



Public Comment Received for:

36 Rincon Vista Rd.

(PLN2020-00503)

Name of Sender	Distributed prior to hearing	Distributed after the hearing
Daniela Johnson	✓	
Mark Linvill	✓	
Michael & Ruth A. Collins	✓	
Sandy DeRousse	✓	
Richard Wotruba	✓	

From: [Daniela Johnson](#)
To: [Community Development SHOsecretary](#)
Subject: 36 rincon vista road project location
Date: Friday, December 31, 2021 3:19:29 PM

EXTERNAL

I'm submitting this for public comment.

I was fortunate to review the plans for this single family residence. I am pleased that they are taking fire abatement seriously, allocating costs for a metal roof. I hope more homeowners moving forward will submit plans that are present-day.

Regarding the front setback modification, their proposed attached garage makes a lot of sense, as it will give more space for safer egress.

I want to welcome them to the neighborhood! The proposed house is GORGEOUS and will be a desirable change to the home that is currently on the lot.

Kind regards,
Daniela Johnson

Mark Linvill
John Ritchie
10 Rincon Vista Rd
Santa Barbara, CA
92264

January 6th, 2022

Re: Public Hearing for 36 Rincon Vista Rd, January 12, 2022

Dear SHO Hearing Officer,

My name is Mark Linvill. My spouse and I live at 10 Rincon Vista Rd and have attended all of the SFDB meetings regarding 36 Rincon Vista Rd in 2021. We request that a review by the Santa Barbara City fire department take place regarding the Front Yard/Garage setback modification before giving full approval. This is a critical location for fire fighting due to a fire hydrant across the street from 36 Rincon Vista Rd.

As you probably know, most of the homes on Rincon Vista Rd., including our home, and many in the surrounding neighborhood were destroyed in the 1977 Sycamore Canyon fire. In the Tea Fire of 2008, only two homes were destroyed due to the placement of a fire truck and crew on Rincon Vista Rd to battle the flames. The owner of 34 Rincon Vista Rd shared with me that, during the Tea Fire, an ember landed on her deck and started a fire. The crew placed on Rincon Vista Rd was able to douse the flames immediately saving her home and most likely the neighboring homes.

If by allowing the front yard setback modification it would impede or prohibit the placement of a fire truck and crew on Rincon Vista, as was placed in 2008, it would place our homes on Rincon Vista at higher risk. If the modification was approved and homes were destroyed in a future fire, due to the unnecessary space restriction or inability to place a fire crew on Rincon Vista Rd, it would also place the city at an undesirable level of liability, particularly after residents have expressed such concerns in writing to the SHO and the SFDB.

When new homes are built and lot space allows for alternative, away-from-the-street garage locations, (as this lot allows) public and fire safety should be a paramount consideration.

We encourage you, before approving the setback, to have the modification and any implications reviewed and approved by the Santa Barbara fire department. This would reduce some of the concerns that the neighborhood has about the impact of future fires on Rincon Vista Rd.

Thank you very much,

Mark Linvill

Michael and Ruth Ann Collins
20 Rincon Vista Road
Santa Barbara, CA 93103

January 3, 2022

SHO Secretary
PO Box, 1990,
Santa Barbara, CA 93102

Re: Public Hearing for 36 Rincon Vista Road, January 12, 2022

Dear SHO Hearing Officer:

We are Michael and Ruth Ann Collins. We live at 20 Rincon Vista Road, three houses west of 36 Rincon Vista Road. We have lived at this location since 1972. **We request that you do not approve the proposed Front Setback Modification or at a minimum, that you continue this hearing until the City Fire Department and the City Transportation Division have reviewed and approved in writing the location of the garage.** This modification would allow the building of a two-car garage right on Rincon Vista Road with almost no setback. This road is very narrow, only 21 feet wide where the garage is to be located and the safety and enjoyment of the neighbors would be much improved if the garage were located further away from the street.

First, a little background. This portion of the Riviera is in the High Fire Hazard Area of the Foothill Zone of the City of Santa Barbara. It has suffered two major fires, the Sycamore Canyon fire in 1977, and the Tea fire in 2008. Together, these fires destroyed almost all of the homes adjacent to Sycamore Canyon including every home on Rincon Vista Road except for 36 Rincon Vista. (See Photos 1 and 2). There is a fire hydrant across the street and just east of 36 Rincon Vista Road. This is where the Fire Department staged during the Tea Fire and saved all of the homes on Rincon Vista except for one. Since 2008, this area has been evacuated at least three times. This portion of Rincon Vista Road is critical during periods of evacuation and fire-fighting and the neighborhood would benefit greatly if the garage were located further from the roadway allowing more space for evacuation and fire-fighting equipment and maneuvering. **We request the City Fire Department be contacted to review this project and make a site visit to determine whether or not moving the garage further from the street would enhance the safety of the neighbors and improve the ability of the Fire Department to stage in this area and protect the homes on Rincon Vista Road.**

Because of the fires, most of the homes in this area of the Riviera are relatively new. Many have been built since 2008. They are almost all built on hillsides. Some lots are of average steepness, like 36 Rincon Vista, and others are much steeper. They have all been built without having to put their garages on the street. The homes are all beautiful and nicely landscaped. This area is very popular for walking and biking but because the roads are narrow, having structures away from the street is very important for safety reasons, both during emergencies and evacuations, when large trucks are using the streets, and when pedestrians and bikers are using the streets. This is our main concern. Locating the garage on the street is dangerous and an inconvenience to those using the street. **We request that this hearing be continued until the City Transportation Division has conducted a site visit and determined in writing whether or not locating the garage further from the street would enhance the safety and accessibility of the street to pedestrians, bikers, and motor vehicles.**

We have reviewed the Staff Report and feel that some of the statements in the report may be misleading. We would like to address these concerns.

Front and Interior Setback Modifications: The staff report states: “*While setbacks are meant to provide building relief, garages are a common encroachment in front yards and front yard setbacks in the City.*”. We feel that this statement is misleading. The requested front yard setback modification is not just to build a garage in the setback but to build it right on Rincon Vista Road with essentially no setback. While it is true that there are a number of garages on the Riviera that are in front yard setbacks, they are mostly 15 to 20 feet away from the street. This allows for some landscaping and pedestrian access and often some temporary parking. These are all major benefits to the neighborhood.

“*There is also a topography issue on the subject lot: the lot has a 34% slope and the location of the existing house and garage is already flat.*” Again, this is misleading. In fact the garage is not on a flat portion of the lot. There is significant open space underneath the floor of the garage. A view of the garage from the west side illustrates that the floor of the garage at the street may be flat but the terrain drops approximately 6 to 8 feet at the south end of the garage. (See Photo 3) Therefore, there is no slope benefit to building the garage where it is currently located. In addition, to build the garage where it is proposed, would require significant fill to raise the garage driveway to the elevation of the proposed garage floor. The plans specify 620 yards of fill for the project. Most of this is likely due to having to build the garage and the driveway close to the street elevation rather than at a lower elevation. Clearly, there is no topological benefit to building the garage at the elevation of the street and having to bring in 620 yards of fill. It would be much better to move the garage further from the street allowing the garage floor and the driveway to be closer in elevation to the existing ground.

“*To have the garage and house conform to the required front yard setback would mean pushing development more towards to the rear of the lot with the steep slopes and require a large amount of grading or more advanced engineering to construct the residence in a hillside configuration.*” Almost every house on the Riviera has had to deal with a sloping lot. In fact, many of the houses are built on lots much steeper and topography much more challenging than the lot at 36 Rincon Vista Road and they have all been able to be built without putting a garage on the street. A good example of a house and garage with a similar layout to the one proposed can be found nearby at 1117 Las Alturas Road. This house and lot is on a steep hillside with a garage and driveway in front of the house as is proposed for 36 Rincon Vista Road. (See Photos 4 and 5). They were able to build this project keeping the garage away from the street allowing for landscaping, public access, and temporary parking. It also lowered the roof elevation which benefitted the neighbors.

“*So staff is supportive of the project and the Modification to allow its construction in a sensible location.*” We do not think that locating the garage on the street is sensible in any way. It interferes with safe pedestrian and vehicle use of the street, causes people entering the property from the east to have to walk on the street, eliminates any possibility for temporary street parking, attractive landscaping and improved safety during fire emergencies.

“*The Staff Hearing Officer finds that the Front Setback modification is necessary to secure an appropriate improvement on the lot and consistent with the purpose and intent of the Santa Barbara Municipal Code. The front setback for the garage would remain unchanged with the existing*

development, and remain in a developed, flat area of the lot on a steeply sloped lot. Garages are also a common encroachment in front yards and setbacks in the City”

A new two-car garage built at the edge of Rincon Vista Road would not be an improvement to the lot nor to the neighborhood. Moving the garage 10-20 feet south and lowering the elevation of the floor of the garage appropriately would be a significant benefit to the lot and the neighborhood. It would result in improved pedestrian, bike and vehicle safety, safer pedestrian access to the property, improve fire department access and deployment, allow for some temporary on-street parking, lower the roof line and visual impact of the garage and allow for some attractive landscaping, all benefiting the property owner and the neighborhood. As mentioned earlier, the garage is not on a flat portion of the lot. The ground is steeply sloped under the garage and where the proposed driveway is planned. Finally, it could not be common to allow garages to be built on City streets with zero setbacks. **It would be a dangerous precedent and a threat to pedestrians, bikers and vehicles to build a structure right on the street and it couldn't be consistent with the purpose or intent of the Santa Barbara Municipal Code pertaining to front yard setbacks.**

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Michael and Ruth Ann Collins

List of Attached Photos

1. 36 Rincon Vista Road – view from above showing long lot and house at northern end to illustrate the feasibility of moving the garage away from the street as has been done at all of the other homes on Rincon Vista Road.
2. Rincon Vista Road in 1977 after Sycamore Canyon Fire- view from above showing narrow section of road at the corner of the garage at 36 Rincon Vista , the only unburned house, illustrating how narrow the street is at 36 Rincon Vista road and the importance of making access along the street at 36 Rincon Vista Road wider for safety reasons.
3. 36 Rincon Vista Road – view from the west showing the location of the garage, the topography of the lot adjacent to the street and the garage illustrating the slope of the lot underneath and adjacent to the garage.
4. 1117 Las Alturas Road – view from above illustrating the feasibility of locating a garage away from a street on a steep slope.
5. 1117 Las Alturas Road – view from the street illustrating the benefit of locating a garage away from the street on a steep slope: public access, temporary street parking, lowered roof elevations.

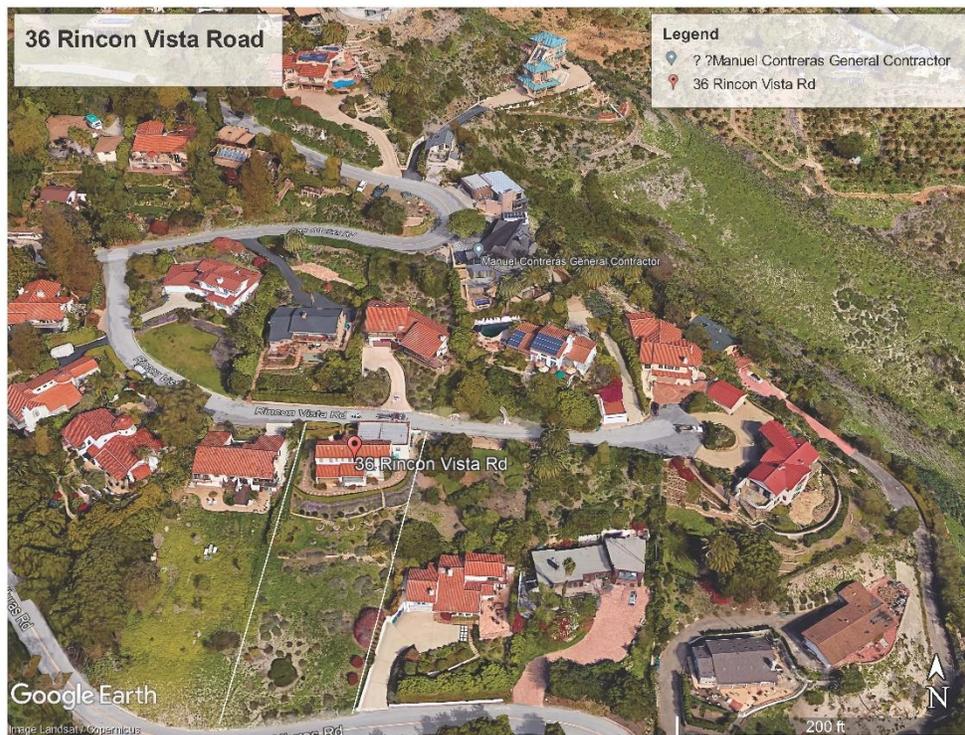


Photo 1. 36 Rincon Vista Road – View from above showing long lot and house at north end.



Photo 2. 36 Rincon Vista Road in 1977 after Sycamore Canyon fire. View shows narrow section of street at the corner of the garage at 36 Rincon Vista, the only unburned house.



Photo 3. 36 Rincon Vista Road – View from the west showing the location and elevation of the garage and the topography of the lot near the street showing that the garage is not built on a flat portion of the lot.

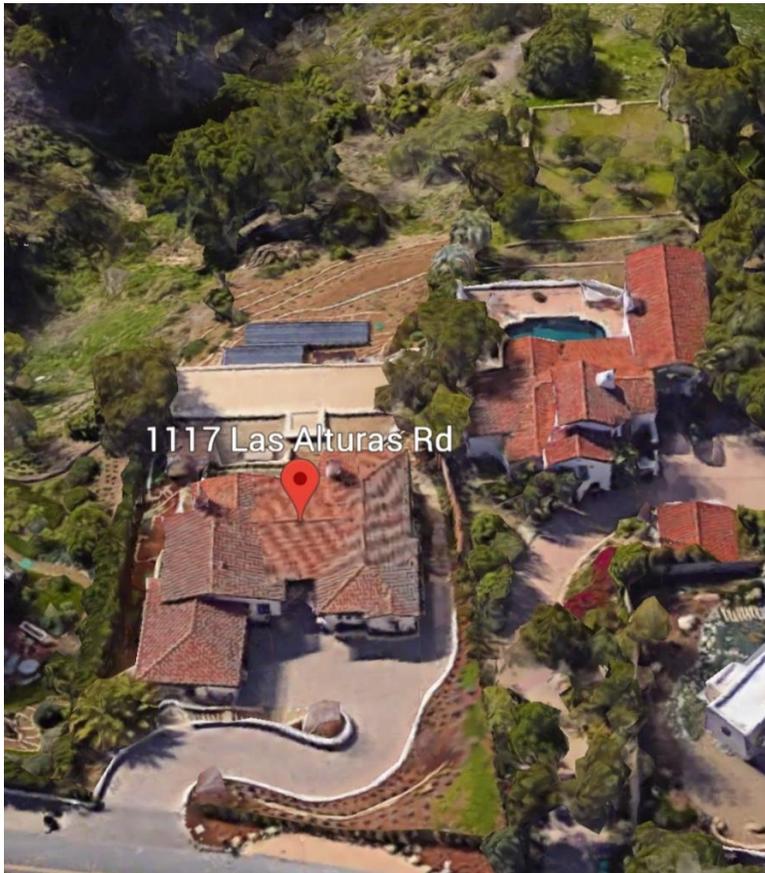


Photo 4. 1117 Las Alturas Road – View from above showing the feasibility of locating a garage away from a street on a steep slope.



Photo 5. 1117 Las Alturas Road – View from the street showing the benefit of locating a garage away from the street on a steep slope: public access, temporary street parking, and lowered roof elevations.

From: [Sandy DeRousse](#)
To: [Community Development SHOsecretary](#)
Subject: Fwd: Public Comment in Support of 36 Rincon Vista Road
Date: Friday, January 7, 2022 12:55:09 PM

EXTERNAL

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Sandy DeRousse** <sjderousse@gmail.com>
Date: Fri, Jan 7, 2022 at 12:49 PM
Subject: Fwd: Public Comment in Support of 36 Rincon Vista Road
To: Sandy DeRousse <sjderousse@gmail.com>

To The Staff Hearing Officer Board:

We are writing in support of David and Janice Sims' efforts to receive your approval for their home project at 36 Rincon Vista Rd. We live at 43 Rincon Vista Rd, which is across the street from the Sims' property. We have been living in California since 1976 and own and operate a business in downtown Santa Barbara.

As long term residents of Rincon Vista, having built our home on this street 36 years ago, we witnessed several of our neighbors rebuilding their homes, most recently due to the Tea Fire. At no time did we have the opportunity to review building plans for any of these new homes.

When we first met the Sims, in February of 2021, we were very impressed with their immediate and conscientious presentation of their building plans. Having had the opportunity to review these plans over the past 9 months, while getting to know the Sims', we feel the quality of life we've enjoyed on Rincon Vista will continue, and even be enhanced by the addition of their home on our street. The Sims have been good neighbors, and been open about their project with us and other neighbors.

We think that the project is appropriate for the site, will blend well with the neighborhood and generally enhance the streetscape on Rincon Vista and the Riviera as a whole. The design is attractive and nicely proportioned. They are using high quality materials and making good use of the sloping lot. Siting the house in essentially the same place as the existing house also makes good sense, as it preserves existing views of all neighbors.....one of the wonderful things about living up here!

Changing the orientation of the garage door so that it will no longer open into the street makes good sense from a safety and aesthetic standpoint. Their plan to decrease the amount of house within the front setback will enhance the streetscape. And changing the garage material to Santa Barbara sandstone will further beautify the streetscape.

The south facing elevation is very appealing and will be extensively landscaped. To the extent that the house might be seen from afar, it would be an enhancement to the overall Riviera hillside.

We fully support their plans and encourage the Board to do the same.

Sincerely,

Sandy and Michael DeRousse

43 Rincon Vista Rd.

From: [Richard Wotruba](#)
To: [Community Development SHOsecretary](#)
Subject: 36 Rincon Vista Road
Date: Monday, January 10, 2022 3:32:46 PM

EXTERNAL

Not able to determine where any of recommendations were adhered to in this presentation,ie.,setback,roof,architecture/design,rock facing on garage,setback on west house facing area.Sorryfor confusion,Dick Wotruba,501 Las Alturas Aroad,805 708 5388

In Hoc Signo Vincas,, ,we shall conquer,Keep “go ing” , daily walks,eat broccoli,do push aways,, drink red wine, be thankful , enjoy loved ones, ♀ ,exercise keep moving