

**AGENDA ITEM NO.
6 a, b, c**

**TENTATIVE
PARCEL MAP NO. 063010**

ADDITIONAL CORRESPONDENCE

**RPC
PUBLIC HEARING**

5-21-08

May 1, 2008

To: Mr. Jodie Sackett
Senior Regional Planning Assistant
Department of Regional Planning
Land Divisions Section
320 West Temple Street, Room 1382
Los Angeles, California 90012

From: Mr. Peter Taranto
2712 Rockpine Lane
La Crescenta, California 91214

Subject: Tentative Parcel Map No. 063010
Variance Case No. 2007-00011-(5)
Conditional Use Permit Case No 52005-00151-(5)

Dear Mr. Sackett,

I am submitting this letter as a written statement of my objections to the subject proposal. I will be attending the Public Hearing on May 21, but want to submit a written objection so that this can be included for consideration by the Planning Commission. In the report package to be reviewed by the Planning Commission.

I purchased this house 8 years ago. The main attraction is that the Pinecrest development, and especially Rockpine Lane is a quiet, well-established community. I especially enjoy the fact that the north side of the Rockpine, across from my property, remains an undeveloped hillside.

The Rogics propose to subdivide their Willowhaven lot into 3 lots, and build two houses along the north side of Rockpine. This self-serving project will destroy the natural ambience on Rockpine, but has NO impact on their Willowhaven property. In addition, their proposal of terracing the hillside and removing 2114 cubic feet of dirt will no doubt destabilize the hill. Please note that there is a swimming pool on top of the hill and we are in the Sierra Madre Fault zone!

I understand that the Rogics made a similar proposal in 1985 that was rejected by the LA County Planning Commission. Reason for the rejection was: *The property was not physically suitable for development.* I see no reason why it would be suitable in 2008.

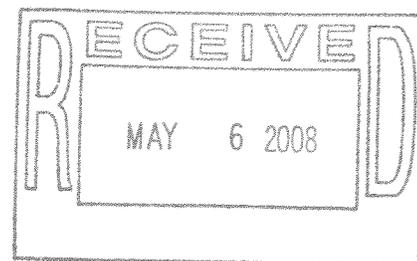
Please take into consideration the impact of the project to the characteristics and safety of the Rockpine residents. Along with 14 of the homeowners on Rockpine, I have signed a petition opposing this project. Clearly, the community is against this project.

I ask that you and the Planning Commission reject this proposal

Yours truly,

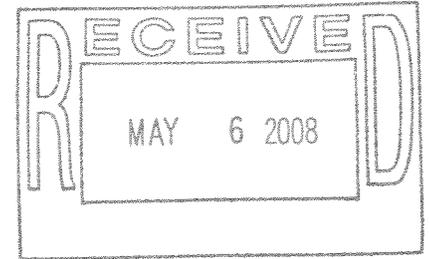


Peter Taranto



May 1, 2008

To: Mr. Jodie Sackett
Senior Regional Planning Assistant
Department of Regional Planning
Land Divisions Section
320 West Temple Street, Room 1382
Los Angeles, California 90012



From: Mr. Gordon Wood
2713 Rockpine Lane
La Crescenta, California 91214

Subject: Tentative Parcel Map No. 063010
Variance Case No. 2007-00011-(5)
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Ladies and Gentlemen,

This letter is to express my strong opposition to the subject project. The proposed changes would allow structures that are not consistent with the characteristics of the neighborhood, inconsistent with the hillside management provisions of the General Plan and possibly dangerous to future occupants and neighbors.

I have lived immediately east of Mr. Rogic's property at 2713 Rockpine Lane since 1990. I selected this property because it was in an established, quiet, peaceful neighborhood. Adjacent slopes had been in place since 1965. I felt that the slopes had achieved a stable angle of repose, endured some significant rains and so were unlikely to become unstable.

The Pinecrest Tract was developed in the early sixties by Webster Wiley. All of the plots in the Pinecrest Tract are over 100 feet deep and all homes have a minimum of 20 to 25 foot setback. Driveway slopes are less than 20 degrees. Pinecrest homes are generally less than 18 feet in height.

By contrast, the proposed homes would be balanced on some hundreds of lineal feet of terraced retaining walls running the entire 200+ foot length of the properties, rising at least 38 feet up the slope and topped by a 25,000 gallon swimming pool. Buildings would reach a height of 30 feet. I am estimating the height of the garage floor (from the "South Elevation" rendering) to be at least 3 feet above the street. With a five-foot setback, the driveway slope would be about 60 percent.

I invite the Commission and the Staff to visit the location in person prior to approving the proposal. It would become very clear once you see the topography of the general area that it is NOT suitable for subdivision or building houses per the proposal.

On page 8 of 11 of the Staff Report, Staff Evaluation under “Variance” section B. Willowhaven Drive please note the following statements:

Item 1. Specifically, on the subject property-side of Willowhaven Drive there are seven parcels with a net lot area between area 7,256 and 8,700 square feet.

Item 2. The two parcels directly adjacent to the east and west of the subject property on Willowhaven Drive each have a net lot area less than the applicant’s proposed 7,724 square feet.

These two statements are accurate, BUT incredibly misleading. The Willowhaven lots are virtually dead flat and buildable. The reason they are flat is that they are cut at the top of a steep slope. The toe of that slope is at the north side of Rockpine Lane. The proposed new parcels are on Rockpine Lane at the bottom of the slope that supports these flat properties. If Webster Wiley had decided to subdivide the north side of Rockpine Lane, he would have eliminated the flag lots off Willowhaven Drive, moved the slope back by 100 feet and created six flat buildable lots on the north side of Rockpine Lane. I am not a developer, but clearly the required excavation made that choice uneconomical. My point is that the comparisons between steep proposed parcels on the north side of Rockpine Lane and flat lots on the south side of Willowhaven Drive are irrelevant and intentionally misleading.

Similarly, in the “Rockpine Lane” section on the same page are these statements:

- 1. Along Rockpine Lane, there are eight parcels with a net lot area between 7,700 and 8,100 square feet.*
- 2. Four of the eight parcels along Rockpine Lane each have a net lot area less than the applicant’s proposed 7,724 square.*
- 3. Lastly, one parcel directly across Rockpine Lane from the subject property has a net lot area of less than 7,724 square feet.*

Plots on the south side of Rockpine Lane are (as staff observes) of an area similar to the proposed new parcels. However, it should be noted that each of these plots is over 100 feet deep and has a flat pad sufficient in size to allow any of the three floor plans of the original Webster Wiley development to exist without requiring any retaining walls. If one were to climb 100 feet (the length of a “standard” lot) north from Rockpine Lane on Mr. Rogic’s property he/she would be in the middle of his existing swimming pool.

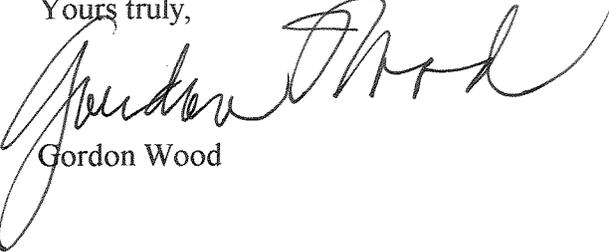
As indicated in the section about the lots on Willowhaven Drive, the two types of lots on Rockpine Lane are not comparable. The north side of Rockpine Lane is a 40 to 50 degree slope and lots on the south side are virtually flat and over 100 feet deep.

I fail to see how the proposed project can be described as “improvements”. I do not believe this proposal does anything to enhance or improve this community. I firmly believe that it will reduce the value of my home and other surrounding properties. Most

importantly, this project certainly subjects the neighborhood to the hazards of land slippage and washouts.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Please feel free to contact me if I can answer any questions or clarify my objections. I can be reached at 818-303-4499.

Yours truly,



Gordon Wood

May 1, 2008

To: Mr. Jodie Sackett
Senior Regional Planning Assistant
Department of Regional Planning
Land Divisions Section
320 West Temple Street, Room 1382
Los Angeles, California 90012

From: Mrs Rosemary Toby
2636 Willowhaven
La Crescenta, California 91214

Subject: Tentative Parcel Map No. 063010
Variance Case No. 2007-00011-(5)
Conditional Use Permit Case No 52005-00151-(5)

Dear Mr. Sackett,

My late husband and I moved into this house when it was new back in 1965. We love this quiet community. In 43 years, we have watched businesses developed in La Crescenta. Our Pinecrest community remains a quiet, friendly and intimate neighborhood.

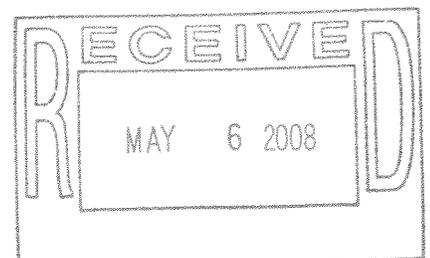
I oppose the subdivision of the subject lots and the building of two houses that will look very difference from the existing homes. I am also concerned that cutting into the hillside will cause it to become unstable.

Please reject this proposal and help keep this neighborhood intact.

Yours truly,



Mrs. Rosemary Toby

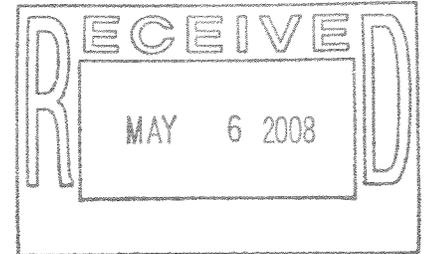


May 1, 2008

To: Mr. Jodie Sackett
Senior Regional Planning Assistant
Department of Regional Planning
Land Divisions Section
320 West Temple Street, Room 1382
Los Angeles, California 90012

From: Mrs. Anna Seu
2713 Rockpine Lane
La Crescenta, California 91214

Subject: Tentative Parcel Map No. 063010
Variance Case No. 2007-00011-(5)
Conditional Use Permit Case No 52005-00151-(5)



Dear Mr. Sackett,

First of all, thank you for taking time out on April 22 to meet with us. Again, I apologize for the unscheduled interruption of your busy day.

I have strong objections to the proposed project Tentative Parcel Map No. 063010. This letter serves as my written documentation of my objections. I will be out of the country on May 21st, and will not be able to attend the hearing in person. Therefore, I kindly ask that you included my letter for review by the Planning Commission.

My main objection: The proposed subdivision of the lot, terracing the hillside and eventual construction of two (2) new houses will destroy the characteristic and ambience of the neighborhood. The Pinecrest area was developed in the mid-1960. It is an established neighborhood. All the houses in and around the Subject Parcel are of three basic home styles. Many of the homes have been upgraded and remodeled, but ALL the remodeling has been interior or in the backyards. None of the remodeling has made significant visible changes to the look, feel and characteristics of the original development. The artist rendition of the two proposed houses bears absolutely no resemblance to the neighborhood. They will stick out like two sore thumbs.

I understand that the proposed building rendition may not be required as part of the subdivision proposal. However, the appearance and visual impact of the two proposed houses should be taken into account as you and the Commission evaluate the merits of the proposal. The artist rendition of the houses can be viewed on the Crescenta Valley Town Council website: www.crescentavalleytowncouncil.org. Click on the 'Land Use' tab, and then on the 'Willowhaven' tab.

You can clearly see that the drawings are incomplete, inaccurate and purposely misleading. They do not substantiate information that the applicant has submitted to the

Department of Regional Planning. I ask that you please take a moment to look at the drawings. A picture is worth a thousand words!

I am not alone in this objection. Please note that the two proposed houses will be built on Rockpine Lane, and can only be accessed from Rockpine Lane. Fact is, 14 out of 15 homes with Rockpine address have signed the petition opposing this project. The one home that did not sign is vacant and on the market, and the owner cannot be reached.

I have several observations and concerns after reviewing the "Staff Report, May 21, 2008 Regional Planning Commission Public Hearing." I appreciate that your evaluation is based on information provided by the applicant. In the following cases that I am citing, I question the accuracy and integrity of the information you received. I request that these concerns be addressed by the applicant prior to approval.

1. Page 1 of 11 – under Urban Hillside Management: *The proposed terraced grading is designed to reduce the overall impacts of the existing hillside'*
Page 4 of 11 – *the development shall 'apply innovative approaches to housing placement (including stepped multi-level designs)...*
Page 9 of 11 – Under Hillside Management CPU item A-2 *the project employs a sensitive terrace grading design to minimize the impact...*
There are many such vague, tenuous and imprecise statements all through the document, too many to list here.

Concern: "Reduce" and "Minimize" do not mean eliminate. There are no quantifying fact and figures in the entire document. "Innovative approaches" does not mean proven technology. The hillside is 40% to 50% incline. Removing 2,114 cubic feet of dirt from the hillside in this the Sierra Madre Fault zone cannot be glossed over with nebulous statement and claims. This is especially important as the removed dirt currently supports a swimming pool that will remain on Parcel 3, on the top of the hillside.

2. Page 3 of 11 – Project was first proposed in 1985 to construct one additional home. It was rejected by LA County Hearing Officer, denial sustained by County Regional Planning Commission, denial sustained by LA County Board of Supervisors for the reason that *'the proposal was inconsistent with the hillside management provision of the General Plan and the site was not physically suitable for development.'*

Concern: The hillside has not changed since that time. If it was not suitable for building one additional house in 1985, how can it be suitable for building two houses in 2008?

3. Page 6 of 11 – *Applicant is proposing a density of 4.1 dwelling units per acre, which exceeds the midpoint threshold.*

Concern: On what basis is this request for variance approved?

4. Page 6 of 11 – Under Hillside Management item 4. *The proposed development demonstrates creative and imaginative design resulting in a visual quality that will complement community character and benefit current and future residents.*

Objection: I cannot speak for ‘future’ residents, but 14 out of 15 current Rockpine residents see no benefit and strongly disagree with this arrogant statement. The drawings of the proposed houses absolutely do not complement the community and neighborhood. As stated previously, the development will destroy the characteristics of the Pinecrest neighborhood.

5. Page 7 of 11 – *At the time of writing, staff has not received any correspondence regarding the project proposal.*

Request: Please amend this statement prior to submission to the Commission. Aside from this letter, I understand from our meeting that you have received a Petition with 50+ signatures opposing this project.

6. Page 11 of 11 – item 3: *The current design proposes increased open space within the rear yard and a minimum set back distance of 40 feet for Parcel 1 and 28 feet for Parcel 2.*

Concern: This is an erroneous statement, made to mislead the Planning Department. The stated 40 feet and 28 feet set back cannot be verified. If the applicant is measuring from Parcel 3 on Willowhaven, this may be true. The fact is, Parcels 1 and 2 will have NO access from Willowhaven. If the subdivision is approved, both of these parcels will be accessed from Rockpine Lane. It is physically impossible to have a 28 feet set back from the street. This is outright trickery to maneuver around variance requirements.

I have reviewed the entire 67 pages of the package downloaded from Planning Commission Website and have the following concerns: (The following page numbers are for the entire 67 pages.)

7. Page 20 of 67 – item 3: *Permission is granted to provide minimum five feet of front yard set back distance each for Parcel Nos 1 and 2...*

Concern: What are the bases for this approval? ALL the houses in the neighborhood have a minimum of 20 to 25 feet of set back from the street to the garage. Both of the proposed houses will access their garages from Rockpine, and therefore, should have the minimum 20 feet set back from Rockpine.

If approval for the R-10000 variance on the lot size is based on the justification that these 2 lots are similar in size to the ones on Rockpine. Logic then follows

that these two lots must also conform to the set back distance like all the houses on Rockpine.

8. Page 25 of 67 – Item 27: *No construction equipment or vehicles shall be parked or stored on any existing or private streets.*

Concern: This is physically impossible for the proposed lots. The hillside on which parcels 1 and 2 reside comes right up to the sidewalk. There is no flat space for either of these lots. Please request that the applicant submit a plan on how this condition can be met prior to approval of the proposal.

9. Pg 57 of 67 – Item D : *Is the proposed use out-of-character in comparison to adjacent uses....*

Concern: the “NO” box is checked. I absolutely disagree for the reasons already stated in this letter.

Please feel free to contact me at 818-957-7995 or email anna.seu@earthlink.net prior to May 15, 2008 if you need additional information or clarification from me.

Again, thank you for meeting with us and for your further assistance in addressing my concerns.

Yours truly,



Anna Seu

CC: Crescenta Valley Town Council Land Use Committee

May 1, 2008

To: Crescenta Valley Town Council Land Use Committee

From: Mrs. Anna Seu
2713 Rockpine Lane
La Crescenta, California CA

Subject: Subdivision Proposal from Alex and Radoslava Rogic

Dear Committee,

I am putting in writing my objection to the proposed subdivision. Our small Rockpine Lane community in the Pinecrest Development is well established and the homes are homogenous. The hillside on Rockpine has blessedly been stable through the several earthquakes and rainstorms in the past few decades.

Mr. Rogic's self serving proposal to subdivide his property and build 2 houses downhill from his Willow Haven property will destroy the characteristics, look and feel of our neighborhood.

- There will be multiple retaining walls extending the full 214 feet of the Rockpine Lane frontage and 40 feet up the hill.
- The proposed buildings are 28 feet high. None of the houses in the neighborhood are more than 20 feet high.
- Houses in this development are of 3 basic plans. The proposed houses bear no resemblance to the existing homes.
- The "Site Plan" shows that the driveway to the houses has a 5-foot setback. ALL houses along Rockpine have a minimum of 20 feet. It is not clear from the plans what is the slope of the driveway.
- Mr. Rogic proposes to cut into the hillside and remove 2114 cubic feet of dirt for the development. This will not double destabilize the hillside that supports a swimming pool.

The drawings that Mr. Rogic submitted to the Town Council and currently available on the website are incomplete and misleading.

- The "Site Plan" indicates two houses to be built along Rockpine. The "South Elevation" shows only one house.
- The East elevation and West elevation views are from between the 2 houses. They are NOT views of the development.
- The Section plan shows the height of the building, but does not indicate the elevation above the street.

I have also reviewed the LA County Planning Commission Staff Report and have many concerns. I have documented my concerns in a letter to the LA County Planning Department; a copy of the letter is attached for your consideration.

I am not alone in my objection. 50+ Pinecrest residents have signed a petition opposing this project. More significantly, 14 out of 15 homes with Rockpine Lane address (which the 2 houses will be built on) have signed the petition. The one house that did not sign is vacant and on the market. The owner cannot be reached.

My travel commitment prevents me from attending the Town Council Meeting on May 15, 2008. I am submitting this letter in advance to voice my objection.

Please examine Mr. Rogic's presentation carefully, and evaluate its merits based on facts.

Yours truly,

Anna Seu

CC: Mr. Jodie Sackette, LA Regional Planning
Attachment
