

December 2, 2008

Planning Commissioners  
San Francisco Planning Department  
1650 Mission Street, Suite 400  
San Francisco, CA 94103

**Re: Discretionary Review Reform — Support Letter**

Dear Planning Commission:

**Please support a more fair permitting process.** My family and I suffered through the DR process. For a mere \$300 DR application fee, my neighbor triggered a process that delayed our residential project over 2 years and cost us well over \$40,000 to defend a code-compliant project that the Planning Department and the Residential Design Committee deemed to meet the Residential Design Guidelines. These costs do not even include redesign costs and opportunity costs such as lost wages from not working in order to defend our permit.

**Please end frivolous DR claims.** My neighbor used the DR process to protect his view of my back yard. In the DR application, however, he stated a laundry list of irrelevant objections—without supporting facts. In other words, a nominal fee and a few buzz words trigger a process that costs tens of thousands of dollars not only to the permit applicant but also to the Planning Department—our tax dollars.

**Please fix the abused DR process.** After we prevailed at the DR hearing, our neighbor's agent sent us a letter threatening appeals of both permits for our home, even though only permit one was being disputed. The last paragraph of the attached letter states: "Not revising your plans, will leave neighbors no alternative but to appeal the issuance of all permits to the Board of Appeals" (emphasis added). In other words, the DR process itself is used to intimidate and coerce homeowners. People know the financial and emotional burdens of the current DR process.

Someone even suggested to me that if I wrote a big enough check to the opposition, the DR claim might just go away. I did not take the suggestion seriously, but I later learned that neighbors do use the DR process to obtain all sorts of perks: money, free landscaping, new skylights, a new sidewalk, etc.

**The proposed improvements are well-designed and comprehensive.** They address these problems and many others. For example, the improved internal review process will provide a more predictable and consistent permitting process, where homeowners will know up front what they can and cannot do. Better utilizing the Residential Design Committee and introducing a Hearing Officer enables the Planning Commission to better focus on big projects and policy issues instead of individual neighbor disputes.

Please approve the Planning Department's proposed improvements.

Sincerely,

  
Joe Acayan

Cc: Elaine Forbes

**LUCIAN ROBERT BLAZEJ**

February 6, 2008

Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Lee Acayan

Re: 76 Laidley Street –BPA Nos. 2006 1010 4591 and 2006 1016 5080

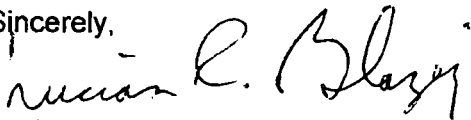
Dear Mr. & Mrs. Acayan:

As you know neighbors strongly oppose your project to build a 735-square foot two-story pool-house and office in the rear portion of your property. The reason we oppose this intrusion into the mid-block open space is because what you propose is a precedent that would be most unfortunate and disruptive to the entire block, if other neighbors decided to do the same. Clearly, the office you propose, looking toward the back of existing homes would be intrusive and result in great loss of privacy. Also, constructing a two story structure in what is now mid-block open space, will diminish the quality, quantity and esthetic appeal of what we all now enjoy, a naturally peaceful and lovely park-like setting at the rear of our homes.

We hope you will consider revising your plans along the lines that were supported when you met with the "Community Board." Building a pool in the rear yard is acceptable. However, building a second story office is unacceptable, particularly since such a structure could easily morph into a guest house or second dwelling unit. The office and downtown view you desire could well be accommodated and included as part of the remodel and expansion of your home.

We make this request that you consider revising your plans because, with such revisions, neighbors will be in support of the issuance of building permits. Not revising your plans, will leave neighbors no alternative but to appeal the issuance of all permits to the Board of Appeals. Please give this request your serious consideration. We would be pleased to meet with you to discuss this further and come to a mutually satisfactory solution. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



Lucian Robert Blazej  
Representing Laidley Street Neighbors

Copies: Tergis, Clark