

18 June 2020

To:

Xavier Del Valle, Development Project Manager, City of San Diego

Kenneth Mills, Civil Engineer, City of San Diego

CC:

Diane Kane, President, La Jolla Community Planning Association

Michael Costello, Trustee, La Jolla Community Planning Association

The residential project at 411 Sea Ridge Dr. (Project No. 659048) must be held to the conclusions and recommendations of the Geotechnical report prepared by Geotechnical Exploration Inc., with the following two clarifications and conditions.

1) Bluff stabilization: The report (Section XIV) recommends a 25-ft setback from the edge of the bluff be used. The report goes on to note that "... localized block fall failures from the vertical upper bluff Terrace Deposit may occur." (Multiple block fall failures of this type have been documented over the last few decades on the surrounding three-tenths of a mile of bluff between False Point and Tourmaline Beach surf park.) The pool is well shorewards of this recommended 25-ft setback. The report concludes that "A sea wall or lower bluff protective structure will not be required during the 75-year useful life of the proposed new residential project." This wording leaves open the option for upper bluff stabilization, which would be counter to San Diego Municipal Code Section 143.0143. To avoid any ambiguity, the project approval must include the wording that "a sea wall or any bluff protective structure (upper or lower) will not be allowed during the 75-year useful life of the proposed new residential project."

2) Surface water runoff source: The report notes that "No surface water flow, should be allowed over the top of the bluff." The project approval must explicitly state that water flow includes flow or seepage from the pool, even if subterranean. The report discusses that the Terrace Deposits, if saturated, are unstable and prone to blockfalls. If the pool cracks, begins to leak, or becomes dangerously undermined, it would be in everybody's best interest to drain the pool. With the first condition above, upper bluff stabilization would not be allowed in the future, even if needed to protect the pool. We're concerned if the pool becomes undermined, the dangerous condition would trigger a seawall.

Based on Section 143.0143f, any buildings and structures shall be set back at least 40 feet from the bluff edge by default, though an exception can be made for the region between 25 and 40 feet if a geological report confirms that the site is stable for the lifetime of the development (75 years). The pool at 411 is significantly closer than 25 feet to the edge at present (closer to 5 - 10 feet, according to the Geotechnical report and as measured with Google Earth), and it will only decrease given the expected erosion over the next 75 years (a predicted recession of 3.75 feet is used in the Geotechnical report).

As citizens and local residents concerned about both the environmental damage as well as the potential injury or death to innocent beachgoers as a result of a preventable blockfall or pool collapse, we strongly urge the city planners to consider the development permit approval be contingent upon the inclusion of the conditions presented herein. On our read, both the code language and the geologic conditions support the removal of the pool from the plans entirely, or allowing a smaller pool set farther back from the bluff. In any case, if the pool is approved as proposed, the geologic conditions will force its eventual removal during the lifetime of development as the only sensible course of action.

We would be happy to meet (virtually) to share these concerns in more detail.

Sincerely,

Ben Reineman, Ph.D., Development Engineer, Scripps Institution of Oceanography, University of California, San Diego (former resident, 414 Sea Ridge Dr.)

Richard Reineman, Vice President, GWR Inc. (resident, 414 Sea Ridge Dr.)