

JAMES STROUPE, ARCHITECT

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01 October 1999

County of San Mateo
Environmental Services Agency
Paul Koenig, Director
455 County Center, Fourth Floor
Redwood City, California 94063-1646

Subject : Renovations and Additions to 995 Menlo Oaks Drive, Menlo Park, CA

Dear Mr. Koenig;

This letter is submitted in response to Mr. Mark Migdal's request to review and comment on the design of the proposed renovations and additions to his own home, located at 995 Menlo Oaks Drive in Menlo Park.

I have known Mark Migdal for more than a decade and worked closely with him in the design of five custom homes in Menlo Park and Palo Alto. My architectural firm, Quintessential Forms, was selected by Mark to prepare designs for two new homes at 991 and 999 Menlo Oaks Drive, which flank this 1930's vintage Cape Cod Colonial. These two new homes were designed to complement the quality and style of the existing home and to allow the existing home to maintain it's integrity. I understand from Mark that both the new owners and the current neighbors very much like the two homes which we designed.

In 1996, while I was designing these two new homes, I discussed and sketched many ideas with Mark for the future renovations and additions to his own home at 995. My firm has been swamped with large new homes for the past three years and I was unable to schedule time to work on Mark's own home. But I have recently reviewed drawings for the proposed renovations and additions prepared by Richard Haro Drafting and Planning Incorporated and believe that if work is completed in accordance



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June 22, 2004

Mr. Mark Migdal
1963 Rock Street #8
Mountain View, CA 94043

Re: 995 Menlo Oaks Dr
Menlo Park

This is a review of the condition of the house located at 995 Menlo Oaks Drive. The findings listed are based upon a visual observation of conditions found at this house. Deterioration does continue over time and conditions will be found to be worse as time progresses. Original plans are not available for this house. Our recommendations are based upon many years of inspection and design of houses. No actual engineering calculations have been performed to determine existing loads on any structural members in this house. We can do such calculations, if desired.

This house is badly deteriorated. It will not meet current Building Codes for any of the constituent parts. Required repair will probably trigger requirements by the Building Department to bring all portions of the house up to current Code levels. The foundation must be replaced. Roof is leaking and must be replaced. Vertical clearance on the stairs and in the upstairs hall are substandard, it will require rebuilding the roof to raise to a proper level. Electrical service is unacceptable. Furnace and water heater are worn out and must be replaced. Windows and wood trim are rotted and must be replaced. Grading on the lot is incorrect and must be corrected. Plumbing is leaking and must be replaced. Theoretically you could move the

GRADING on this lot is basically flat. The house was set too low on the lot when originally built 80 years ago. Rain run-off on the lot has ponded at the house almost since new. Soil is a type of expansive adobe clay. Such soils will swell when wet, and contract when dry. When muddy, the soil loses virtually all strength. As a consequence the foundation has sunk into the earth. Normal building practice and the Building Code require that the earth near a house be built up higher to direct water to flow away from this house. This was not done at this house. The lot must be substantially regraded to direct water away from the house and away from neighboring property. Fill will have to be imported to correct the grade. Estimated cost to regrade this lot is \$15,000 to \$20,000.

FOUNDATION for this house is raised concrete perimeter style stem wall, with isolated interior piers, and a small basement. Concrete is not reinforced with steel. Anchor bolts are not provided. The left side of the house has been expanded over a brick patio, with out a proper foundation. The foundation has settled down into the ground because of improper outside grading and the adverse soil conditions. Numerous cracks have developed in the foundation because of the settlement. Cracks and offset in the foundation face up to 3 inches wide were observed. Settlement has resulted in the wood mud sill being too close to the ground. There is no practical method of repairing cracks of the size found in this foundation. The foundation needs to be stronger and higher. Current Code requirement to meet earthquake safety will call for anchor bolts and hold down brackets. Such anchor bolts and hold down brackets must be included in the new foundation. Water has been running under this house through the foundation cracks for years. Water causes

STAIR and hall vertical clearance is less than 6 feet on the stairs, and only 4 to 6½ feet in the upstairs hall. This never has been in conformance with requirements for access and safety. The clearance over the stairs could be obtained by moving the upstairs hall forward. Unfortunately this is where the hall is only 4 feet tall. To move the hall requires that the roof be raised about 3½ feet, and extend the front wall higher to match. This is possible, but the roof must be cut off and reconstructed to provide the necessary clearances. As stated, the hall and stairs never have met required heights. The landing on the stairs has failed and is falling through. The problem is deterioration of the wood. Stairs are not safe and must be replaced. Estimated cost to rebuild the stairs is \$20,000. Estimated cost to rebuild the roof at a higher level is \$110,000.

ROOF is leaking through the flat portions and low slope over the rear dormer. Composition shingles are worn but still functioning. Flat roof must be replaced. Some deteriorated wood will be found in the roof structure. As stated above the roof over the front of the house must be raised to provide required clearance for access to the bedrooms from the hallway. Dormer requires recovering to cure the leaks. Additional cost for covering the flat roof and the dormer is \$12,000. Gutters are provided. Downspouts discharge right next to the house foundation. Rain water from the roof has contributed to foundation movement. Downspouts should all be piped well away from the house. We recommend off the lot if possible. If water must be retained on the lot, then it should be piped at least 20 feet from the house. Cost of piping is \$5,000.

WALLS are horizontal lap siding outside. Paint is deteriorated

FURNACE is a very old gravity type. It has no fan or filter. Asbestos material was used to wrap all the ducts. Asbestos is a known carcinogen and must be disposed of in a hazardous waste dump. There is no heat upstairs. Building Codes require a heating system capable of maintaining 70° in every room. Heat is therefore required to be added upstairs. The current system has an efficiency of about 30%. New furnace efficiency can exceed 90%. This furnace must be replaced. Asbestos must be disposed of properly. Heat must be added upstairs. Cost for a proper heating system is \$20,000.

WATER HEATER is old and worn out. Pipes are leaking at the water heater. A new heater with venting, strapping, installation will cost \$1,000.

WATER is plumbed through galvanized steel pipes. The pipes are clogged and leaking. The water pipes will not survive the house movement. Replumbing both floors with new copper pipe will cost \$15,000.

ELECTRICAL service is only 120 volts, 30 amp capacity. This has been insufficient capacity for about the last 50 years. Wiring is open knob and tube. No ground wires are provided. No provision for an electric range or dryer. Total replacement of the electrical wiring system will be required. This electric system is not safe. Cost to upgrade to current code requirements will run about \$15,000, while the walls are already open.

CHIMNEY is non-reinforced brick masonry. It will not survive a move. Chimney must be removed and rebuilt with reinforced construction. A new masonry chimney will cost \$25,000.

MARK MIGDAL

1963 Rock St. Unit 8; Mountain View, CA 94043 ph.(650)967-2323

February 21, 2005

Mr. Richard S. Gordon
Board of Supervisors
County of San Mateo
455 County Center
Redwood City, CA 94063

Dear Mr. Gordon:

It has been sometime since you and I discussed the unpleasant situation happening with our house at 995 Menlo Oaks Drive, Menlo Park, CA.

If you remember in 1996-1997 this property was involved in a minor subdivision. The original property was subdivided into 3 parcels.

This house was our home and the subdivision was designed in such a way so our home could be preserved and we would have sufficient lot size.

The application was reviewed and subsequently approved by the Board of Supervisors- File No. SMN96-0009 on Feb 10, 1997.

The resolution for approval among other conditions had a requirement that our home, which was to remain in a middle lot, would stay "as is" for at least 10 years. We liked that house. It was our home. At that moment we didn't have any problem with this condition. As a matter of fact,

Due to the water damage to the house and to the foundation and due to the extensive penetration of the water into the crawl space the uneven settlement of the house took place. Numerous cracks appeared in the foundation itself. This old foundation does not have any rebar reinforcement. This resulted in even wider cracks and even shifting of the foundation at the cracks.

In 1999 we attempted to repair our home and approached the Planning Department with repair, renovation and addition proposal. During the review of our application it was determined that the whole house would need to be brought up into the full compliance with the new Building Code.

Simple analysis of the cost of bringing the house in full compliance with the new code combined with the huge cost related to fixing of the foundation and raising the house for at least 8 inches above the surrounding grade made our intentions cost prohibited.

All that work would have costed us three times more than the cost of building a new house on that lot.

Since then we tried to approach Planning Department with a proposal to the Board of Supervisors to amend that one sentence in original approval of this subdivision related to "10 year period" to maintain the existing house.

The letters from our Architect and the Soil Engineer were supporting our request.

Recently, at the recommendation of the Planning Department we hired Licensed Structural Engineer who conducted inspection and whose summary we attach here as well.

Our house in its present condition is not liveable. Water, gas, sewer are being disconnected. It has been few years already since we were forced to move out of this house, though we still pay our mortgage payments and related property tax.

I attached here few old and recent reports prepared by different Architects, Structural Engineers, Surveyor and Civil Engineers. All those reports support our notion that it is practically non-feasible to repair, to restore and to bring existing house to the acceptable living condition at a reasonable cost.

MARK MIGDAL

ATTACHMENT E

1963 Rock St. Unit 8; Mountain View, CA 94043 ph.(650)967-2323

November 16, 2005

Mrs. Lisa Grote
Community Development Director
San Mateo County Planning and Building Division
455 County Center
Redwood City, CA 94063

Re: - 995 Menlo Oaks Drive, Menlo Park

- Application to the Board of Supervisors to amend a part of the 1997 Resolution,
which approved the subdivision.

Dear Mrs. Grote:

I am asking for your Department's support for my application to the Board of Supervisors. I would like to ask Board of Supervisors to amend one of the conditions in the Board's 1997 Resolutions, which approved the subdivision of former 999 Menlo Oaks Dr. M.P. That time #999 Menlo Oaks Dr (later became #995) was our family home. The whole property, more than 45000 sq. ft., was subdivided into 3 lots.

The subdivision was done in such a way that the only existing house in the middle would remain "as is" in the middle lot for at least 10 years and any changes to the house must be approved by the Director of the Planning & Building Division. This was more than 8.5 years ago. I attached here some documents, which are self-explanatory.

As you could see in the letter of Structural Engineer, Mr. Alan Huntzinger, in all practical purposes the conditions and the damages present in this property and most specifically the

Anybody who lives or drives by this property now could see nothing but abandon house in nuisance and cysorc condition. During the last few years Police and the Sheriff were called many times to this property to investigate break-ins and illegal occupancy by the homeless people.

All this could be quickly and easily reversed by allowing us to demolish this house and to build nice new residence compatible with the neighborhood and with the brand new homes recently build around it. Nobody likes this eyesore in the lovely Menlo Oaks neighborhood. Nobody benefits from keeping this house there. Please review my request and support my application to amend resolution.

Thank you very much.

Very truly yours,

Mark Migdal

Attached:

1. Letter to Mr. R. S. Gordon
2. Letter of Mr. Alan Huntzinger, Civil Engineer
3. Letter of Mr. Jim Stroupe, Arhitect
4. Letter of Mr. Roger Kohler, Architect
5. Photographs

Matt Seubert
Project Planner
Planning and Building Division
455 County Center
Redwood City, Ca. 94063

Re: APN: 062-150-400, PLN 2000-00504/SMN 96-009 property address 995 Menlo Oaks Drive, Menlo Park

Dear Mr. Seubert;

We strongly oppose the request for a revision of the original condition of approval of a subdivision granted to Mark Migdal. We ask that the original condition of subdivision approval be honored and the house not be demolished until the full time specified has passed. (October 6, 2007)

We as county residents expect the county to keep to its commitment to its constituents with respect to the conditions attached to the original subdivision File No. SMN 96-009. The fact that the foundation of the existing structure has some damage is irrelevant to whether the county honors its commitment to the original conditions of subdivision. Please do not allow Migdal to undermine this commitment.

Sincerely,

Nathaniel and Monica Bowditch
999 Menlo Oaks Drive
Menlo Park, Ca. 94025

December 6, 2005

Matt Seubert
Project Planner
Planning and Building Division
455 County Center
Redwood City, CA 94063

Re: Pre-Public Hearing Notification for 995 Menlo Oaks Drive

Dear Mr. Seubert:

We are writing again to oppose Mark Migdal's request to demolish his home at 995 Menlo Oaks Drive. Our letter of September 30, 2000 should still be in the file on 995 Menlo Oaks.

Nothing has changed since we wrote that letter: the house continues to be abandoned and to deteriorate. From the notice, it seems that Mr. Migdal offers the same justification for demolishing his house: it was damaged during his construction on his adjacent properties. We continue to believe that he shouldn't be allowed to demolish the house simply because it has suffered from his construction activities and his neglect.

For what's it's worth, we should mention that we are now the owners of three properties within 300 feet of 995 Menlo Oaks: 941 Menlo Oaks, 426 Bay Road and 430 Bay Road.