

841 Hillside Ave.
Albany, Cal.
May 25, 2020

Amendment to letter of 5 / 20 / '20

To whom it may concern:

This is to verify that a mistaken street address was given on my previous letter. The street number for the house already under construction that was referred to should have been number 850 Hillside and not 840 Hillside Avenue.

I apologize for the mistake and hope it has not caused confusion.

Yours truly,



John David Ford

841 Hillside Ave.
Albany, CA
94706
5/20/20

To whom it may concern,

I am writing in objection to the proposed design and positioning of the residence to be constructed at 836 Hillside Ave., Albany, California. I have lived at 841 Hillside Avenue for twenty-eight years and did not build my home.

The proposed construction site at 836 Hillside Ave. has been a popular site that attracts community members for observing Berkeley and San Francisco fireworks on multiple holidays. Police respond to the popularity and numbers of pedestrians going to watch fireworks by closing the street to traffic. Families on walks and exercisers also daily stop to enjoy the special view. The preservation of the public usage of this view would be nice if it could be partially preserved for the future. It would be sad to lose this public park-like service. Limiting front street appearance to garage height and having a set back of the building may facilitate fireworks observation if the public stands across the street on the sidewalk.

House number ~~840~~⁸⁵⁰ Hillside is presently in the process of construction. In many ways it exemplifies some of the problems that need to be dealt with for 836 Hillside Avenue. At the time of the hearings for the building permit for 840 Hillside Avenue, I presented a petition signed by 31 of 32 residencies of Hillside Avenue objecting to the non-conformity, house lot street position, and general appearance of one story over the garage. That original petition should be in your files for reference and I present it as evidence to the public feelings.

The recent coronavirus shelter in place order would have made it difficult to have another petition regarding 836 Hillside's design. Not only Hillside Avenue residents, but many visiting the street and the empty, lot have expressed their disappointment in the street presentation of the new construction at ~~840~~⁸⁵⁰ Hillside and wondered how it was ever approved. Let us not again make the same mistake. On the original petition, over the garage construction was by far the primary objection due to the street's previous customary architecture. Now that the public can see the finished product, objection is often expressed that the large two story size so close to the street seems to be overbearing. Over the garage construction on the downhill side of the street gives the appearance of being much closer and forms a canyon-like walled-in sensation. More set-back or more ideally no structure over the garage, or both would help relieve this problem. Comments have also been made that ~~840~~⁸⁵⁰ does not fit into the general appearance of the other homes the way it looks from lower streets and the way it jets out and high into the air. Do we really want something that stands out so boldly? Is there a point where architecture can lose its cosmetic appeal?

Lastly is the further loss of view from my residence. Recent construction at ~~840~~⁸⁵⁰ Hillside has blocked a large portion of my land view, and 836 Hillside will cause a major block of my view of the Golden Gate Bridge and part of the city, thus again severely reducing the value of my home.

Yours truly,

John D. Ford

From: [Christopher Tan](#)
To: [PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION](#)
Subject: FW: ATTN - RE 5/27 Planning and Zoning Meeting - 836 Hillside Ave.
Date: Wednesday, May 27, 2020 2:15:33 PM

Hello,

I am forwarding a second correspondence I have received regarding 836 Hillside.



Christopher Tan
Associate Planner
e: ctan@albanyca.org
p: 510.528.5761

From: Theodore Kempf <tkempf333@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 27, 2020 1:19 PM
To: Christopher Tan <ctan@albanyca.org>
Subject: ATTN - RE 5/27 Planning and Zoning Meeting - 836 Hillside Ave.

Warning: This email originated from outside the City of Albany. Think before you click!

To the Albany Planning and Zoning Commission,

I am writing to oppose the proposed design for the prospective residence at 836 Hillside Avenue. My objection is not to the construction of a new home on this lot. We look forward to welcoming our soon-to-be new neighbors. Rather, our objection to the proposed style. It does not fit within even broadly defined styles of the other homes in our part of the neighborhood.

We are also purely guessing at the real-world look at street height because no height frames were ever created to visibly mark the height of the proposed construction. We do oppose any design that would add a story on top of a ground-level story as it is not: 1) in keeping with the design of all other homes on the downhill side of Hillside Avenue, 2) creates a claustrophobic and narrow environment on the already tight-spaced street, and 3) the Residential Planning Application Form lists the maximum height as 18 feet above street level and the Notice of Virtual Public Hearing states 20 feet. This represents the first incongruence of between the forms filed and the notice provided. We are also concerned that the proposed lot coverage is 25% greater than Albany's Basic Residential Site Regulations permit, at 55%. The max lot coverage is 30% and this design is stating over 50%! The proposed new construction should adhere more closely to the Basic Residential Regulations which govern the designs of all homes in Albany.

Lastly, the design of the home would create an unfavorable view from my backyard as it would stare straight up to the underside of the proposed new construction. If the home design followed Hillside Avenue design norms, for the downhill side of the street, then the proposed new home at 836 Hillside would follow the downslope of the hill and not present an unorthodox and megalithic view from my backyard. The proposed design would engulf my home—effectively leaving it sitting in a hole. Every time I run up Catherine's Walk, I am taken aback at the sheer height which the newly constructed home there imposes. This serves as an example of how the raised foundation and raised height designs simply do not fit the neighborhood without negatively affecting the other homes on Hillside. Existing Elevations must be taken into account as neither home to either side of 836 Hillside have any elevation above garage level.

To be clear, the opposition is not to new construction, but to the proposed design. Please, let us keep the design and feel of Hillside Avenue in tact, while still welcoming new folks to the neighborhood.

Kind Regards,

Residents of 840 Hillside Avenue.