

I would like to introduce the content of the the attached letter with a few points. One is that I believe the Zoom meeting of the DRB that my wife and I attended was on August 12, 2021 when the size of the project and M8 were discussed in some detail.

The environmental concerns about the project at 771-773 First Street have changed since 2001. The preservation of this kind of unique property that borders on watershed is even more of a concern now than it was tin 2001. We have experienced more draught, more fires, more atmospheric rivers, and higher temperatures since 2001. These conditions will become ever more severe as we proceed into our age of global warming. It is projected we will have even higher temperatures, more severe atmospheric river events. So the preservation of this kind of natural corridor and watershed wher the project will be located becomes even more important for ourselves and for future generations.

As part of the Calder Creek watershed, the proposed structure with its 5000+ square foot footprint will greatly affect this sensitive area. In previous meetings DRB staff expressed concerns that it was just too large a footprint for such a restricted building area, bordering as it does trees to the East and Calder Creek to the west.

The house at 900 Bayberry Ct that is used for size comparison for the project is on a City Cul de Sac. It is a completely different kind of site with none of the rural and natural preserve and riparian concerns that characterize the site of the proposed 5000+ square foot structure to be built at 771-773 First street.

A house with a more modest footprint than 5000+ square feet would do much to preserve the important and inherent qualities of this sensitive area. It would still be a tremendously enjoyable site in which to live, sharing as it does the charming rural character of the First Street area.

Saturday, February 25, 2023

I would like to thank the DRB, the Schochs, and the interested neighbors for their willingness to continue to work on the proposed project for 771- 773 First St., Sebastopol. A special thank you to Steve and Rose because this is undoubtedly their dream house. And thank you for throwing the party last year for the neighbors where we all had a chance to meet you and see what great neighbors you would be. I speak for myself and my wife Dale when I say we look forward to having you as neighbors.

Thank you for the tree mitigation measures in the proposal now. The existing older trees will provide privacy, shade, and wildlife and environmental benefits like CO2 removal for this wonderful area.

There are a few things that are troubling me about the process and the substance of the proposal as it now stands. One is the timing of the very important meetings that either have taken place or will take place. There was a meeting in early January, 2023 without substantive public notice and no public input. Additionally there is a great deal of material presented on line for the February 28th meeting. It takes time to review it all, and it takes even more time to understand it and to think about it and respond in a thoughtful way that is respectful to all parties involved.

We received the card announcing the February 28th DRB meeting on February 24th. Thank you for sending it. There is the intervening weekend of February 25 and 26. It is an important meeting for all of us in the neighborhood because what is done on the land here has an impact on all of us in the immediate neighborhood, and I would also add that it has an impact on all of Sebastopol. So I wish the 28th meeting could have been held at a later date. As it is, It is nearly impossible to even ask a question to Sebastopol DRB staff and receive an answer since there is only one business day, Monday the 27th, before the DRB meeting takes place. It doesn't allow enough time for those who may be away or working or otherwise engaged on February 28th at 3:30 to change their schedules so they can attend the DRB meeting.

The second point is about the nature and quality of the neighborhood. The area being addressed in this proposal is an extremely sensitive naturally preserved area. It is one of the last pieces of riparian land in East Sebastopol left in its natural state. Calder Creek watershed runs through it. Some heritage protected trees have lived on the land for decades. The preserve quality of the land extends to wildlife and to the surrounding neighborhood. My wife Dale and I have found tiger salamanders in our garden on 814 Jewell Ave. to the East of the property. We have seen deer on the property being considered. Many species of

birds live, nest, and forage there. We see the creek running through our neighbor's yard to the southwest of us. So all of these natural features will be impacted by what is done on the property in question.

In a previous meeting we attended of the DRB, there was guidance given to the project's builder and manager about the radius of the houses that could be used to compare the proposed structure's size to what is already present in the neighborhood. The radius adopted was 650 feet from the proposed project. The project manager/builder wanted to use all of the Swain Woods neighborhoods to do the comparison for what will be built on 771-773 First Street, and he has now submitted materials again using Swain Woods for comparison. That idea was originally rejected at the public meeting by the DRB in favor of the 650 foot radius for comparison. Why is that radius important? It is important because of the extreme sensitivity of the 771-773 First St land, its character and function as a natural riparian preserve for Calder Creek watershed, and its associated wildlife.

The First Street neighborhood itself is unique. You won't find an active pig farm anywhere in the Swain Woods neighborhoods. You won't see your neighbor walking her pig down the street on a leash. You experience that only in the more rural neighborhood and setting of First Street. You will not find in Swain Woods a continuation of the nature corridor that is present on First Street, Calder Creek area. That natural corridor continues through the ranch that exists on Leland at the North end of First Street, right across from the existing pig farm. The ranch has livestock and pasture for animals. Both the pig farm and the ranch with its animals are visited regularly by parents with children so that they can interact with the animals. Those features are not present in Swain Woods.

So I'm saying the First Street area is unique in its qualities. It functions as a nature preserve. It has unique agrarian qualities that will become ever more important and rare as people encroach more and more on natural areas.

Ours is a time of atmospheric rivers and droughts, weather events that get more intense as global warming proceeds. The land under consideration has unique characteristics that protect the Calder Creek watershed. That watershed will grow in importance to the entire City of Sebastopol as the weather changes. The importance of these kinds of environmentally sensitive areas will grow, not just for us who are here now, but even more so for future generations.

These considerations bring me to the size of the footprint of the proposed Schoch residence, workshops and garages. In the papers available on the website there is this statement, "The building's footprint has not changed from the original submission". We in the neighborhood were invited to attend the DRB

meeting held on August 12, 2021. My wife and I as well as other neighbors did attend that meeting on Zoom. In the minutes of the meeting you will find the concerns expressed by some DRB staff members regarding the size of the footprint of the proposed Schoch residence at 771- 773 First Street, where it “meets the ground.” You can also read their concerns regarding the appropriateness of such a large footprint structure on the restricted nature of the building site itself.

So here is what I am suggesting. A more modest footprint structure would do much to preserve the qualities of the site I have outlined above. A smaller footprint with bigger setbacks from the creek to the west and from the trees to the east would better respect and preserve the valuable natural qualities of the site.

So I am asking the Schochs to please reconsider the footprint size of the structure to be built at 771-773 First Street in favor of a smaller structure. I emphasize in all of this that we would love to have you as neighbors, and we respect your right to build on the property, but I do believe that you also keep in mind the environmental impacts of what you are proposing. For these reason, can these plans be changed in favor of a smaller footprint?

Sincerely,

Daniel [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]