

I am writing in support of the MHRB's recent decision regarding the above property.

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> This property has been an eyesore for many, many years. When my husband and I first starting visiting Mendocino, 15 years ago, we took note of it. There was an old RV there, multiple broken-down "structures," (some looked like dog- or play-houses), and a general feeling of decay.

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> So you would think that we and all the neighbors would be all for any kind of "improvement" on the property. In this case, due to the nature of the plans, we are not.

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> The MHRB guidelines are clear about how new construction should blend in with the old and not detract from the town's basic nature, which is Victorian and vertical. These stringent requirements are why it is difficult to sell lots here, and why similar houses are worth approximately 50% more here than in other coastal towns. This charm is what we all paid for.

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> In the case of this property, the plans are not at all in keeping with the guidelines. The main structure looks like a Ranch-style motel, not at all Victorian, let alone vertical. Also, the planned structures are too close to the lot lines, causing a real fire danger. There's a reason for setbacks; it's not just aesthetics! Additionally, the number of exterior doors implies multiple independent residents, and the street is very narrow and has inadequate parking already, further increasing the fire danger. (If there is a parked car on this block of Albion, there is only room for one-lane traffic.)

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> A further concern I have is that residents are starting to sense that the Board of Supervisors may be more likely to cave in to appeals of MHRB decisions due to a fear that the property owners will sue if they are denied. This means people of means are able to afford to push their projects through, and may damage the town's overall feeling, while people without means cannot afford to appeal and are less likely to threaten legal action. Sadly, this echoes the unfairness of the criminal justice system and just encourages more appeals of their decisions and more disregard for the guidelines.

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> The MHRB offered reasonable options to the owner for approval. In my opinion, after four years of multiple hearings by the all-volunteer MHRB, the appellant should completely rethink the plans — or sell the lot to someone who loves the way the town looks and wants to continue to honor that with their plans.

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> Sincerely,

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> Jean T. Arnold