



Planning Commission Staff Report

Date: May 23, 2012
Case No.: 3.3387 MAA (APPEAL)
Type: Appeal of Director's Decision
Applicant: Mary Esper
Location: 1855 West Crestview Drive
APN: 513-363-038
General Plan: Estate Residential (0 – 2.0 du/ac)
Zone: R-1-C (Single Family Residential)
From: Craig A. Ewing, AICP, Director of Planning Services
Project Planner: David A. Newell, Associate Planner

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The property owner, Mary Esper, has filed an appeal of the Planning Director's decision of April 18, 2012, for the property located at 1855 West Crestview Drive. The Director approved a request to re-roof flat roof portions with urethane foam and required that the color be tan. The appellant is seeking that the approval be modified to allow white color urethane foam.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Planning Commission uphold the decision of the Planning Director denying the request to allow a re-roof color of white.

BACKGROUND:

On April 18, 2012, the applicant submitted the application and the Planning Department approved the request to re-roof the flat portions of the roof with tan urethane foam.

On May 2, 2012, the applicant / appellant filed a request to appeal the Director's decision to the Planning Commission (see attachment # 3).

SETTING:

The subject property is approximately 0.57-acres in size and located at the upper terminus of Crestview Drive. The subject property is bounded by residential uses to the north and south, and vacant hillsides to the west and east. Surrounding land uses, Zoning, and General Plan designations are detailed below:

Table 1: Surrounding Land Uses:

	General Plan	Zone	Land Use
North	Estate Residential	R-1-B (Single-Family Resident'l)	Single-Family Resident'l
South	Estate Residential	R-1-C (Single-Family Resident'l)	Single-Family Resident'l
East	Estate Residential	R-1-B (Single-Family Resident'l)	Vacant Hillside Land
West	Open Space – Mtn.	O-20 (Open Land)	Vacant Hillside Land

The existing single-family residence was constructed in 1954 with subsequent additions and modifications have been completed.



SUBJECT RESIDENCE

APPEAL

The applicant/appellant provided six reasons for modifying the approval to allow a white roof. Staff has listed each reason and responded below:

1. *A white roof is a more energy-efficient roof, consistent with the City's stated commitment to environmental sustainability. The solar reflectance*

and high thermal emittance of a white reflective roof coating is 25 to 30 percent greater than a tan roof coating;

Staff's decision to require a tan roof color was based on the guidelines of Section 94.04.00 "Architectural Review" of the Zoning Code; specifically, subsection (D)(4) states, "Building design, materials and colors to be sympathetic with desert surroundings." A white color roof is too reflective and not sympathetic with the desert surroundings. None of the review guidelines specify that energy-efficiency be considered as stated above by the appellant.

Further, the Planning Commission has not allowed white roofs as a regular practice when reviewing projects under the guidelines of Section 94.04.00 of the Zoning Code.

- 2. For the cost to be invested in this project (\$25,000), a properly maintained white reflective roof coating will result in a longer expected life of the new roof, which will reduce long-term environmental impact by reducing landfilling of old roof materials, reduced dust emissions from deferred construction and reduced greenhouse gas emissions;*

The esthetic considerations of a white reflective roof must be balanced with the costs and energy-conserving benefits. The Commission has directed that tan roofs be required.

- 3. Our adjacent neighbor directly south of our property on El Portal is also a hillside home and was recently allowed to use a white reflective roof coating on their new roof. We request similar consideration;*

The approval of a white roof was based on the fact that a white roof already existed at this property and it would match the existing condition.

- 4. There are no permanent structures above our home where residents would be visually impacted by a white roof;*

Location of adjacent home elevations was not known at the time of approval. Nonetheless, staff determined a tan roof would be appropriate based on direction from the Planning Commission and the guidelines of Section 94.04.00 of the Zoning Code.

- 5. Hillside hikers are far up the hillside on the Lykken Trail and their view of La Mesa neighborhood is predominantly of white roofs; and*

White roofs may exist on homes that are in the "La Mesa" neighborhood but not in an architectural review area. Thus, the color of the roof is not reviewed under the architectural review guidelines outlined in Section 94.04.00 of the Zoning Code.

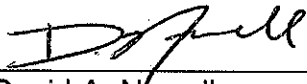
- 6. From a ground or street view perspective, the perimeter tan shingle portion of our planned new roof completely eliminates any visibility of the*

flat roof portion which would be white.

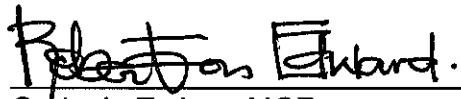
The Commission's direction was understood by staff to be required in all cases to reduce white roofs from all hillside views.

CONCLUSION:

That the Planning Commission uphold the decision of the Planning Director denying the request to allow a white roof for the hillside property located at 1855 West Crestview Drive.



David A. Newell
Associate Planner


FOR

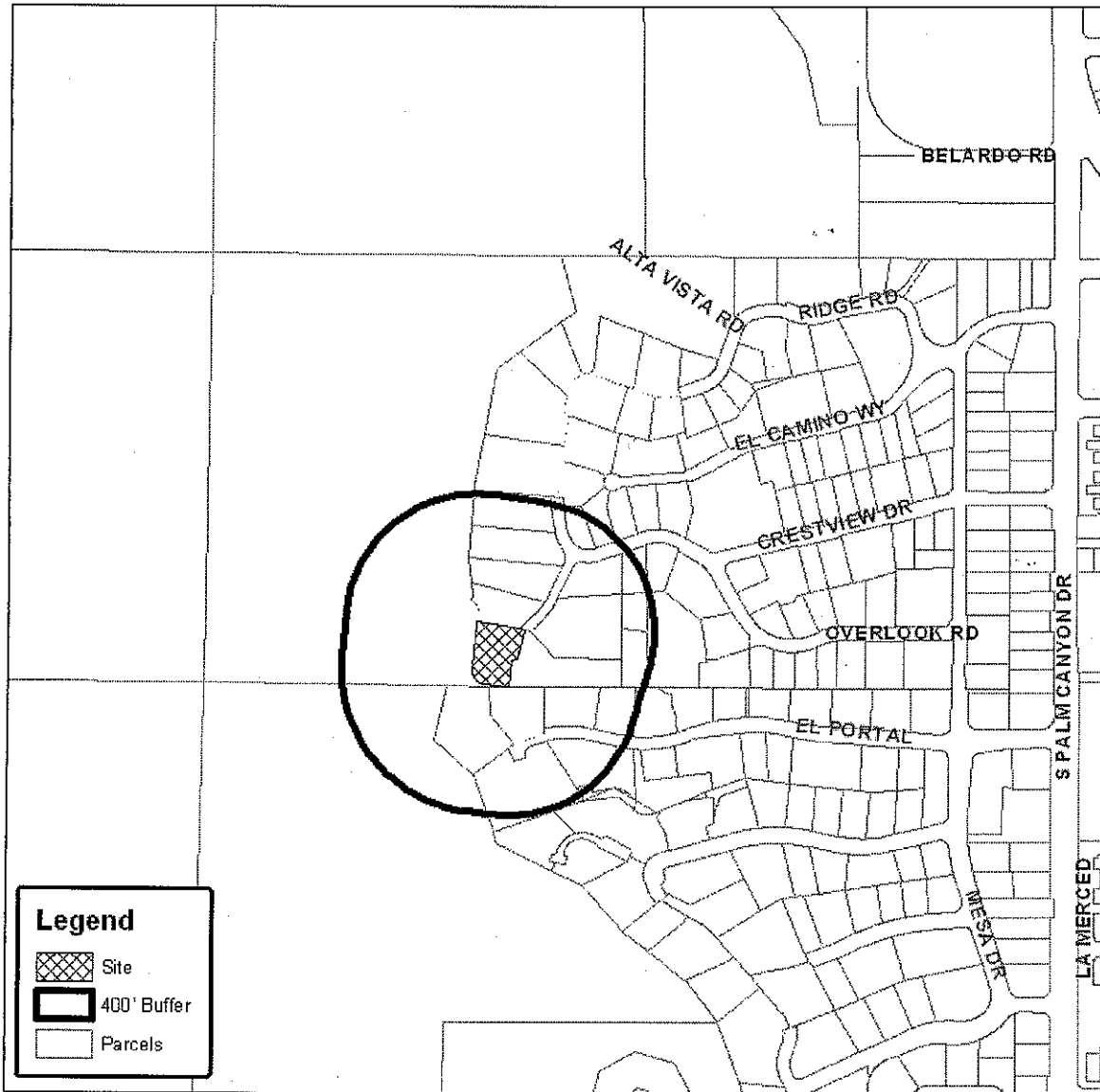
Craig A. Ewing, AICP
Director of Planning Services

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Vicinity Map
2. Denial Resolution
3. Letter of appeal by applicant
4. Existing Site Photographs



Department of Planning Services Vicinity Map



CITY OF PALM SPRINGS

CASE NO: 3.3387 MAA Appeal

APPLICANT: Mary Esper

DESCRIPTION: Appeal by Mary Esper of the Planning Director's decision to require a white roof color for her a re-roof project at 1855 West Crestview Drive, Zone R-1-C, Section 27.

RESOLUTION NO.

A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA UPHOLDING THE DECISION OF THE DIRECTOR OF PLANNING SERVICES AND DENYING AN APPEAL BY MARY ESPER TO RE-ROOF FLAT PORTIONS OF HER RESIDENCE A TAN COLOR AT THE PROPERTY LOCATED 1855 WEST CRESTVIEW DRIVE, APN 513-363-038.

WHEREAS, on April 18, 2012, the Planning Director approved a re-roof of the flat portions of the roof of a single-family residence located at 1855 West Crestview Drive, and required the roof color to be tan; and

WHEREAS, on May 2, 2012, the property owner, Mary Esper, filed an appeal request of the Planning Director's decision; and

WHEREAS, Sections 94.04.00(E)(2)(b) of the Palm Springs Zoning Code allows decisions by the Director of Planning Services to be appealed to the Planning Commission; and

WHEREAS, on May 23, 2012, the Planning Commission conducted a public review of the appeal request, including all of the evidence presented in connection with the matter, including, but not limited to, the staff report prepared on the matter, and all written and oral testimony presented.

THE PLANNING COMMISSION HEREBY FINDS AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1: That the decision by the Director of Planning Services to require a tan re-roof was justified based on the following:

1. Staff's decision to require a tan roof color was based on the guidelines of Section 94.04.00 "*Architectural Review*" of the Zoning Code; specifically, subsection (D)(4) states, "*Building design, materials and colors to be sympathetic with desert surroundings.*" A white color roof is too reflective and not sympathetic with the desert surroundings.
2. The Planning Commission's direction has more recently been to require tan or beige roofs.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that, based upon the foregoing, the Planning Commission hereby rejects the appeal and upholds the decision of the

Director of Planning Services for the re-roof to a tan color at the property located at 1855 West Crestview Drive.

ADOPTED this 23rd day of May, 2012.

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

ATTEST:

CITY OF PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA

Craig A. Ewing, AICP
Director of Planning Services

May 2, 2012

Planning Commission
City of Palm Springs
3200 E. Tahquitz Canyon Way
Palm Springs, CA 92262

Subject: Appeal of Building Permit
Tan Reflective Roof Coat
1855 W. Crestview Drive
Palm Springs, CA 92264

RECEIVED

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PLANNINGSERVICES

Dear Planning Commissioners,

This letter is written on behalf of Ian Webster and I as owners of the property located at 1855 West Crestview Drive. We request your consideration of a change to the final roofing layer specified in the roofing permit approved by the City on April 18, 2012. Our home is located on the hillside in La Mesa neighborhood and we understand that the City requires that the final roof layer must be a color other than white. Our current permit states that the final layer will be tan.

Our existing roof consists of a flat roof portion with white gravel over a cap sheet, and a perimeter sloped and shingled portion that is situated 4-feet above the flat roof. The flat portion is about 60% of the total roof's square footage. We plan to replace the flat roof portion and a portion of the shingle perimeter with an insulated composite roof which will include a final layer of reflective coating. The remaining shingle portion surrounding two-thirds of the roof perimeter will be re-shingled with tan shingles.

Since obtaining the permit, we have researched and pondered the trade-offs of using a tan versus white final roofing layer. Considering the factors described below, we respectfully request the City to allow the use of a white reflective coating as our final roof layer over the applicable area:

- A white roof is a more energy-efficient roof, consistent with the City's stated commitment to environmental sustainability. The solar reflectance and high thermal emittance of a white reflective roof coating is 25 to 30 percent greater than a tan reflective roof coating¹;
- For the cost to be invested in this project (about \$25,000), a properly maintained white reflective roof coating will result in a longer expected life of the new roof, which will reduce long-term environmental impact by reducing landfilling of old roof materials, reduced dust emissions from deferred construction and reduced greenhouse gas emissions²;
- Our adjacent neighbor directly south of our property on El Portal is also a hillside home and was recently allowed to use a white reflective roof coating on their new roof. We request similar consideration;
- There are no permanent structures above our home where residents would be visually impacted by a white roof;

¹ 2012, Personal Communication. Rick Marto, Tropical Roofing (supplier of reflective roof coatings), May 1.

² Akbari, Hashem; Surabi Menon and Arthur Rosenfeld (6 2009). "Global cooling: increasing world-wide urban albedos to offset CO₂". *Climatic Change* 94 (3): 275-286. doi:10.1007/s10584-008-9515-9. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10584-008-9515-9>.

- Hillside hikers are far up the hillside on the Lykken Trail and their view of La Mesa neighborhood is predominantly of white roofs; and
- From a ground or street view perspective, the perimeter tan shingle portion of our planned new roof completely eliminates any visibility of the flat roof portion which would be white.

If all urban, flat roofs worldwide were whitened, the reduction in carbon emissions would be 24 Gigatonnes, or equivalent to taking 300 million cars off the road for 20 years. This is based on the fact that a 1,000-square-foot (93 m²) white roof will offset 10 tons of carbon dioxide over its 20 year lifetime.³ By comparison, a tan roof is estimated to offset 30% less CO₂, or just 7 tons over a 20 year lifetime.

In closing, we believe there is a significant environmental benefit to replacing the applicable portion of our roof in kind with a white roof, and that there is recent precedent with an adjacent hillside neighbor being permitted by the City to install a white reflective final roof coat.

With the incorporation of green goals into the City's long-term strategic plan, as exemplified by the ever increasing construction of green buildings, we would appreciate your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,



Mary J. Esper

Cc: Craig Ewing, Planning Director
David Newell, Planning Department
Ian Webster

³ California Energy Commission (2005). *Residential Compliance Manual For California's 2005 Energy Efficiency Standards*. Sacramento, CA: California Energy Commission. <http://www.energy.ca.gov/2005publications/CEC-400-2005-005/CEC-400-2005-005-CMF.PDF>.

