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Condo Project Finally Gets Okay

By Cathy Tyson



East Elevation of Lafayette Park Terrace, Hollman Bologna Architects

At the very end of the Mt. Diablo Court, past Blodgett's Abbey Carpet and two other existing condominium complexes, the 2-acre parcel owned by Lafayette Properties recently received an approval to finally start building, subject to conditions from the City Council. It was more than a year ago, September 19, 2007, that this paper reported that the Council was wrestling with the Lafayette Park Terrace project.

Originally planned as a much larger 40-unit condominium complex, a year ago that was whittled down to 28, now the final approval will be for 18 units.

In late July City Council members took the unusual step of visiting a few of the units in the adjacent complex to get a better idea of the visual and possible noise implications of the proposed project. Concerned neighbors throughout the process have requested reducing the height and mass of the building, and increasing the distance between the new building and the Lafayette Pointe condos next door.

At the meeting a letter was presented by Kathy Skovgard on behalf of the residents of Lafayette Pointe and Randy Castro, President of Pleasant Hills and Valleys Homeowners Association, with nine specific requests.

Noting that, "we've made changes in direct response to the neighbors concerns," Mike Hollman of architectural firm Hollman Bologna, was "basically in agreement with all nine points except the last one." Even that one they ended up compromising on - reducing the height of the building, again.

Neighbor Carol Gray wanted to voice her opposition, "We feel the development is out of proportion to the site. We also are concerned with the number of cars - it's already a crowded court. The people of the east end do not need or want intense development on this side of town. Once this goes through - what's next? It sets a precedent for future developments." She went on to compliment the Council, however, for being very considerate and attentive throughout the process.

Council members recognized that the applicant has gone a long way toward accommodating neighbor concerns. Member Carol Federighi mentioned that the density is not inappropriate for the site, and that twelve individual homes that could be built on the parcel would have a greater negative impact.

Curious residents can see story poles on the site with bright orange tape to mark the height of the building, just past the cemetery, turn right into Mt. Diablo Court.

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