

# SANTA BARBARA NEWS-PRESS



## Environmental review under way

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A proposal for construction of an 11,498-square-foot single-story house on a knoll overlooking Highway 101 west of Goleta is currently undergoing environmental analysis by Santa Barbara Planning and Development.

Proposed plans also include a 1,798-square-foot garage, an 800-square-foot guest house with a 568-square-foot garage, and a 1,200-square-foot barn on a 17-acre parcel.

The applicant and owner is Lynn Ballantyne.

In June, the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors decided -- in response to an appeal filed by the Gaviota Coast Conservancy -- that its 2006 approval of the project was a discretionary act, triggering review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Seeking information to use in its CEQA review, the county Planning and Development Department on Sept. 18 sent Ms. Ballantyne a letter requesting details on her building plan. In the letter, the county asked Ms. Ballantyne to document previous visual simulations that show the heights of the proposed buildings in relation to the sky and views from public places.

The county's Visual Resource Policy prohibits intrusion of structures into the skyline from a public viewing place.

"We're in the process of completing (this information) -- it may be another month or so," said Richard Adam, Ms. Ballantyne's attorney for the project.

On Monday, Supervisor Salud Carbajal, representing the 1st District, said, "This is a challenging circumstance as it relates to local visual hillside policies. We need to be careful (that any decision on the project) doesn't set a bad precedent for proliferation of development on the Gaviota Coast."

The site of the proposed residence is a ridge overlooking Rancho Embarcadero and Hwy. 101 west of Goleta.

Mike Lunsford, president of the Gaviota Coast Conservancy, said that if the project is approved in a way that does not meet their satisfaction, the Conservancy will file a lawsuit.

"This is the kind of thing that would have to go to a judge, because if this goes through, the Gaviota Coast is in trouble," Mr. Lunsford said.

Houses on hilltops are "OK for Malibu," he said, "but not for Santa Barbara County."

The applicant states in her appeal letter, "The extremely low profile of the Ballantyne residence, its placement on the site in a curved configuration, and the arrangement of the roof elements all follow the natural contours of the land. The house does not make any kind of statement that could detract from the hills and rolling areas to the west. it's design is subdued."

Planning and Development's analysis states, "The property would be sited on the ridge about 2,000 feet north of Hwy. 101 and Calle Real. The ridge is not screened by topography or vegetation. As a result the ridge is the most prominent point on the subject parcel and the residence would be highly visible as seen in the foreground from public viewing places such as Hwy. 101, Farren Road and Calle Real. The residence's large size . . . accentuates its visibility."

The county is requiring the applicant to provide documentation for her photo composition and site sections. Specifically requested are the name and qualifications of the surveyor, architect and others who prepared the photo (height) compositions; a map with topography showing locations of camera positions relative to location of the residence; a description of the locations of the cameras with GPS coordinates and elevations; a copy of air photographs used to prepare the photo compositions, including resolution; and descriptions of any methodology used to verify accuracy of photo compositions, such as story poles or field survey. Also, if story poles were used, the county wants the name of the person who erected the poles, the date the poles were erected, the site plan showing location of poles and photographs.

The county is asking for similar detail with respect to the site sections.

Additional information on proposed utilities, water supply, sewage disposal, grading and landscape plans is also sought in the county's information request.

Ms. Ballantyne declined to comment except through her attorney.

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