

[EXTERNAL] PLN20-0541 Comment: 910 Centennial Ave

Laura Woodard <heyauraw@gmail.com>

Mon 4/19/2021 9:10 AM

To:

Deirdre McCartney;

You replied on 4/19/2021 9:20 AM.

Dear Ms. McCartney,

I'd like to add my comments for consideration in today's decision regarding the project PLN20-0541. Will this email be shared or will I need to be present this afternoon to make a comment?

I'm aware of other commenters calling for the new structure to be closer to the street. I am already concerned with how close the house will be to my home next door, 908 Centennial, and how it will effect the light and privacy that I am used to. I appreciate that these issues were taken into consideration in the design.

Building the house closer to the street will block at least one of my windows, one that I rely on for natural light to prevent mold in the back of the house. Having the new structure right next to my bedroom would likely lead to more noise and a loss of privacy.

I have rented this home for 9 years, I have been a considerate and active part of the neighborhood, and I plan to stay a lot longer. I hope my quality of life will not have to be sacrificed to meet the aesthetic taste of people who do not spend time on our block.

Please keep the designer's original blueprint for the new structure.

Thank you,
Laura Woodard

[EXTERNAL] Variance for 910 Centennial Avenur, Alameda

REPLYREPLY ALLFORWARD

Mark as unread

Martha McCune <martitout@yahoo.com>

Sun 4/18/2021 8:12 AM

To:

Deirdre McCartney;

I am responding to a notice I received in regard to an application for a variance for the new construction on the site of 910 Centennial Ave.

After reading the notice, I feel that the proposed structure is too large for the property, not only in width but in height.

Once built, the people who have gardens on each side of the property will find that the natural light they are use to will be will be altered and the plants that are existing may not be able to survive.

The building will also prevent natural sunlight, causing the homes on each side to use more energy in the winter months to heat their homes, creating a financial impact on current residents.

It is my hope for the sake of the neighborhood, that the City of Alameda, will deny the permit.

Sincerely,
Martha McCune
912 San Antonio Ave



April 15, 2021

(By Electronic Transmission)
Ms. Deidre McCartney
City of Alameda Planning and Building Department
2263 Santa Clara Avenue
Alameda, California 94501

Subject:—Design Review for 910 Centennial Avenue - -PLN20-0541 (to be considered by the Zoning Administrator on 4-19-21)

Dear Ms. McCartney:

The Alameda Architectural Preservation Society (AAPS) has the following comments on this project:

1. **Move the proposed second floor forward so that the second floor extends to the front setback line and the garage is slightly recessed.** Although not explicitly prohibited by the Citywide Design Review Manual's Guide to Residential Design, the proposed garage's front projection from the main body of the proposed residence is inconsistent with the Guide's intent to minimize the visual prominence of garages and garage doors. As proposed, the design is an example of a style sometimes called "Garage with House Attached". Relevant provisions on page 53 of the Guide to Residential Design include:
 - a. *Attached or integrated garages should not face directly onto the street. Alley loaded garages are strongly encouraged as are detached garages located at the rear of the parcel. Alternatively, garages may be attached to the side of the building, but set back from the front façade.*
 - b. *If consistent with surrounding buildings, consider providing paved "tire tracks" for the driveway leading to the garage instead of a fully paved driveway in order to minimize paving.*
 - c. *If no feasible alternative exists, and garages do face directly onto the street, the garage doors should be architecturally treated to be compatible with the adjoining building(s) and other building(s) in the neighborhood, when appropriate.*
 - d. *Make the garage doors appear less visually prominent when compared to other elements of the building, such as recessing the garage door from the front wall or installing an arbor over the garage opening, or, for two-car garages, using two individual doors rather than one large one.*

- e. *Recess the garage door from the same vertical plane as the front wall (or upper wall for a two-story structure) to avoid creating a flat front building elevation.*
2. **Consider providing “paved tire tracks” instead of the proposed solid paved driveway as per Guide Provision (b) above.**
 3. **Consider providing a more “architectural treatment” of the garage doors.** Although most of the neighboring garage doors do not have what could be considered “architectural treatment” as per Guide Provision (c) above, such treatment should be seriously considered given the visual prominence of the garage. The doors of the nearby garage at the east end of Centennial Avenue are a good model. See attached photo.
 4. **Clarify the proposed Hardi Board cement fiber siding.** Indicate the type (clapboard, channel rustic, etc.) and exposure (3”, 9”, etc.). Ca. 9” channel rustic siding is the codominant material on neighboring structures and should be seriously considered.
 5. **Provide more architectural detailing for consistency with neighboring buildings as called for in the Guide to Residential Design.** Such detailing can be simple and could include: (a) a raking frieze board with about 8” exposure under the front-facing gable eave and along front elevation horizontal eaves; and (b) ca. 1 x 6 casings for doors and windows and other openings and at building corners (unless the horizontal siding is specified to be mitered at the corners). The following provisions on page 52 of the Guide to Residential Design are relevant:
 - a. *Infill projects should incorporate the distinctive architectural characteristics of development in the surrounding neighborhood. For example: window and door spacing/rhythm, building materials, roof style and pitch, finished-floor height, porches, and the like.*
 - b. *Similarity of architectural detail may be accomplished by the use of cornices, lintels, braces, arches, decorative woodwork, chimneys, stairs, etc. This similarity of detail is extremely important in ensuring a compatible appearance in new construction.*
 - c. *The height of new infill projects must be considered within the context of their surroundings. Buildings with greater height should consider setbacks at the second story to reduce impacts on adjacent buildings.*
 - d. *A variety of materials, when properly used, can reinforce the distinctiveness of the neighborhood. Common materials are brick, stone, wood, and stucco. Used properly, materials can enhance desired neighborhood qualities (i.e., compatibility, continuity, similarity, harmony, etc.) The design of infill projects should incorporate an appropriate mixture of the predominant materials in the area whenever possible.*

Please provide us copies of any decision letters or other important correspondence concerning this project and any notices of plan revisions. Please either send these materials to me directly at 1017 San Antonio Avenue or to cbuckleyaicp@att.net.

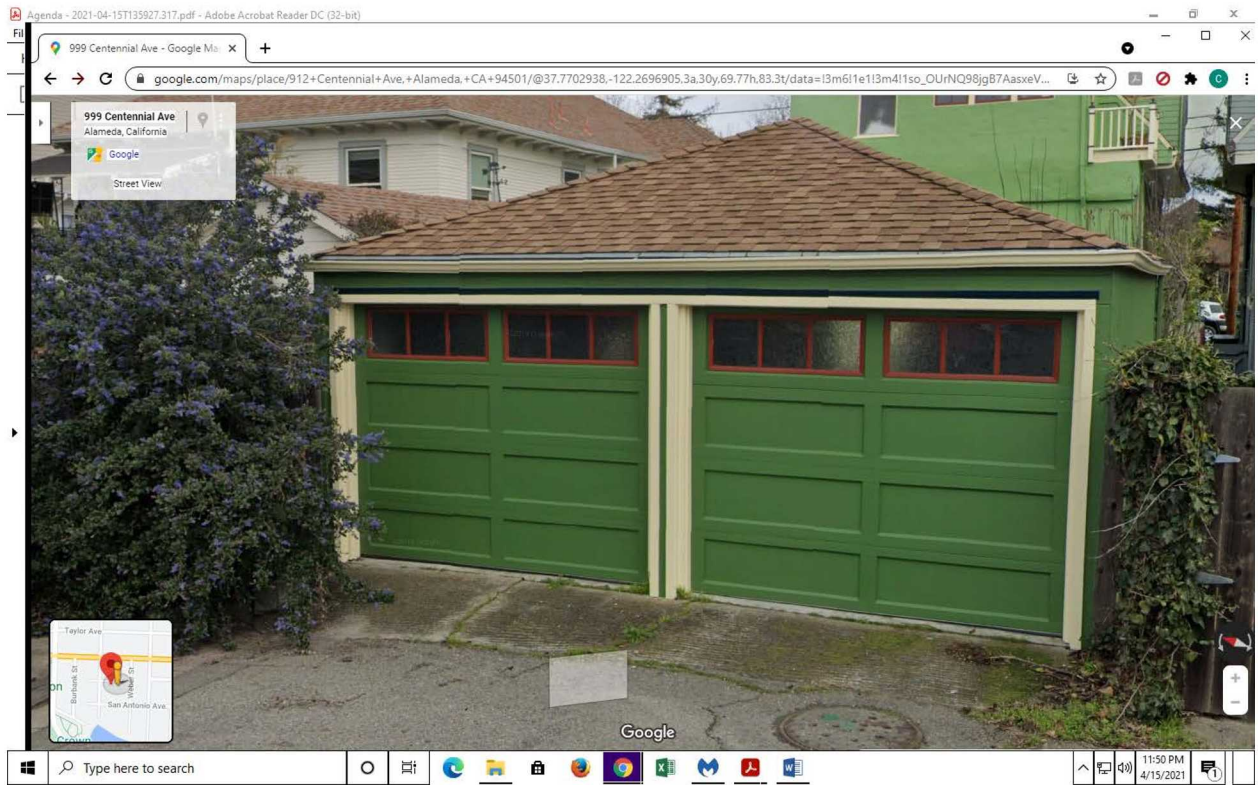
Thank you for the opportunity to comment. Please contact me at 510-523-0411 or cbuckleyaicp@att.net if you have questions or would like to discuss these comments.

Sincerely,

Christopher Buckley, Chair
Preservation Action Committee
Alameda Architectural Preservation Society

Attachment: Photo of garage at east end of Centennial Avenue

cc: Allen Tai and Andrew Thomas (by electronic transmission)
Planning Board (by electronic transmission)
AAPS Board and Preservation Action Committee (by electronic transmission)



To Zone Administrator
c/o Deirdre McCartney, Planning Technician III
City of Alameda- Planning, Building + Transportation
510 747-6814 dmccartney@alamedaca.gov

April 17, 2021

Re: PLN20-0541-910 Centennial Avenue

A one foot set-back from many neighbors' fences is a problem. How can an adult enter the space to recover a favorite toy such as a teddy bear recruited into a flight experiment, or rescue a frightened pet that can't move forward but won't move backward, or retrieve an inquisitive child who found a secret hideaway? It seems to me more hazard than asset.

How can the drain and fencing be maintained without access? There are drainage concerns which are increased during atmospheric river events. Is there a water infiltration plan with % permeable area? Where do the gutters drain? Is there a foundation drain with a pump to remove water to Centennial Avenue? Does the storm water drain indicated on the west side extend the entire length of the structure? Or will the water pile up on the neighbors' fence posts in its south western journey towards the bay?

What arrangement assures the cooperation by both parties for maintaining common fencing? One party shouldn't be able to subject the personal fence of the other party to excessive water and mechanical abuse. If common fencing is to be used then both parties need to be willing to communicate respectfully and contribute materially for the common benefit. Since behavior cannot be regulated, shouldn't land use approval strive to preclude conflict as well as hazards in the decision-making?

The south boundary may give an indication of another type of fence problem: boundary creep. Doesn't the sum of the distances in Fig1.1A exceed 135' by nearly a foot (i.e. 10-1/4inch)?

A mature 22 ft tree growing on a west boundary line is proposed for complete removal - unilaterally. It is inaccurately represented on Fig A1.1 as within the parcel for 910 Centennial Ave. Was a cut-out considered? What compensation is there for this loss to the adjacent 6 households and the general environment? There is also a coast live oak tree which overhangs a fence. How will this tree be preserved for the property owner of 1214 9th St and the environment? (When Mr. Phillip Figone cut back my cherry laurel tree, *Prunus carolinia*, to the fence it was with more enthusiasm than skill. The jagged cuts were an invitation to pest and disease made worse by his timing in fall when the species is sensitive to silver leaf blight. My 30+ ft tree weakened and was removed to avoid infecting nearby trees but its treatment by Mr. Figone is a red flag). How will the coast live oak which are supposedly protected in Alameda, including those in the "Oak Shade Tract", be actually protected if they are inconvenient?

Some neighbors are easier to live with than others. In close proximity courtesy becomes even more important. The provision of a living screen of trees will help in time to mitigate the project impact on the southern neighbor. However, any similar effort at screening for other neighbors isn't evident. Six upstairs windows look directly into back-yards without mitigation of obscure glass or sand-blasted tempered glass. Why are windows allowed in this case when the lot line is less than 3 feet away and not for other projects? And what mitigation might there be for lack of morning sun? Answer: None.

This proposed structure is more than twice the size of my home built in 1909, given as 850 sq ft which is similar to post-war suburbs such as Levittowns. (1) Why should this hulking new house be located in an old neighborhood with even older lot lines? The adverse impacts on neighbors are known without any corresponding benefit. Should this project take precedence over the well-being of the existing residents and the environment? In my humble opinion an extreme variance for the western setback of a single foot

is not justified and this project is out of scale with both the parcel and the immediate neighborhood.

I respectfully request that the Zoning Administrator reject the variance and design review for PLN 20-0541.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Roberta Hough

911 San Antonio Ave.

Alameda, CA 94501-3959

ref(1)

Joe Pinsker, "Why Are American Homes So Big?" Sept 12, 2019, The Atlantic

(According to the article, part of the answer is that "land use regulations in the U.S. tend to be more lax than those in other places". Another reason is given as follows:

"In the case of the U.S., more than national wealth is linked to size—there's often a personal financial advantage to it as well. In the 1970s, Americans started to view their houses as assets that could appreciate, according to Louis Hyman, a historian at Cornell University and the author of *Debtor Nation: The History of America in Red Ink*. "One of the reasons why I think there's an explosion in bigger houses, more expensive houses, is the more money you can [get a bank to give you], the more money you can make as a homeowner," Hyman told me. "You borrow as much as you possibly can, you buy the biggest possible house you can, and then you can make more money on the upside if you think house prices are going to go up." "

[EXTERNAL] PLN20-054` - 910 Centennial Ave

REPLYREPLY ALLFORWARD

Mark as unread

Elmer Strasser <elmerstrasser@gmail.com>

Wed 4/14/2021 10:09 PM

To:

Deirdre McCartney;

I would like to comment on the construction on this property as being against it for the following reasons:

1) You mention a setback of 1 ft on the west side of the property where a 5 ft setback is required.

Why is the proposal being approved when a basic requirement is not met.

This requirement is for fire safety purposes. I noticed that there is a dwelling next to the property and fires can spread easily!

2) I live on 913 San Antonio and our house is not even a 2000 sq ft house. How is it even possible to build a 2 storey house on that property?

3) Have you addressed the parking situation? Centennial already has a parking issue. If you think the dwellers will use the garage... think again.

4) how is it even possible to have a lot only 22 ft wide?

5) I enjoy having the open space behind my backyard and a 2 story building will definitely make the area feel more cramped for space.

6) I don't know what you define as medium density... but that area and 9th st are very dense. We get a lot of spillover parking on San Antonio from 9th st residents.

7) there was no mention of the setback on the back side of the structure (the South side). Will you also break the setback requirement?

8) we weren't even given a plan view of the proposal.

So for all these reasons, I oppose the project as it goes against my neighborhood values and what I know Alameda for... it's quiet streets, uncrowded housing and home ownership.

910,912, and 914 are owned by the same persons. They will just turn 910 into another rental (I think 912 has at least 2 apartments) and 914 looks like a converted garage (also a rental).

Thank you for your consideration,
Elmer Strasser

[EXTERNAL] PLN 20-0541—910 Centennial Ave.

Christopher Buckley <cbuckleyaicp@att.net>

Thu 4/1/2021 10:38 AM

Inbox

To:

Deirdre McCartney;

Hi Deirdre,

It looks like the public notice is just for demolition of the existing garage rather than for the replacement building. Should we hold off submitting Comments on the new structure? Our quick take based on the current plans is that it is somewhat problematic. Among other things, what you mostly see at the front is the new garage with the rest of the building set back, Making it an example of "garage with house attached" style, which is inconsistent with the prevailing configuration in the surrounding neighborhood.

Chris

Sent from my iPhone

RE: Phone conversation with Simon Tse, 10:30 am on 4/13/21

Project Number:
PLN20-0541 Project
Address: 910
Centennial Ave.

Mr. Tse, who is a neighbor at 1216 Ninth Street has stated the following comments/concerns:

1. The proposed building is too tall and too long.
2. The proposed building is too close to the fence
3. The building is a potential fire hazard since it is close to the property line.
4. Mr. Tse will have less privacy and sunlight at the rear of his property.
5. Water drainage

Deirdre McCartney, Project Planner
City of Alameda – Planning, Building + Transportation

[EXTERNAL] PLN20-0541-910 Centennial Ave

REPLYREPLY ALLFORWARD

Mark as unread

John Hillenbrand <hillenbees@gmail.com>

Wed 4/14/2021 4:46 PM

To:

Deirdre McCartney;

Yellow category

Ms. McCartney,

I live across the street towards the east end of the street and I want to express my frustration about how the project will increase the number of cars on the street by taking away the 2 parking spots in front of the existing structure that have served the next door 3 story apartment building. Those two cars will now be parked on the street. Parking in the street is already tough with all spots on the street often occupied on a regular weekday right now. I request that, in addition to the two parking spots inside the structure, two additional spots that are in front of the existing structure will be maintained as viable parking spots for the new structure.

Also, the structure does not seem to have any street facing vegetation enhancement associated with the project. Given the starkness of all the concrete in the area, especially the 3 story building next door, it would help the neighborhood if the three deformed and gnarly bottle trees were replaced with fuller and more enhancing trees that also do not lift the sidewalk. These three trees are located on the same side of the street as the project and to the east.

I believe the neighborhood enhancement that the trees bring will partly offset the increased parking difficulty.

Thank you for your consideration of my comments.

John Hillenbrand

Zoning Administrator
Planning, Building & Transportation, City of Alameda, City Hall
2263 Santa Clara Avenue, Rm 190
Alameda, CA 94501

April 14, 2021

Dear Zoning Administrator,

We are long-time residents of 1218 9th Street, a property adjoining the proposed construction plan at 910 Centennial Avenue. While we are not opposed to new housing being built in Alameda, new structures must be built with the good of the community in mind. After talking with numerous neighbors and property owners and discussing the potential impacts of the project in depth, we have unfortunately come to the conclusion that the proposed project as planned is *not* good for the surrounding properties, including ours. We ask you to refuse the proposed variance.

First, we are vigorously opposed to ANY plan that requires the removal of or damage to the avocado tree. This tree's location is completely misrepresented in the plans. The tree does NOT sit on the neighboring property as represented in the plans (see "(E) 22' tree to be removed" on Existing Siteplan), but is on a shared fence line (see Figure 1), with the fence built around the tree. As you can see, the tree's trunk is halfway in our yard right on the property line, extending into our yard. It does not sit in the neighbor's yard, as drawn on the plans.



Figure 1 — The tree sits on the fenceline, not the neighbor's property.

This avocado tree is decades old and gives us necessary privacy from the tall neighboring house, and also gives us fruit. It's an important habitat for numerous local wildlife, including native birds. We love this tree just for the numerous benefits it provides. Crucially, without this tree, we will lose ALL privacy in our yard from the neighbors on the rear side, especially if it is replaced with an enormous structure with windows that look straight onto our yard and bedroom. Eliminating privacy and a tree that has long been a beloved fixture of our yard for the decade and a half we have lived here—and is on the shared property line—is a significant and unacceptable alteration. ANY building plan or variance that involves damaging the tree or removing it is totally unacceptable.

Second, we are opposed to a building plan which impedes our view of the neighborhood as well as significantly alters the sunlight. Our current view of the horizon will be completely obstructed by this new house. This means we will no longer have a view of the sunrise, and the morning light in our home will be significantly altered and reduced. Furthermore, significant portions of our yard will no longer get *any* sunlight in the morning, which would have a devastating effect on the California native plants we have planted recently to take advantage of the low angle of early morning sun, especially in the winter months. These plants rely on that early morning sunlight. Finally, the early morning sunlight is also important to help control damp, mold, and mildew in the winter. Without that light the house will be that much more prone to developing mold and it will be harder to control.

We are also just generally concerned about building such a large building only one foot away from our fence and property line. Fence maintenance will be extremely difficult, it will be difficult to control vegetation which could increase fire risk, and we have concerns about fence stability, flooding, and other issues.

We know that our immediate neighbors and adjacent property owners have numerous issues with this variance request, as well, but felt the need to add our voices to the opposition.

Please refuse the request for variance in this case, and in any future plans do not allow the removal of the avocado tree that is on the boundary between properties.

Thank you,
Sundari Johansen and Sam Hurwitt
1218 9th Street
Alameda, CA 94501

[EXTERNAL] Letter opposing zoning variance (910 Centennial)

REPLYREPLY ALLFORWARD

Mark as unread

Sundari Johansen Hurwitt <sundari.johansen@gmail.com>

Wed 4/14/2021 3:28 PM

To:

Deirdre McCartney;

Yellow category

2 attachments

Download all

Mimecast Attachment Protection has deemed this file to be safe, but always exercise caution when opening files.

Dear Ms. McCartney,

I hope this email finds you well. My husband and I are writing to oppose the zoning variance request at 910 Centennial, due to numerous issues including a misrepresentation of the location of a tree listed as planned for removal, which is actually on a shared property line. All the details along with a photo are in the attached letter, which we are submitting as comment on the request.

Thank you!

-Sundari Johansen & Sam Hurwitt

--

Sundari Johansen Hurwitt | sundari.johansen@gmail.com | she/her

melissa guerrero <create@melissaguerrero.com>

Mon 4/5/2021 10:00 AM

PENDING DR

To:

Deirdre McCartney;

Cc:

melissa guerrero <create@melissaguerrero.com>;

Hello,

I am writing in regards to the building of a single family home at the garage address of 910 Centennial Ave.

My concerns are as follows:

Existing is a double, side by side garage, with two driveways allowing two cars to be parked off street. The apartments located next door have been using these garages and spaces for as long as I have lived here, 16 years.

Parking is an issue already on our cul de sac or dead end.

Will additional parking be planned into the new building? Meaning, will the existing off street parked cars, two, continue to be off street? as well as the newly built home to have off-street parking?

For someone who does not have off-street parking, no driveway or garage, I have little choice. I assumed that any new building needed to provide off street parking as well as the grandfathered in situations.

Thank you,

Melissa

Melissa Guerrero Design

www.melissaguerrero.com

510-749-0766 office

415-519-2294 cell

[EXTERNAL] PLN20-0541 910 Centennial Ave new 2-story residence

rob_hough_alameda@yahoo.com

Sun 4/4/2021 10:44 PM

To:

Deirdre McCartney;

Hello Deirdre McCartney,

I'm responding to the letter informing neighbors of the proposed 2 story single family residence to replace the garage at 910 Centennial Ave. I live behind the proposed project and have requested of Amornrit Pukdeepamrongrit that amelioration of the reduction in privacy from the proposal include obscure glass in the upper story windows and tree planting along the south boundary.

What surprises me most is that the proposal is defined as a sliver of the huge lot complex which contains 3 units in one structure as well as the attached garage, which apparently is slated for demolition and rebuilding. Is a 1 ft side yard set-back sufficient to feasibly build a fence without some explicit easement transferred from 912

Centennial? Or is the proposed structure behind (eg south) that of 912? I apologize for not having had the ability to visit the planning office in person to see the plot plan.

I believe my privacy request will need to be re-phrased in terms of sight-lines from the 2nd story of the proposed project into my yard at 911 San Antonio Ave., Parcel # 73-398-26-1.

I hope that off-street parking will be adequate for the increased occupancy. We are currently saturated with cars with some neighbors parking a block from home on occasion.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the project.

Sincerely,

Roberta Hough

P.S. I was unable to verify the parcel number of the application as shown in the following screen shot where the leading zeros caused confusion:

[EXTERNAL] Letter opposing zoning variance (910 Centennial)

REPLYREPLY ALLFORWARD

Mark as read

[Sundari Johansen Hurwitt <sundari.johansen@gmail.com>](mailto:sundari.johansen@gmail.com)

Mon 4/19/2021 10:50 AM

To:

Deirdre McCartney;

Yellow category Green category

Hi there,

My husband and I wanted to make one addendum to this letter, which is that the tree in question which they have inaccurately placed on their side of the property is not only on the fence line, but also extends into our yard about 12 feet (about 143 inches from the fence, I just measured it). Their illustration shows the tree primarily on their side of the fence but in reality the trunk is on the fence line and at least half the tree is in our yard. We absolutely do not want to lose it.

I will try to make it to the meeting today but my work schedule may not allow it.

Thank you!

rob_hough_alameda@yahoo.com

Mon 4/19/2021 12:20 PM

To:

Deirdre McCartney;

You replied on 4/20/2021 8:22 AM.

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[Action Items](#)

Dear Ms. McCartney,

I don't know the correct procedure for introducing the following comment but it is nagging me. Can you introduce it into the hearing?

Was the environmental benefit of a light roof reflecting solar radiation over it's lifetime considered before selecting the dark roof ?

Else I will attempt to "speak" through the Zoom meeting interface if time allows.

Thank you again,

Roberta Hough

Richard Davis <oskidavis@sbcglobal.net>

Mon 4/19/2021 11:49 AM

To:

Deirdre McCartney;

Red category

You replied on 4/20/2021 8:25 AM.

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: "mailer-daemon@yahoo.com" <mailer-daemon@yahoo.com>

To: "oskidavis@sbcglobal.net" <oskidavis@sbcglobal.net>

Sent: Monday, April 19, 2021, 11:40:03 AM PDT

Subject: Failure Notice

Sorry, we were unable to deliver your message to the following address.

<dmccartney@alameda.gov>:

No mx record found for domain=alameda.gov

----- Forwarded message -----

Ms McCartney;

My name is Richard Davis, I reside at 1304 Weber Street, in Alameda; approximately one block from the 910 Centennial Avenue location. I would like to voice my objection to the variance asking for a 1 foot set back on the west side of the development. I believe such a variance will have a negative impact on the environment, light, and space of the neighboring homes. I would hope that the 5 foot setback is maintained.

Sincerely,

Richard Davis
1304 Weber Street
Alameda, Ca 94501