



**West Forest Road Construction - How and why did this happen?**



**Rockledge Road demo/rebuild with site cleared of much of its vegetation and its stream channelized.**

# **VAIL HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION**

## **Letters to Vail**

### **Can We Avoid Damaging Development?**

**July 16, 2024**

Never before have incursions of this magnitude been seen in Vail. Vail's historic records include references to manmade landslides caused by overly ambitious excavation and reliance upon ephemeral retaining walls, and resulting mudslides triggered during the wet seasons. Destructive extensive excavations should be curtailed. Regulations for modification and excavation of hillsides should be amended to revise and add language to avoid scars on the landscape and potential mishaps. Additionally, some Vail officials are advocating limitation on the size of residential homes. A process to limit home size is currently underway in Pitkin County, Colorado.

Insurance companies are taking note of conditions that could create manmade or are subject to natural hazards. Extensive excavations can be a risk to the owner as well as to neighboring properties. The Town needs to review and resurrect regulations that require buildings to be compatible with, and complimentary to, the neighborhood and surrounding residences, buildings and site conditions.

Public officials need to determine to what degree a site can be stripped of its natural vegetation before neighborhoods are impacted and irreparable harm to the natural environment occurs. Vail's microclimate is moisture laden; altering it harms property values and diminishes the Vail experience.

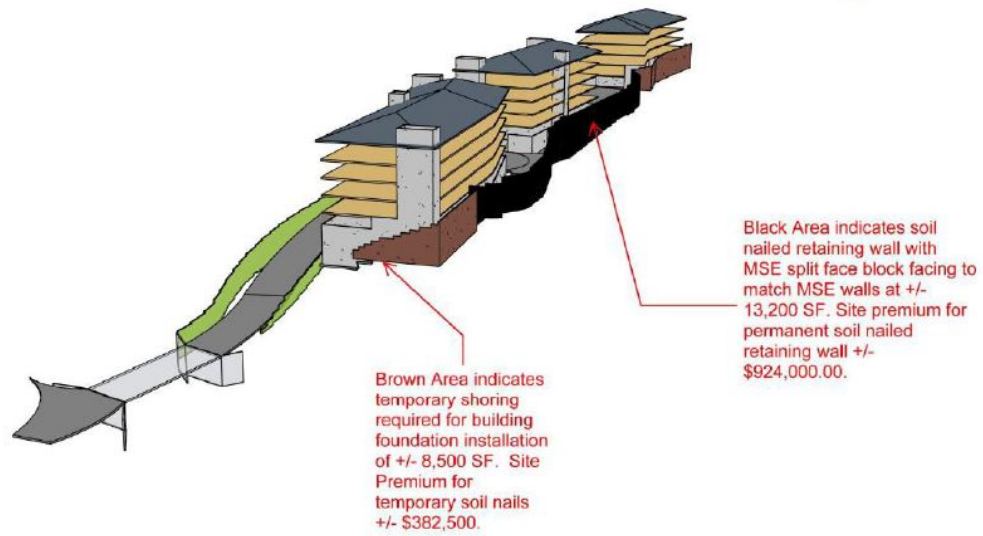
The drying out of Vail through excessive conservation and hazard reduction methods, such as extensive tree removal and reduction in irrigated landscape. The wetter the climate, the more lush the vegetation. If properly maintained it is a first line of defense again against the encroachment of arid condition in the Gore Valley. Denuding the community's forests and landscape reduces the valley's water retention ability. Reducing the community's water retaining landscape could cause the environment to becomes dryer as ground water drains more quickly downstream. Draining the water table more rapidly invites earlier and longer drought conditions. A dryer climate increases the threat of hazardous conditions and endangers wildlife. Depending on location, property values are affected according to the risks associated with the inhabiting the property.



**Construction site in the West Vail Chamonix neighborhood is illustrative of changes to the TOV's density standards, which is undermining historical development constraints created to minimize the effects of site disturbance and natural hazards.**

The foregoing examples heighten concern about hillside scaring resulting from development of the proposed [West Middle Creek](#) deed restricted housing project near the Main Vail entrance. Potentially, excavation could result in the hillside scaring as a result of building extensive retaining walls on the north side of the building. The project stretches along the I-70 North Frontage Road for nearly a quarter of a mile. Extensive retaining walls on the south side of the project allow for enclosed parking and traffic circulation and create a platform on which the residential village will be constructed.

The Town of Vail Municipal Building site is across I-70 to the south. Creating a complimentary residential village on the Municipal Building site should be strongly considered. An I-70 pedestrian bridge and wildlife crossing could link West Middle Creek and the Municipal site using cut and cover bridging technology.



**West Middle Creek needs to make a serious attempt at making its architecture to yodel.**

The bland facades of the West Middle Creek exterior design is a concern. More imaginative solutions are available and should be pursued. The stair stepped design used to harmonize the Middle Creek Apartments with the terrain was successful, while the Residence at Main Vail fell far short of expectations.



**Middle Creek Apartments, with mismatched Residence at Main Vail in foreground.**



**Examples of Vail’s interpretation of alpine architecture as prescribed in the TOV’s design guidelines.**

Examples of the evolution of Vail’s architectural styles are best seen in residential neighborhoods. Which styles are best suited for the climate and site circumstances is a matter of conjecture and debate. Fashionable contemporary styles range from American and Latino modern to Adirondack or Alpine traditional. Lack of

consistency in the oversight of architectural design risks creating a mishmash townscape that lacks uniqueness of identity and purpose.



**Duke home - Squaw Valley Alpine Modern – Architectural style evolved from structures built for the 1960 Winter Olympics.**

**Forested Townscape:** Lining the frontage roads with trees has fallen into disuse or non-enforcement, exposing to all who pass by a hulking impression of urban sprawl with buildings pushing up against roads and walkways. The lack of trees or varied vegetation fails to soften I-70 and Frontage Road noise or provide privacy to residences.



**Vail's tree lined avenues and highways are a symbol of the community's desire to live in harmony with nature by not portray itself to passerby as the crowded strip development it is becoming.**

*Meeting Notice:*  
*Vail Homeowners Annual Membership Meetings*  
*July 24,25 and 26, 2024*  
*1:30 pm-3:00 pm*  
*Vail Public Library – Community Room*  
*Prior registration is required*  
Registration: [vailhomeownersassoc@gmail.com](mailto:vailhomeownersassoc@gmail.com)  
*Zoom access available.*

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