

**From:** [grebev40@gmail.com](mailto:grebev40@gmail.com) on behalf of [Richard Solomon](#)  
**To:** [sbcob](#)  
**Subject:** Urbany Appeal of Bonillo/LaTorre project -- Item no. 6  
**Date:** Thursday, April 28, 2016 11:34:43 AM

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Re: Item no. 6 (Agenda, at p. 23)

Dear Honorable Supervisors of the County of Santa Barbara:

I am a resident of Mission Canyon and serve on the Mission Canyon Association board of directors. I write as a community member and not as a spokesperson for the MCA, to request that County land use decision-makers, at all levels, take seriously the Mission Canyon Community Plan [MCCP] and the Mission Canyon Residential Design Guidelines [RDGs]. In a nutshell, the BAR and Planning Commission failed to properly apply the relevant Guidelines to the Bonillo/La Torre project, and thus set an unacceptable precedent for future new homes, remodels and rebuilds in the Canyon.

The MCCP unequivocally states that “The Mission Canyon Residential Design Guidelines shall be used to guide development subject to review and approval by the Board of Architectural Review.” DevStd LU-MC-2.1 (emphasis added). “Shall,” of course, is mandatory. The RDGs are quite specific with respect to building size, bulk and scale. They are intended to insure neighborhood compatibility not only while viewing the project from the street but also from neighboring properties: “One of the most common complaints about new or remodeled houses is that they are not compatible with neighboring dwellings in terms of size, bulk, and scale.” RDGs at p. 36. While second stories in the site area are common, the Guidelines contain specific “Neighborhood Scale Guidelines” and “Second Story Design and Location Guidelines” which have been violated by the design inexplicably approved by the BAR and Planning Commission.

Specifically, Guideline 4.15 requires that designs “appear proportional and complementary to nearby dwellings,” and Guideline 4.16 requires minimization of “size, bulk and scale through the use of appropriate roof style and pitch, form and materials, [and] varied setbacks. . . .” Id. at 37. Even more specifically, Guideline 4.19 mandates that the second story be set “back and to the center of the first story (Figure 26).” Id. at p. 38. Figure 26 gives four illustrations of how such set backs could be done to minimize the “size, bulk, and scale” of a second story.

It is clear from the story poles (Attachment 14) and the west elevation depicted on the site plans (Attachment 4), however, that the project’s second story is a massive structure not at all set back to minimize, as required, its size and bulk. The design does not meet or resemble any of the examples given in Figure 26. And yet, the Planning Commission found that this design was compatible with the RDGs, and the proposed finding continues that mistaken conclusion. There is simply no basis

on which to make such a finding based on the applicants' current design. Indeed, the proposed finding in section 2.2 utterly fails to come to grips with this incompatibility. It merely contains an unsupported conclusion that the design is compatible. Nor does it explain why these "size, bulk, and scale" Guidelines are not workable because of "unusual project characteristics." RDGs at p. 6. As a matter of policy, it is unacceptable to adopt findings that do not provide the nexus between the disputed design features and the applicable standards and that thus fail to take project objections seriously.

If the appeal is denied and this design is approved, it is difficult to imagine the County ever finding that a design violates the RDGs, and the "mansionization" of Mission Canyon, with tall elements of houses looming over adjacent homes and compromising neighbors' privacy, will proceed unabated. The Bonillo project, at nearly 3,500 square feet of structures on a 7840 square feet lot, is an example of what will no doubt be, if allowed, a trend. If a project so clearly in violation of a clear and quite specific Guideline can be approved, there is virtually no limit on how many square feet of living space future applicants will try to squeeze into their lots, and, over time, the unique "look and feel" of Mission Canyon will be gone.

Thank you for your consideration.

Cordially,

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