

Midcoast Community Council

*An elected Municipal Advisory Council to the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors
representing Montara, Moss Beach, El Granada, Princeton, and Miramar
P.O. Box 248, Moss Beach, CA 94038-0248*

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Chair Vice-Chair Secretary Treasurer

Date: August 22, 2012

To: Olivia Boo, Project Planner

Subject: **PLN2005-00349, 264-280 Princeton Ave, Boatyard (Foss) Project**

The MCC has reviewed the revised plans for this project which you sent us on 8/10/12. The project as approved by ZHO on 9/18/08 consisted of 4 commercial buildings, 36 ft tall, totaling 17,147 sf. The revised project consists of 6 buildings totaling 18,318 sf, 30 ft tall (reduced height due to substandard 25-ft-wide lot size).

Condition of approval #22 required merging parcels 6&7, and 14-16. Revised parcel ownership now is divided between two entities (Princeton Boatyard LLC and Eventide Charters LLC) with adjacent parcels arbitrarily having alternating ownership, preventing merging of any of these substandard parcels.

The site plan shows the "toe of the bank" as much as 8 ft out from the seawall, when actually the beach has sunk below the base of the wall, undermining it. The wall also has major cracks up to 2" wide. As reported by former boatyard employee, the wall was built without permits around 1979 by the boatyard crew. The wall was poured at approximately the toe of the bank and dirt filled in behind it to provide extended level area for storing and working on boats. Previously the land had been sloped down to the shore.

The site plan depicts the seawall as extending in front of 3 parcels, when in fact it is only 50 ft long. Parcel "E" is actually the location of the boat ramp with significantly lower elevation and no seawall. The plan shows building "E" about 2 ft from the seawall that is not actually there.

Condition of approval #18 requires the owner to agree in writing to participate in an "area-wide shoreline protection solution" including removal of riprap if required. The LCP does not allow approval of projects that require armoring. This project appears to include a seawall extension with raised fill behind it for parcel "E", and major repairs, if not complete replacement, of the existing unpermitted wall and riprap. The only other development in this block is set reasonably well back from the shore (Karp & Yacht Club). Other projects by this applicant/designer along the western-most block of Princeton shoreline have been permitted so close to the shore that emergency unpermitted armoring has been put in place, sometimes before construction was even complete.

The project 50-year erosion study notes that up to 15 ft of land was added at the time the seawall was built. This project proposes allowing buildings on top of the added land, right up to the edge with no room for any coastal retreat. The study estimates that without well-maintained armoring the bank would retreat 22 feet over the next 50 years. Note this does not include projected sea level rise. The project needs to be moved further away from the shore in order to allow shoreline retreat. The deteriorated, unpermitted seawall should be removed.

The revised project does not address the 2006 MCC concerns regarding the 150-ft solid wall of adjoined buildings which in one stroke would block off from view about one third of the waterfront between Vassar and Columbia. Development needs to provide for views to the shore from Princeton Ave, route of the California Coastal Trail.

The exterior style of the buildings has not changed and does not comply with the Visual Resources Component and the Design Review Standards of the LCP. Considering these buildings are on the shoreline, we feel it is imperative that they reflect the nautical character of the harbor setting. We have seen the results of this type of development in the western-most block of Princeton Ave (or as they are addressed, Ocean Blvd) -- the industrial "airplane hangar" look, tall and looming over the beach, built so close to the shore that emergency armoring is immediately required, greatly diminishing the experience of walking along the shore.

Of the recent waterfront buildings of this style, not one is currently being used for marine-related commercial use and the only access is from the street. Waterfront shoreline zoning is for marine-related commercial uses that actually require shoreline access. It is meant to enhance and protect coastal resources. How does taking out a boat ramp, armoring the shoreline and walling it off behind a 30-ft tall wall of buildings accomplish that?

Our precious limited amount of shoreline should be reserved for visitor-serving or marine-related uses that actually require shoreline access, such as the yacht club, the Inn, and the Conference Center. This is the architecture, scale, spacing and use that should be allowed and encouraged in these last two (eastern-most) blocks of Princeton shoreline.

Thank you for your consideration.

s/Bill Kehoe, Chair
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