



City of Santa Barbara California

STAFF HEARING OFFICER STAFF REPORT

REPORT DATE: April 2, 2008
AGENDA DATE: April 9, 2008
PROJECT ADDRESS: 108 Loma Media (MST2008-00134)
TO: Bettie Weiss, City Planner. Staff Hearing Officer
 Susan Reardon, Senior Planner
FROM: Planning Division, (805) 564-5470
 Danny Kato, Zoning & Enforcement Supervisor
 Roxanne Milazzo, Associate Planner *RM*

I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The 29,000 square foot project site is currently developed with a single-family residence and 3-car garage. The proposed project involves a request to replace a failing retaining wall with a new concrete wall 60' in length and 12' in height. The discretionary application required for this project is a Modification to permit the wall to exceed the maximum allowable height of eight-feet (8') when located within a required yard (SBMC §28.87.170).

Date Application Accepted: March 19, 2008 Date Action Required: June 19, 2008

II. PARCEL INFORMATION

Applicant:	W. Wright Watling	Property Owner:	Same
Parcel Number:	019-262-011	Lot Area:	28,900 sf
General Plan:	3 Units Per Acre	Zoning:	E-1
Existing Use:	One-Family Residence	Topography:	43% Slope

Adjacent Land Uses:

North - One-Family Residence	East - One-Family Residence
South - One-Family Residence	West - One-Family Residence

III. DISCUSSION

The proposed project was subject to review by the Single Family Design Board (SFDB) due to its location within the Hillside Design District and the overall slope of the site. On March 31, 2008 the item was reviewed and continued indefinitely to the Staff Hearing Officer with the comment that the over height wall is supportable.

The current property owner purchased this property in January of this year. During heavy rains this past February, the existing wood retaining walls failed and have resulted in a landslide

within six-feet of the existing residence. Both this property and the adjacent property to the West are in jeopardy of additional damage.

It has been determined that the wall height necessary to remedy the existing slide situation may need to reach a height of twelve feet (12'). Its location, within the required front yard setback, requires a Modification in order to exceed a maximum allowable height of eight-feet (8'). Due to the immediate danger of the existing situation, Staff finds this request justifiable.

Staff understands that the wall height regulations are intended to provide safe exiting into the public right-of-way and to discourage complete screening of residential development for aesthetic reasons. This retaining wall is eighty-feet (80') from the driveway, is not visible from the grade above, and as conditioned by the SFDB, will be screened from below.

IV. RECOMMENDATION/FINDING

Staff recommends that the Staff Hearing Officer approve the project, making the findings that the Modification is necessary to secure an appropriate improvement on site by retaining the subject lot and providing a solution to the existing landslide situation and that it meets the purpose and intent of the ordinance by neither creating a visual obstruction or blocking visibility of the residence from the right of way.

Exhibits:

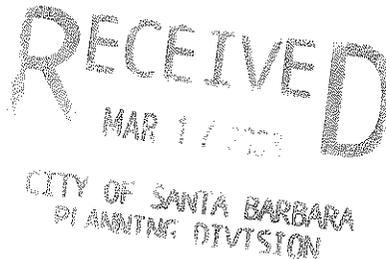
- A. Site Plan
- B. Applicant's letter dated March 17, 2008

Contact/Case Planner: Roxanne Milazzo, Associate Planner
(rmilazzo@SantaBarbaraCA.gov)
630 Garden Street, Santa Barbara, CA 93101
Phone: (805)564-5470

**W. WRIGHT WATLING
108 LOMA MEDIA ROAD
SANTA BARBARA, CALIFORNIA 93103
(Ph) 805 899 0010 (Cell) 805 570 8667**

March 17, 2008

Staff Hearing Officer
City of Santa Barbara
630 Garden Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101



BY HAND

Re: Modification Request for 108 Loma Media Road, APN 019-262-11

Dear Staff Hearing Officer:

Applicant proposes and urgently needs to build a retaining wall approximately 60 feet long and up to 12 feet high to protect both his residence and the City's Loma Media Road which is below the subject property. This request is made on an urgent basis as the result of land sliding on applicant's property (which applicant purchased January 22, 2008) during the recent heavy rains in early February 2008. There were existing wood retaining walls that failed during the storm requiring this proposed new wall. The top of the slide is within approximately 6 feet of applicant's residential structure and is above Loma Media Road. The wall is urgently needed to protect both the residence and Loma Media Road from likely further sliding in future heavy rains.

Applicant requests a modification which would allow the proposed up to 12 foot wall instead of an 8 foot wall within the front yard setback. The proposed wall will be in keeping with and continue the effect of the existing wall on applicant's property immediately south of the proposed new wall. It is applicant's intent to landscape the new wall exactly as the landscaping is on the existing wall to the south and to present a consistent theme across the front of the property above Loma Media. Furthermore, there is tiered walling below both the proposed new wall and the existing wall to the south, all fronting along Loma Media.

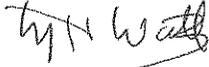
This is not a wall applicant had wanted to build upon purchasing the property about two months ago. However it urgently needs to be built and applicant will landscape it the same way as the existing wall to the immediate south with the result that the wall itself will be entirely covered and won't be seen. Planting of small trees and other landscaping

EXHIBIT B

will be made below the wall (as there is below the existing wall to the south) to break up the vertical feeling of the new wall.

Your timely attention to this urgent matter is most appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W. Wright Watling". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underlining the name.

W. Wright Watling