
From: Russ Diamond < .com>
Sent: Saturday, August 8, 2020 5:57 PM
To: Comments
Cc: Comments
Subject: 28340 Balkins Dr/Aurora Appeal
Attachments: PC 28340 Balkins Dr Letter.docx; IMG_2252.jpg; IMG_2262.jpg; IMG_2258.jpg

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August 8, 2020

Dear Agoura Hills City Council and Planning Commission,
Re: 28340 W. Balkins Dr. Old Agoura

For the record; Russ and Andrea Diamond, 5833 Lapworth Dr, SW corner of W. Balkins Dr and Lapworth Dr., second home east of new proposed single-family home. This letter is being written to support the Resolution of Denial (the basis of this appeal) voted upon by majority (3-2) of the Agoura Hills Planning commission at the July 2, 2020 meeting.

The denial of approval of the proposed home as constituted was appropriate, logical, analytical, and objective. The reasoning voiced by the majority stated that his project clearly does not meet the standards of the community. It is completely out of character with the neighborhood and opposed by every surrounding homeowner in proximity. The size, scope and topography of this site just does not support the existing plan seeking approvals to build.

Those advocating for approval of the plans as presented and overriding the responsible and conscientious decision already rendered by the planning commission, use reasoning that ignore the basic facts. It is admirable that the proposed construction will be "Green Leeds Certified" and incorporate innovative environmental, technological, and fire-retardant methodology into the building process. However, these building techniques will be much better served on a parcel and topography that makes more sense.

The acquisition cost of the dirt on this site was lower for a reason and the economics does not justify trying to circumvent a more reasonable buildable footprint. There are more creative ways to build a home on this site sensitive to the stated limitations, but any suggestions to the contrary apparently has not been acceptable to the applicant.

We have outlined other specifics (below) in the original letter to the planning commission with photos that are already in the record (new photos added). The argument that other homes in the area have similar flaws, (distance from street, questionable setbacks, and over boding height etc.) are no justification to override the wrongs of past planning commission decisions. As stated, each project needs to be judged on its own merits and without compounding past bad decisions.

The history of Old Agoura, with its cast of characters, the eclectic nature of the properties, and all past home building and development (with existing and intended uses) all factor how each surrounding neighborhood act and evaluate each development. As property values have rapidly accelerated, Old Agoura in recent years has become more desirable because of its rural equestrian nature and value (when compared to Hidden Hills, Calabasas, and Malibu) for private individuals, custom home developers and speculators.

Over the years there were many projects that were railroaded through the city planning commission without regard to aesthetics, lot coverage, compatibility with surrounding structures and/or topography, and road/street and neighborhood impact ect. Whenever a project got approved and then built, the refrain from the City Council and Planning Commission was they never received opposition from surrounding homeowners or area stakeholders. Old Agoura has experienced its share of "Mansionization" in recent years where the scope of many of these projects belong in Calabasas and not in the more unpretentious rural Old Agoura.

If there is any doubt with supporting the planning commission's initial decision to deny, we implore the Council to please visit the site to gain the surrounding homeowner's perspective.

Thank you,

Russ Diamond & Andrea Diamond
5833 Lapworth Dr
Old Agoura, CA

Previously sent:

Facts:

Current home proposed is 4180 sq ft + 730 sq ft garage attached. That seems to be right under the magic 5,000. Although the lot size is over one acre, lot is deceiving regarding supporting proposed home square footage due to buildable topography.

After analyzing the grading plan and speaking with a grading contractor on the site who is a potential sub-contractor (name and contact info available upon inquiry) there are many issues with this site regarding size of home, height of home, setback off street, coverage of lot and the amount of grading for retaining walls, which call for two walls 10 foot apart with the back wall being cut within 8 foot of one of the large oaks.

The grading contractor suggested it best to support the proposed retaining walls with "Soil Nails" as that allows for less disruption and easier access for equipment. Two retaining walls proposed (back wall 10' deep which is closest to existing oaks and second wall 5' deep, closer to building structure) with a 10' space in between. This is in place of a single wall that would have to be dug deeper with a greater potential to affect Oak root structure with a much higher cost that might prove prohibitive for site. The useable backyard space between home structure and the back 5' retaining wall is only around 15' to 17'.

All the excavated dirt from the retaining walls and foundations are to be compacted on site. This raises the pad even more off the street than it currently sits. Home structure is 28' high, which could make

the actual height almost 40' off the street with an extremely steep driveway. Because this home spans almost the entire width of the lot this will create a foreboding and towering structure, especially because this is a juncture of Balkins which has the smallest width with little opportunity to make it much wider.

The contractor related all electrical cabling (electrical vault and vent, is on west side of property protected by yellow steel/concrete bollards) will have to be relocated forward towards street, to allow for the septic tank which is located to east side of property in the front. We are also under the understanding that all new Old Agoura home developments are required to provide a designated space for equestrian use and access. Although there is one shown on the plan, it is not plausible given the topography and presence of the many oak trees.

Bottom line, the surrounding neighborhood, road structure and buildable lot size, just does support a home of this size. Ingress and egress in this back area of Old Agoura is extremely limited with roads crumbling and limited space to accommodate construction equipment and an influx of vehicles. At some point a dwelling is constructed we implore everyone that a conditional use permit be issued, limiting the size, quantity and weight of vehicles and the routing away from Fairview Pl off of Driver but only by way of Colodny. This has been requested many times with past new construction projects only to be ignored by the developer/homeowner or general contractor. We suggest that whoever is taking responsibility for the construction, position a person at the 4-Way Stop sign at Cheseboro, to help direct construction vehicle traffic.

Before rubber stamping this project, we invite any or all planning commission members to please visit this actual location to validate many of the concerns of the neighborhood. We are still very upset that we will not have the opportunity to express our opinions and concerns in front of the commission in person but hope we have adequately communicated and conveyed our opposition to the scope of this project.

Thank you for this forum and our desire to maintain the nature and character of Old Agoura.

Russ Diamond & Andrea Diamond
5833 Lapworth Dr
Old Agoura, CA

Russ Diamond
President
1399 Olympic Blvd., Santa Monica, CA 90404
T 310.450.1000 x1900 F 310.452.7259 C 310.629.3277

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August 8, 2020

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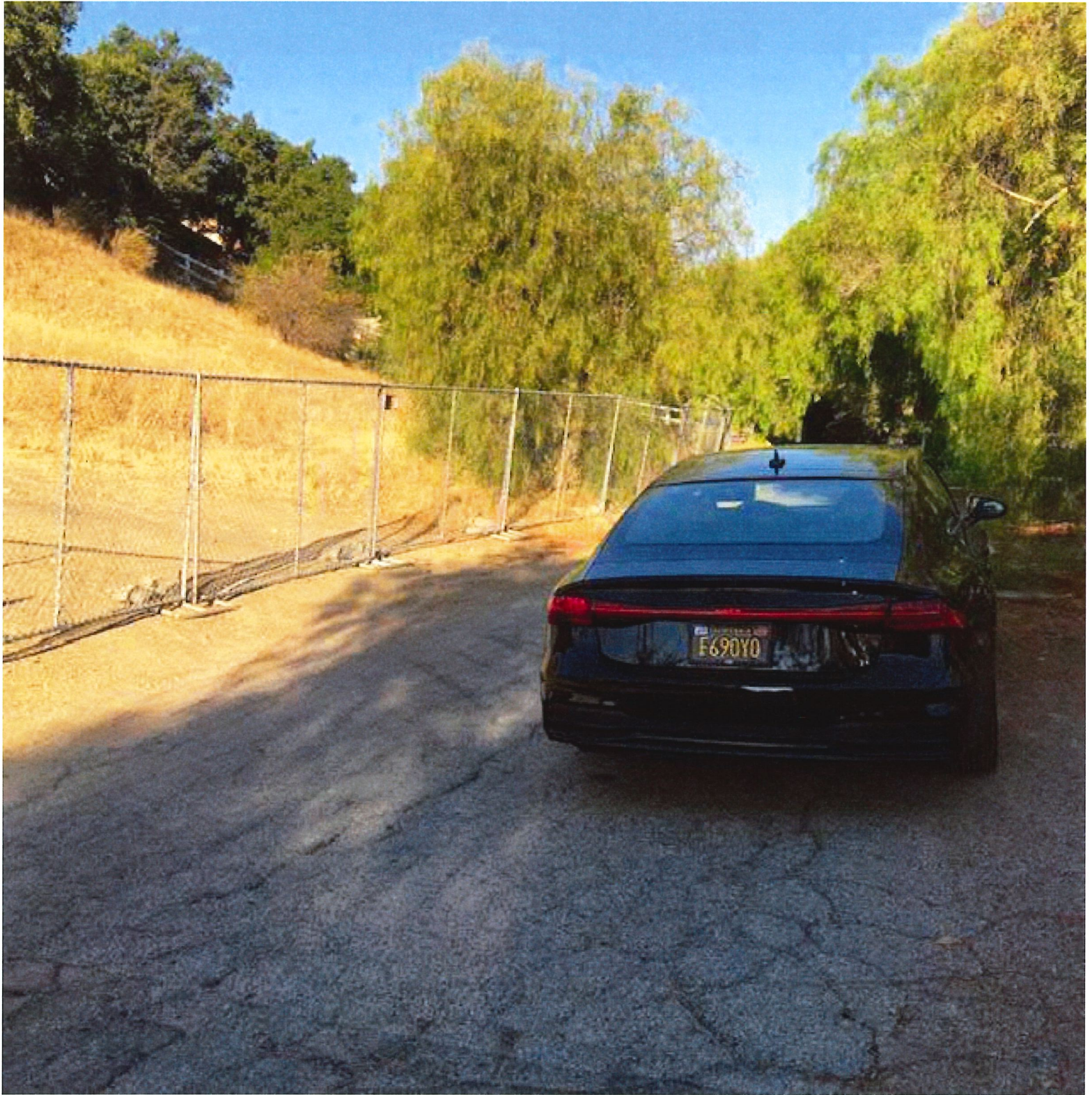
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Russ Diamond & Andrea Diamond
5833 Lapworth Dr
Old Agoura, CA







NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING (APPEAL)
CIP-21222-2018 & 204-0134-2018

Request for the City Council to consider an appeal of the Planning Commission's denial of the following: 1) Approval of a Conditional Use Permit to build a 100-unit apartment building on the residence with an attached 750 square foot garage, 2) approval of a lot split. The hearing is open to the public and will be held at the City Hall, 1000 California Street, San Francisco, CA 94109.

Requesting Party: City Council Date: August 18, 2020 Time: 4:00 PM	Applicant: Arvid Rasmussen 1000 California Street San Francisco, CA 94109	Responsible City: City Hall 818 977-1334
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Location of Hearing: [Address]

From: Laurie Turner < @gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, August 10, 2020 11:19 AM
To: Comments
Subject: Balkins Drive
Attachments: Aurora Project.docx

Laurie Turner
6001 Lapworth Dr.
Agoura Hills

Dear Agoura Hills City Council Members:

I previously wrote a letter to the Planning Commission to voice my concern regarding the size of the Aurora proposed home, and I watched the video of the Planning Commission meeting. I stand by what I said in the previous letter and am pleased that the Planning Commission chose to deny the project.

I would like to comment on Mr. Aurora's statement at the Planning Commission meeting where he questioned why the homeowners on Lapworth would have anything to say about his house. I would have hoped that the Planning Commission could have addressed this statement, but they failed to do so. I hope the City Council and Mr. Aurora understand that our community is committed to keeping the rural character of our area. We are an eclectic group, but we love where we live. We value our hillsides and oak trees and animals. We plant gardens and raise goats and chickens. We walk, bike, and ride horses along our rural country roads. The house that Mr. Aurora wants to build affects more than just his immediate neighbors.

The size of Mr. Aurora's proposed house is simply way too large for this steep hillside lot. It would tower above the road and change the character of the neighborhood. I urge all of the City Council members to come visit this location and try to imagine a huge 2 story house spanning nearly the width of this lot and sitting close to the road. Please do not use the rendition of this house as criteria for your decision. Come look at this steep hillside.

I have lived in Old Agoura for over 30 years. It saddens me that we are unable to appear before you. I am sure many people in our community would attend this meeting, as the members of

this community support the need to preserve the character of our unique neighborhood. I urge you to uphold the Planning Commission's decision and deny this project.

Laurie Turner

From: Laurie Turner < @gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, August 10, 2020 11:21 AM
To: Comments
Subject: Balkans Drive
Attachments: Brant Turner.docx

Brant Turner
6001 Lapworth Dr.
Agoura Hills

Dear Agoura Hills City Council Members;

I am writing this letter in regard to the proposed 5,000 square foot home on Balkins Dr. I cannot see how it is appropriate considering the slope of the lot. We are Old Agoura, with an accent on OLD. Please come and walk the neighborhood and try to visualize what is proposed. This project will forever change the country setting which we are lucky to have been a part of.

People come every day to walk through our neighborhood to enjoy the country setting and to relax. They do not come to look at another mansion. In many cases we have unfortunately traded rural for city, but that is not who we are as a community. Old Agoura is special, and those of us who have been here for some time hope we can pass it down to future generations.

In closing, just let me say two things; One, just because you can build it does not mean you should. Two, you don't miss it until you have lost it.

Brant Turner

Kimberly Rodrigues

From: @yahoo.com
Sent: Monday, August 10, 2020 11:46 AM
To: Comments
Subject: Balkins Drive

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Dear Agoura Hills City Council:

Our concern about the proposed home is that having a large double-story home constructed above street level, on a very narrow section of a street enjoyed by many for its country feeling, will negatively impact the character of the street for all of us who enjoy taking walks in the area. The shape of the lot will make the height of the home feel as though it is towering over the street. Other large homes in the area are either below street level or far back from the street.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
David Sack
5952 Lapworth Drive
Agoura Hills