

From: [DONALD WALT CHANDLER](#)
To: [Comments](#)
Subject: Planned project at 28340 Balkins, Agoura Hills, CA
Date: Friday, January 19, 2024 1:13:56 PM
Attachments: [Balkins House Project Comment.docx](#)

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Please find attached comments regarding the project at 28340 Balkins Dr., Agoura Hills, CA. We would like to submit the comments attached on the project proposed for 28340 Balkins Dr., which was rejected by the Agoura Hills Planning Commission, opposed by local residents, and adversely impacts oak trees and the environment.

Sincerely,

Donald Walt Chandler

Pamela Knuth Chandler

[REDACTED]

Agoura Hills, CA 91301

[REDACTED]

January 19, 2024

Dear Ladies and gentlemen of the City Council,

We would like to submit the comments below on the project proposed for 28340 Balkins, which was rejected by the Agoura Hills Planning Commission, opposed by local residents, and adversely impacts oak trees and the environment.

1. Quite simply the house is too big for the lot. While we sympathize with the owner wishing to build a certain size home, this lot is not suited for the home. That is the problem. If we read the plans from the city correctly the roof peak will be nearly 40 feet above the street and only set back 26 feet. The driveway will also be quite steep. The house will feel like a central city building towering over the street. This would give a Hollywood Hills feel, not rural horse property feel. During the planning commission meeting Mr. Aurora stated that we should not be concerned with the feel of the neighborhood since we would not necessarily pass this lot driving in and out of the neighborhood. We walk! We enjoy the surrounding neighborhood and value the country ambiance. People also come from other parts of Agoura to walk our neighborhood; let's not spoil it. Neighbors should definitely have a say in the development.
2. Because the house is very wide and the lot is so steep any access is a problem. How will the owner access the upper part of the lot? There is a graded dirt road now, but I can't tell by the plans if that road will remain or be paved. It doesn't seem that there are plans to grade for the corral, but practical all-weather access to the upper lot area seems problematic. Note that Balkins is narrow and street parking would be a problem during and after construction.
3. The impact on the oak trees seems severe. The plan doesn't take into account that trees grow and occasionally shed limbs. Too close is too close, and this will eventually lead to removal or death of the trees.
4. It is great that the builder will pave a short stretch of Balkins Drive in front the property, but the trucks hauling materials equipment, yards and yards of excavated dirt and workers will travel over other Old Agoura roads. The squiggly part of Fairview at the end of the county-maintained road is not safe for big trucks, and it is breaking up badly, as is Balkins. It appears that the plan is to use Colodny, but Google maps and other map programs send suppliers and workers up Fairview. I understand that the applicant has stated that the road repairs, if needed would be done, however details are missing.
5. Have the property owners along Colodny been notified of the planned building materials route? It is wrong to placate the neighbors in one area by driving the heavy trucks through a different area. What about their road?

Donald Walt Chandler
Pamela Knuth Chandler
[REDACTED]
Agoura Hills, CA 91301
Phone [REDACTED]

From: [DONALD WALT CHANDLER](#)
To: [Comments](#)
Subject: Public Hearing: Planned project at 28340 Balkins, Agoura Hills, CA
Date: Friday, January 19, 2024 1:47:41 PM
Attachments: [Balkins House Project Comment.docx](#)

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Sincerely,

Donald Walt Chandler

Pamela Knuth Chandler

[REDACTED]

Agoura Hills, CA 91301

[REDACTED]

**Added "Public Hearing" to the subject line.

January 19, 2024

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5. Have the property owners along Colodny been notified of the planned building materials route? It is wrong to placate the neighbors in one area by driving the heavy trucks through a different area. What about their road?

Donald Walt Chandler
Pamela Knuth Chandler
[REDACTED]
Agoura Hills, CA 91301
Phone [REDACTED]

From: [Maayan Mcabian](#)
To: [Comments](#)
Subject: Public hearing 28340 balkins drive
Date: Friday, January 19, 2024 4:21:26 PM

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Dear City Council Members,

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to voice our concerns. Our goal is not to create any issues for any incoming neighbors.

We own our home two properties down from this site at [REDACTED]. We have concerns about the already narrow street in front of said property. It's hard enough for two regular size cars to pass each other. Where will the builder place his equipment and trucks that will allow easy and safe passage in and out of our property? The plans of the house seem to show a very large home and garbage built very close to the edge of the street. Almost looming over the street and taking away from the general "look" of balkins.

We already have many delivery trucks and trash vehicles going down our street and making U-turns in front of our property wearing down the road that's already deteriorated.

Thanks for your time,

Maayan and Adi McAbian

Sent from my iPhone

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Comments](#)
Subject: Public Hearing - 28340 Balkins Dr.
Date: Saturday, January 20, 2024 5:10:02 PM

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I am David Sack, a resident of [REDACTED], situated just a few hundred feet from the subject lot. Having attended the prior hearing on this matter via Zoom, I fully agreed with the committee's conclusion that the proposed development does not align with the rural character of our neighborhood.

My primary concern revolves around the close proximity of a two-story house to the street, creating the impression of it looming over the street especially since the second story is not set further back. This architectural choice appears more suitable for a densely populated city rather than our rural area. It is disconcerting that the applicant has not taken steps to modify the plans in response to the comments and concerns raised by numerous neighbors during the previous hearing.

I strongly urge the [City Council/Committee] to reject the proposed development, considering its potential impact on the rural ambiance of our community. Preserving the character that initially attracted us to this area is paramount. Your attention to this matter is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,
David Sack

From: [Russ Diamond](#)
To: [Comments](#)
Cc: [Comments](#); [Illece Buckley Weber](#)
Subject: FW: 28340 Balkins Dr/Aurora Appeal
Date: Saturday, January 20, 2024 8:06:03 PM
Attachments: [PC 28340 Balkins Dr Letter.docx](#)

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January 22, 2024

Dear Agoura Hills City Council,

RE: Reconsideration of Denial of Conditional Use Permit Case No. CUP-01533-2018 for 28340 W. Balkins Dr. Old Agoura

After reviewing the resubmitted request and planning documents asking for the reversal of the decision of the previous planning commission and the subsequent denial of the appeal to the AH City Council in August of 2020, it is hard to conceive that any decision not affirming the original edict would prevail. Every objection voiced in 2020 exists today. (See attached and below which still should exist in the record regarding this address/site).

The fact that Arvind Aurora the original applicant has not altered the original plans as had been suggested or resubmitted for a downsized project on this site is inconceivable. The passage of time has not remedied any of the negative aspects detailed by the planning commission recommending denial of this project. After reviewing all the digital records (realtor.com, Zillow & Trulia) it appears the current applicant has sold the property contingent upon securing the approval of the proposed 4,910 sq ft home (including attached garage) being approved. When Mr. Aurora purchased this property from a previous party who had been denied building a home due to challenging topography. His acquisition price was very low compared to other properties in the neighborhood.

Although we will not be able to attend the upcoming council meeting on Wednesday January 24, 2024 (only became aware through notice the week of Jan 8th), all the concerns and project opposition detailed in past correspondence and in unison with all the surrounding home and property owners, we implore that the council reaffirms the denial of approval for this project as currently proposed.

Thank you again for your consideration.

Russ Diamond & Andrea Diamond

[REDACTED]
Old Agoura, CA

From: Russ Diamond <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Saturday, August 8, 2020 5:57 PM
To: comments@ci.agoura-hills.ca.us
Cc: comments@agourahillscity.org
Subject: 28340 Balkins Dr/Aurora Appeal

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, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] 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

[REDACTED]

Old Agoura, CA

Previously sent and attached above:

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


Old Agoura, CA

August 8, 2020

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[REDACTED] 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.

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Russ Diamond & Andrea Diamond

[REDACTED]
Old Agoura, CA

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

Russ Diamond & Andrea Diamond

[REDACTED]

Old Agoura, CA



NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING (APPEAL)

CUP-01530-2019 & OAR-01504-2019

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 1.5/20-acre lot secondary residence with an attached 730 square foot garage; 2) approval of an "Use-Tree Permit" to convert into the tree canopies and protected zones of Item 2); or the West; 3) use trees on site, and 3) to make a finding of exemption under the California Environmental Quality Act.

Reviewing Body:
City Council

Date: August 10, 2020

Time: 6:00 pm

Applicant:
Arnold Burns
10254 Lockwood Drive
Cupertino, CA 95014

FOR INFORMATION CALL:
CITY HALL
845 961 7308

Location of Hearing





BALKINS DRIVE

BOUNDARY LINE

E.D.W.Y.

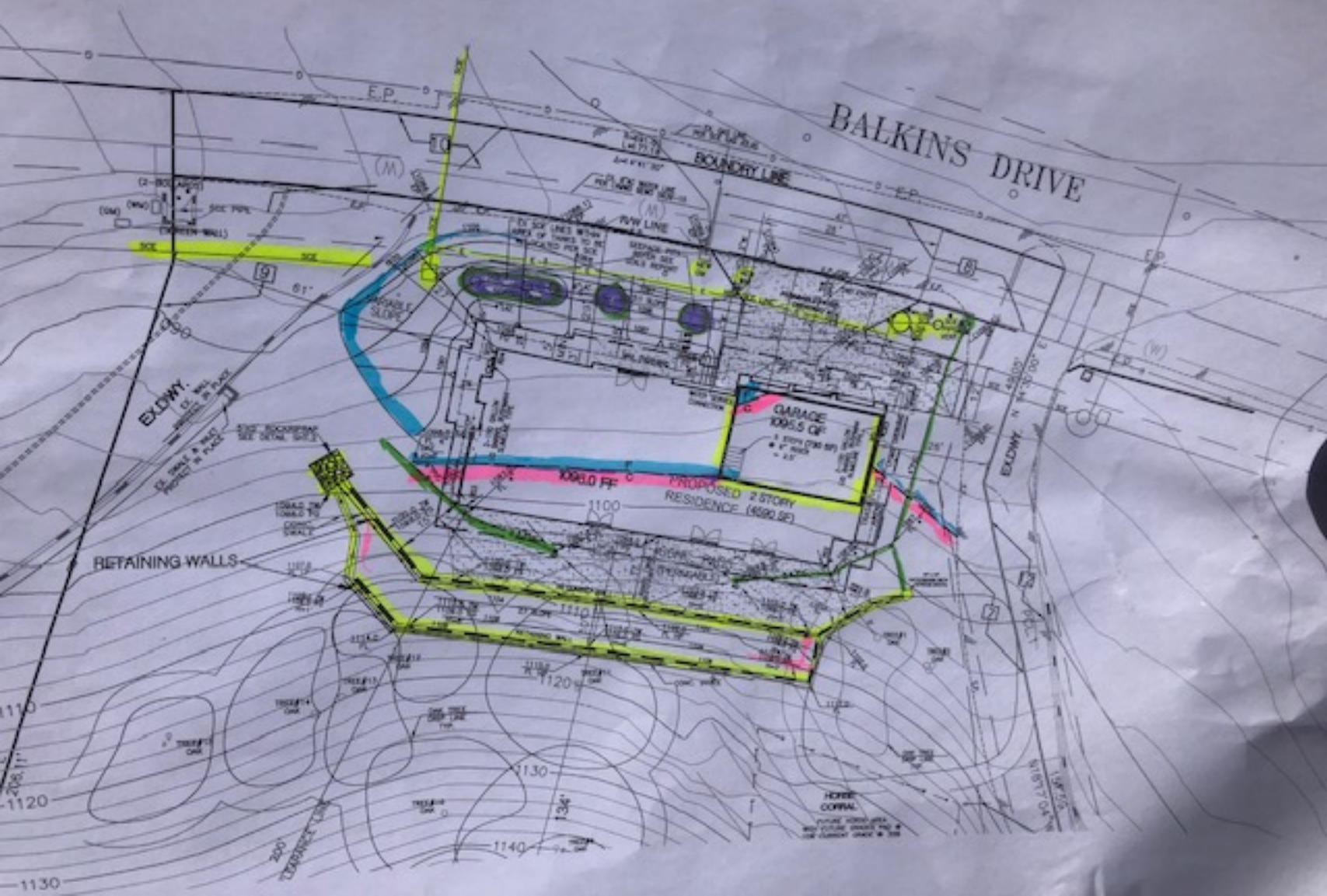
E.D.W.Y.

RETAINING WALLS

PROPOSED 2 STORY RESIDENCE (4690 SF)

GARAGE 1095.5 SF

1006.0 SF



From: [Karen](#)
To: [Comments](#)
Cc: [REDACTED] [Karen Marriott](#)
Subject: 28340 Balkins Drive Appeal
Date: Sunday, January 21, 2024 9:49:01 AM
Attachments: [28340 Balkins Dr Appeal.docx](#)

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Hello,

Please find attached my objection and points to the appeal of the property at 28340 Balkins Drive. Would welcome a visit to the site by the appropriate members to get a true understanding of what this properties challenges are and the sweeping changes they are trying to make.

Thanks
Karen

Karen Marriott

[REDACTED]

January 20, 2024

Agoura Hills City Council and Planning Commission

Re new home development: 28340 W. Balkins Dr. Old Agoura

Dear City Council,

We live at [REDACTED] and have been in Old Agoura since 2000 and are again strongly objecting this obtrusive development:

- We objected to these plans, and gratefully the city planning commission rejected them in 2020. Not much has changed...It appears that one of the only revisions is moving 4 feet from one place to another.
- There is still no conformity to houses that fit in the neighborhood, let alone the size and shape of the lot
- It is so large it requires a major excavation and possible erosion issues due to the major hill and elevations involved. A site visit should be a requirement to view the property.
- I would also suggest when a builder is attempting to get something approved that it is required they put up "Malibu Poles" so the residents and planning commission get a realistic view of what they are proposing. (See development beside Deoji)
- This house is now apparently for sale "with plans". It would be assumed that this new attempt is to get rid of the property and leave the new owners to deal with the neighbors.

McMansions can be built anywhere in L.A. County and Malibu, if Agoura Hills and Old Agoura do not keep the integrity of Old Agoura it will be forever gone to the "McMansion" types. This area and we who live in it, are grateful for the ability to give our families a little piece of the farm and for those that don't like it or want to change it...please you are free to go elsewhere as there are plenty of communities to choose from, but we do not!

We do expect the City of Agoura and planning commission to support this vision and it should not have the attitude that if they hear no objection there is not one. The officials should be aware by now what is acceptable and reasonable in Old Agoura and should question any monstrosity such as this and other being proposed for development.

We appreciate in advance your continued rejection of this project without radical redesign and changes.

Thank you,

Karen Marriott

From: [Jon Levin](#)
To: [Comments](#)
Subject: Public Hearing
Date: Sunday, January 21, 2024 10:36:34 AM

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Dear members of the Agoura Hills City Council

My name is Jon Levin and I live at [REDACTED] which is directly across from the proposed building site at 28340 Balkins Drive..The road is the narrowest part of Balkins in this area...

I do have several issues with the proposed new construction, the main objection is the size of the home but I have other concerns too..I would like to state that I feel that my neighbors and I have been given such a short time to respond to this matter when we could have been given as much as twice as long a time to respond.

I hope you all have had a chance to see the proposed site to put things into perspective..I would like to add that about fifteen years ago the Planning Commission rejected plans for a new home on this site and stated that the maximum size of a new home could only be 700 square feet..I do not expect you to agree with such small number but I thought this would be of some interest to you..

The proposed house is simply much too big for this deeply sloping lot..This proposed house would be much too close to the street and the two story home also adds to the problem of excessive size..With the three car attached garage the build would cover almost the entire width of the narrow property and the two story home would stick out and not fit in with the the rest of the street..There is a lot above this property and plans have already been submitted for a new home to be built..It would really be a mess if they were both being built at the same time..It would be very difficult for residents to get in and out of the area..It could also possibly destabilize the hill with the type of unstable soil makeup of this area..There are two long retaining walls behind the structure and another wall connected to them that starts about eight feet from one of the large oak trees at the east side of the property so there will be non stop structures, driveways and walls massing on most of this only small area where a home could be built...There is also only a 15 foot back yard and no realistic area for horses..Also large quantities of dirt must be removed to build this proposed home.. There is also a common driveway on the east side of the lot..There will have to be a new road dug out of the ,very steep hillside to gain access to the lot above further weakening the hill and creating more future possible problems..

Even though the project might meet the basic specs to build it is just too big for the space..This is not the first time a house has met the basics but has not been appropriate for the location..This reminds me of a time several years ago when I was attending a planning commission meeting in Agoura Hills..A planning commissioner got up and proposed the idea of all the commissioners getting in a bus and driving around Old Agoura looking at all their successes and failures..I do not want to live across the street from another failure for the rest of my life.

There are other possible problems for constructing a large home on a narrow street where it is difficult to turn around and all the large construction vehicles are tearing up the street and private properties that the homeowners are responsible to repair..

I hope that the commissioners will take time to study our responses and also look at the responses that we made about three years ago when the Planning Commission rejected almost the exact same plans.

Thanks to all of the City Council..Sincerely..Jon Levin