

Council Meeting of  
June 2, 2009

**PUBLIC HEARING**

Honorable Mayor and Members  
of the City Council  
City Hall  
Torrance, California

Members of the Council:

**SUBJECT: Community Development – Consider an appeal of the Planning Commission’s Approval of a Precise Plan of Development to allow single story additions and interior renovations to an existing one-story single family residence on property located within the Hillside Overlay District in the R-1 zone at 428 Via Mesa Grande.**

**PRE08-00033: Paul and Stephanie Thomas**  
**Expenditure: None**

**RECOMMENDATION**

Recommendation of the Planning Commission and the Community Development Director that the City Council:

1. Deny the Appeal and Approve the project; and
2. Adopt a Resolution Approving the project.

Funding: Not applicable

**BACKGROUND**

The applicants request approval to allow single story additions and interior renovations to an existing one-story single family residence, on property located within the Hillside Overlay District, in the R-1 zone. A Precise Plan of Development is required, because the applicants propose construction over 14 feet in height. The item is before the City Council as an appeal of the Planning Commission’s Approval of the request. A copy of the Appeal Form is provided in Attachment C.

**Prior Hearings and Publications**

A Planning Commission Public Hearing was scheduled for April 1, 2009. On March 20, 2009, the site was posted, 105 notices were mailed to property owners, within a 500-foot radius, and a legal advertisement was published in the newspaper. The Hearing was continued to April 15, 2009; therefore, no additional noticing or posting was made or required. Due to an Appeal, a City Council Public Hearing was scheduled for June 2, 2009. On May 21, 2009, the site was posted, and 136 notices were mailed to property owners, within a 500-foot radius. On May 22, 2009, a legal advertisement was published in the newspaper (Attachment F).

**Environmental Findings**

Additions to existing structures, provided that the addition will not result in an increase of more than 50 percent of the floor area of the structure before the addition, or 2,500

square feet, whichever is less, are Categorically Exempted by the 2009 Guidelines for Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act, Article 19, Section 15301 (e) (1).

### **ANALYSIS**

The subject site is located in an interior parcel, and is semi-rectangular in shape, with a width of 59.95 feet in the front and a width of 52.34 feet in the rear, by a length of 120.71 feet on the north side yard and a length of 119 feet on the south side yard, for a lot area of approximately 6,740 square feet. The existing residence is a single-story, constructed in 1954.

The addition proposed totals 715 square feet, and consists of the relocation of the kitchen from the rear of the residence towards the front, and in its place the construction of a master bathroom with a master bedroom added further towards the rear. The existing living room located towards the center of the home will be enlarged to create a great/family room, with the fireplace removed. The existing powder room also located toward the center of the residence will be remodeled, and the entryway will be extended towards the front of the property, with a new covered porch.

Prior to the item going before the Planning Commission, Staff discovered that the plans were drawn using an incorrect figure as the "lowest adjacent grade", which impacted the height of the proposed project. The plans were redrawn to reflect the correct "lowest adjacent grade" and included a revised roof pitch, in order to comply with the R-1 Zoning standards. The ridge height of the proposed addition was revised to 17 feet 11 inches. This revision resulted in the silhouette featuring a ridgeline approximately 6 inches higher than was actually being proposed. The applicant was allowed to proceed to the Public Hearing utilizing this silhouette, as it was constructed at a higher elevation than proposed and because at that time, no impacts to view had been detected.

The proposed remodeled residence will total 2,606 square feet, including the existing 365 square foot swing-in garage. The Floor Area Ratio (FAR) will be .39, with a Lot Coverage of 28%. The project complies with the FAR, height and setback development standards; a detailed analysis is included in the attached Staff Report to the Planning Commission dated April 1, 2009 (Attachment E).

The project summary is included below for your convenience:

<b>PRE08-00033</b>	<b>Existing Project</b>	<b>Additions</b>	<b>Proposed Project</b>
Total Living Area =	1,526 sf	715 sf	2,242 sf
Garage =	365 sf	0 sf	365 sf
<b>Total Area =</b>	<b>1,891 sf</b>	<b>715 sf</b>	<b>2,606 sf</b>
<b>FAR =</b>	<b>0.28</b>		<b>0.39</b>
<b>Lot Coverage =</b>	<b>28 %</b>		<b>39 %</b>
Building Height =	15 feet 10.5 inches		17 feet 11 inches
Lot Area = 6,740 square feet			

For the April 1, 2009 Planning Commission Hearing, Staff was able to view the

silhouette from the surrounding area, but was not able to make an assessment from within the home or yard of 433 Via Mesa Grande. From the information available at the time, the proposed plan did not appear to have an adverse impact on the view, light, air or privacy of the surrounding properties. The properties on Via la Soledad are located behind the proposed site, and at a significantly higher elevation, the plan as revised met the R-1 development standards and represented a modest addition to the home. During the April 1, 2009 Planning Commission meeting, there was discussion regarding the lowest adjacent grade, the changes to the plan and the height of the silhouette. The Planning Commission was concerned about the public's ability to review a silhouette which most accurately reflected the proposal. For this reason, the item was continued to the meeting of April 15, 2009, in order to allow the applicant the opportunity to revise the silhouette and certification.

After the revised silhouette was constructed, and prior to the April 15, 2009 Planning Commission Hearing, Staff was allowed to view the silhouette from the property at 433 Via la Soledad. During that visit, it was apparent that there was impact to view from selected seated positions in the home and yard. These view corridors were located between homes on the west side of Via Mesa Grande and the surrounding landscaping. In an effort to address the neighbors view concerns, staff proposed an additional Condition of Approval that the maximum height be lowered by an additional 1.42 feet by reducing the roof pitch from 3.75:12 to 3:12, in order to alleviate any impact. The Planning Commission, at its April 15, 2009 Hearing, reviewed the materials presented by staff and discussed their experiences having viewed the site and determined that there was no adverse impact to view, as the impact to view is only a fraction of the view from the neighbor's residence and yard and did not consider it to be a significant view impact.

Based on the above, Staff concurs and recommends the Denial of the Appeal and recommends the Approval of the project as approved by the Planning Commission. The resolution before the City Council tonight does not contain the additional proposed condition regarding reducing the roof pitch.

#### **PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION**

The matter was first considered by the Planning Commission, on April 1, 2009. The applicant gave a brief description of the proposed project to the Commission. Thereafter, public testimony was given by five neighbors. Two neighbors (429 and 433 Via la Soledad) voiced opposition, noting impacts to their views. Two other neighbors (114 Via la Soledad and 645 Via los Miradores) voiced concerns about their neighbors' view impacts and opposed the project. One neighbor at 432 Via Mesa Grande expressed support for the project. The Planning Commission questioned the issues regarding the plans, silhouette height and roof pitch. The Commission discussed the request to continue the item to allow the neighbors opportunity to view the corrected silhouette, the applicant agreed to continue the item to April 15, 2009, in order that the silhouette could be lowered to reflect the correct height.

At the April 15, 2009 Planning Commission Hearing, the applicant opposed Staff's proposed Condition of Approval to further reduce the height of the project. Additional

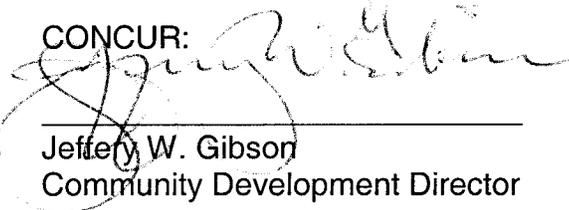
public testimony was taken from two neighbors. The property owner of 429 Via la Soledad expressed concern that the proposal would create view impacts from her residence, thereby decreasing her property value. The neighbor from 450 Via la Soledad noted that he did not have a view impact, but voiced concern about the precedent set. The Planning Commission determined that the project, as proposed, did not create adverse impacts to view. The Planning Commission voted 5-0 (2 absent Commissioners) to Approve the project as submitted.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeffery W. Gibson  
Community Development Director

By   
\_\_\_\_\_  
Gregg D. Lodan, AICP  
Planning Manager

CONCUR:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jeffery W. Gibson  
Community Development Director

NOTED:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
LeRoy J. Jackson  
City Manager

**Attachments:**

- A. Resolution for Approval
- B. Draft Resolution for Denial
- C. Appeal Form
- D. Planning Commission Hearing Minutes Excerpt of 04/01/09 and 04/15/09
- E. Previous Planning Commission Staff Reports, Supplementals and Material Submitted during Public Hearings
- F. Proofs of Publication and Notification
- G. Site Plan, Floor Plan and Revised Elevations (Limited Distribution)
- H. Mayor's Script (Limited Distribution)

**DRAFT RESOLUTION NO. 2009-**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF TORRANCE, CALIFORNIA, GRANTING AN APPEAL AND DENYING WITHOUT PREJUDICE A PRECISE PLAN OF DEVELOPMENT AS PROVIDED FOR IN DIVISION 9, CHAPTER 1, ARTICLE 41 OF THE TORRANCE MUNICIPAL CODE TO ALLOW SINGLE STORY ADDITIONS AND INTERIOR RENOVATIONS TO AN EXISTING ONE-STORY SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENCE ON PROPERTY LOCATED IN THE HILLSIDE OVERLAY DISTRICT IN THE R-1 ZONE AT 428 VIA MESA GRANDE.**

**PRE08-00033: PAUL AND STEPHANIE THOMAS**

**WHEREAS**, the Planning Commission of the City of Torrance conducted a public hearing on April 1, 2009, to consider an application for a Precise Plan of Development filed by Paul and Stephanie Thomas to allow single story additions and interior renovations to an existing one-story single family residence on property located within the Hillside Overlay District in the R-1 Zone at 428 Via Mesa Grande; and

**WHEREAS**, the Planning Commission of the City of Torrance continued the public hearing to April 15, 2009; and

**WHEREAS**, the Planning Commission of the City of Torrance at its meeting of April 15, 2009, Approved Precise Plan of Development 08-00033 filed by Paul and Stephanie Thomas to allow single story additions and interior renovations to an existing one-story single family residence on property located within the Hillside Overlay District in the R-1 Zone at 428 Via Mesa Grande; and

**WHEREAS**, due and legal publication of notice was given to owners of property in the vicinity thereof and due and legal hearings have been held, all in accordance with the provisions of Division 9, Chapter 1, Article 41 of the Torrance Municipal Code; and

**WHEREAS**, additions to existing structure, provided that the addition will not result in an increase of more than 50 percent of the structure before the addition, or 2,500 square feet, whichever is less, are Categorically Exempted by the 2009 Guidelines for implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act, Article 19, Section 15301 (e) (1); and

**WHEREAS**, the City Council of the City of Torrance conducted a duly noticed public hearing on June 2, 2009, to consider an appeal of a Planning Commission's Approval of a Precise Plan of Development filed by Paul and Stephanie Thomas to allow single story additions and interior renovations to an existing one-story single family residence on property located within the Hillside Overlay District in the R-1 Zone at 428 Via Mesa Grande; and

**WHEREAS**, the City Council of the City of Torrance does hereby find and determine as follows:

- A. That the property address is 428 Via Mesa Grande.
- B. That the property is located on Lot 116 of Tract 19306.
- C. That the project is in compliance with both the R-1 Zoning and the Low-Density Residential General Plan designation for this site.
- D. That the proposed additions will have an adverse impact upon the view, light, air, or privacy of other properties in the vicinity, because *(to be determined by City Council)*.
- E. That the proposed additions have not been located, planned and designed so as to cause the least intrusion on the view, light, air, or privacy of other properties in the vicinity, because *(to be determined by City Council)*.
- F. That the design of the additions does not provides an orderly and attractive development in harmony with other properties in the vicinity, because *(to be determined by City Council)*.
- G. That the design of the additions will have a harmful impact upon the land values and investment of other properties in the vicinity, because *(to be determined by City Council)*.
- H. That the granting of this application would be materially detrimental to the public welfare and to other properties in the vicinity, because *(to be determined by City Council)*.
- I. That the proposed additions will cause or result in an adverse cumulative impact on other properties in the vicinity, because *(to be determined by City Council)*.
- J. That it is feasible to increase the size of or rearrange the space within the existing residence for the purposes intended without increasing the height, because *(to be determined by City Council)*.
- K. That the denial of this request to increase the height will not result in an unreasonable hardship to the applicant, because *(to be determined by City Council)*.
- L. That the granting of this application will be materially detrimental to the public welfare and to other properties in the vicinity, because *(to be determined by City Council)*.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that PRE08-00033, filed by Paul and Stephanie Thomas to allow single story additions and interior renovations to an existing one-story single family residence on property located within the Hillside Overlay District in the R-1 Zone at 428 Via Mesa Grande, on file in the Community Development Department of the City of Torrance, is hereby DENIED WITHOUT PREJUDICE.

Introduced, approved and adopted this 2<sup>nd</sup> day of June 2009.

\_\_\_\_\_  
MAYOR, of the City of Torrance

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk of the City of Torrance

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

JOHN FELLOWS III, City Attorney

By \_\_\_\_\_



**RESOLUTION NO. 2009 –**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF TORRANCE, CALIFORNIA, DENYING AN APPEAL AND APPROVING A PRECISE PLAN OF DEVELOPMENT AS PROVIDED FOR IN DIVISION 9, CHAPTER 1, ARTICLE 41 OF THE TORRANCE MUNICIPAL CODE TO ALLOW SINGLE STORY ADDITIONS AND INTERIOR RENOVATIONS TO AN EXISTING ONE-STORY SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENCE, ON PROPERTY LOCATED WITHIN THE HILLSIDE OVERLAY DISTRICT IN THE R-1 ZONE AT 428 VIA MESA GRANDE.**

**PRE08-00033: PAUL AND STEPHANIE THOMAS**

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**WHEREAS**, due and legal publication of notice was given to owners of property in the vicinity thereof and due and legal hearings have been held, all in accordance with the provisions of Division 9, Chapter 1, Article 41 of the Torrance Municipal Code; and

**WHEREAS**, additions to existing structure, provided that the addition will not result in an increase of more than 50 percent of the structure before the addition, or 2,500 square feet, whichever is less, are Categorically Exempted by the 2009 Guidelines for implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act, Article 19, Section 15301 (e) (1); and

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**WHEREAS**, the City Council of the City of Torrance does hereby find and determine as follows:

- A) That the property address is 428 Via Mesa Grande.
- B) That the property is located on Lot 116 of Tract 19306.
- C) That the project is in compliance with both the R-1 Zoning and the Low-Density Residential General Plan designation for this site.
- D) That the proposed additions will not have an adverse impact upon the view, light, air, or privacy of other properties in the vicinity, because the proposed additions are limited to one-story and have been designed to have a maximum height of 17 feet 11 inches, to prevent adverse view impairments to properties to the east, and limit the potential for light, air and privacy impairments for properties to the north, south and west by providing setbacks that meet and/or exceed the Code Requirements. Furthermore, the grade difference between the subject property and the adjacent properties to the east (rear) allows westward views over the proposed development and allows air and light to pass through the properties.
- E) That proposed development has been located, planned and designed so as to cause the least intrusion on the view, light, air, or privacy of other properties in the vicinity, because the additions have been designed with rear setbacks that exceed the Code Requirements, with the front and side yard setbacks that meet and/or exceed the Code Requirements, and the proposed new doors/window placement provides for privacy to the adjacent properties, including high window sill heights and obscured glass.
- F) That the design of the additions provides an orderly and attractive development in harmony with other properties in the vicinity, because the design features stucco walls to match the existing residence, multiple cross gables, and a new asphalt shingle roof over the entire residence, which are materials and designs that are consistent with other residences in the vicinity.
- G) That the design will not have a harmful impact upon the land values and investment of other properties in the vicinity, because the proposed additions will be an improvement to the property, provide high window sill height and obscured glass to provide privacy to the adjacent properties, meet or exceed the R-1 development standards including height, and are consistent with the pattern of development in the vicinity.
- H) That the granting of this application will not be materially detrimental to the public welfare and to other properties in the vicinity, because the project is designed with heights that are lower than the maximum allowed by Code, are lower towards the front and rear to avoid adverse view, light, air and privacy impacts, and provide high window sill heights and obscured glass to provide privacy to the adjacent properties.

- I) That the proposed development will not cause or result in an adverse cumulative impact on other properties in the vicinity, because the proposed one-story additions have been designed to cause the least intrusion on views, light, air and privacy with high window sill heights and obscured glass, would be compatible with the surrounding pattern of development in both design and materials, and complies with the developments standards for the R-1 Zone.
- J) That it is not feasible to increase the size of or rearrange the space within the existing building or structure for the purposes intended except by increasing the height, because adding floor area by maintaining a one-story profile can only be achieved by slightly increasing the ridge height to cover the increased span of the residence, due to the grade difference in the rear.
- K) That the denial of this request to increase the height will result in an unreasonable hardship, because the topography of the lot would make it difficult to construct the additions otherwise without proposing a second-story addition, as the sloped rear portion of the lot makes it difficult to develop further into this area, and the request preserves the usable portion of the rear yard area to the extent possible.
- L) That granting this application would not be materially detrimental to the public welfare and to other properties in the vicinity, because the project complies with the development standards for the R-1 Zone, and specifically, the project is proposed with a height that is less than what the Code allows to prevent adverse impacts.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that PRE08-00033, filed by Paul and Stephanie Thomas to allow single story additions and interior renovations to an existing one-story single family residence on property located in the Hillside Overlay District in the R-1 Zone at 428 Via Mesa Grande, is hereby APPROVED subject to the following conditions:

1. That the use of the subject property for a single family residence shall be subject to all conditions imposed in Precise Plan of Development 08-00033 and any amendments thereto or modifications thereof as may be approved from time to time pursuant to Section 92.28.1 et seq. of the Torrance Municipal Code on file in the office of the Community Development Director of the City of Torrance; and further, that the said use shall be established or constructed and shall be maintained in conformance with such maps, plans, specifications, drawings, applications or other documents presented by the applicant to the Community Development Department and upon which the Planning Commission relied in granting approval;
2. That if this Precise Plan of Development 08-00033 is not used within one year after granting of the permit, it shall expire and become null and void unless extended by the Community Development Director for an additional period as provided for in Section 92.27.1;
3. That the maximum height of the addition at the highest point of the roof shall not exceed a height of 17.9 feet as represented by the survey elevation of 368.6 feet for

the highest ridge based on the lowest adjacent grade of 350.7 (located at the southwestern corner of the attached garage), based on a bench mark elevation of 348.00 feet located within the public right-of-way along Via Mesa Grande near the southwestern corner of the property, as shown on the official survey map on file in the Community Development Department; (Development Review)

- 4. That the final height of the addition shall be certified by a licensed surveyor/engineer prior to requesting a framing or roof-sheathing inspection and shall not exceed a survey elevation of 368.6 feet for the highest ridge based on the benchmark of 348.00 feet located within the public right-of-way along Via Mesa Grande at the southwest corner of the property, as shown on the official survey map on file in the Community Development Department; (Development Review)
- 5. That color and material samples of the proposed additions and home shall be submitted for review to the Community Development Department, prior to the issuance of a Building Permit; (Development Review)
- 6. That the silhouette shall remain in place for at least 15 days through the appeal period, but no more than 45 days after the final public hearing to the satisfaction of the Community Development Director; (Development Review)
- 7. That within 30 days of the final public hearing, the applicant shall remove the City's "Public Notice" sign to the satisfaction of the Community Development Director; (Development Review)
- 8. That the master bathroom window shall incorporate obscured glass to the satisfaction of the Community Development Director; (Development Review)
- 9. That the window sill height of the master bedroom windows shall not be less than six feet to the satisfaction of the Community Development Director; (Development Review) and
- 10. That all conditions of other City Departments received prior to or during the consideration of this case by the Planning Commission shall be met.

Introduced, approved and adopted this 2<sup>nd</sup> day of June 2009.

\_\_\_\_\_  
MAYOR, of the City of Torrance

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk of the City of Torrance

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

JOHN FELLOWS III, City Attorney

By \_\_\_\_\_

**CITY OF TORRANCE****INTEROFFICE COMMUNICATION****DATE: April 22, 2008**

**TO: Jeffrey Gibson, Community Development**

**FROM: City Clerk's Office**

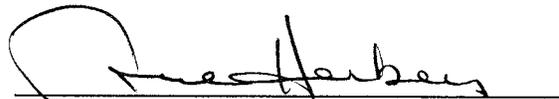
**SUBJECT: Appeal 2009-04**

Attached is Appeal 2009-04 received in this office on April 22, 2009 from Elaine Hern, 429 Via la Soledad, Redondo Beach, CA 90277; and Jennifer Johnson, 433 Via la Soledad, Redondo Beach, CA 90277. This appeal is of the Planning Commission's approval on April 15, 2009 regarding PRE08-00033: PAUL AND STEPHANIE THOMAS located at 428 Via Mesa Grande, Redondo Beach, CA 90277 citing its impact to their view. SEE ATTACHMENTS.

The appeal fee of \$160.00, paid by cash, was accepted by the City Clerk.

**SECTION 11.5.3. PROCEDURE AFTER FILING.**

- a) Upon receipt of the notice of appeal, and the appeal fee, the City Clerk shall notify the concerned City officials, bodies or departments that an appeal has been filed and shall transmit a copy of the appeal documents to such officials, bodies or departments.
- b) The concerned City officials, bodies or departments shall prepare the necessary reports for the City Council, provide public notices, posting, mailing or advertising in the same manner as provided for the original hearing or decision making process, request the appeal be placed on the agenda for hearing before the City Council within thirty (30) days of receipt of the said notice of appeal, and notify the applicant in writing of the time, date and place of the hearing not less than five (5) days before the Council hearing.



Sue Herbers  
City Clerk

cc: Building & Safety  
City Council



# CITY OF TORRANCE

## APPEAL FORM

### AN APPEAL TO:

- City Council
- Planning Commission
- \_\_\_\_\_

### RETURN TO:

Office of the City Clerk  
 3031 Torrance Boulevard  
 Torrance CA 90509-2970  
 310/618-2870

2009 APR 22 PM 4:43  
 RECEIVED  
 CITY OF TORRANCE  
 OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK

RE: PRE 08-00033

(Case Number and Name)

Address/Location of Subject Property 438 V.I.A MESA GRANDE  
(If applicable)

### Decision of:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Administrative Hearing Board                           | <input type="checkbox"/> License Review Board           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Airport Commission                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Planning Commission            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Civil Service Commission                               | <input type="checkbox"/> Community Development Director |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Quality & Energy Conservation Commission | <input type="checkbox"/> Special Development Permit     |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____                    |

Date of decision: \_\_\_\_\_ Appealing:  APPROVAL  DENIAL

**Reason for Appeal:** *Be as detailed as necessary. Additional information can be presented at the hearing. Attach pages as required with additional information and/or signatures.*

Planning Commission decision to override the Development Review Bd's decision re 428 V.I.A MESA GRANDE

Name of Appellant Glaine Hernandez 433 Via La Soledad

Address of Appellant Smiley Johnson 429 Via La Soledad

Telephone Number (310) 375-07198 PB

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Appeal Fee paid \$ <u>160.00</u>	For office use only: Date <u>4/22/09</u>	Received by <u>[Signature]</u>
<b>Notice to:</b> Community Development Department: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Planning <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building & Safety <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> City Council <input type="checkbox"/> City Manager <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> City Attorney <input type="checkbox"/> Other Department(s) _____		

April 22, 2009

To: Torrance City Council / City Clerk

Re; PRE 08-00033 -

Proposed Plan of development @ 428 Via Mesa Grande  
Paul and Stephanie Thomas

We are appealing the decision made on April 15, 2009, by the Planning Commission based on their refusal to take the advice of the Development Review Board which was concerned that the present silhouettes would impact properties behind, ie., Which would be mine at 429 Via La Soledad and Jennifer Johnson at 433 Via La Soledad.

On April 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting re the proposed plan at the above address, we came to petition against the development because the silhouettes posted showed that the addition would impact our view, taking into consideration the roof rim and completed roof. At that meeting, Mr. Thomas, owner of 428 Via Mesa Grande announced that he already agreed to lower the roof. However, there was no example of that roof line. Commissioner Browning called for a vote for the new change. This is rather unorthodox and I took the stand and stated that there should be another silhouette to show the "new" proposed height, so we could determine if this change would still impact our view. A meeting was scheduled for April 15, and again I could see how the lower roof line would still impact my view. Jennifer Johnson could not attend that meeting because of previous commitment of being out of town. She sent a letter stating the fact and had it time stamped to make sure the Commissioners received the letter.

The meeting took place on April 15, and I attended. At that meeting Mr. Thomas took the stand and asked that the new roof line be accepted. At that meeting the letter from the Review Board was read and Mr. Thomas was upset about their decision. And went further to say that he was trying to be agreeable and that if he wanted to grow bamboo reeds against the back (I have a 3ft. retaining wall) that he could do that because there is no ordinance for how high trees can be. I took my turn at the podium and requested DENIAL because, at that point, it appeared that the present silhouettes would still impact the views and the Board was intent in trying to solve the problem. The commissioners' over- road the decision and voted that nite.

Jennifer and I are asking the City Council to review the printed information and all signed letters, & petition that are included in preserving our property & what impact it could have on market value. Mr. Thomas doesn't see any difference in impact his addition could make to view lots nor does he care. The Development Review Board certainly does and that was flatly denied by the Commission

PRE08-00033

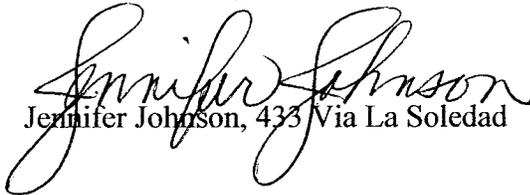
In closing, I would like to mention that the Planning Manager, Greg D. Lodan AICP was intent in bringing the concern to the forefront. Silhouettes merely illustrate the proposed height. Adding composition roof and a rim adds more to the height. It stated in Mr. Lodan's letter, "staff is concerned that the project as currently proposed, with a roof pitch of 3.75:12 does not represent or meet the burden of being the "least intrusion of view".(Finding E).

Finally, we are asking that the Commission's decision of April 15 be overturned. And new signed Blue prints are reviewed by showing the exact elevation of the roofline when it is finished and the advice of the Development Review Board is followed. .

Sincerely,



Elaine Hern 429 Via La Soledad



Jennifer Johnson, 433 Via La Soledad

Cc; Robin Webb and David C. Grant  
Grant, Genovese & Baratta, LLP

**EXCERPT OF MINUTES**

√ Minutes Approved  
~~√ Minutes Subject to Approval~~

April 1, 2009

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF  
 THE TORRANCE PLANNING COMMISSION**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The Torrance Planning Commission convened in a regular session at 7:04 p.m. on Wednesday, April 1, 2009 in the Council Chambers at Torrance City Hall.

**3. ROLL CALL**

Present: Commissioners Busch, Gibson, Horwich, Skoll, Uchima, Weideman and Chairperson Browning.

Absent: None.

Also Present: Planning Manager Lodan, Sr. Planning Associate Santana, Plans Examiner Noh, Associate Civil Engineer Symons, Deputy City Attorney Sullivan and Fire Marshal Kazandjian.

**11. PRE08-00033: PAUL AND STEPHANIE THOMAS**

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Precise Plan of Development to allow single-story additions and interior renovations to an existing one-story, single-family residence on property located within the Hillside Overlay District in the R-1 Zone at 428 Via Mesa Grande.

**Recommendation**

Approval.

Commissioner Uchima announced that he was abstaining from consideration of this item because he lives within the notification area and exited the dais.

Sr. Planning Associate Santana introduced the request and noted supplemental material available at the meeting consisting of correspondence received after the staff report was completed.

Chairperson Browning indicated that he was inclined to continue this hearing because according to the staff report, the applicant was proposing to modify the pitch of the roof from 4:12 to 3.75:12, but the silhouette does not reflect this change and the elevation of the lowest adjacent grade, the benchmark used to calculate the maximum height of the project, will be changed during the course of construction. He also noted that Item 2 (Limitation in Increases in Height) of the Precise Plan application erroneously states, "Our proposed plan will NOT increase the height of any part of our residence beyond the height of the existing building."

Paul Thomas, 428 Via Mesa Grande, applicant, explained that the inaccurate response to Item 2 was the result of a miscommunication with his architect in the initial planning stages of the project.

Commissioner Gibson questioned whether staff was aware of these changes to the project when they recommended approval.

Planning Manager Lodan explained that staff discovered that the lowest adjacent grade was called out incorrectly on the plans, therefore the project exceeded the allowable height by 6 inches and the architect subsequently reduced the height of the project to account for the extra 6 inches by lowering the roof pitch from 4:12 to 3.75:12. He noted that staff requested revised drawings to reflect this change, which were provided to the Commission as Attachment 8. He advised that staff did not observe that the original project would have any adverse impact on the view, light, air or privacy of surrounding properties and the reduction in height would only lessen any impact, so staff was comfortable going forward with this hearing.

Commissioner Busch expressed concerns that there may be potential legal issues should the Commission go forward with the hearing without having the silhouette corrected and the Commission's decision becomes subject to judicial review.

Deputy City Attorney Sullivan advised that if the silhouette was too low, it would have to be rectified, however, he believed it was within the Commission's purview to go forward with this hearing since the silhouette is higher than the proposed project.

Commissioner Weideman noted that neighbors' concerns about the height issue have been exacerbated due to another project on Via Mesa Grande that was constructed 12 inches higher than the approved height and the Commission subsequently approved the height of the project as-built due to the expense involved in correcting the error. He indicated that he was prepared to proceed with this hearing.

Chairperson Browning stated that he favored a continuance because he was not comfortable approving the project without being able to see exactly what the impact would be and he was also concerned about the benchmark situation.

The Commission entertained the idea of continuing the hearing, and Mr. Thomas expressed concerns about the delay, explaining that he had hoped to start the project in the summertime while his children are out of school.

Planning Manager Lodan stated that he failed to see any value in continuing the hearing, noting that the project is a one-story home and staff observed no view impairment from either the original or the revised project. He confirmed that the elevations called out in Resolution No. 09-019 accurately reflect the revised project and any confusion about the benchmark has been clarified.

Discussion continued, and an informal poll revealed that the majority of Commissioners favored going forward with the hearing.

Referring to a letter and petition submitted by neighbors on Via la Soledad urging denial of the project due to view impact, Mr. Thomas contended that any impact on their views would be miniscule or non-existent because they sit at a higher elevation and the proposed ridge height of the project matches the height of homes across the street. He

explained that he considered adding a second story, but rejected the idea due to the impact on neighbors behind him and related his belief that the proposed project was a very reasonable and conservative remodel. He requested that the Commission consider eliminating Condition No. 10, which requires that the existing garage be enlarged to meet minimum Code requirements, because the plans do not call for any revisions to the garage or adjacent rooms.

Planning Manager Lodan advised that the existing garage is 8 inches shorter in width and 9 inches shorter in depth than current Code requirements; that staff felt there was an opportunity to enlarge the garage to current standards since the roof above it was being re-structured; and that it was within the purview of the Commission to eliminate the condition if Commissioners felt that the expense was not warranted given the scope of the project.

Commissioner Busch questioned whether Mr. Thomas had met with neighbors on Via la Soledad who object to the project. Mr. Thomas reported that he had shared the plans with two of the three neighbors behind his home before the silhouette was erected, but had not been able to share them with the neighbor to the south.

Commissioner Skoll expressed concerns about the validity of the petition submitted in opposition to the project. He related his belief that neighbors who were not personally impacted, should have gone to the homes of the two people circulating the petition to determine whether their claims of view impact were valid before signing the petition. He reported that he attempted to view the silhouette from adjacent properties on Via la Soledad, but did not find anyone at home.

Mr. Thomas submitted photographs taken from Via la Soledad the previous evening.

In response to Commissioner Weideman's inquiry concerning Condition No. 10, Planning Manager Lodan confirmed that the Commission had the discretion to delete this condition if Commissioners believe there are extenuating circumstances.

Mr. Thomas explained that he had hoped to use the garage to store items during construction, which he would not be able to do if the walls were torn down, and voiced his opinion that the slight increase in the size of the garage would not justify the expense of enlarging it. He stated that the only feasible way to enlarge the garage would be to push it out toward the street because it wouldn't make sense to take square footage away from adjacent bedrooms.

Planning Manager Lodan noted that the front setback would not meet minimum Code requirements if the garage was expanded toward the street, therefore, he was recommending that Condition No. 10 be deleted.

Elaine Hern, 429 Via la Soledad, reported that she purchased her property because of the view; stressed the importance of preserving it; and called for a continuance so the silhouette could be corrected. She voiced objections to findings contained in Resolution No. 09-019.

Deputy City Attorney Sullivan clarified that the Resolution was drafted by staff based on their assessment of the project and the Commission would decide whether or not to adopt it after hearing all of the evidence.

Jennifer Johnson, 433 Via la Soledad, voiced objections to the project, estimating that it would block between 15-20% of her view. She contended that Mr. Thomas had misrepresented the project because he told her husband that the height of the house would not be increased. She explained that they paid a premium for their home when they purchased it 17 years ago due to the view and expressed concerns about the project's impact on their property value. She maintained that those who do not live on the view side of the street should not be allowed to block the view of those who do. She noted that neighbors are particularly concerned because the project at 406 Via Mesa Grande was built a foot above the approved height.

Phyllis Vranesh, 432 Via Mesa Grande, expressed support for the project, stating that she believed that it was a very conservative remodel that would fit in well with the neighborhood.

Ruth Vogel, 114 Via la Soledad, stated that she believed whatever decision is made should be based on an accurate silhouette so people could see exactly what the impact would be. She reported that a project across the street from her was built higher than originally approved, but a neighbor noticed the error in time for the height to be corrected.

Chairperson Browning stressed the need to focus on this project.

Ms. Vogel related her belief that the error in height was relevant because it shows that mistakes do happen. She noted that it wasn't necessary for people to be personally impacted in order to sign a petition in opposition to a project and the people who signed the petition submitted by Ms. Hern and Ms Johnson were simply supporting their position that the project should be denied based on the view impact to properties behind it.

Commissioner Busch expressed confidence in City staff's ability to monitor projects to ensure that they are constructed at the appropriate height.

Commissioner Horwich stated that he concurred with Ms. Johnson's estimate that she would lose between 15-20% of her ocean view, however, he had not yet decided whether that impact was significant enough to deny the project since at least 80% of her view would remain.

Kay White, 645 Via los Miradores, urged the Commission to reconsider deleting Condition No. 10 because the smaller a garage is, the more likely the occupants will use it for storage instead of parking cars.

Responding to audience members' comments, Mr. Thomas stated that parking has never been an issue on Via Mesa Grande and he has always been able to park two cars in his garage. He further stated that he has never heard the Hillside area categorized as "view side" and "non-view side" and doubted that Ms. Johnson paid more for her home 17 years ago than he did 7 years ago. He contended that the project would have a miniscule impact on views and absolutely no impact on air, light or privacy and urged the Commission to approve it.

Commissioner Weideman suggested that it might be more expeditious if Mr. Thomas agreed to continue the hearing so the silhouette could be corrected and

there would be no doubts about the project's exact height because it would add months to the approval process if neighbors appeal the Commission's decision. He noted that he personally supports the project and did not observe an adverse view impact.

A brief discussion ensued and Commissioners Busch, Skoll and Horwich indicated that they favored a continuance so the silhouette could be corrected.

Mr. Thomas agreed to continue the hearing to April 15, 2009.

Commissioner Busch requested that neighbors who object to the project leave contact information with staff.

Commissioner Weideman requested that staff provide clarification regarding their position on Condition No. 10 at the April 15 meeting.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Busch moved to continue the hearing on PRE08-00033 to April 15, 2009. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Horwich and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Uchima).

###

**EXCERPT OF MINUTES**

Minutes Approved  
 Minutes Subject to Approval

April 15, 2009

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF  
 THE TORRANCE PLANNING COMMISSION**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The Torrance Planning Commission convened in a regular session at 7:03 p.m. on Wednesday, April 1, 2009 in the Council Chambers at Torrance City Hall.

**3. ROLL CALL**

Present: Commissioners Gibson, Horwich, Skoll, Weideman and Chairperson Browning.

Absent: Commissioners Busch and Uchima.

Also Present: Planning Manager Lodan, Planning Assistant Graham, Plans Examiner Noh, Associate Civil Engineer Symons, Deputy City Attorney Sullivan and Fire Marshal Kazandjian.

**9B. PRE08-00033: PAUL AND STEPHANIE THOMAS**

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Precise Plan of Development to allow single-story additions and interior renovations to an existing one-story, single-family residence on property located within the Hillside Overlay District in the R-1 Zone at 428 Via Mesa Grande.

**Recommendation**

Approval.

Planning Assistant Graham introduced the request and noted supplemental material available at the meeting consisting of correspondence received after the agenda item was completed and a memo from staff recommending that the pitch of the main roof be reduced from 3.75:12 to 3:12.

Paul Thomas, 428 Via Mesa Grande, expressed frustration that staff was no longer recommending that the project be approved as submitted. He noted that the hearing on this project was continued two weeks ago so the silhouette could be lowered six inches to accurately reflect revised plans and staff had recommended approval of the project at that time. He related his belief that the project was very conservative, as it meets or exceeds all requirements and the FAR (floor area ratio) was well below the maximum allowed. Submitting photographs to illustrate, he contended that any impact on views was very minimal and pointed out that the resident at 433 Via la Soledad, who is claiming view impact, has a two-story home. He requested that the Commission approve of the project as submitted.

Chairperson Browning stated that he was opposed to lowering the pitch to 3:12, noting that the Commission would be in the same situation as they were two weeks ago when the hearing was continued because the silhouette did not accurately reflect the height of the project to be approved. He further stated that he did not believe lowering the height another 1.5 feet would make any difference at 433 Via la Soledad other than adding to blue-sky view.

Elaine Hern, 429 Via la Soledad, voiced objections to the project due to the impact on her view.

Chairperson Browning noted that he specifically asked Ms. Hern at the last meeting whether the project would impact her view, light, air or privacy and she responded "no" in each case.

Ms. Hern explained that she currently is not impacted by the project but once it is built, it would block the portion of her view that is below the silhouette and impact the value of her home.

James Pickard, 450 Via la Soledad, stated that he supports his neighbor Elaine Hern in her opposition to the project and believes that the height could be lowered by changing the configuration of the roof.

In response to Chairperson Browning's inquiry, Mr. Pickard reported that he could not see the silhouette from his home, but was concerned about the precedent this project would set.

Mr. Thomas contended that Mr. Pickard's comments were irrelevant because he is not impacted by the project and related his belief that Ms. Hern's property value would only increase due to the project.

In response to Commissioner Weideman's inquiry, Mr. Thomas reported that the photographs he submitted were taken from the highest point of the hill at the back of his property, which is approximately 6 inches higher than the grade of Ms. Hern's property.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Weideman moved to close the public hearing. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Horwich and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Commissioner Weideman reported that he did not visit the site to see the revised silhouette, however he did view the prior silhouette two weeks ago from both 429 and 433 Via la Soledad; that he did not observe a significant view impact; and that he would support the project as proposed with the 3.75:12 roof pitch. He explained that he had been prepared to make a decision on the project at the April 1 meeting, but asked that it be re-silhouetted so neighbors could see the exact height.

Commissioner Skoll stated that he walked the length of the backyards at 429 and 433 Via la Soledad and, in his opinion, the view impact was insignificant, therefore he would support the project as proposed.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Skoll moved to approve PRE08-00033, as conditioned, including all findings of fact set forth by staff, with the roof pitch to remain at 3.75:12. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gibson and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Planning Assistant Graham read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution No. 09-019.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Weideman moved for the adoption of Planning Commission Resolution No. 09-019. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Horwich and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

###

**AGENDA ITEM 9B**

**TO:** Members of the Planning Commission  
**FROM:** Development Review Division  
**SUBJECT:** Precise Plan of Development – PRE08-00033  
Paul and Stephanie Thomas

**LOCATION:** 428 Via Mesa Grande

This item is a request for approval of a Precise Plan of Development to allow single story additions and interior renovations to an existing one-story single family residence on property located within the Hillside Overlay District in the R-1 Zone. The item was originally heard on April 1st, 2009 and was continued to allow the applicants to revise the silhouette in order to clarify the project's potential impacts.

At the meeting, there were questions and discussion regarding the silhouette's accuracy of the proposed project. It was determined that the silhouette was six inches higher than shown on the plans. The applicants have since submitted a revised silhouette certification and Hillside criteria response sheet, in addition to revised elevations. The silhouette has been lowered by six inches to properly represent the plans and the elevations have been modified to show the correct resulting height.

Staff has also re-evaluated the need for expansion of the garage (Condition #10). As the proposed additions do not exceed the 50% threshold established by the Torrance Municipal Code, the 2 foot width and 9 inch depth expansion is not required. This expansion would also encroach into the required setbacks if built out towards the street.

The attached correspondence features a letter from an opposing neighbor requesting the item be further continued and an e-mail from the applicants requesting the case proceed as scheduled.

Staff made a field observation of the proposed residence from the rear (east) adjacent property at 429 Via Los Soledad, and based on the revised silhouette, the project does not appear to cause adverse impacts. The subject property is much lower in grade and even with the increased height of the proposed residence, the rear property still has westward ocean views over the silhouette. Although the silhouette is visible from the neighbor's dining room and rear yard, it does not block views or impede light and air. Given the grade difference, the silhouette would only block downward views towards existing houses and landscaping—the ocean views would not be impacted. The grade difference will continue to allow light and air to pass through the properties.

As of the writing of this report, staff has not had the opportunity to view the silhouette from the rear, northeast neighbor at 433 Via La Soledad. Staff has scheduled an appointment to meet with that neighbor and will submit a supplemental regarding that site visit.

Should the Commission proceed with the hearing as schedule, staff continues to recommend approval of the project as conditioned. Staff has provided an updated Resolution eliminating Condition #10.

Prepared by,



for: Yolanda Gomez  
Planning Associate

Respectfully submitted,



Gregg D. Lodan, AICP  
Planning Manager

Attachments:

- 1) Revised Resolution
- 2) Revised Silhouette Certification
- 3) Revised Hillside Ordinance Criteria Response
- 4) Recent Correspondence
- 5) Minutes Excerpt
- 6) Material submitted at 4/1/09 Planning Commission Hearing
- 7) Previous Staff Report and Supplemental Material
- 8) Site Plan, Floor Plans, and Revised Elevations

**PLANNING COMMISSION RESOLUTION NO. 09-019**

A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF TORRANCE, CALIFORNIA, APPROVING A PRECISE PLAN OF DEVELOPMENT AS PROVIDED FOR IN DIVISION 9, CHAPTER 1, ARTICLE 41 OF THE TORRANCE MUNICIPAL CODE TO ALLOW SINGLE STORY ADDITIONS AND INTERIOR RENOVATIONS TO AN EXISTING ONE-STORY SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENCE, ON PROPERTY LOCATED WITHIN THE HILLSIDE OVERLAY DISTRICT IN THE R-1 ZONE AT 428 VIA MESA GRANDE.

**PRE08-00033: PAUL AND STEPHANIE THOMAS**

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**WHEREAS**, the Planning Commission of the City of Torrance conducted a public hearing on April 1, 2009, to consider an application for a Precise Plan of Development filed by Paul and Stephanie Thomas to allow single story additions and interior renovations to an existing one-story single family residence on property located in the Hillside Overlay District in the R-1 Zone at 428 Via Mesa Grande; and

**WHEREAS**, the item was continued to April 15, 2009, to consider an application for a Precise Plan of Development filed by Paul and Stephanie Thomas to allow single story additions and interior renovations to an existing one-story single family residence on property located in the Hillside Overlay District in the R-1 Zone at 428 Via Mesa Grande; and

**WHEREAS**, additions to existing structures, provided that the addition will not result in an increase of more than 50 percent of the floor area of the structure before the addition, or 2,500 square feet, whichever is less, are determined to be Categorically Exempted by the Guidelines for Implementation of the 2009 California Environmental Quality Act, Article 19, Section 15301 (e)(1); and

**WHEREAS**, due and legal publication of notice was given to owners of property in the vicinity thereof and due and legal hearings have been held, all in accordance with the provisions of Division 9, Chapter 1, Article 41 of the Torrance Municipal Code; and

**WHEREAS**, the Planning Commission of the City of Torrance does hereby find and determine as follows:

- A) That the property address is 428 Via Mesa Grande.
- B) That the property is located on Lot 116 of Tract 19306.
- C) That the project is in compliance with both the R-1 Zoning and the Low-Density Residential General Plan designation for this site.

- D) That the proposed additions will not have an adverse impact upon the view, light, air, or privacy of other properties in the vicinity, because the proposed single-story additions have been designed to have a maximum height of 17 feet 11 inches, to prevent view impairments to properties to the east, and limit the potential for light, air and privacy impairments for properties to the north, south and west by providing setbacks that meet and/or exceed the Code Requirements. Furthermore, the grade difference between the subject property and the adjacent properties to the rear allows westward views over the proposed development and allows air and light to pass through the properties.
- E) That proposed development has been located, planned and designed so as to cause the least intrusion on the view, light, air, or privacy of other properties in the vicinity, because the additions have been designed with rear setbacks that exceed the Code Requirements, with the front and side yard setbacks that meet and/or exceed the Code Requirements, and the proposed new doors/window placement provides for privacy to the adjacent properties, including high window sill heights and obscured glass.
- F) That the design of the additions provides an orderly and attractive development in harmony with other properties in the vicinity, because the design features stucco walls and asphalt shingles, matching the remainder of the residence, which are also materials consistent with other residences in the vicinity.
- G) That the design will not have a harmful impact upon the land values and investment of other properties in the vicinity, because the proposed additions will be an improvement to the property, provide high window sill height and obscured glass to provide privacy to the adjacent properties, meet or exceed the R-1 development standards and are consistent with the pattern of development in the vicinity.
- H) That the granting of this application will not be materially detrimental to the public welfare and to other properties in the vicinity, because the project is designed with heights that are lower than the maximum allowed by Code, are lower towards the front and rear to limit the potential for view, light, air and privacy impacts, and provide high window sill heights and obscured glass to provide privacy to the adjacent properties.
- I) That the proposed development will not cause or result in an adverse cumulative impact on other properties in the vicinity, because the proposed one-story additions have been designed to cause the least intrusion on views, light, air and privacy with high window sill heights and obscured glass, would be compatible with the surrounding pattern of development in both design and materials, and complies with the developments standards for the R-1 Zone.
- J) That it is not feasible to increase the size of or rearrange the space within the existing building or structure for the purposes intended except by increasing the height, because adding floor area by maintaining a one-story profile can only be achieved by

slightly increasing the ridge height to cover the increased span of the residence, due to the grade difference in the rear.

- K) That the denial of this request to increase the height will result in an unreasonable hardship, because the size and topography of the lot would make it difficult to construct the additions otherwise without proposing a second-story addition, as the sloped rear portion of the lot makes it difficult to develop further into this area, and the request preserves the usable portion of the rear yard area to the extent possible.
- L) That granting this application would not be materially detrimental to the public welfare and to other properties in the vicinity, because the project complies with the development standards for the R-1 Zone.

**WHEREAS**, the Planning Commission by the following roll call vote APPROVED PRE08-00033, subject to conditions:

AYES: COMMISSIONERS:

NOES: COMMISSIONERS:

ABSENT: COMMISSIONERS:

ABSTAIN: COMMISSIONERS:

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that PRE08-00033, filed by Paul and Stephanie Thomas to allow single story additions and interior renovations to an existing one-story single family residence on property located in the Hillside Overlay District in the R-1 Zone at 428 Via Mesa Grande, is hereby APPROVED subject to the following conditions:

1. That the use of the subject property for a single family residence shall be subject to all conditions imposed in Precise Plan of Development 08-00033 and any amendments thereto or modifications thereof as may be approved from time to time pursuant to Section 92.28.1 et seq. of the Torrance Municipal Code on file in the office of the Community Development Director of the City of Torrance; and further, that the said use shall be established or constructed and shall be maintained in conformance with such maps, plans, specifications, drawings, applications or other documents presented by the applicant to the Community Development Department and upon which the Planning Commission relied in granting approval;
2. That if this Precise Plan of Development 08-00033 is not used within one year after granting of the permit, it shall expire and become null and void unless extended by the Community Development Director for an additional period as provided for in Section 92.27.1;
3. That the maximum height of the additions/structure at the highest point of the roof shall not exceed a height of 17.9 feet as represented by the revised north elevation of

368.6 feet for the highest ridge based on the lowest adjacent grade of 350.7 (located at the southwestern perimeter of the building), based on a bench mark elevation of 348.00 feet located within the public right-of-way along Via Mesa Grande near the southwestern corner of the property, as shown on the official survey map on file in the Community Development Department; (Development Review)

4. That the final height of the structure shall be certified by a licensed surveyor/engineer prior to requesting a framing or roof-sheathing inspection and shall not exceed a survey elevation of 368.6 feet for the highest ridge based on the benchmark of 348.00 feet located within the public right-of-way along Via Mesa Grande near the southwest corner of the property, as shown on the official survey map on file in the Community Development Department; (Development Review)
5. That color and material samples of the proposed home shall be submitted for review to the Community Development Department, prior to the issuance of a Building Permit; (Development Review)
6. That the silhouette shall remain in place for at least 15 days through the appeal period, but no more than 45 days after the final public hearing to the satisfaction of the Community Development Director; (Development Review)
7. That within 30 days of the final public hearing, the applicant shall remove the City's "Public Notice" sign to the satisfaction of the Community Development Director; (Development Review)
8. That the master bathroom window shall incorporate obscured glass to the satisfaction of the Community Development Director; (Development Review)
9. That the window sill height of the master bedroom windows shall not be less than six feet to the satisfaction of the Community Development Director; (Development Review)
10. That all conditions of other City Departments received prior to or during the consideration of this case by the Planning Commission shall be met.

Introduced, approved and adopted this 15th day of April 2009.

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Chairperson, Torrance Planning Commission

ATTEST:

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Secretary, Torrance Planning Commission

STATE OF CALIFORNIA     )  
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES) ss  
CITY OF TORRANCE         )

I, GREGG D. LODAN, Secretary to the Planning Commission of the City of Torrance, California, do hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was duly introduced, approved, and adopted by the Planning Commission of the City of Torrance at a regular meeting of said Commission held on the 15th day of April 2009, by the following roll call vote:

AYES: COMMISSIONERS:

NOES: COMMISSIONERS:

ABSENT: COMMISSIONERS:

ABSTAIN: COMMISSIONERS:

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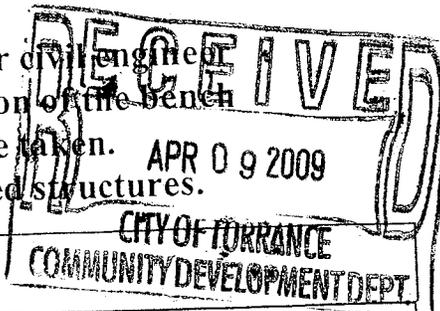
Secretary, Torrance Planning Commission

ATTN: Soc Yumal - <sup>30</sup>original in mail lot 2



City of Torrance, Community Development Department Jeffery W. Gibson, Director  
3031 Torrance Blvd., Torrance, CA 90503 (310) 618-5990 Fax: (310) 618-5829

# Height and Location Certification



The survey must be performed by a licensed land surveyor or civil engineer and should be accompanied by a map which shows the location of the bench mark and the locations where the measurements were taken. The map should also show the location of existing and proposed structures.

## SILHOUETTE CERTIFICATION

I have surveyed the silhouette located at 428 Via Mesa Grande, Torrance, Ca  
(address)

Ca 90277 on 4-3-09, based on plans submitted to the City of Torrance  
(date)

by Mr. Paul Thomas on 4-3-09. The survey was taken  
(applicant/architect) (date)

from a bench mark located at S.W. Prop Corner L&T, RCE 22024, Torrance Ca  
(address)

(attached map) which established a base elevation of 348.0'

The ridge line/highest point of the roof was determined to have an elevation of 368.60'

The plans indicate that the elevation should be 368.60'

*I certify that I have measured the location of pertinent features located on the subject property. Based on the plans submitted to the Community Development Department, I have verified that the silhouette/construction accurately represents the proposed structure in terms of height, building envelope, location on the site, and all setbacks.*

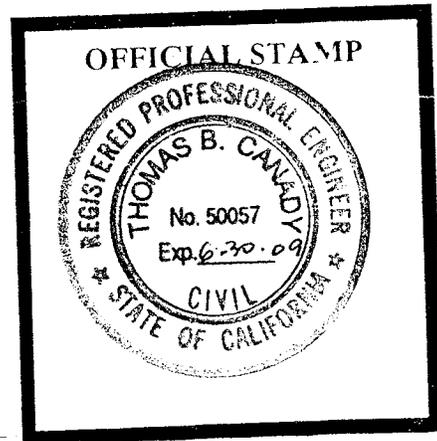
Thomas Canady  
Name (please print)

50057  
LS/RCE#

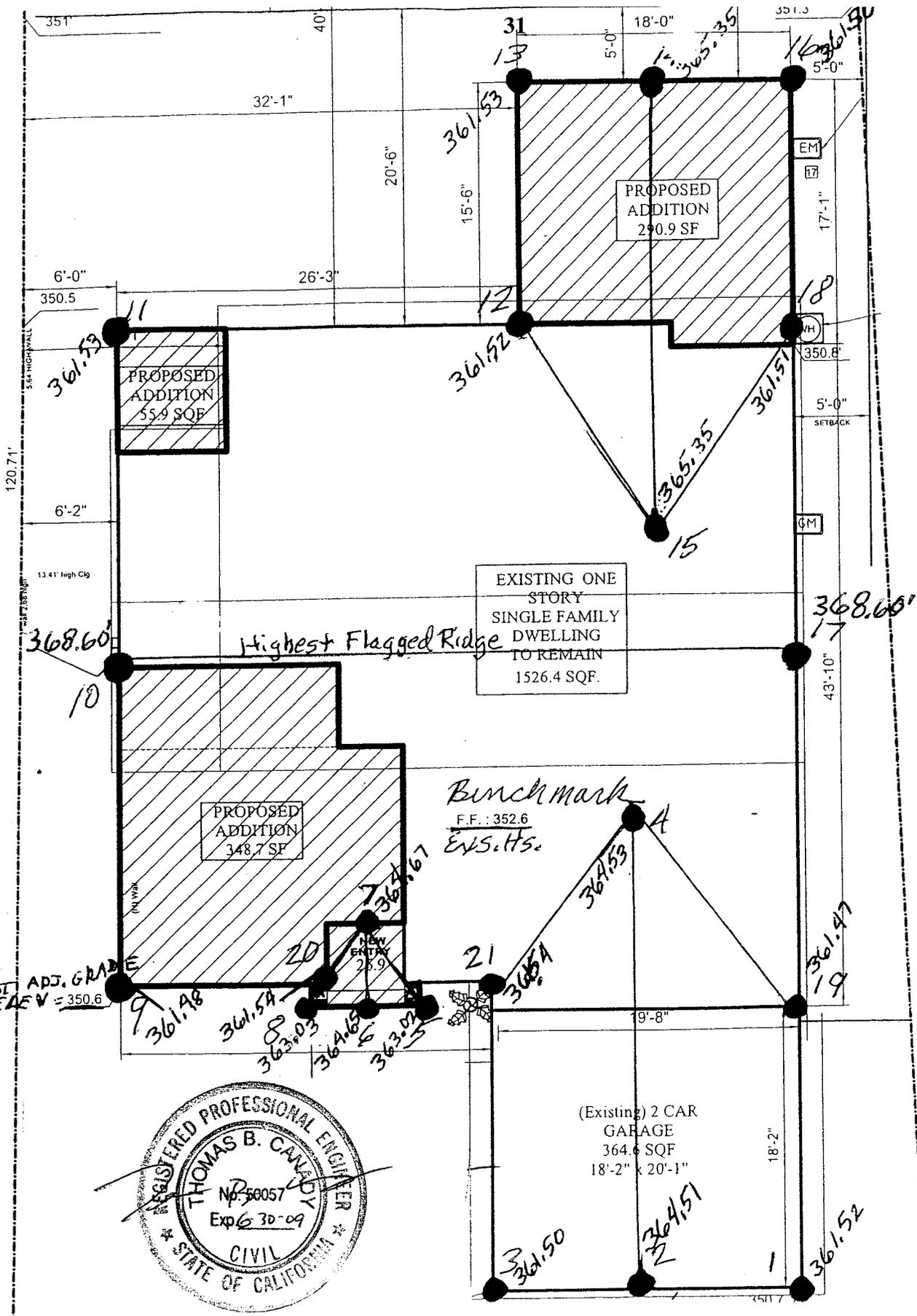
[Signature]  
SIGNATURE

619-280-7873  
PHONE

4-3-09  
DATE



Notes: original



Residence  
 Mr Paul Thomas  
 428 Via mesa Grande  
 Torrance Ca 90277

Benchmark  
 FD LET, RCE 22024  
 S.W. Prop Corner  
 348.00'

original

1. **Planning and Design**

- a. Our proposed development will not adversely affect the view, light air or privacy of surrounding properties because of the following facts:
  - i. The proposed addition is a relatively minor addition.
  - ii. The proposed addition is not a second story addition, therefore the height will only be minimally increased and the views will not be obstructed.
  - iii. The windows will not be positioned in areas that will affect privacy of neighbors.
  
- b. The following planning, design and locational considerations will ensure that the proposed development will cause the least intrusion on the views, light, air and privacy of other properties in the vicinity:
  - i. The planning and design was done by *Lomita Blueprint* in accordance with the standards and guidelines set by the city of Torrance.
  - ii. Surrounding neighbors have all had an opportunity to review a copy of the plans and raise their concerns.
  
- c. The following elements have been employed to provide an orderly and attractive development in harmony with other properties in the vicinity.
  - i. The new addition will be a continuation of our “traditional style” home, which is consistent with other properties in our neighborhood.
  - ii. The roof will be stripped and replaced in order to give the property a more uniform and attractive appearance.
  
- d. The following aspects of the design will ensure that the development will not have a harmful impact upon the land values and investment of other properties in the vicinity.
  - i. Our house was built in the 1950’s and the design is inconsistent with current interest of today’s families. The design of our remodel includes a large new kitchen, and transforms the old living space into a more usable “great room”. These features will not only increase the value of our property, but should also have a positive impact on the property values of surrounding properties.
  
- e. Granting this application would not be materially detrimental to the public welfare and to other properties in the vicinity for the following reasons:
  - i. We are taking into consideration of the welfare of our neighbors by not “overbuilding” for the size of our lot.
  - ii. Our remodel will only improve the appearance of our home and therefore increase the value of our property and those around us.

- f. The proposed development will not cause or result in an adverse cumulative impact on other properties in the vicinity for the following reasons:
  - i. Our proposed remodel is relatively minor when considering the current proposed developments of other properties within our vicinity.
  - ii. No obstructions to light, air, or view or privacy will be made to the surrounding neighbors.
  - iii. Our development will be in accordance with the guidelines and restrictions set by the city of Torrance.

**2. Limitation to increases in height**

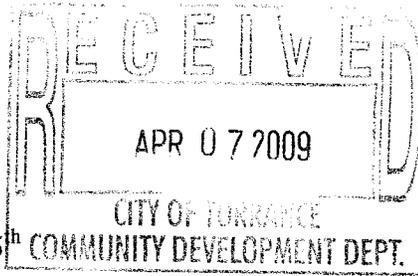
- a. It is not feasible to increase the size of or rearrange the space within the existing building or structure for the purposes intended except by increasing the height, demonstrated by the following facts:
  - i. One of our primary objectives is to create more space for our family. Since we decided to not apply for a second-story addition, we decided we would like to create the “illusion” of more space by vaulting the ceilings. Raising the ridge of our roof will accommodate for the illusion of more space and a more open and welcoming feel.
- b. Denial of this application would constitute an unreasonable hardship for the following reason(s):
  - i. Our goal is to minimize the burden of this remodel on our children and to avoid disrupting their lives while they are in school. Therefore, it’s very important for us to begin this project in June (during Summer break) so that we can devote all our energy to finishing this remodel; and, hopefully be moved back into our home before school starts again in the Fall. Therefore, we need ample time to obtain quotes and hire a contractor, find temporary housing, and move out this June. Denial of this application would undoubtedly prevent this from happening
  - ii. Cost is always a factor to everything in life. Denial of this application would cost more money to have plans redrawn and recertified, it would cost more time away from work, and it would put an emotional burden on our family.
- c. Granting this application would not be materially detrimental to the public welfare and to other properties in the vicinity for the following reason(s):
  - i. Not a single person living on Via Mesa Grande has objected to our project, and most of them signed a petition in support of our project.

- ii. Our plans are quite conservative and very reasonable. We have followed the guidelines and remained within the limits set by the City of Torrance, and nobody has claimed any adverse impacts to their privacy, air, or light. The only objection raised by the neighbors on Via La Soledad was that we impact their view. In my opinion, the highest point of our roofline will not exceed the height of their floor, and any obstruction to their view is unfounded.
- iii. Any upgrading to our property will result in an increased value to our home, which will also reflect in the value of surrounding properties.

3. **Limitation to increases in building space lot coverage**

Our proposed plan will increase the building space a total of 715 square feet. The floor area ratio will be increased to .39 and the proposed structure will encompass only 39% of the area of the lot.

To: City of Torrance  
From: Jennifer Johnson 433 Via La Soledad  
Re: Hearing of PRE08-00033  
428 Via Mesa Grande Scheduled for April 15<sup>th</sup>



April 6, 2009

I am writing this letter to everyone involved in this hearing. I am leaving on Monday April 13<sup>th</sup> to New York a trip planned 9 months ago. This obviously means I will not be able to attend this hearing. I along with my neighbor Elaine Hearn started the petition against this remodel, therefore I am asking that the date be changed which we would greatly appreciate. I will be back April 19<sup>th</sup>. I have no other scheduled conflicts. I feel that I need to be present along with Elaine regarding this matter which is so important to us and the impact this remodel would have on our homes. I really appreciate your consideration to delay this hearing so that I may be there, I thank you all in advance for your time and effort. I look forward to seeing you all in future hearings regarding the above address of Paul & Stephanie Thomas.

Thank you  
Jennifer Johnson  
433 Via La Soledad  
310 373-8460 home  
310 938-5562 cell

## Yumul, Soc Angelo

---

**From:** paul thomas [paulthomas100@yahoo.com]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 07, 2009 9:13 PM  
**To:** Yumul, Soc Angelo; Santana, Danny  
**Cc:** Gomez, Yolanda; Lodan, Gregg  
**Subject:** RE: Hillside Substantiation Form

**Attachments:** city of torrance application.doc



city of torrance  
application.d...

Danny,

Here is the revised form. Please let me know if this is satisfactory.

With respect to continuing the meeting, I truly believe that this would unnecessarily delay this whole process. I also believe that if they cannot be present at the meeting on the 15th, then they should simply write a letter outlining any objections they might have. The same applies to those supporting our project . . . if they can't make it, then they should write a letter showing support. We shouldn't have to delay a meeting simply because 1 person cannot be present.

Additionally, I was told last Wed at our original planning commission meeting that if I was able to 1) lower our silhouette 6 inches, 2) get it recertified, and 3) resubmit this substantiation form, then I would be scheduled for the next meeting on the 15th. I've worked very hard trying to get all this done in a very short amount of time because it's important to me to have this project approved quickly. Our goal is to begin this project by the beginning of Summer so that we can minimize any disruption to our children's school year. Another continuance would only make this more difficult.

Furthermore, I feel confident that the planning commission will approve this project whether or not this objector is present. Our project is a very conservative remodel and everyone that I've spoken to who lives on Via Mesa Grande has voiced support for our project.

As a result, I would ask to keep the original scheduled meeting on 04/15/09, and deny anyone's request for an additional continuance.

Thanks for your time and assistance,

Paul

**EXCERPT OF MINUTES**

Minutes Approved  
 Minutes Subject to Approval

April 1, 2009

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF  
 THE TORRANCE PLANNING COMMISSION**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The Torrance Planning Commission convened in a regular session at 7:04 p.m. on Wednesday, April 1, 2009 in the Council Chambers at Torrance City Hall.

**3. ROLL CALL**

Present: Commissioners Busch, Gibson, Horwich, Skoll, Uchima, Weideman and Chairperson Browning.

Absent: None.

Also Present: Planning Manager Lodan, Sr. Planning Associate Santana, Plans Examiner Noh, Associate Civil Engineer Symons, Deputy City Attorney Sullivan and Fire Marshal Kazandjian.

**11. PRE08-00033: PAUL AND STEPHANIE THOMAS**

Planning Commission consideration for approval of a Precise Plan of Development to allow single-story additions and interior renovations to an existing one-story, single-family residence on property located within the Hillside Overlay District in the R-1 Zone at 428 Via Mesa Grande.

**Recommendation**

Approval.

Commissioner Uchima announced that he was abstaining from consideration of this item because he lives within the notification area and exited the dais.

Sr. Planning Associate Santana introduced the request and noted supplemental material available at the meeting consisting of correspondence received after the staff report was completed.

Chairperson Browning indicated that he was inclined to continue this hearing because according to the staff report, the applicant was proposing to modify the pitch of the roof from 4:12 to 3.75:12, but the silhouette does not reflect this change and the elevation of the lowest adjacent grade, the benchmark used to calculate the maximum height of the project, will be changed during the course of construction. He also noted that Item 2 (Limitation in Increases in Height) of the Precise Plan application erroneously states, "Our proposed plan will NOT increase the height of any part of our residence beyond the height of the existing building."

Paul Thomas, 428 Via Mesa Grande, applicant, explained that the inaccurate response to Item 2 was the result of a miscommunication with his architect in the initial planning stages of the project.

Commissioner Gibson questioned whether staff was aware of these changes to the project when they recommended approval.

Planning Manager Lodan explained that staff discovered that the lowest adjacent grade was called out incorrectly on the plans, therefore the project exceeded the allowable height by 6 inches and the architect subsequently reduced the height of the project to account for the extra 6 inches by lowering the roof pitch from 4:12 to 3.75:12. He noted that staff requested revised drawings to reflect this change, which were provided to the Commission as Attachment 8. He advised that staff did not observe that the original project would have any adverse impact on the view, light, air or privacy of surrounding properties and the reduction in height would only lessen any impact, so staff was comfortable going forward with this hearing.

Commissioner Busch expressed concerns that there may be potential legal issues should the Commission go forward with the hearing without having the silhouette corrected and the Commission's decision becomes subject to judicial review.

Deputy City Attorney Sullivan advised that if the silhouette was too low, it would have to be rectified, however, he believed it was within the Commission's purview to go forward with this hearing since the silhouette is higher than the proposed project.

Commissioner Weideman noted that neighbors' concerns about the height issue have been exacerbated due to another project on Via Mesa Grande that was constructed 12 inches higher than the approved height and the Commission subsequently approved the height of the project as-built due to the expense involved in correcting the error. He indicated that he was prepared to proceed with this hearing.

Chairperson Browning stated that he favored a continuance because he was not comfortable approving the project without being able to see exactly what the impact would be and he was also concerned about the benchmark situation.

The Commission entertained the idea of continuing the hearing, and Mr. Thomas expressed concerns about the delay, explaining that he had hoped to start the project in the summertime while his children are out of school.

Planning Manager Lodan stated that he failed to see any value in continuing the hearing, noting that the project is a one-story home and staff observed no view impairment from either the original or the revised project. He confirmed that the elevations called out in Resolution No. 09-019 accurately reflect the revised project and any confusion about the benchmark has been clarified.

Discussion continued, and an informal poll revealed that the majority of Commissioners favored going forward with the hearing.

Referring to a letter and petition submitted by neighbors on Via la Soledad urging denial of the project due to view impact, Mr. Thomas contended that any impact on their views would be miniscule or non-existent because they sit at a higher elevation and the proposed ridge height of the project matches the height of homes across the street. He

explained that he considered adding a second story, but rejected the idea due to the impact on neighbors behind him and related his belief that the proposed project was a very reasonable and conservative remodel. He requested that the Commission consider eliminating Condition No. 10, which requires that the existing garage be enlarged to meet minimum Code requirements, because the plans do not call for any revisions to the garage or adjacent rooms.

Planning Manager Lodan advised that the existing garage is 8 inches shorter in width and 9 inches shorter in depth than current Code requirements; that staff felt there was an opportunity to enlarge the garage to current standards since the roof above it was being re-structured; and that it was within the purview of the Commission to eliminate the condition if Commissioners felt that the expense was not warranted given the scope of the project.

Commissioner Busch questioned whether Mr. Thomas had met with neighbors on Via la Soledad who object to the project. Mr. Thomas reported that he had shared the plans with two of the three neighbors behind his home before the silhouette was erected, but had not been able to share them with the neighbor to the south.

Commissioner Skoll expressed concerns about the validity of the petition submitted in opposition to the project. He related his belief that neighbors who were not personally impacted, should have gone to the homes of the two people circulating the petition to determine whether their claims of view impact were valid before signing the petition. He reported that he attempted to view the silhouette from adjacent properties on Via la Soledad, but did not find anyone at home.

Mr. Thomas submitted photographs taken from Via la Soledad the previous evening.

In response to Commissioner Weideman's inquiry concerning Condition No. 10, Planning Manager Lodan confirmed that the Commission had the discretion to delete this condition if Commissioners believe there are extenuating circumstances.

Mr. Thomas explained that he had hoped to use the garage to store items during construction, which he would not be able to do if the walls were torn down, and voiced his opinion that the slight increase in the size of the garage would not justify the expense of enlarging it. He stated that the only feasible way to enlarge the garage would be to push it out toward the street because it wouldn't make sense to take square footage away from adjacent bedrooms.

Planning Manager Lodan noted that the front setback would not meet minimum Code requirements if the garage was expanded toward the street, therefore, he was recommending that Condition No. 10 be deleted.

Elaine Hern, 429 Via la Soledad, reported that she purchased her property because of the view; stressed the importance of preserving it; and called for a continuance so the silhouette could be corrected. She voiced objections to findings contained in Resolution No. 09-019.

Deputy City Attorney Sullivan clarified that the Resolution was drafted by staff based on their assessment of the project and the Commission would decide whether or not to adopt it after hearing all of the evidence.

Jennifer Johnson, 433 Via la Soledad, voiced objections to the project, estimating that it would block between 15-20% of her view. She contended that Mr. Thomas had misrepresented the project because he told her husband that the height of the house would not be increased. She explained that they paid a premium for their home when they purchased it 17 years ago due to the view and expressed concerns about the project's impact on their property value. She maintained that those who do not live on the view side of the street should not be allowed to block the view of those who do. She noted that neighbors are particularly concerned because the project at 406 Via Mesa Grande was built a foot above the approved height.

Phyllis Vranesh, 432 Via Mesa Grande, expressed support for the project, stating that she believed that it was a very conservative remodel that would fit in well with the neighborhood.

Ruth Vogel, 114 Via la Soledad, stated that she believed whatever decision is made should be based on an accurate silhouette so people could see exactly what the impact would be. She reported that a project across the street from her was built higher than originally approved, but a neighbor noticed the error in time for the height to be corrected.

Chairperson Browning stressed the need to focus on this project.

Ms. Vogel related her belief that the error in height was relevant because it shows that mistakes do happen. She noted that it wasn't necessary for people to be personally impacted in order to sign a petition in opposition to a project and the people who signed the petition submitted by Ms. Hern and Ms. Johnson were simply supporting their position that the project should be denied based on the view impact to properties behind it.

Commissioner Busch expressed confidence in City staff's ability to monitor projects to ensure that they are constructed at the appropriate height.

Commissioner Horwich stated that he concurred with Ms. Johnson's estimate that she would lose between 15-20% of her ocean view, however, he had not yet decided whether that impact was significant enough to deny the project since at least 80% of her view would remain.

Kay White, 645 Via los Miradores, urged the Commission to reconsider deleting Condition No. 10 because the smaller a garage is, the more likely the occupants will use it for storage instead of parking cars.

Responding to audience members' comments, Mr. Thomas stated that parking has never been an issue on Via Mesa Grande and he has always been able to park two cars in his garage. He further stated that he has never heard the Hillside area categorized as "view side" and "non-view side" and doubted that Ms. Johnson paid more for her home 17 years ago than he did 7 years ago. He contended that the project would have a miniscule impact on views and absolutely no impact on air, light or privacy and urged the Commission to approve it.

Commissioner Weideman suggested that it might be more expeditious if Mr. Thomas agreed to continue the hearing so the silhouette could be corrected and

there would be no doubts about the project's exact height because it would add months to the approval process if neighbors appeal the Commission's decision. He noted that he personally supports the project and did not observe an adverse view impact.

A brief discussion ensued and Commissioners Busch, Skoll and Horwich indicated that they favored a continuance so the silhouette could be corrected.

Mr. Thomas agreed to continue the hearing to April 15, 2009.

Commissioner Busch requested that neighbors who object to the project leave contact information with staff.

Commissioner Weideman requested that staff provide clarification regarding their position on Condition No. 10 at the April 15 meeting.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Busch moved to continue the hearing on PRE08-00033 to April 15, 2009. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Horwich and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Uchima).

###

SUBJECT TO APPROVAL

PAUL SONG & PRISCILLA ACKER  
424 VIA MESA GRANDE  
REDONDO BEACH, CA 90277  
310/373-8248

April 1, 2009

To whom it may concern,

We are the owners of, and live at 424 Via Mesa Grande, and our neighbors at 428 Via Mesa Grande have petitioned the City of Torrance for approval for a remodel of their property which includes an addition and an increase in the elevation of the roofline. Due to personal matters, we are unable to attend this hearing, however we would like to make it known that we do not object in any way to this addition. We feel that this will only increase the value of the property which in turn affects the values in the neighborhood.



Signed: Paul Song, Priscilla Acker

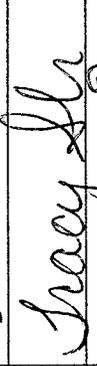
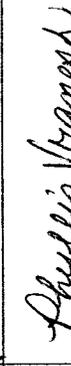
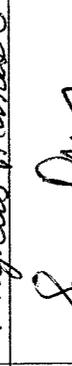
Submitted to the  
Planning Commission  
at the 04/01/2009  
Public Hearing

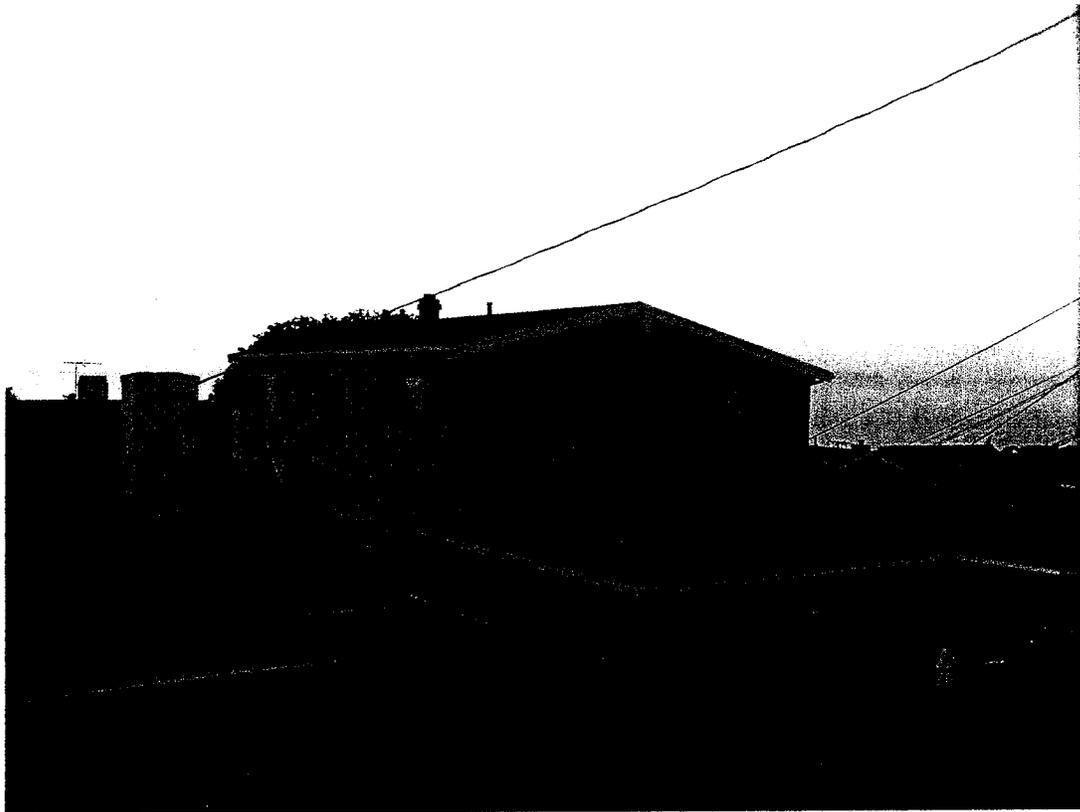
# Petition in support of a Precise Plan of Development for 428 Via Mesa Grande, Redondo Beach, CA 90277

Petition summary and background  
 Action petitioned for

To allow single story additions and interior renovations to an existing one-story single family residence on property located within the Hillside Overlay District in the R-1 Zone at 428 Via Mesa Grande, Redondo Beach, CA 90277.

We, the undersigned, are residents of Redondo Beach in the Hillside Overlay District and neighbors of Paul and Stephanie Thomas. We support the development at 428 Via Mesa Grande and urge the City of Torrance Planning Commission to **APPROVE** the proposed project.

Printed Name	Signature	Address	Comment	Date
Tracy Sepevic		431 Via Mesa Grande Redondo Beach, 90277	We Approve!	3/31/09
KARON KANTZ		530 CAVE DE ANGELES	We Approve	3/31/09
BOB V. RAJESH		423 VIA MESA GRANDE	We APPROVE	3/31/09
Phyllis Vranesh		432 Via Mesa Grande	We approve	3/31/09
Spencer Dorton		420 Via Mesa Grande	We approve	3/31/09
G.R. Reinhardt		414 Via Mesa Grande	We approve	3/31/09
JENNIFER REINHARDT		414 Via Mesa Grande	We approve	3/31/09
CORNELIS BOB		407 VIA MESA GRANDE	We approve	3/31/09
Randy Rowegno		406 Via Mesa Grande	Great plan!	3/31/09
LEWIS OVERBY		419 VIA MESA GRANDE	We approve	3/31/09



**SUPPLEMENTAL #1 TO AGENDA ITEM NO. 11A**

**TO:** Members of the Planning Commission  
**FROM:** Development Review Division  
**SUBJECT:** PRE08-00033  
**LOCATION:** 428 Via Mesa Grande

This is a request for approval of a Precise Plan of Development to allow single story additions and interior renovations to an existing one-story single family residence on property located within the Hillside Overlay District.

Attached please find additional correspondence received, after the Staff Report for the above project was completed and distributed.

Staff continues to recommend Approval of the project, as proposed.

Prepared by,



Yolanda Gomez  
Planning Associate

Respectfully submitted,



Gregg D. Lodan, AICP  
Planning Manager

Attachment:  
1. Correspondence

**Martinez, Oscar**

---

**From:** rovegno03@aol.com  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 01, 2009 3:47 PM  
**To:** Martinez, Oscar  
**Subject:** 428 Via Mesa Grande

To The City Planning Committee,

I apologize for not being able to attend the hearing in person this evening. I was called away this afternoon on business but I wanted to support the proposed project at 428 Via Mesa Grande. I am 100% in favor of the project for several reasons:

- 1) They are well within their FAR, Sq Footage, and are requesting no side yard setback or other waivers. They are at or below their allotted height, and everything is modest in the logistics of their proposal.
- 2) They are not even attempting to add a second story as they don't want to block their neighbors' views. Foregoing their own potential ocean view to appease their neighbors is a show of good faith, and class, that should not go unnoticed. (I wonder how many of the people in the area would prove to be so selfless?) Those are the type of people we want to keep in our community and I'm proud to have them as my neighbors.
- 3) Their current layout is (by my estimate) +1,500 sq ft and not nearly large enough for a family of 4 in today's world to live comfortably. Allowing them to expand and upgrade their current residence is not an unusual request and frankly, they have the right to provide their children with a nice home.
- 4) It is my understanding that the owners discussed their plans with any and all affected neighbors beforehand and that appears to have become a key element in the process. I have discussed the project with the owners several times despite not even being directly affected. When he told me he reviewed the plans with the residents in the area, it just confirmed that the considerate owners have taken everyone's interest into consideration.
- 5) The Riviera is being updated and improved for the betterment of everyone. Even if you never visit the renovated 428 project, their hard work, resources, and effort increases all of our values. If you have an argument for not wanting the neighborhood to look newer, cleaner, and nicer, and provide more valuable comps for our own property values, I'd love to hear it.

Thank you for your consideration and I urge the committee to unanimously approve this project. It's good for the residents of 428 Via Mesa Grande and it's good for those of us surrounding them.

Sincerely,

Randy and Heather Rovegno  
 406 Via Mesa Grande

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[New Low Prices on Dell Laptops - Starting at \\$399](#)

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 11A****CASE TYPE & NUMBER:** Precise Plan of Development - PRE08-00033**NAME:** Paul and Stephanie Thomas**PURPOSE OF APPLICATION:** Request for approval of a Precise Plan of Development to allow single story additions and interior renovations to an existing one-story single family residence on property located within the Hillside Overlay District in the R-1 Zone.**LOCATION:** 428 Via Mesa Grande**ZONING:** R-1, Single Family Residential District / Hillside Overlay District**ADJACENT ZONING AND LAND USE:**

NORTH: R-1 Hillside Overlay District, One and Two Story Single Family Residences

SOUTH: R-1 Hillside Overlay District, One Story Single Family Residences

EAST: R-1 Hillside Overlay District, One and Two Story Single Family Residences

WEST: R-1 Hillside Overlay District, One Story Single Family Residences

**GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION:** Low-Density Residential**COMPLIANCE WITH GENERAL PLAN:** The site has a General Plan Land Use Designation of Low Density Residential allowing up to nine dwelling units per acre. The proposed construction of additions to an existing single-family residence on this property is consistent with the Low Density Residential designation.**ENVIRONMENTAL FINDINGS:** Additions to existing structures, provided that the addition will not result in an increase of more than 50 percent of the floor area of the structure before the addition, or 2,500 square feet, whichever is less, are Categorically Exempted by the Guidelines for Implementation of the 2009 California Environmental Quality Act, Article 19, Section 15301 (e)(1).**EXISTING IMPROVEMENTS AND / OR NATURAL FEATURES:** The lot is semi-rectangular in shape and the building pad is relatively flat, with a slight slope at the entrance to the driveway in the front of the property, and a steep slope in the rear yard of the property. Building pads to the east sit at a higher elevation than the project site. The subject property is developed with an existing 1,526 square foot single-story single family residence, with an attached swing-in garage of 364 square feet, originally constructed in 1954.

## **BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS**

The applicants request approval of single story additions and interior renovations to the existing one-story residence. A Precise Plan is required, because the property is located within the Hillside Overlay District and the new addition to the residence is over 14 feet in height.

The lot size is 6,740 square feet. The project includes additions to the front and rear of the residence. A total of 715 square feet of living area is proposed to be added. The kitchen, which is currently located at the rear (southeast) of the residence, will be relocated to the front (northwest). A new master bathroom will be constructed where the kitchen was located, and a new master bedroom will extend beyond that, towards the rear. The existing living room, located towards the center of the residence on the east side, will be enlarged to create a great (family) room, and the fireplace will be removed. The existing powder room, located towards the center of the residence will be remodeled. The entryway will be extended closer towards the front of the property, and a covered porch will be constructed.

The property features an existing swing-in garage in excess of 15 feet from the front property line. The remainder of the existing and new additions are setback substantially further at approximately 35.5 feet, providing for an average front yard setback of over 23 feet. The north side yard setback will be six feet. The south side yard setback will be five feet. The rear yard setback will be 24 feet 8 inches. The proposed project meets and/or exceeds the setback development standards.

The kitchen and a portion of the family room additions to the front of the residence are shown on the site plan as an area of 348.7 square feet. The new entry or covered porch is shown as 26.9 square feet; however, only 19.6 square feet is countable towards the Floor Area Ratio (FAR) – the portion that is enclosed on more than two sides. The rear (master bedroom) addition is shown as 290.9 square feet. Lastly, the small extension of the family room (on the northeastern portion) is shown on the site plan as 55.9 square feet; however, this amount was inadvertently left off of the Project Data summary on Page A-1 of the proposed plans, including the FAR calculations. The total proposed additions are shown as 666.5 square feet, but are actually 715 square feet. The FAR is shown as .37, but is actually .39. The lot coverage is also shown as 37%, but is actually 39%.

New windows and doors are proposed for the residence. Along the west (front) elevation, the new entry way and door are located closer to the front of the property, but generally the same location, and a new window is proposed for the new kitchen. Along the north (side) elevation, no new windows are proposed, except for a small 3' x 3' octagonal vent, located below the highest ridge point, at about 11 feet above the finished floor, and sliding doors at the new master bedroom. Along the east (rear) elevation, three sets of sliding doors are located for the new family room, which open out into the patio. Along the south (side) elevation, three small windows are

proposed for the new master bedroom; however, the window sill height is six feet. A new window is proposed at the new master bathroom; however, Staff is proposing a Condition of Approval that this window shall incorporate obscured glass. The remaining windows on this side are existing and will remain.

According to the architect, the height of the existing home is 15 feet 10.5 inches. The entire roof will be reframed and will contain multiple cross gables, similar to the existing structure. The existing lowest adjacent grade elevation, called out on the silhouette certification, is 350.6 feet. However, the architect has provided Staff with documentation that this lowest adjacent grade point will be raised by six inches after construction to 351.1, thus making the actual lowest adjacent grade elevation 350.7, which is located at the southwestern corner of the garage and will remain unchanged. Due to this discovery, the architect made changes to the original plans, by lowering the pitch of the roof from 4:12 to 3.75:12 to accommodate for the extra six inches. While the original highest ridge of the residence was shown as 369.1 feet, the architect has provided a revised elevation plan (Attachment #8), showing the highest ridge point lowered to 368.6. This results in a maximum height of 17 feet 11 inches along the main/highest ridge of the residence. The front (garage) will measure a height of 13 feet 10 inches, and the rear gable will measure a height of 14 feet 8 inches.

The project summary is provided below:

PRE08-00033	Existing Project	Additions	Proposed Project
Total Living Area =	1,526 sf	715 sf	2,242 sf
Garage =	365 sf	0 sf	365 sf
<b>Total Area =</b>	<b>1,891 sf</b>	<b>715 sf</b>	<b>2,606 sf</b>
<b>FAR =</b>	<b>0.28</b>		<b>0.39</b>
<b>Lot Coverage =</b>	<b>28 %</b>		<b>39 %</b>
Building Height =	15 feet 10.5 inches		17 feet 11 inches
Lot Area = 6,740 square feet			

The Hillside Ordinance requires that the Planning Commission make a series of findings relating to the design of the project and its potential impact on the view, light, air and/or privacy of properties in the vicinity. The applicant has responded to this requirement in the Hillside Ordinance Criteria Response Sheet (Attachment #4). The applicant was required to construct a silhouette to demonstrate potential impacts (Attachment #5). A licensed engineer has verified the height of the silhouette and staff made a field inspection.

Staff received a petition from opposing neighbors on Via La Soledad and Via Alameda, citing ocean view obstructions (Attachment #6). The petition contained the signatures of 13 residents on Via La Soledad and 4 residents on Via Alameda. These two streets are located to the east (rear) of the proposed site, and are located at higher elevations than Via Mesa Grande.

Based on staff observations, the proposed development does not appear to have adverse impacts on view, light, air or privacy of surrounding properties. The properties to the north and south appear to be at generally the same elevation as the proposed site, and do not appear to have views across the subject property. Properties to the west are lower or at generally the same elevation as the proposed site and do not have views above the proposed roof lines. Properties to the east (Via La Soledad) are developed at a higher elevation than the proposed site, and while many of these homes have substantial ocean views over the subject property, the proposed additions do not appear to impact these views, as the highest portion of the silhouette appears to end at or near the floor level of these homes. Staff also notes that this ridge will be lowered by six inches to accommodate the revised design. The placement of the new windows helps prevent privacy impacts, as the window sill height is shown at six feet for the new master bedroom windows, and Staff is requesting a Condition of Approval that the new master bathroom incorporate obscured glass for its window. The new sliding doors at the rear of the project, open into a small usable rear yard; however, most of the rear yard contains retaining walls due to the steep slope, therefore, these doors should not pose any privacy concerns. The rear addition for the family room is proposed with sliding doors; however, an existing five feet eight inch fence should prevent adverse privacy impacts. Additionally, the project provides setback requirements that either meet and/or exceed the R-1 development standards, which help in preventing any potential light and air impacts. Staff attempted to contact the adjacent neighbors of the proposed project; however, as of the completion of this report, Staff has not received any further communication or correspondence from neighboring property owners.

The applicant has submitted plans for a project that complies with the R-1 standards, maintains height requirements, exceeds the open space requirements and is within the maximum lot coverage and FAR limits for this property. The design of the one-story home will continue to incorporate a traditional design, which is compatible with the surrounding properties, including the material finishes, such as stucco and asphalt shingles. Staff has determined that the residence would provide an orderly and attractive development in harmony with other properties in the vicinity. This project, as conditioned, does not appear to cause an adverse impact on the view, light, air or privacy of adjacent properties. Staff is recommending Approval of this application as conditioned.

The applicant is advised that Code Requirements have been included as an attachment to the Staff Report, and are not subject to modification.

**PROJECT RECOMMENDATION: APPROVAL**

**FINDINGS OF FACT IN SUPPORT OF APPROVAL OF THE PRECISE PLAN:**

Findings of fact in support of Approval of the proposed project are set forth in the attached Resolution.

**RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS, IF PROJECT IS APPROVED:**

Recommended conditions of the proposed project are set forth in the attached Resolution.

Prepared By,



Yolanda Gomez  
Planning Associate

Respectfully Submitted,



Gregg D. Lodan, AICP  
Planning Manager

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Planning Commission Resolution
2. Location and Zoning Map
3. Code Requirements
4. Hillside Ordinance Criteria Response
5. Silhouette Verification
6. Correspondence from Neighbors
7. Site Plan, Floor Plans and Elevations (Limited Distribution)
8. Revised Elevations (Limited Distribution)

**PLANNING COMMISSION RESOLUTION NO. 09-019**

A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF TORRANCE, CALIFORNIA, APPROVING A PRECISE PLAN OF DEVELOPMENT AS PROVIDED FOR IN DIVISION 9, CHAPTER 1, ARTICLE 41 OF THE TORRANCE MUNICIPAL CODE TO ALLOW SINGLE STORY ADDITIONS AND INTERIOR RENOVATIONS TO AN EXISTING ONE-STORY SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENCE, ON PROPERTY LOCATED WITHIN THE HILLSIDE OVERLAY DISTRICT IN THE R-1 ZONE AT 428 VIA MESA GRANDE.

**PRE08-00033: PAUL AND STEPHANIE THOMAS**

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**WHEREAS**, the Planning Commission of the City of Torrance conducted a public hearing on April 1, 2009, to consider an application for a Precise Plan of Development filed by Paul and Stephanie Thomas to allow single story additions and interior renovations to an existing one-story single family residence on property located in the Hillside Overlay District in the R-1 Zone at 428 Via Mesa Grande; and

**WHEREAS**, additions to existing structures, provided that the addition will not result in an increase of more than 50 percent of the floor area of the structure before the addition, or 2,500 square feet, whichever is less, are determined to be Categorically Exempted by the Guidelines for Implementation of the 2009 California Environmental Quality Act, Article 19, Section 15301 (e)(1); and

**WHEREAS**, due and legal publication of notice was given to owners of property in the vicinity thereof and due and legal hearings have been held, all in accordance with the provisions of Division 9, Chapter 1, Article 41 of the Torrance Municipal Code; and

**WHEREAS**, the Planning Commission of the City of Torrance does hereby find and determine as follows:

- A) That the property address is 428 Via Mesa Grande.
- B) That the property is located on Lot 116 of Tract 19306.
- C) That the project is in compliance with both the R-1 Zoning and the Low-Density Residential General Plan designation for this site.
- D) That the proposed additions will not have an adverse impact upon the view, light, air, or privacy of other properties in the vicinity, because the proposed single-story additions have been designed to have a maximum height of 17 feet 11 inches, to prevent view impairments to properties to the east, and limit the potential for light, air and privacy impairments for properties to the north, south and west by providing setbacks that meet and/or exceed the Code Requirements.

- E) That proposed development has been located, planned and designed so as to cause the least intrusion on the view, light, air, or privacy of other properties in the vicinity, because the additions have been designed with rear setbacks that exceed the Code Requirements, with the front and side yard setbacks that meet and/or exceed the Code Requirements, and the proposed new doors/window placement provides for privacy to the adjacent properties, including high window sill heights and obscured glass.
- F) That the design of the additions provides an orderly and attractive development in harmony with other properties in the vicinity, because the design features stucco walls and asphalt shingles, matching the remainder of the residence, which are also materials consistent with other residences in the vicinity.
- G) That the design will not have a harmful impact upon the land values and investment of other properties in the vicinity, because the proposed additions will be an improvement to the property, provide high window sill height and obscured glass to provide privacy to the adjacent properties, meet or exceed the R-1 development standards and are consistent with the pattern of development in the vicinity.
- H) That the granting of this application will not be materially detrimental to the public welfare and to other properties in the vicinity, because the project is designed with heights that are lower than the maximum allowed by Code, are lower towards the front and rear to limit the potential for view, light, air and privacy impacts, and provide high window sill heights and obscured glass to provide privacy to the adjacent properties.
- I) That the proposed development will not cause or result in an adverse cumulative impact on other properties in the vicinity, because the proposed one-story additions have been designed to cause the least intrusion on views, light, air and privacy with high window sill heights and obscured glass, would be compatible with the surrounding pattern of development in both design and materials, and complies with the developments standards for the R-1 Zone.
- J) That it is not feasible to increase the size of or rearrange the space within the existing building or structure for the purposes intended except by increasing the height, because adding floor area by maintaining a one-story profile can only be achieved by slightly increasing the ridge height to cover the increased span of the residence, due to the grade difference in the rear.
- K) That the denial of this request to increase the height will result in an unreasonable hardship, because the size and topography of the lot would make it difficult to construct the additions otherwise without proposing a second-story addition, as the sloped rear portion of the lot makes it difficult to develop further into this area, and the request preserves the usable portion of the rear yard area to the extent possible.

- L) That granting this application would not be materially detrimental to the public welfare and to other properties in the vicinity, because the project complies with the development standards for the R-1 Zone.

**WHEREAS**, the Planning Commission by the following roll call vote APPROVED PRE08-00033, subject to conditions:

AYES: COMMISSIONERS:

NOES: COMMISSIONERS:

ABSENT: COMMISSIONERS:

ABSTAIN: COMMISSIONERS:

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that PRE08-00033, filed by Paul and Stephanie Thomas to allow single story additions and interior renovations to an existing one-story single family residence on property located in the Hillside Overlay District in the R-1 Zone at 428 Via Mesa Grande, is hereby APPROVED subject to the following conditions:

1. That the use of the subject property for a single family residence shall be subject to all conditions imposed in Precise Plan of Development 08-00033 and any amendments thereto or modifications thereof as may be approved from time to time pursuant to Section 92.28.1 et seq. of the Torrance Municipal Code on file in the office of the Community Development Director of the City of Torrance; and further, that the said use shall be established or constructed and shall be maintained in conformance with such maps, plans, specifications, drawings, applications or other documents presented by the applicant to the Community Development Department and upon which the Planning Commission relied in granting approval;
2. That if this Precise Plan of Development 08-00033 is not used within one year after granting of the permit, it shall expire and become null and void unless extended by the Community Development Director for an additional period as provided for in Section 92.27.1;
3. That the maximum height of the additions/structure at the highest point of the roof shall not exceed a height of 17.9 feet as represented by the revised north elevation of 368.6 feet for the highest ridge based on the lowest adjacent grade of 350.7 (located at the southwestern perimeter of the building), based on a bench mark elevation of 348.00 feet located within the public right-of-way along Via Mesa Grande near the southwestern corner of the property, as shown on the official survey map on file in the Community Development Department; (Development Review)

4. That the final height of the structure shall be certified by a licensed surveyor/engineer prior to requesting a framing or roof-sheathing inspection and shall not exceed a survey elevation of 368.6 feet for the highest ridge based on the benchmark of 348.00 feet located within the public right-of-way along Via Mesa Grande near the southwest corner of the property, as shown on the official survey map on file in the Community Development Department; (Development Review)
5. That color and material samples of the proposed home shall be submitted for review to the Community Development Department, prior to the issuance of a Building Permit; (Development Review)
6. That the silhouette shall remain in place for at least 15 days through the appeal period, but no more than 45 days after the final public hearing to the satisfaction of the Community Development Director; (Development Review)
7. That within 30 days of the final public hearing, the applicant shall remove the City's "Public Notice" sign to the satisfaction of the Community Development Director; (Development Review)
8. That the master bathroom window shall incorporate obscured glass to the satisfaction of the Community Development Director; (Development Review)
9. That the window sill height of the master bedroom windows shall not be less than six feet to the satisfaction of the Community Development Director; (Development Review)
10. That the garage shall be enlarged to meet the minimum Code Requirements to the satisfaction of the Community Development Director; (Development Review)
11. That all conditions of other City Departments received prior to or during the consideration of this case by the Planning Commission shall be met.

Introduced, approved and adopted this 1<sup>st</sup> day of April 2009.

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Chairperson, Torrance Planning Commission

ATTEST:

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Secretary, Torrance Planning Commission

STATE OF CALIFORNIA     )  
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES) ss  
CITY OF TORRANCE        )

I, GREGG D. LODAN, Secretary to the Planning Commission of the City of Torrance, California, do hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was duly introduced, approved, and adopted by the Planning Commission of the City of Torrance at a regular meeting of said Commission held on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of April 2009, by the following roll call vote:

AYES: COMMISSIONERS:

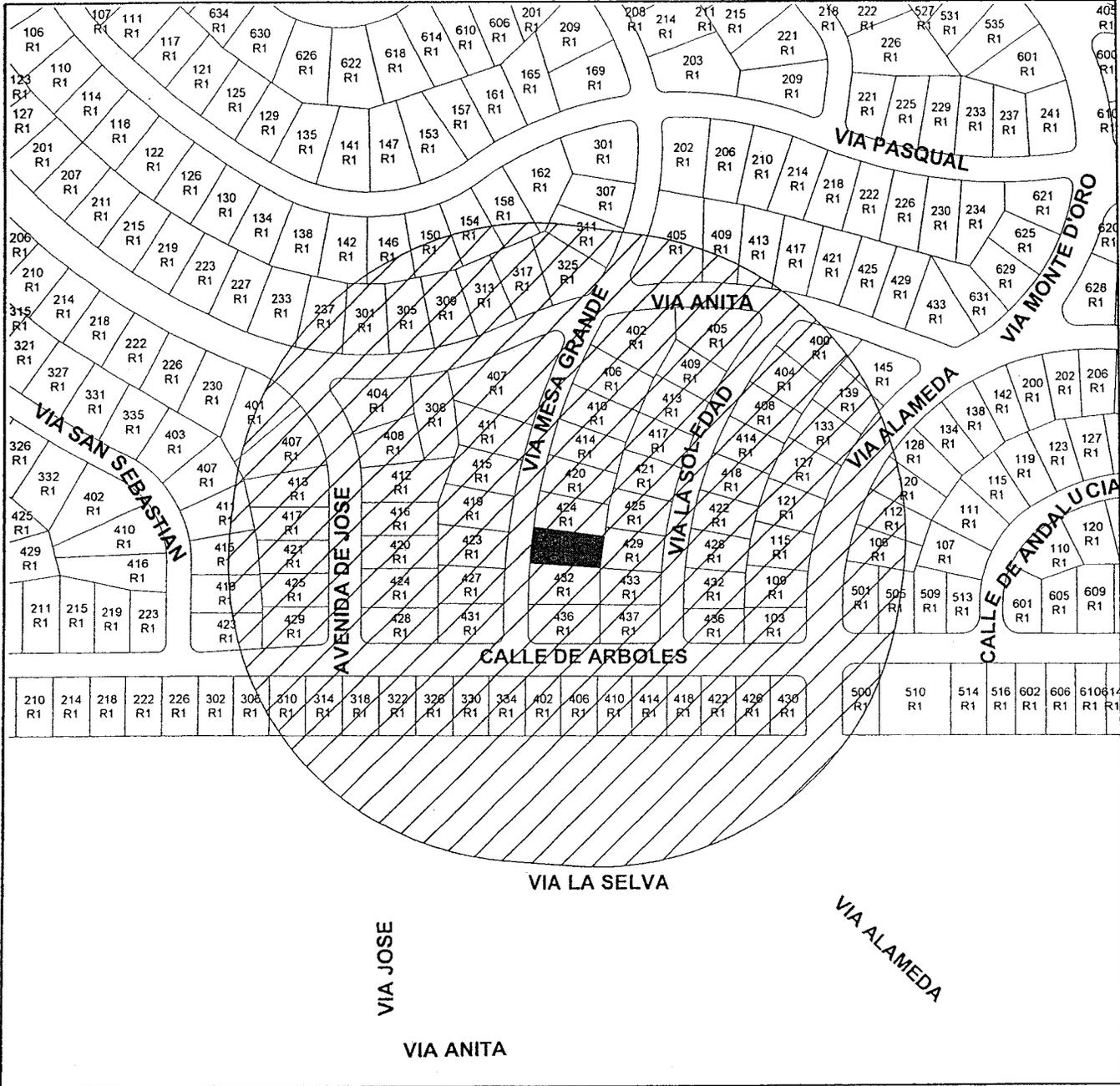
NOES: COMMISSIONERS:

ABSENT: COMMISSIONERS:

ABSTAIN: COMMISSIONERS:

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Secretary, Torrance Planning Commission



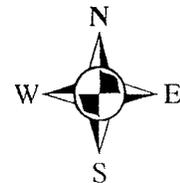
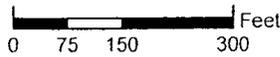
### LOCATION AND ZONING MAP

428 Via Mesa Grande  
PRE08-00033



### LEGEND

-  Notification Area
-  428 Via Mesa Grande



## CODE REQUIREMENTS

The following is a partial list of code requirements applicable to the proposed project. All possible code requirements are not provided here and the applicant is strongly advised to contact each individual department for further clarification. The Planning Commission may not waive or alter the code requirements. They are provided for information purposes only.

### Building and Safety

- Comply with the State Energy Requirements.
- Provide underground utilities.

### Engineering – Permits & Records

- A C&E (Construction and Excavation) Permit is required from the Community Development Department/Engineering Permits and Records Division, for any work in the public right-of-way.
- Replace grinded/cracked sidewalk along the project frontage per City of Torrance Standards.
- Install a street tree in the City parkway every 50' for the width of this lot (City Code sec. 74.3.2). Contact the Torrance Public Works Department at 310.781.6900 for information on the type and size of tree for your area.

### Environmental

- Provide a closet in the bedroom adjacent to the master bathroom.
- The front yard of any property zoned for residential use shall not be more than 50% paved (92.5.14).
- The property shall be landscaped prior to final inspection (92.21.9)

## 1. Planning and Design

- a. Our proposed development will not adversely affect the view, light air or privacy of surrounding properties because of the following facts:
  - i. The proposed addition is a relatively minor addition.
  - ii. The proposed addition is not a second story addition, therefore the height will not be increased and views will not be obstructed.
  - iii. The windows will not be positioned in areas that will affect privacy of neighbors.
- b. The following planning, design and locational considerations will ensure that the proposed development will cause the least intrusion on the views, light, air and privacy of other properties in the vicinity:
  - i. The planning and design was done by *Lomita Blueprint* in accordance with the standards and guidelines set by the city of Torrance.
  - ii. Surrounding neighbors have all had an opportunity to review a copy of the plans and no objections were made.
- c. The following elements have been employed to provide an orderly and attractive development in harmony with other properties in the vicinity.
  - i. The new addition will be a continuation of our “traditional style” home, which is consistent with other properties in our neighborhood.
  - ii. The roof will be stripped and replaced in order to give the property a more uniform and attractive appearance.
- d. The following aspects of the design will ensure that the development will not have a harmful impact upon the land values and investment of other properties in the vicinity.
  - i. Our house was built in the 1950’s and the design is inconsistent with current interest of today’s families. The design of our remodel includes a large new kitchen, and transforms the old living space into a more usable “great room”. These features will not only increase the value of our property, but should also have a positive impact on the property values of surrounding properties.
- e. Granting this application would not be materially detrimental to the public welfare and to other properties in the vicinity for the following reasons:
  - i. We are taking into consideration of the welfare of our neighbors by not “overbuilding” for the size of our lot.
  - ii. All neighbors have been notified of our intent to remodel and no objections were raised.
  - iii. Our remodel will only improve the appearance of our home and therefore increase the value of our property and those around us.

- f. The proposed development will not cause or result in an adverse cumulative impact on other properties in the vicinity for the following reasons:
  - i. Our proposed remodel is relatively minor when considering the current proposed developments of other properties within our vicinity.
  - ii. No obstructions to light, air, or view will be made to the surrounding neighbors.
  - iii. Our development will be in accordance with the guidelines and restrictions set by the city of Torrance.

2. **Limitation to increases in height**

Our proposed plan will **NOT** increase the height of any part of our residence beyond the height of the existing building.

3. **Limitation to increases in building space lot coverage**

Our proposed plan will **NOT** increase the building space to more than 50% of the area of the lot.



City of Torrance, Community Development Department Jeffery W. Gibson, Director  
3031 Torrance Blvd., Torrance, CA 90503 (310) 618-5990 Fax: (310) 618-5829

# Height and Location Certification

The survey must be performed by a licensed land surveyor or civil engineer and should be accompanied by a map which shows the location of the bench mark and the locations where the measurements were taken.

The map should also show the location of existing and proposed structures

FEB 17 2009

## SILHOUETTE CERTIFICATION

CITY OF TORRANCE

I have surveyed the silhouette located at 428 Via Mesa Grande, Torrance Ca 90277  
(address)

on 2-6-09, based on plans submitted to the City of Torrance  
(date)

by Mr. Paul Thomas on 12-24-08. The survey was taken  
(applicant/architect) South West Prop Corner L&T, RCE 22024  
(date)

from a bench mark located at 428 Via Mesa Grande, Torrance Ca, 90277  
(address)

(attached map) which established a base elevation of 348.00'

The ridge line/highest point of the roof was determined to have an elevation of 369.12'

The plans indicate that the elevation should be 369.10'

*I certify that I have measured the location of pertinent features located on the subject property. Based on the plans submitted to the Community Development Department, I have verified that the silhouette/construction accurately represents the proposed structure in terms of height, building envelope, location on the site, and all setbacks.*

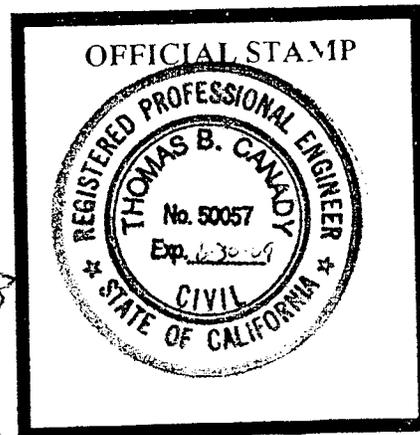
Thomas Canady  
Name (please print)

50057  
LS/RCE#

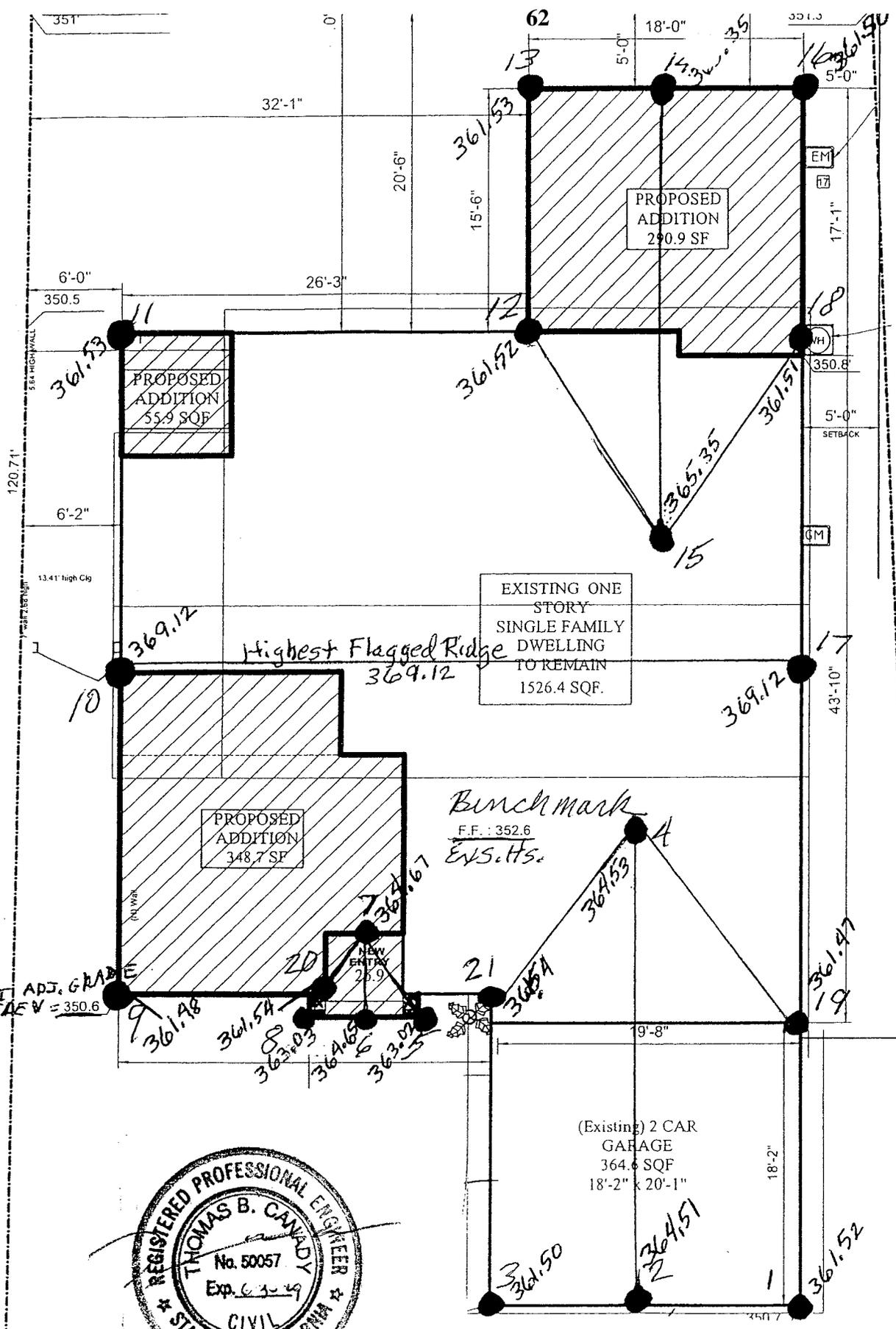
[Signature]  
SIGNATURE

619-280-7873  
PHONE

2-6-09  
DATE



Notes: \_\_\_\_\_



Residence  
 Mr. Paul Thomas  
 428 Via mesa Grande  
 Torrance Ca 90277

Benchmark  
 FD L&T, RCE 2 2024  
 SW Prop Corner  
 348.00'

Not to Scale

January 26, 2008

Page 1 of 2

Community Development      Fax: 1-310-618-5829  
Planning Commission  
3031 Torrance Blvd.  
Torrance, California 90503

Attention: Jeff Gibson, Director and Jefferson Browning

Re: Proposed construction site @ 428 Via Mesa Grande—Hillside Overlay

Please be advised that a petition has been signed with reference to the above address. We urge the Commission to deny permission to build. The height of roof line on this proposed construction impacts the ocean views from the view lots directly behind. The 8.6 and 9 foot Ceilings with roof rim is the main concern. We were told that construction would be just additions to home and not impact ocean view(s). The visual constructive notice illustrates a higher roof line considering the proposed heights of the ceilings.

We appreciate your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Elaine Hern  
429 Via La Soledad, RB 90277

*Elaine Hern*

Jennifer Johnson  
433 Via La Soledad, RB 90277

*Jennifer Johnson*

JAN 28 2009

CITY OF TORRANCE

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

PETITION

Re: Proposed Plan for 428 Via Mesa Grande, located in the Hillside Overlay in the Hollywood Riviera

We the undersigned hereby urges the City of Torrance Planning Commission to deny permission for the proposed construction at 428 Via Mesa Grande, which is located in the Hillside Overlay. Such construction would diminish the ocean view(s) on the view properties directly behind the proposed construction. Diminishing view properties impacts the future market values of such properties.

(Petition circulated by Elaine Hern and Jennifer Johnson)

Signature

Address

- |                       |                                  |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Elaine Hern        | 429 Via La Soledad, RA 90277     |
| 2. Jennifer Johnson   | 433 Via La Soledad RB 90277      |
| 3. James Shickel      | 405 Via La Soledad R.B. 90277    |
| 4. Elizabeth Nadalini | 400 Via La Soledad R.B. 90277    |
| 5. Andrew Zaccari     | 400 Via La Soledad RA. 90277     |
| 6. Robert Buhl        | 437 VIA LA SOLEDAD ROB 90277     |
| 7. Elaine Polini      | 409 Via La Soledad RB90277       |
| 8. Annie Uleri        | 425 Via La Soledad RB            |
| 9. [Signature]        | 433 VIA LA SOLEDAD 90277         |
| 10. Alan Jarvis       | 417 Via La Soledad RB 90277      |
| 11. Sara Berryman     | 413 Via La Soledad 90277         |
| 12. Barbara Lane      | 401 Via La Soledad 90277         |
| 13. C. L. Boudell     | 103 VIA ALANOSA RB, CA 90277     |
| 14. E.T. AYRES        | 421 VIA LA SOLEDAD R.B. CA 90277 |

2

PETITION

Re: Proposed Plan for 428 Via Mesa Grande, located in the Hillside Overlay in the Hollywood Riviera

We the undersigned hereby urges the City of Torrance Planning Commission to deny permission for the proposed construction at 428 Via Mesa Grande, which is located in the Hillside Overlay. Such construction would diminish the ocean view(s) on the view properties directly behind the proposed construction. Diminishing view properties impacts the future market values of such properties.

(Petition circulated by Elaine Hern and Jennifer Johnson)

Signature

Address

15 Lynne B. Hunter

115 Via Alameda Redondo Beach

16 Andrea Syunt

127 Via Alameda Redondo Beach

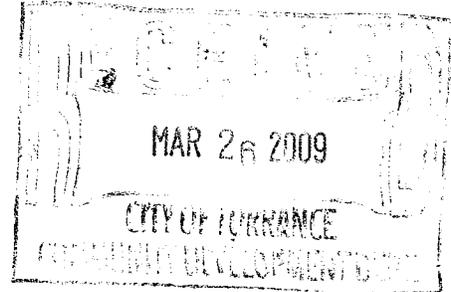
17 Kelly Hunt

127 VIA ALAMEDA, REDONDO BEACH

66 GVE 5

March 23, 2009

Community Development Fax: 310-618-5829  
Planning Department  
3031 Torrance Blvd.  
Torrance, California 90503



Attention: Jeff Gibson, Director ✓

Re: Proposed construction site@428 Via Mesa Grande-Hillside Overlay/View impact

Several calls have been made to the Planning Department re the above Petition. When I called the Community Development/Planning Dept., I asked to speak to the person in charge of this proposed site on Mesa Grande. I was told that Suk is handling this particular site. When I talked with Suk he informed me that 14 feet is the allowable height, when I mentioned to him that the ceiling height was the problem. Immediately I was surprised that someone would say that without knowing that this project involves the Hillside Overlay. I then talked to someone in the City Clerk's office who referred me to attorney, Patrick Sullivan. Patrick is going to let me know any updates on this proposed construction. Last Thursday, March 19<sup>th</sup>, Miss Gomez, an employee from Torrance Planning Dept. left a business card which had a note on the back of her card, asking homeowners on Via La Soledad to call her number to state any questions. She further informed another neighbor that we have to call Community Development if we want someone to inspect & see how this proposed construction affects our view. When I talked to Suk, he informed me that a notice would be mailed out by March 21, 2009, and the Planning Meeting would be set for April 1<sup>st</sup>.

When another house on Mesa Grande had proposed plans to add to their two storey home, it went before the Planning Commission. I attended that meeting. The owner was allowed to build but within certain guidelines, later that construction had a change of plans by one foot. Too many additions are changed again after starting construction on an improved plan. That is one reason that view property owners, (who originally paid considerably more for their home) become watchful of any addition impacting their view and thus impact the future value. Attached to this letter is our original signed Petition.

Thank you and sincerely,

Elaine Hern

Cc: Mayor Frank Scotto, City clerk, and Patrick Sullivan

January 26, 2008

Page 1 of 3

Community Development      Fax: 1-310-618-5829  
Planning Commission  
3031 Torrance Blvd.  
Torrance, California 90503

*on phone**618-3190*

Attention: Jeff Gibson, Director and Jefferson Browning

Re: Proposed construction site @ 428 Via Mesa Grande—Hillside Overlay

Please be advised that a petition has been signed with reference to the above address. We urge the Commission to deny permission to build. The height of roof line on this proposed construction impacts the ocean views from the view lots directly behind. The 8.6 and 9 foot Ceilings with roof rim is the main concern. We were told that construction would be just additions to home and not impact ocean view(s). The visual constructive notice illustrates a higher roof line considering the proposed heights of the ceilings.

We appreciate your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Elaine Hern  
429 Via La Soledad, RB 90277

*Elaine Hern*

---

Jennifer Johnson  
433 Via La Soledad, RB 90277

*Jennifer Johnson*

---

PETITION

Re: Proposed Plan for 428 Via Mesa Grande, located in the Hillside Overlay in the  
Hollywood Riviera

We the undersigned hereby urges the City of Torrance Planning Commission to deny permission for the proposed construction at 428 Via Mesa Grande, which is located in the Hillside Overlay. Such construction would diminish the ocean view(s) on the view properties directly behind the proposed construction. Diminishing view properties impacts the future market values of such properties.

(Petition circulated by Elaine Hern and Jennifer Johnson)

Signature	Address
1. Elaine Hern	429 Via La Soledad, RB 90277
2. Jennifer Johnson	433 Via La Soledad RB 90277
③ James Buchanan	405 Via La Soledad R.B. 90277
④ Elizabeth Nadalin	400 Via La Soledad R.B. 90277
⑤ Andrew Zaccari	400 Via La Soledad RB. 90277
⑥ Robert Buhl	437 VIA LA SOLEDAD RB 90277
⑦ Elave Polin	409 Via La Soledad RB 90277
⑧ Annie Uleri	425 Via La Soledad RB
⑨ [Signature]	433 VIA LA SOLEDAD <sup>90277</sup> 90277
⑩ Alan J. Jarvis	417 Via La Soledad RB 90277
⑪ Jane Benymann	413 Via La Soledad <sup>90277</sup>
⑫ Barbara Lane	404 Via La Soledad 90277
⑬ C. L. Berger	633 VIA ALANOSA RB, CA. 90277
⑭ E.T. AYRES	421 VIA LA SOLEDAD R.B. CA 90277

PETITION

Re: Proposed Plan for 428 Via Mesa Grande, located in the Hillside Overlay in the Hollywood Riviera

We the undersigned hereby urges the City of Torrance Planning Commission to deny permission for the proposed construction at 428 Via Mesa Grande, which is located in the Hillside Overlay. Such construction would diminish the ocean view(s) on the view properties directly behind the proposed construction. Diminishing view properties impacts the future market values of such properties.

(Petition circulated by Elaine Hern and Jennifer Johnson)

Signature	Address
⑮ Lynne B. Hunter	115 Via Alameda Redondo Beach
⑯ Andrea Syrett	127 Via Alameda Redondo Beach
⑰ Philly Hunt	127 VIA ALAMEDA, REDONDO BEACH

**SUPPLEMENTAL #1 TO AGENDA ITEM NO. 9B**

**TO:** Members of the Planning Commission  
**FROM:** Development Review Division  
**SUBJECT:** PRE08-00033  
**LOCATION:** 428 Via Mesa Grande

This is a request for approval of a Precise Plan of Development to allow single story additions and interior renovations to an existing one-story single family residence located in the Hillside Overlay District. Page one of the staff report inadvertently described 433 Via La Soledad as being located to the northeast of the subject property, however it is actually located to the southeast.

Staff was able to make a field observation of the silhouette from 433 Via La Soledad. During the visit staff noted that from standing positions in the yard and the first floor of the home, the proposed residence did not create adverse impacts to views. We did note however that from seated positions on the rear yard patio and within the living space of the home there were view corridors between homes and landscaping on Via Mesa Grande. These view corridors afforded views of the ocean which would be impacted if PRE08-00033 were approved in its current form.

The existing home at 428 Via Mesa Grande features a ridge height elevation of 366.58. The plans indicate that with the proposed roof pitch of 3.75:12, the new ridge height elevation would be 368.6, or two feet higher than the existing home. If the roof pitch of the home were reduced to 3:12, staff calculates that the ridge would be reduced by approximately 1.42 feet (one foot, 5 inches). According to Building Division staff this change would not impact the choice of roofing materials and does not represent a significant burden in terms of cost of construction. It would also not require a modification to the floor plan or require significant changes to the overall design.

Based on this information, staff is concerned that the project as currently proposed, with a roof pitch of 3.75:12 does not represent the meet the burden of being the "least intrusion on the view..." (Finding E).

Should the Planning Commission concur with staff's assessment, a condition of approval could be added requiring that the roof pitch for the main roof be reduced to a pitch of 3:12. Staff calculates that this would result in an overall roof height elevation of 367.2; which is approximately seven inches higher than the existing residence. In the judgment of staff, the project as conditioned would then represent the least intrusion into views from surrounding properties.

Staff notes that the reduction in height would then impact conditions 3 and 4 regarding the project's final height. If approved conditions 3 and 4 would need to be revised to limit the ridge height elevation of the project to 367.2. Plans submitted to the Building Division for plan check would have to reflect this height and the ridge height would be certified during construction to ensure compliance with these conditions.

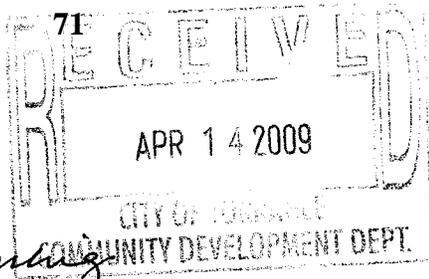
Furthermore, staff notes that additional correspondence has been received.

Respectfully submitted,



Gregg D. Lodan, AICP  
 Planning Manager

Attachment: Correspondence



4/14/09

Members of the Planning  
Commission - City of Torrance RE: PRE08-00033

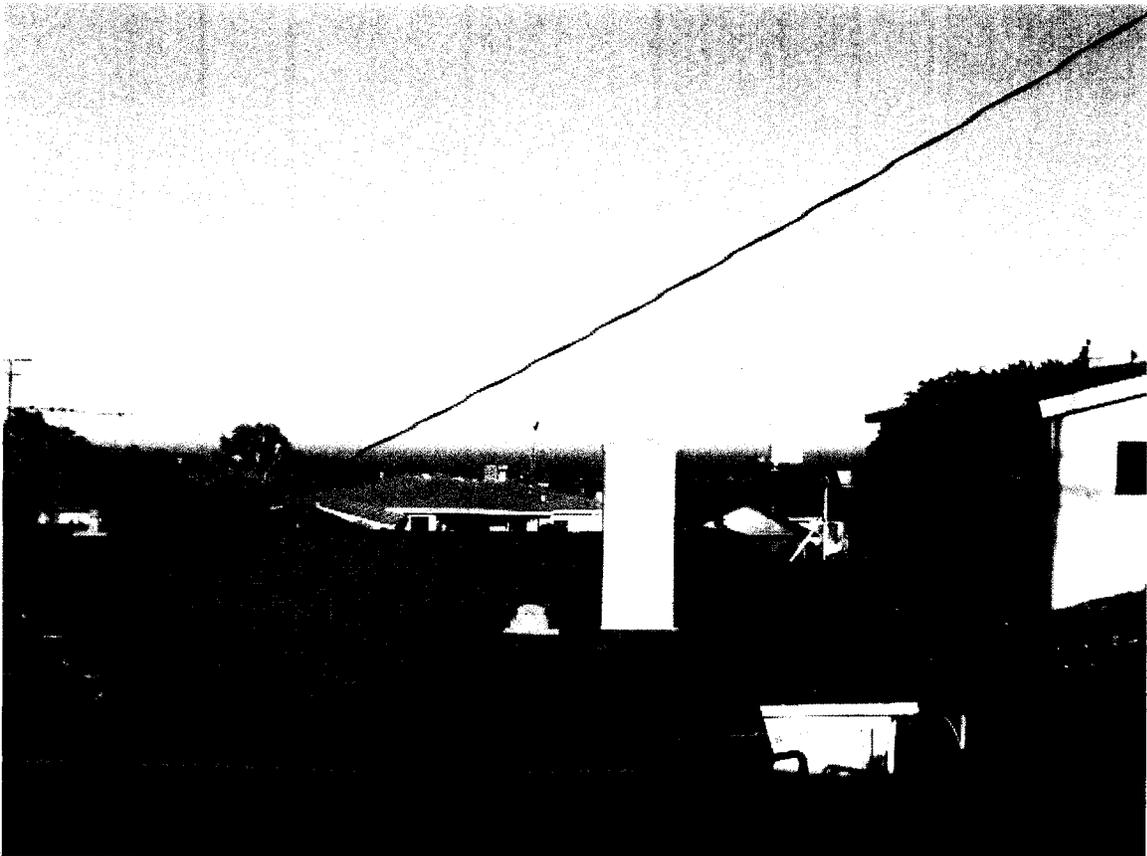
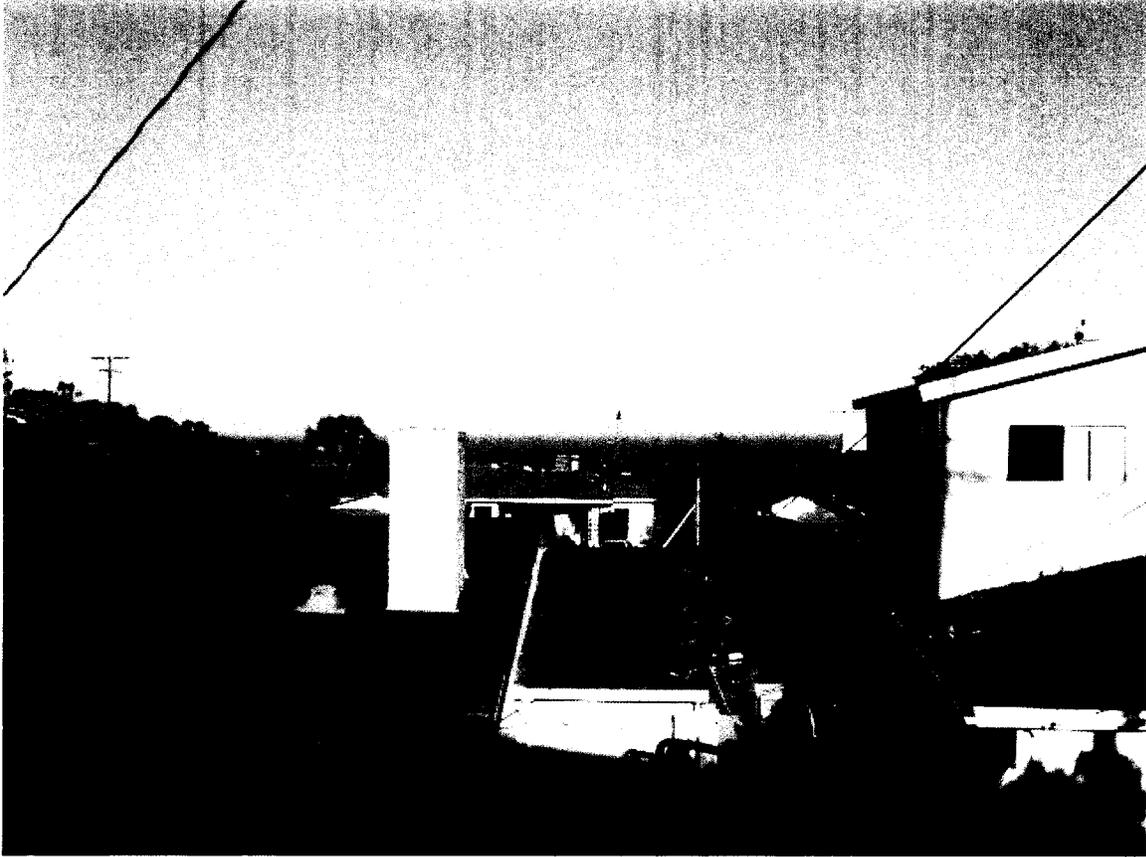
I write to express my concern over the proposed re-model at 428 Via Mesa Grande in the Hollywood Riviera. Although it constitutes merely a one-story addition, the roof line is to be raised in order to accommodate the extra square-footage. The problem is, in doing so, the view of the resident at 429 Via La Soledad, above, is being impinged upon. No matter how little this view impairment might be, this poor resident would have insult added to grievous injury in that back in 1975, before the overlay, a house at 424 Via Mesa Grande added a second story, much taller than it needed to be, and completely obliterated the 429 Via La Soledad resident's view. It is one of the worst travesties of justice in the whole Riviera. This resident doesn't need any remaining view topped with, the remodel at 424 would never be allowed today, and shouldn't have been then, ordinance or no ordinance.

Beyond all of the above, I have had a little amateur architectural design experience and it seems to me the addition at 428 Via Mesa Grande could be accomplished without raising the roof line by developing a different roof configuration, a series of hip-roofs or the like.

Please deny the application as it exists and suggest that a different roof design be configured to maintain the existing roof height as it is, or very close to it. Thank you for your consideration of this matter. Here again, precedent is suggested to future applicants.

Sincerely,

James E. Richard  
405 Via La Saleda, (Annex),  
Redondo Beach, Ca. 90277  
(310) 375-0264  
jamespartm@aol.com



Submitted to the  
Planning Commission  
at the 04/15/2009  
Public Hearing.



# Daily Breeze

5215 TORRANCE BLVD \* TORRANCE CALIFORNIA 90503-4077  
(310) 543-6635 \* (310) 540-5511 Ext. 396

## PROOF OF PUBLICATION (201 5.5 C.C.P.)

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

County of Los Angeles,

I am a citizen of the United States and a resident of the County aforesaid; I am over the age of eighteen years, and not a party to or interested in the above-entitled matter. I am the principal clerk of the printer of the THE DAILY BREEZE

a newspaper of general circulation, printed and published \_\_\_\_\_

in the City of Torrance  
County of Los Angeles, and which newspaper has been adjudged a newspaper of general circulation by the Superior Court of County of Los Angeles, State of California, under the date of \_\_\_\_\_

June 10, 1974

Case Number SWC7146

that the notice, of which the annexed is a printed copy (set in type not smaller than nonpareil), has been published in each regular and entire issue of said newspaper and not in any supplement there of on the following dates, to-wit

May 22,

all in the year 2009

the foregoing is true and correct.

Dated at Torrance

California, this 22 May 2009

  
Signature 

This space is for the County Clerk's Filing Stamp

Proof of Publication of

DB

DB 5-119

### NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a Public Hearing will be held before the Torrance City Council at 7:00 p.m., June 2, 2009 in the City Council Chambers of City Hall, 3031 Torrance Boulevard, Torrance, California, on the following matter:

**PRE08-00033, Paul and Stephanie Thomas:** City Council consideration of an appeal of the Planning Commission's Approval of a Precise Plan of Development to allow single story additions and interior renovations to an existing one-story single family residence on property located within the Hillside Overlay District in the R-1 Zone at 428 Via Mesa Grande.

Material can be reviewed in the Community Development Department. All persons interested in the above matter are requested to be present at the hearing or to submit their comments to the City Clerk, City Hall, 3031 Torrance Boulevard, Torrance, CA 90503, prior to the public hearing.

If you challenge the above matter in court, you may be limited to raising only those issues you or someone else raised at the public hearing described in this notice, or in written correspondence delivered to the Community Development Department or the office of the City Clerk prior to the public hearing, and further, by the terms of Resolution No. 88-19, you may be limited to ninety (90) days in which to commence such legal action pursuant to Section 1094.6 of the Code of Civil Procedure.

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact the Community Development Department at (310) 618-5990. If you need a special hearing device to participate in this meeting, please contact the City Clerk's Office at (310) 618-2870. Notification 48 hours prior to the meeting will enable the City to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to this meeting [28 CFR 35.102-35.104 ADA Title II].

For further information, contact the **DEVELOPMENT REVIEW DIVISION** of the Community Development Department at (310) 618-5990.

**SUE HERBERS  
CITY CLERK**

Pub: May 22, 2009

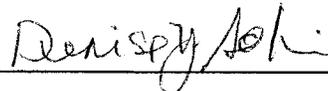
**PROOF OF SERVICE BY MAIL**

I, the undersigned, am a resident of the County of Los Angeles, State of California, over the age of eighteen years, and not a party to the within action. I am employed by the City of Torrance, 3031 Torrance Boulevard, Torrance California 90503.

On May 21, 2009, I caused to be mailed 136 copies of the within notification for City Council PRE08-00033: PAUL AND STEPHANIE THOMAS to the interested parties in said action by causing true copies thereof to be placed in the United States mail at Torrance California.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed May 21, 2009 at Torrance, California.



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(signature)

**CITY OF TORRANCE**  
**Community Development Department**  
**3031 Torrance Boulevard**  
**Torrance, CA 90503**

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Publish: **May 22, 2009**

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