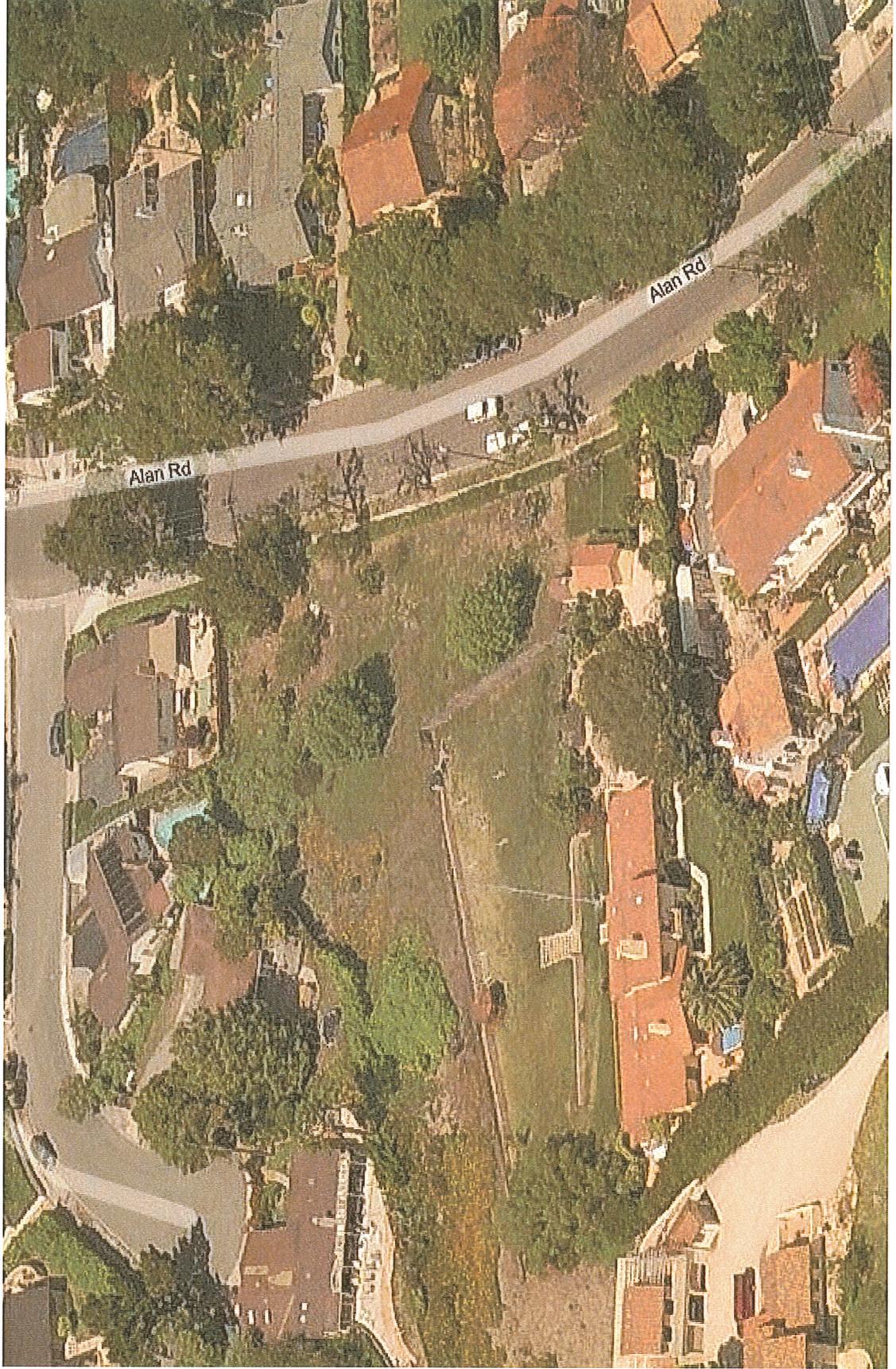


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Enclosure

cc: Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Seybold (by email)
Scott Vincent, Assistant City Attorney (by email)
Paul Casey, Director (by email)
Danny Kato, Senior Planner (by email)
Kathy Kennedy, Associate Planner (by email)

415 Alan Road: Today



415 Alan Road: Proposed

