

Good afternoon... I'm Virginia Madden and my husband John and I have lived in Carmel since 1987. It was due to John's allergies that we bought our home here on Del Mar. I'm not sure of the house number, but I think it could be <REDACTED> on Del Mar south of Ocean.

We lived in our house for six months, trying to figure out the best way to make it into our house. After six months I went before the planning commission here in Carmel. I found them to be very helpful and very thorough. They would come down and stand in our front yard and study what our changes would do to the overall environment on the beach. Every suggestion they made, I followed to a tee... and each suggestion they made, improved our idea of what our house should look like.

We enlarged our area by buying the house right behind us. We re-did that house for our children, without changing the outside appearance. Next door to that house lived an architect who seemed to try to push the planning commission as far as he could. He built a tower, well over the limit prescribed by the planning commission, and then he went underground. I believe there are two bedrooms underground, simply to defy the planning commission who evidently didn't have any rules about building underground.

Now, the people next to us on Del Mar are re-doing their house, going underground. And the people on Scenic, behind my next-door neighbor, are going underground. My question is... is it legal? If it is, how can we stop it? Did anyone study the effect of drainage on the houses right on the beach? There was a tank buried on the sand dune that the city would come down and dig up and pump out a couple times a year. Now it's covered, and it hasn't been pumped out in years. I am worried that people who want to buy in Carmel should try to keep it cute, quaint and within the architecture of Carmel. Carmel is a one-mile square... that is your jurisdiction... one mile square. If people want to build monstrous houses, go outside the one-mile square, or to Pebble, or the Valley. Stay out of Carmel. Let's keep Carmel the way we all love it... it's why we moved here.

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City of Carmel-by-the-Sea
Planning & Building Dept.