

From: [Michelle Kuehn](#)
To: [Planning Commission](#)
Subject: Angelo Consentino - County File Number: PLN2024-00327
Date: Tuesday, March 11, 2025 1:42:37 PM
Attachments: [Morria Shaffer Engineering.pdf](#)

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Dear Planning Commission and secretary,

We are the backside neighbor to 2896 Hillside Drive, please find below our concerns for tomorrow's hearing scheduled at 9:00 AM.

1. Per Morris Schaffer Engineering (report attached) the current retaining wall is not structurally engineered to hold the load of a 2-car garage. It's not in compliance with current code for this project as it has no anchoring or post and pier. The planning department advised us the wall must be structurally safe, with an anchor and additional post and pier. If the current wall remains in place as is, then no additional weight should be added per the Morris Shaffer Engineer report. The 3-foot-tall form that was added in the last 6 months will be removed per Travis in Planning Department.

Additionally, this project can cause loosening of soil which could promote a landslide/liquefaction putting our property and home in harm's way.

2. The height (17.66 feet) raises concerns about future conversion to an additional ADU, especially since the owner is a contractor who has not always applied for permits in advance. There will be an impact to the adjoining property with such a disproportionate structure. And this submission is not complete due to the lack of sign off from the civil engineer, Pacific Engineering and Construction.

Additionally, fumes from the cars, as well as noise, are also a concern. To avoid these issues, relocating this structure closer to the front of the property (2896 Hillside Drive), as well as a lower height, would be preferable.

3. Drainage - the current drainage from 2896 Hillside Drive has been flowing directly onto our property causing erosion issues. The current drainage to our property needs to be redirected and closed up. We were advised by the planning department that the current drainage will be redirected to Hillside Drive.
4. There will be an impact to the adjoining property with such a disproportionate structure and it is going to impact the surrounding neighborhood. We are not completely opposed

to this project but want to ensure there is no adverse effect to our property's safety, its value, or aesthetics. This is our family heritage - it's been in our family for 75 years, and this project as proposed, is a huge impact.

5. The setback needs to be further back from our retaining wall than the requested 4 feet, so it does not interfere with the Heritage Oak tree and complies with Country Fire that addresses clearance. Which includes requirements for creating and maintaining defensible space around structures to protect them from wildfire. Also, the current proposed height will impact the Heritage Oak as well as impact the light to our yard and house.

We were advised from the building department that the county doesn't have a structural engineer on staff who could provide an unbiased opinion.

Kind regards,

Michelle Kuehn & Raymond Moreno
2897 Adeline Drive

MORRIS SHAFFER

ENGINEERING

County of San Mateo Building Department
455 County Center, 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA, 94063

June 25, 2024
MSE # 24176

RE: Rear property line retaining wall
2897 Adeline Drive, Burlingame, CA

To whom it may concern,

We conducted a site visit at the property located at 2897 Adeline Drive in Burlingame on June 24, 2024 to review the current condition of the retaining wall along the property line separating the subject property and its uphill neighbor at 2896 Hillside Drive. The owner at 2897 Adeline Drive requested the visit to observe the ongoing construction that will increase the height of the existing retaining wall to approximately 9'-9". The visit took place during daylight hours in dry conditions. Figure 1 shows the layout of the walls we observed and the relationship between the properties.

We noted an existing concrete block wall built in two phases. An original lower portion extending approximately 5'-4" above the low grade at the subject property and a 2'-0" extension above the original wall. See Figure 2 and Photo 1. It is the owner's recollection that original retaining wall is at least 40 years old. We were unable to verify the age of either segment of the wall, but the estimated age is reasonable based on our visual review. A portion of the soil at the toe of the wall was excavated to verify the foundation dimensions which extends horizontally 18" from the front face of the wall. (See Photo 2 on next page). There was no documentation available for the wall construction, thus the drainage, reinforcing and grout for the block wall, and the depth and reinforcing of the wall foundations are unknown.

It is unlikely that either segment of the existing wall was engineered. The California Building Code requires all walls over 4' high measured from the bottom of the foundation to be engineered, thus the existing wall is non-conforming. We noted the presence of formwork that has been added to the top of this non-conforming wall. We understand this has been added in the course of construction initiated by the owners at the 2896 Hillside Drive property and this will potentially create a retained soil height over 9'-6".

It is our opinion that the existing wall condition is already inadequate for the retained condition present. In Photo 1 there is evidence that water may be seeping through the block grout at the middle joint which over time will break down the wall. The addition to its height will exacerbate the visible movement at the joint between the original block wall and extension. Many jurisdictions limit retained wall heights to 6'-0" to minimize the imposition of downhill site condition. We did not confirm if the local zoning codes include such restrictions, but note that where they are implemented, it is to restrict property owners from creating conditions such as the one this construction will create. It is our opinion that construction of the wall extension at the 2896 Hillside Drive property should be halted until engineering work has been done to justify its construction and zoning codes reviewed concerning the maximum height.

Do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Jason Hughey, PE
Morris Shaffer Engineering, LLP



Kerry MacDonald, PE, SE, Principal
Morris Shaffer Engineering, LLP



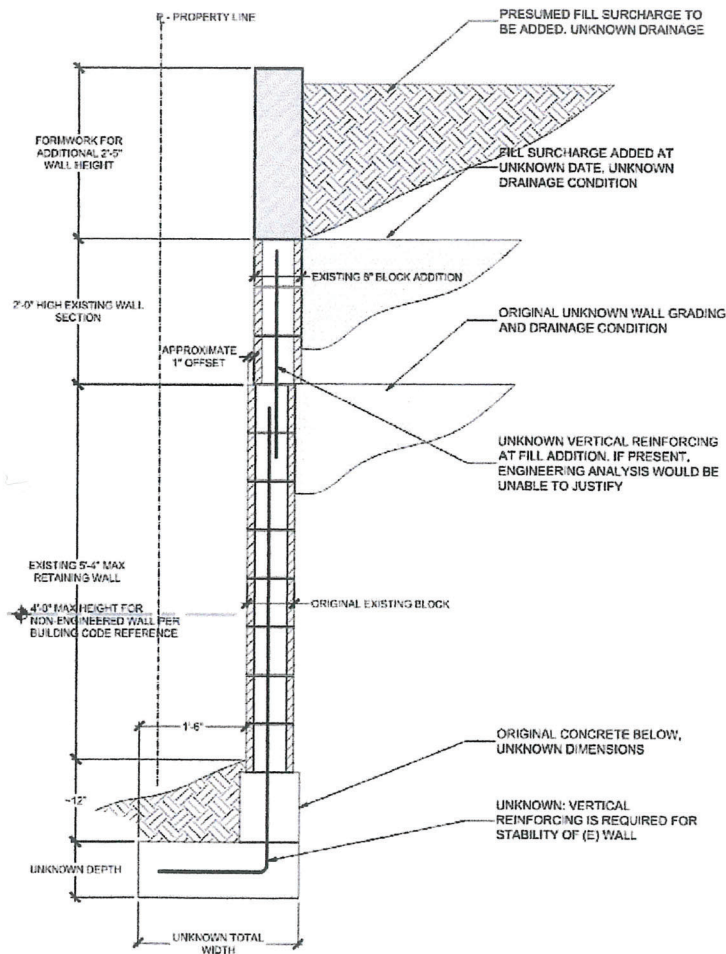
Photo 1 – Retaining wall at property line



Photo 2 – Embedded shovel showing extent of concrete footing below



Figure 1 - View of Property and surrounding area



1 **RETAINING WALL SECTION**

Figure 2 – Section of retaining wall