

re: Messenger House Phase 2 – SEPA Public Comment Period

April 16, 2021

Dear All,

Some of you have read and viewed our previous comments and photos/maps on the Messenger House Phase II development relative to our home next door. Please forgive any repeats! We thought it best to include all of you who may be involved in the decision-making, knowing Messenger House is eager to move forward, and we are equally eager to have our needs as an immediate neighbor taken into account. This way, we'll all be on the same page.

As reference, we have correspondence, documents, photos and maps regarding both the 1994/95 CUP and related property updates, and this proposed current remodel/upgrade. Please let us know if you'd like copies of this communications trail.

On to the issues and proposed remedies...

Conditional Use Permit: ongoing non-compliance

1995. The 1995 expansion of the Messenger House facility, including a new wing to the north and a new parking lot to the southwest, grossly violated the requirement that neighboring residences be buffered by the property's existing heavily forested perimeter. In 1995, the forest between us was totally clear-cut, and the gently sloped lot was re-graded and elevated for the new parking lot, to an altitude parallel to our living space and leaving us wide open to **noise, light, traffic**, noisy late night **shift changes** – a complete loss of privacy: a significant impact, not a subtle insert. The parking lot sits just 110' from our home. Over the next years, in response, Messenger House partially recreated a replacement buffer, adding some Leland Cypress and replacing tall commercial parking lot lights with lower ones. But the “buffer” never did shut out sound or headlights, and most of it has since died. We were, and remain, aware this is not a private residence next door to us. They never fully complied.

Now. The new upgrade to Messenger House references the same CUP; it does not meet these guidelines, either. This is a high impact project, not benign: a wholly new building, not only of greater height (3 stories vs. 1), but extending beyond the existing footprint (closer to its bordering residences to the west/south [us ~25 feet closer as designed] and south/east [Coleman], extending east down the historically gracious hillside, cutting into the elegant grounds and lawn), and serving a more mobile range of residential clients, beyond nursing and memory care—sure to make it a livelier place. Which is not bad. But it is a different use. Thus, as adjacent neighbors we will have even more noise, more light, more traffic.

The 1995 expansion, in its CUP review, assured the neighborhood that its new building would be “tucked away, not visible to the neighbors” (the Alzheimer's wing, recently

refurbished). It was. By contrast, this new assisted living building will definitely not be tucked away! Three stories with windows and balconies facing our property, new public social spaces near us, indoors and out, set further east down the hillside toward Manitou Park Boulevard, and further south toward us. Adequate buffering is essential – for privacy, noise, light, and security—to maintain the quiet residential nature of our home and this neighborhood.

REQUESTS: *Construction Period*

- Limit work to M-F, 7am – 7pm (audible work on Saturdays, and/or beyond 7pm)
- Re-locate this construction parking/staging if possible (west side vs. south)
- If not, please add temporary noise-proof fencing around the parking lot, on both sides (buffering both sides of Corbett, and Coleman). This will offset:
 - Large trucks in and out with constant deliveries
 - Constant back-up beeps (hearing loss = 70db, these are 97-112db)
 - The mobile home on site 24/7 with crew/music/generator running
 - Fencing may also prevent the cans, bottles, and trash tossed our way
 - Phase II (construction much closer to us) will be even more impactful

REQUESTS: *The Overall Project*

- A new CUP. This project deviates from the 1990s CUP both in scale and detail; and the previous Messenger House update was never fully in compliance (buffers)
- Plant and maintain a dense 6'+ green buffer (ie *Thuja*) around the southwest parking lot on the sides bordering both adjacent residences – Corbett and Coleman
- Locate staff parking to the west lot (opposite entry) to minimize shift change noise
- Consider re-locating the new building within the existing footprint/distance (the new building is ~25' closer to us; we don't know the Coleman proximity difference)
- Also assure tall/dense vegetative screening on neighboring side of the 3-story wing, given the new residence windows (light) and balconies (noise) face our homes
- Assure grounds lighting is residential-neighborhood-compliant; not too tall or bright.

A NOTE: Noise from Messenger House has a greater effect on us than might be apparent from looking at a map, or standing in the parking lot and looking our way. Our lot is contoured in something of a bowl shape that directs and focuses sound toward our house. Guests on our deck are surprised to hear clearly conversations taking place in the parking lot, be they staff, construction workers, or children learning to bicycle during this past Covid summer. Leyland Cypress have proven extremely ineffective as sound barriers. Even our neighbor the next lot over, retired acoustic engineer Charles Schmid, hears this parking lot noise loud and clearly.

SEPA: Wildlife habitat concerns

While we're tucked away from Manitou Park Boulevard, our property borders Messenger House on two sides, both to the south *and* to the west. Half of our one-acre lot is natural forest with a seasonal pond, adjacent to another forested half-acre open space lot we co-own. We're also adjacent to a undeveloped forested parcel belonging to Messenger House. And further north across the Messenger House access road is another large protected forested parcel owned by the Rolling Bay Land Co. In other words, this is a richly forested patch of the island. Our property is home to wildlife (both transient and permanent) increasingly squeezed by Island development: deer, otter, bald eagles, Barred Owls, water fowl, frogs, birds (many!), rabbits, squirrels, raccoons, etc. We're trying to be good stewards.

Public path (proposed)

We do not want a public pathway bordering our two properties (Corbett and Coleman), as proposed in January site drawings. This proposed 6'-wide gravel path was drawn along the outside/our side of the never-used (1910) city right-of-way that jags between our property and Michael Coleman's: a border we share with Messenger House. This path would render buffering moot, and pose security concerns; it would be a huge public invasion of our privacy. It would also disrupt the wildlife we've allowed to thrive here.

The Messenger House developers' idea of enhancing the property to feature it as an Island destination was an unpopular notion with area residents during a 2020 project walk-through. And this path would be redundant: locals already use the existing route between Manitou Beach Road and Manitou Park Boulevard. They wouldn't choose this awkward potential trail. Besides, the Messenger House site plan includes a diverse and accessible trail network.

Request to vacate right-of-way

Both adjacent property owners (Corbetts and Coleman) plan to apply for vacation of the never-used, 111-year-old, 30' right-of-way between us and the Messenger House property. It is wholly unusable as a roadway. We would purchase it, if necessary, as an additional privacy assurance, allowing us to landscape for better buffering, and to steward this buffer ourselves.

If the City chooses to initiate this vacation, we would accept a grant of this property to append to each of ours, respectively. We would similarly landscape and steward this buffering border to help keep the new Messenger House project in better CUP compliance, knowing how the City values the prospect of this quality senior/care community.

We hope the architect and Cascade Holdings are supportive of this application for vacation, in recognition that this current large-impact project, along with its previous remodel, has a significant effect on the quiet residential nature of both this neighborhood and our two homes.

Thank you for considering our input. We're happy to answer any questions, and look forward to working with you to see this through.

All the best,



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