

[New fire station design appeases Mt. Tam residents](#)

Keri Brenner, IJ reporter

Thursday, March 24, 2005 - At the behest of local residents, the Board of Supervisors approved a final "rustic lodge-style" design for the new Throckmorton Ridge fire station to make it fit more with the character of Mount Tamalpais.

But neighbors say they still aren't happy: they want lattice work and more.

"Obviously, we'll have to keep on this - push for a redesign, monitor construction," said Del Goetz, coordinator of the Muir Woods Park Community Specific Plan Group. "We'll see to it that it's better-looking, one way or another."

Goetz and other neighbors rejected earlier versions as too industrial or "like a shed." Instead, they are seeking a "rustic, old Mill Valley lodge-style" building with lattice-framed porches, outdoor seating and roof overhangs for a more welcoming feel.

"Attention should be focused on the fact that this is the only public building in our community," Goetz said. "And, it is located on one of the most beautiful sites in our nation."

The county board unanimously approved the final design plans Tuesday, clearing the way for preparation of blueprints and construction bids on the project. However, Marin County Fire Chief Ken Massucco said there was still room to add the touches the residents feel are necessary before the county breaks ground on the project this summer.

"We've had some good dialogue with the community," Massucco said. "And we'll continue to dialogue until they are very happy and we've incorporated a lot of what the community wants."

Construction will take about a year.

The estimated cost of the station was up \$450,000 Tuesday from earlier predictions, rising to \$3.75 million with the addition of a photovoltaic solar panel system covering the entire roof, said project architect Chris Ford, of C3DesignAlliance, San Francisco.

Ford said the system, assuming a minimum rebate of \$84,000, would pay for itself in about 20 years and would save over \$230,000 in energy usage over the life of the facility.

"I can think of no better place to recommit ourselves to renewable energy than the roof of this station," said Supervisor Charles McGlashan. "It's a great move, I really appreciate it."

The 5,400-square-foot station atop Mount Tamalpais will replace the existing '50s-era outmoded facility, which will be razed. Fire officials say the current station is too small for today's trucks and doesn't accommodate current firefighting practices.

"It's going to be real nice," said Marin County Fire Battalion Chief Tim Thompson. "With split-face rock on the facade and wainscoting around the building."

Goetz said members of the community group voted 10 to 2 at their meeting Friday to recommend approval to the county board - even though most were still unhappy with the design. She said the group wanted to avoid holding up the project and causing construction delays.

At the same time, Goetz sent a note to the county with the group's concerns, including:

- A pergola - an arbor of horizontal trelliswork - should be added for a public reception area, and another one built near the garage bays.
- Blunt joints to be abandoned.
- Beams should be extended in "the style of the era."
- Natural stone is preferred over concrete.
- More attention should be given to outdoor seating and "comfortable places for people to interact with fire department personnel."

"The colors are OK, but they left out a few things," Goetz said, reflecting on the dark brown woodsy trim and gray rock facade. "Our group felt certain our concerns will be met as we move into the construction phase."

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