

**Beth Taylor**  
**141 Pepper Ave, Burlingame CA**

June 9, 2025

City of Burlingame  
Planning Department-Community Development Department  
501 Primrose Road  
Burlingame, CA 94010

**RE: 121 Pepper Ave, Burlingame zoned R-1**

Dear Members of the Design Review Board,

I hope this letter finds you well. First and foremost, I want to sincerely thank each of you—both the city staff and volunteer board members—for your dedicated service. Your thoughtful work helps ensure that the character of Burlingame is preserved while allowing for responsible and sensitive development. It is deeply appreciated.

I am a neighbor and longtime resident of Burlingame and Burlingame Park, living on Pepper Avenue—one of the legacy streets that helps define the unique charm and architectural character of our neighborhood. This area is filled with original homes that represent the era in which the neighborhood was first developed. From historic Craftsman and Spanish Revival styles to other early 20th-century designs, the homes here are unique, artfully designed, and carry a timeless presence that gives the neighborhood its distinctive feel.

With this deep connection to the neighborhood in mind, I am writing to express my concerns about the proposed design for the property at 121 Pepper Ave. While I understand and support thoughtful evolution in housing, I am concerned that the proposed home may not respect the established architectural style, rhythm, and scale of the existing homes on our street. The current home on the property already fits well with the character of the neighborhood. If the owners wish to modernize it internally or even thoughtfully enhance its exterior while maintaining its historic charm, that approach would be far more appropriate and appreciated.

In addition, I would like to respectfully remind the Planning Commission of a prior project in the neighborhood that proved extremely problematic for the community. A home was approved that, unfortunately, became a major disruption. The original owner and contractor essentially abandoned the construction project for nearly two years. It took over seven years to complete in total, and during that time, the surrounding neighbors were left with an incomplete structure, safety hazards, and a property that was poorly maintained. The re-landscaping caused significant water issues not just for the site itself but also for surrounding properties. That situation left a lasting impact on the neighborhood and remains a cautionary example.

Given this context, I urge the Planning Commission and the current owners to strongly reconsider whether demolition of the existing home is necessary. The present structure already aligns with the neighborhood's character, and there are creative ways to modernize or expand upon it without compromising the historical integrity of Pepper Avenue. A remodel that reflects a modern interior while preserving the timeless look of the home's exterior would be far more in harmony with the values and aesthetics of the neighborhood.

Thank you again for your time and for considering the perspectives of the neighbors who are deeply invested in maintaining the beauty, history, and cohesiveness of Burlingame Park.

Sincerely,  
**Beth Taylor**  
Neighbor, Pepper Avenue  
Burlingame Park

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From: Donna Colson <[REDACTED]>  
Sent: Monday, June 9, 2025 11:15 AM  
To: Public Comment <publiccomment@burlingameorgnew.onmicrosoft.com>  
Cc: Walker Shores <wshores@burlingame.org>; PLG Comm-Jennifer Pfaff <jpfaff@burlingame.org>; PLG Comm-John Schmid <jschmid@burlingame.org>; PLG Comm-Audrey Tse <atse@burlingame.org>; PLG Comm-Chris Horan <choran@burlingame.org>; PLG Comm-Sean Lowenthal <slowenthal@burlingame.org>  
Subject: Planning Commission June 9 Item 8.c. 121 Pepper Avenue

Dear Esteemed Members of the Burlingame Planning Commission,

First of all thank you for your service and the hard work you do to review the numerous commercial and residential project applications that are presented to the City. It is not an easy job and you do it well and with a strong commitment to compliance with our general plan and keeping the overall aesthetic of our beautiful community.

I am writing today as a community member and neighbor to the project proposed under Item 8.c. and located at 121 Pepper Avenue.

Property rights and the ability to create a home that works for the owner are something that I support and I understand that goal occasionally requires significant renovations and even the complete demolition of a house. I have both saved and renovated an older 1922 home at 310 Pepper and have built a new home at 320 Pepper Avenue to replace a former barn converted to a home that was not at all functional and completely deteriorated.

For years, I have walked our lovely street and admired the home at 121 Pepper Avenue which significantly contributes to the heritage aesthetic of our older neighborhood. Its beautiful garden with gorgeous wisteria and quaint details capture the imagination of many who walk by and the former owner proudly maintained this home with devotion. While the new owners are certainly entitled to demolition and build to meet their aesthetic and needs, I am saddened at the loss of this home.

I would avail the planning commission on two points. The first being a policy that we should again consider if the Mills Act might be a way to encourage future homeowners to invest in their property rather than demolition. I realize that this site may not have met the historic requirements, but the continued removal of older and original homes might be swayed if there was a financially feasible option to attract buyers interested in preservation. This would also help create a more sustainable world as keeping older properties is far less impactful on then environment then demolition.

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The second, is a request for the commission to carefully review these plans and make possible suggestions that you believe would allow the property to retain some of the character of our neighborhood. The siting and proposed "farmhouse" metal roof aesthetic could be significantly improved. The new street facing forward garage and front yard ADU parking could be more thoughtfully considered and strategically placed. The massive front yard driveway, extensive front yard hardscape, and lack of softer green landscaping is a harsh aesthetic for this location. Please focus attention on this element of the plan. I am sure you will have other helpful comments. I do appreciate that the massive redwoods are being retained and I hope the builder will take seriously their obligation to safeguard these. I think the current construct and adjacent hardscape is likely to result in the eventual failure of these trees.

I have spoken to some of the neighbors who are, frankly, shocked and dismayed that this home is going to be torn down and many are already saying to me "how can the city let this happen" and I have to explain that so long as the floor plans comply with zoning, we can only suggest modifications and hope that the new owners might reconsider and work with the existing structure. Many do not want to speak out because they do not want to strain the relationship with a future neighbor. But the neighbors are feeling overwhelmed and certainly are experiencing an enormous sense of loss and I felt obligated to provide this feedback to the owners and the planning commission.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and if anyone has additional questions, please do feel free to contact me. I do not plan to attend the meeting in person due to another conflict, so I appreciate that I can send this letter and would request that the owners be provided a copy as well so they are aware of the concerns.

Kindly,

Donna Colson

Phone: [REDACTED]

Sent from my iPad