

**pbscommissions - Fwd: Case # UM 2019-0003 Height Variance Petition of DRBA for IIPE project**

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**From:** PBS PBS  
**To:** pbscommissions  
**Date:** 6/24/2021 10:02 AM  
**Subject:** Fwd: Case # UM 2019-0003 Height Variance Petition of DRBA for IIPE project  
**Attachments:** IIPE Letter in support of height variance 6-23-2021.doc; IIPE Letter in support of height variance 6-23-2021.pdf

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Mendocino County  
**JUN 24 2021**  
Planning & Building Services

>>> John Pegan <jrpegan@gmail.com> 6/23/2021 6:39 PM >>>

To whom it may concern:

Below herein and attached as both a Word document and a pdf (depending on which format you prefer), is my personal statement **in support** of the request for variance for the IIPE project.

It is my understanding that a public hearing will be held next week on this height variance. Unfortunately, I will be traveling out of state at the time, otherwise I would give personal testimony in support of this project and the variance petition. Please support the petition and grant the variance request.

I believe it is important that the Commission allow the height variance of 15 feet for the IIPE Assembly Hall at the City of 10,000 Buddhas (CTTB). This building is an important religious and spiritual center for a large religious community that encompasses not only CTTB itself, but the full international Buddhist community of which it is a part.

The design of this building of worship and religious development is architecturally, aesthetically, spiritually and morally important for the entire religious community involved. The height difference will have no impact on seismic or other safety

concerns, the surrounding community, or the economic or other concerns that might be expressed in opposition to this variance.

I lived on Guidiville Road for many years and my three children grew up there. We all enjoyed the view of the CTTB property and the vineyard properties surrounding it. The IIPE Assembly Hall will be a wonderful addition and enhancement to the area. It will NOT be some eyesore or industrialized blight blocking peoples' views. The additional 15 feet will not negatively impact safety, wildlife, wetlands, or property values. The aesthetics that the designers and religious community have worked tirelessly to develop are part of their overall Buddhist ethos of protecting the environment and enhancing the beauty of life and religious worship.

CTTB and all that it offers to a wide and diverse base of followers and guests has been an asset to Mendocino County since its founding in the 1970's. This IIPE project has undergone multiple renditions over the last many years, and the religious community has worked cooperatively with the Planning and Building Department over those years to address any concerns. The current designers have worked to incorporate important religious principles into its overall design and appearance, which includes the roof design components that will contribute the modest 15 feet of additional height.

This important and beautiful religious structure is part of a major renovation and modernization of this religious community. The height is part of the aesthetic and religious motifs and expression of the designers and the religious community and their lay supporters. It would be a grave failure by the Building and Planning Commission to fail to understand and acknowledge this.

**The building is significantly sheltered from any outsider observer and the 65-foot roof is actually 38 feet lower than Guidiville Road. One would need a sextant and measuring compass to determine the height difference. When eyeballing the building through the trees from beyond the property line one would be very hard-pressed to see the height difference without using measuring tools; let alone be emotionally distraught over the additional 15 feet. I'm sure that any safety concerns were addressed to the Commission by DRBA's architects, engineers and designers in their reports.** (Paragraph intentionally bolded for emphasis.)

It is worth repeating that this Assembly building is intended to be a religious landmark and is of utmost importance to the community's religious life at CTTB. The additional 15 feet in building height would enable CTTB to build a structure that will create architectural and aesthetic continuity and enhance the religious experience. Allowing the variance for this important building will highlight the cultural and religious diversity of Mendocino County and beyond, and either minimally impact or not at all visually impact or mar the view of the surrounding properties.

There have been religious structures built within the county that have been provided height exceptions. For example, the New Baptist Church in Ukiah, and a church in Gualala. Respecting the need of this religious community to find expression in a manner that is not overly disruptive is essential. The current design of this Assembly Hall is part of that religious expression.

An example nearby of a variance that recognizes the religious importance of a building design is the Odiyan Retreat Center in Sonoma County. This Buddhist Temple built in 1980, in a resource-based area, has an 85-foot high copper roof. If we expand the comparison to the Bay Area, there are many examples of height variances granted including the Mormon temple in Oakland and several churches in San Francisco.

In conclusion, I join my voice with the many people looking forward to seeing the completion of this important project, and strongly urge the Building and Planning Services Commission to approve the variance for this building.

I am more than willing to answer any questions that the Commission might have and to voice my support for this building and the height variance and voice my concerns should the Commission object to or reject this minor variance for an important religious facility.

I can be reached at the cell number or the personal email address provided in the letterhead. Thank you for considering my comments and I hope the Commission will grant this minor variance.

Respectfully yours,

*John R. Dejan*

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