

BILLBERNSTEINAIA

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November 28, 2011

Delinda Robinson, Planner
Monterey County Resource Management Agency
168 W. Alisal - 2nd Floor
Salinas, CA 93901

RE: **Ridgeline Development**
1170 Signal Hill Road
PN: PLN100338

Dear Ms. Robinson,

This letter is meant to address the issue of "Ridgeline Development" for the project at 1170 Signal Hill Road as defined by the applicable regulations, and to analyze the significance of the impact of the Project on the viewscape from 17 Mile Drive in Pebble Beach, using photographic studies to provide substantial evidence to support its conclusions. If the Project is determined to be a "ridgeline development" for the purposes of land use planning, this study will provide evidence and analysis to support the issuance of a Ridgeline Development Permit.

The Project is located approximately 1000 feet from 17 Mile Drive and is elevated 95 feet above sea level. The highest point of the roof is at 130 feet above sea level, 30 feet higher than the average grade of 100 feet. It is also located approximately 7 feet lower than Signal Hill Road. There is an existing structure on the property which is sited on a flat pad at the 95 foot level. This building also has two stories with a flat cantilevered roof which reaches the 110 foot elevation on the property, and a parapet wall which is approximately at elevation 112..

Given the topography of the site, and the adjacent ESHA, area available to development is extremely limited. The proposed new building will also be sited on the 95 foot pad level which has been determined to be in the only previously developed dune area of the property. Because the surrounding contours exceed 30% slope and are considered to be ESHA by the Project Biologist, no development will be allowed in any other area of the property and the contours of the land prevent this lowest floor from being placed any lower on the site. A front yard setback of 30 feet further limits the siting of the development on the property as does the Developed Dune Line which separates the buildable area from those that may not be disturbed, altered or endangered. Therefore, it can be unequivocally stated there is no alternative location on the property for the building than where it is currently sited.

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The allowable height of a structure in this zone is 30 feet from the Average Grade, and the proposed project features a sloped “shed” roof over the Living Room, with its ridgeline to be 30 feet above Average Grade. The majority of the building features flat roofs with small parapets which are only 22 feet above the grade line. The two levels of the building are stepped and tucked into the hillside to help minimize the impact on the property, especially from 17 Mile Drive. Stepping the two levels allows for open terraces on the first floor and limits the height of the building’s exterior walls to create a lesser silhouette from below.

When compared to the existing residence, especially with respect from visibility from 17 Mile Drive, both buildings present the same visual impact from the public viewscape and are consistent with those homes adjacent to the property on Signal Hill Road as well as many others further to the north along 17 Mile Drive. This report includes photographs of some of these structures to support this claim.

To be sure we fully analyze the impact of the “ridgeline development” from all public viewsapes, we studied the proposed building lines with staking poles from all visible points along 17 Mile Drive, beginning at the northbound turn from Cypress Point, stopping at Fan Shell Beach, the road below the house and as far north as Bird Rock Scenic Overlook. When viewed from any of these stopping points and public viewing spots, the house is well below, and dwarfed by the surrounding hills, dunes and trees behind the property. Since Ridgeline Development is defined as *Development on the crest of a hill which has potential to create a silhouette or other substantially adverse impact when viewed from the public viewing area*, we contend that there is no “ridgeline issue” from these areas. The enclosed photographs in this report clearly support this claim.

We did find that the house would be silhouetted against the sky from the dune area directly below. That may be defined as a “public viewing area” but only in the context of walking or biking off the east side of the road. There is no official stopping point or turnout in this area so the viewing point is relatively limited. Every house along 17 Mile Drive and Signal Hill Road has the same issue and to single this house out as the only one to have a ridgeline issue would be unfair.

Accepting this, however, with respect to Policy #33 of the Del Monte Forest Land Use Plan, the house will have some ridgeline silhouette effect from this one viewing area. We accept this and propose to minimize and mitigate the issue by planting 5 new Monterey Cypress trees behind the house, grouped with one existing Cypress tree just off Signal Hill Road, to create a green backdrop of trees to interrupt the silhouette as seen from the Drive below. Additionally, a large grove of Cypress trees exists to the south of the house, offering silhouette protection in the southerly direction and a small grouping of low Cypress exists

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on the northwest part of the property and offers some screening of the north end of the proposed project as well. Five seedling trees have already been planted on the north and south edges of the proposed footprint and will eventually provide further screening and greenery around the perimeter of the house. This is represented in the rendering at the back of the report of the proposed house as viewed from below.

When all of the various photographs are reviewed and the proposed rendered view of the house are carefully studied, the limited silhouette is very small when viewed as part of the total viewscape. The building is mostly surrounded by trees or dune hillside, which appear taller than the projected structure. Thus the additional impact on the viewscape is not significant.

Finally, we point back to the fairness of the "ridgeline development" requirements with respect to the neighboring homes along 17 Mile Drive. As one continues along the Drive, each and every house on the east side of the road creates the very same silhouette, in some cases far worse. Several of the homes on Signal Hill Road, for example, have very little tree line protection and are completely visible against the sky when viewed from below. (See the attached photographs titled Neighbor's ridgeline). The nature of the road at sea level, compared to the higher properties to the east, make it virtually impossible to prevent some ridgeline silhouette anywhere along 17 Mile Drive. We feel this project fits well within the spirit of the community, and coupled with the proposed mitigation measures, will have an insignificant impact on "ridgeline development".

Therefore, based on all the data presented above, the Proposal should be either not considered a "ridgeline development" in the first instance because of the lack of a substantially adverse silhouette or, in the alternative, if it is considered technically to be "ridgeline development" then a Ridgeline Development Permit should be approved because the requisite findings can easily be made in this case that there is (a.) no substantial adverse impact, and (b.) no alternative location exists which would allow a reasonable development.

Respectfully,

Bill Bernstein,
Architect of Record

CASA PEBBLE BEACH : 1170 SIGNAL HILL ROAD

Ridgeline Justification Images



IMAGE 1 17 Mile Drive: Approaching from the west and as viewed from Cypress Point Turnout



IMAGE 2 17 Mile Drive: Approaching from the west on 17 MD the house is well shielded from ridgeline exposure and almost dwarfed by the hillside beyond.

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Ridgeline Justification Images



IMAGE 3 17 Mile Drive: Approaching Fan Shell Beach, the house is well below the hillside & trees.



IMAGE 4 17 Mile Drive: From roadside pullout across from Fan Shell Beach.

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Ridgeline Justification Images



IMAGE 5 17 Mile Drive: Directly below the house from roadside pullout.



IMAGE 6 17 Mile Drive: Directly below the house and dune at the northern turn of 17 MD. The house is still covered by trees and hillside. Existing trees on property can be seen behind ridgeline as well.

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Ridgeline Justification Images



IMAGE 7 17 Mile Drive: From Cypress Point Lookout (Public Viewshed) the house is well below the hillside and treeline.



IMAGE 8 17 Mile Drive: From Cypress Point Lookout (Public Viewshed) and Fan Shell Beach.

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Ridgeline Justification Images



IMAGE 9 17 Mile Drive: From Fan Shell Beach (Public Viewshed).



IMAGE 10 17 Mile Drive: From Fan Shell Beach (Public Viewshed).

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Ridgeline Justification Images



IMAGE 11 Cypress Point Club: From the golf course the house is well below hillside and treeline.



IMAGE 12 Cypress Point Club: From the middle of the golf course the house is well below the dune hillside and treeline.

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Ridgeline Justification Images



IMAGE 13 Cypress Point Club: From the eastern edge of the golf course looking northeast, the house is still silhouetted by the dune hillside and existing trees.



IMAGE 14 Signal Hill Road: The existing trees off Signal Hill Road will remain to offer additional ridgeline protection. Five new trees will be added to this side of the house.

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Ridgeline Justification Images



IMAGE 15 Adjacent Homes: From the corner of Signal Hill Road and 17 MD, this home on Signal Hill Road has drastic ridgeline exposure.



IMAGE 16 Adjacent Homes: From Fan Shell Beach turnout, this home on Signal Hill Road has some ridgeline exposure.

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Ridgeline Justification Images



IMAGE 17 Adjacent Homes: Another home on Signal Hill Road has extensive ridgeline exposure as viewed from 17 Mile Drive.

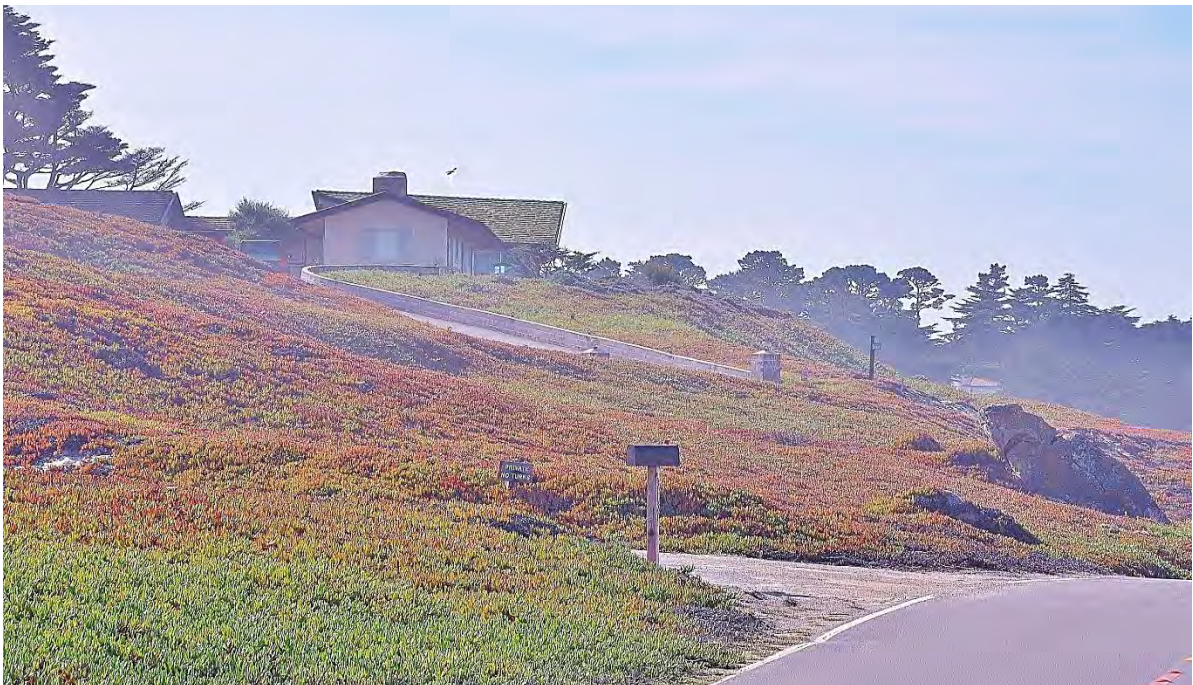


IMAGE 18 Adjacent Homes: The same home on Signal Hill is completely exposed when viewed from further north on 17 Mile Drive.

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Ridgeline Justification Images



IMAGE 19 Adjacent Homes: A “birdlike” home on 17 Mile Drive is dramatic but has complete ridgeline exposure as viewed from 17 Mile Drive.



IMAGE 20 Adjacent Homes: This home directly on 17 Mile Drive also has complete ridgeline exposure as viewed from the road.

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Ridgeline Justification Images



IMAGE 21 Adjacent Homes: This well-known architectural home directly on 17 Mile Drive offers no ridgeline protection at all.



IMAGE 22 Adjacent Homes: Another home directly on 17 Mile Drive.

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Ridgeline Justification Images



IMAGE 23 Adjacent Homes: Looking south from 17 Mile.



IMAGE 24 Adjacent Homes: The group of houses on Signal Hill Road as viewed from 17 Mile Drive have more ridgeline exposure than the proposed house.

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Ridgeline Justification Images



IMAGE 25 Scale: This home just to the north and below 1170 Signal Hill Road on 17 Mile Drive has a longer profile than the proposed house. Its large pitched roof and two guest buildings behind exceed the scale and exposure of the new development. The ground area and footprint are larger as well.

There are few buildings in this section of Pebble Beach that are completely concealed or silhouetted by trees and hillside. The proposed project at 1170 Signal Hill Road is less visible than these neighboring buildings and clearly, when viewed from almost all areas considered public viewing area, is almost always protected by the large dune and treeline behind the property. The images presented clearly support this argument. The addition of five (5) new Cypress trees will further protect the silhouette affect that may occur directly below the house. Classifying it as a Ridgeline Development (*“Development on the crest of a hill which has potential to create a silhouette or other substantially adverse impact when viewed from the public viewing area.”*) is contrary to the multiple images offered here and clearly is within the spirit of the neighborhood.

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Proposed House Rendering



The house will be further shielded from any potential ridgeline effect by using the three existing Cypress trees behind the house and by adding five new trees in the vicinity. These can be seen just above the sloped roof and northern elevation of the house. The rendering graphically shows the existing group of tall Monterey Pine trees to the right and behind as well as the small group of Cypress on the left, partially concealing the northwest corner of the building. The building should be well concealed from ridgeline exposure given the high hillside and treeline evidenced by our photographic montage.

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Proposed House Rendering

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