

pbscommissions - Fwd: Case # _2019-0005/UM 2019-0003

From: PBS PBS
To: pbscommissions
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Subject: Fwd: Case # _2019-0005/UM 2019-0003

Mendocino County

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Attn: Susan H. Summerford, Planner III

Case # _2019-0005/UM 2019-0003

Owner: Dharma Realm Buddhist Association(DRBA)

Re: Height Variance of the International Institute for Philosophy and Ethics (IIFE)

To Planning Commissioners and others:

I am a graduate of Art Center College of Design (B.A. 1979), Pasadena, California, and my grandfather was a well-known architect who designed all of the state park buildings

(inns) in Indiana, as well as the Lincoln Boyhood Home and the Nancy Hanks Lincoln Memorial, and also oversaw the designing of the landscapes of the parks themselves. Bearing this in mind when you consider my opinion, I would like to express that the buildings that have been planned at CTTB for the International Institute of Philosophy and Ethics (IPE) reflect the stability, peacefulness, and tradition that will, or at least could, bring more harmony to the world. They fit quite well with the landscape and are manifestations of Western as well as Asian aesthetics. Their simple design also reflects the monastic aspect of the CTTB community.

The height variance of the IPE is a reasonable request, and in my view should be granted. The building is tasteful and discreet and the variance is minimal. This building will house studies in ethics and philosophy, an activity which is a much-needed asset in today's world. The Ukiah/Talmage area is honored to have been given such a gift to the community.

The track record of the Buddhist community regarding the architecture and landscape at CTTB is remarkable in and of itself. At the time the property was sold, about 1975, the buildings were considered "tear-downs" and white elephants because of their antiquated heating and cooling systems and even the style of the buildings. However, the property was in actuality a real jewel. Jerry Cook, a long-time science teacher at Ukiah High School, undertook to identify the trees on the property and it was discovered that the park-like setting was planted with many species of rare trees and plants, all preserved and cared for over the years by the residents at CTTB. The public buildings (schools, guest building, administration building, restaurant, library, etc.) have been upgraded as to heating and cooling and have been lovingly restored. The newly accredited university, instead of building a new campus, used a building that seemed of no use (in the distant past a hospital building) and remodeled it, making it comfortable, elegant, useful, and most important of all, saving precious resources by reusing an "outdated" building that would have otherwise been torn down. Thus CTTB is actually in agreement with the planning of Ukiah, as the old Ukiah high school was, as far as I know, similarly remodeled to accommodate the Civic Center. Ukiah's ideals of conservation and respect for resources are similar to those at CTTB.

However, after 45 years, CTTB has run out of buildings to upgrade and remodel to accommodate the IPE. They have respectfully submitted plans to build these additions, which in no way will mar the landscape they have so far preserved, and will continue to care for.

I sincerely hope that you will further the possibilities of this treasured community of ours by allowing this building to proceed as planned.

Best Wishes,
Sarah Kennedy Owen