



Rancho Santa Fe Association

Board of Directors Meeting

Staff Report

Date: September 5, 2019
By: Maryam Babaki, Building Commissioner
Item: Presentation on Exterior Building Wall Materials-Hardie Boards

Background:

Consulting Architect Andrew Wright will make a presentation on exterior building wall finish materials to the Rancho Santa Fe Association Board of Directors. In order to facilitate the discussion, five exterior building wall finish materials, both wood and imitation materials, will be presented to the Board.

The included samples and discussions are as follows:

- Exhibits “A” & “B”. Two varied board-and-batten exhibits, finished in painted wood. They are examples of exterior wall finishes which at present may be approved at the discretion of the CDRC.
- Exhibits “C” & “D”. Two varied board-and-batten exhibits finished in painted “James Hardie” panel and plank. James Hardie is a manufacturer of what is generically referred to as fiber-cement board. It is comprised of wood cellulose fiber, cement and silica and is formed to simulate standard exterior wood finish components.
- Exhibit “E”. One board-and-batten exhibit finished with a painted sheet-metal panel simulating wood, manufactured by MD Barnmaster with a batten plank by James Hardie.

The purpose of these exhibits is to present side-by-side comparisons and demonstrate the appearance and aesthetic value of both currently approvable wood finishes and currently prohibited “wood-like” finishes.

Applicable Regulations

The Protective Covenant addresses the question of materials:

Par. 155. (c) Materials, color and forms must be used honestly, actually expressing what they are, and not imitating other materials (such as tin, tile, wood and sheet metal, shamming stone, etc.) as for instance wood being treated frankly as wood and not in imitation of stone, wherever it is used.

Par. 159. Materials: Plaster, adobe or stucco exterior wall surfaces of a durable construction or concrete, stone or an approved artificial stone are to be preferred.

Board Resolution 2019-103 was passed to address non-approved materials:

“The fact that wood board and batten may be validly approved by the CDRC in the proper exercise of its discretion under Paragraph 159 of the Covenant does not mean that the CDRC has the authority to approve exterior wall surfaces of board and batten made of Hardie board. Paragraph 155 of the Covenant prohibits the use of building materials that imitate other materials. With the exception of roofing and materials set forth in section 31.0305.02 of the Association Regulatory Code, the prohibition is absolute and not subject to CDRC discretion. The use of Hardie board, metal siding that has the appearance of wood or other material that imitates wood is or other material that imitates wood is strictly prohibited.”

Attachments:

1. Photos of the Hardie Board samples
2. Request by CDRC to reconsider Resolution 2019-103











**Request to Reconsider Board Resolution 2019-103
Regarding Use of Imitative Materials**

In Board Resolution 2019-103, it states in No. 5 “. . . With the exception of roofing materials set forth in Section 31.0305.02 of the Association Regulatory Code, the prohibition is absolute and not subject to CDRC discretion. The use of Hardie board, metal siding that has the appearance of wood or other material that imitates wood is strictly prohibited.”

We recognize that Paragraph 155 of the Covenant prohibits the use of building materials that imitate other materials. However, few, if any, quality imitative materials were available when the Protective Covenant (PC) was written. Now that many are available and their use will most likely continue to expand, the CDRC believes we need to reconsider.

Paragraph 159 seems contradictory in that approved artificial stone is not only allowed, but a preferred material as are the other “man-made” materials listed: “Plaster, adobe or stucco exterior wall surfaces of a durable construction or concrete, stone or an approved artificial stone are to be preferred.” It is most likely that these materials were listed because their quality could easily be judged by the Art Jury and the general exclusion of imitative materials was due to quality concerns only.

Given that the primary role of the CDRC is to make aesthetic design decisions about the quality of architecture, landscape, and materials to preserve the attractiveness of the community and prevent undesirable and inharmonious design that would depreciate neighboring property, as outlined in Paragraphs 153 and 154, etc., it seems appropriate to allow the CDRC to make decisions about materials, within defined limits, that meet the other aesthetic design criteria.

Due to requests from applicants and architects, the CDRC respectfully requests that the Board of Directors allow the limited use of imitative materials, as proposed below, for the following reasons:

- The construction industry is changing rapidly, and new, high quality imitative materials are being developed and routinely used in high quality construction. Materials are now being produced that are of equal or better quality than the “natural” materials.
- Rancho Santa Fe is located in an extremely high fire danger zone and we should allow materials that are more fire resistant.
- Lack of maintenance within the Covenant is a huge issue. Many products such as Hardie Board are relatively maintenance free when compared to wood. Hardie Board is also more fire resistant, and impervious to termites and mildew. Concrete roof tiles are already approved for these reasons.
- Hardie Board is made of cement. Concrete is an allowed material.
- The standard for all materials used in the Protective Covenant is “high quality.” All materials, real or imitative, must meet this standard to be approved. Current practice by the CDRC is to routinely reject any allowed material that is not of high quality.

Proposal: Imitative material may be approved **only** if the material is equal to or better than the quality of the natural product and a finding is made that the material possesses at least one other superior characteristic that is beneficial to the RSF Covenant, e.g., resistant to fire, impervious to termites, resistant to mold, reduced long-term maintenance, etc.