



City of Santa Barbara California

STAFF HEARING OFFICER STAFF REPORT

REPORT DATE: May 9, 2008
AGENDA DATE: May 21, 2008
PROJECT ADDRESS: 182 La Vista Grande (MST2008-00037)
TO: Staff Hearing Officer
FROM: Planning Division, (805) 564-5470
 Danny Kato, Zoning & Enforcement Supervisor *DK*
 Betsy Teeter, Planning Technician II *BT*

I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The 1 acre project site is currently developed with a 2,385 square foot single family residence and a 490 square foot 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 a retaining wall to exceed three and one-half feet (3 ½') in height when located within ten-feet of a front lot line (SBMC § 28.87.170).

Date Application Accepted: March 25, 2008 Date Action Required: June 25, 2008

II. SITE INFORMATION AND PROJECT STATISTICS

A. SITE INFORMATION

Applicant:	Larry Clark	Property Owner:	David Nordahl
Parcel Number:	015-130-010	Lot Area:	43,560
General Plan:	3 Units Per Acre	Zoning:	E-1
Existing Use:	One-Family Residence	Topography:	40% Slope

Adjacent Land Uses:

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

B. PROJECT STATISTICS

	Existing	Proposed
Living Area	2,385 sf	No Change
Garage	490	No Change
Accessory Space	None	No Change

III. LOT AREA COVERAGE

Lot Area: 43,560 sf
Building: 2,500 sf; 17%
Hardscape: 525 sf; 1%
Landscape: 40,535 sf; 82%

IV. DISCUSSION

The proposed project is to replace a failing 5' 10" retaining wall with a new concrete wall 60 feet in length and 12 feet in height at the front of a one-acre parcel in the Hillside Design District. A retaining wall is required in this location in ordered to support the below grade driveway. The existing wall, located within the front setback and extending to a maximum height of six feet below the street level, is not visible from the street. The proposed new wall will be 1 foot closer to the front property line and will be placed in a circular method which will be further from the interior property line than the existing wall.

This project was reviewed by the Single Family Design Board (SFDB) on March 17, 2008. The SFDB continued the item indefinitely to the Staff Hearing Officer with the following comments: 1) Landscaping is an improvement. Provide more landscaping details; 2) Provide more details for fence. A Phase 1 Archaeological Investigation dated February 19, 2008, prepared by John F. Romani, M.A., RPA, Compass Rose Archaeological, Inc., was accepted by the HLC as submitted. The report concluded that no prehistoric or historical cultural resources were located on or adjacent to the property.

Staff Hearing Officer approval of a zoning modification for an overheight wall within 10 feet of the front property line is requested. Staff supports the replacement of the existing failing retaining wall with one which will exceed the maximum allowable height of 3 ½' for that location by acknowledging that, due to the grade difference between the street and site, the wall will not be visible from the street. Staff understands the height limit requirement is also related to safety and visibility for vehicles exiting onto the public right-of-way. Because the grade of the street is level with the top of the proposed retaining wall, the 12 foot wall will not impair visibility either for vehicles exiting from the driveway or for adjacent neighbors and, therefore, will not create public safety issues. As a condition of approval, the existing hedge, which is located along the front lot line, and which exceeds the maximum allowable height of 3½ feet, must be reduced to 3 ½ feet in compliance with the ordinance. Staff does not support hedges in excess of 3½ feet on front lines for purposes of both aesthetics and safety. Further, the Transportation Department has determined that adequate site distance must be maintained for vehicles exiting the driveway and the hedge must not exceed 3 ½ feet.

V. 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 and that the project meets the purpose and intent of the ordinance because the retaining wall is necessary to support the grade and it does not pose safety or visual issues for the neighborhood.

Exhibits:

- A. Site Plan
- B. Applicant's letter dated March 30, 2008
- C. Phase 1 Archaeological Investigation dated February 19, 2008 (Not available for public review)
- D. SFDB Minutes dated February 11, 2008

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member of American Institute of Architects

Larry R. Clark Architect

March 30, 2008

City of Santa Barbara
630 Garden Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
Attn: Modification Committee

Re: 182 La Vista Grande

Gentlemen:

We are requesting a modification to replace a failing retaining wall. The existing wall is within the front yard setback and extends to a maximum height of 6 feet below the street level. The existing wall is not visible from the public right of way.

The proposed retaining wall will be 1'0" closer to the front property line. The remaining portion will be placed in a circular method and will be further from the interior property line than the existing wall.

Currently there is not a sidewalk along La Vista Grande. A check with Public Works indicates no future plans to require an installation of a sidewalk. The 7'6" portion of land from the top of the wall to the curb will be landscaped. A 42" high fence will be placed above the retaining wall to act as a guardrail for public safety.

The Architectural Review Board has reviewed this project and gave its conceptual approval. A Phase 1 archaeological report was approved by the Landmarks Committee concluding a very low probability of disturbance of historical resources.

Replacement of the retaining wall will allow the owner the continued use of his property, particularly his covered parking. Your consideration in this matter is greatly appreciated.

Very truly yours,



Larry R. Clark
Architect/Agent for David Nordahl

NEW ITEM**A. 216 E JUNIPERO ST****E-1 Zone**

Assessor's Parcel Number: 025-132-002
Application Number: MST2008-00026
Owner: Chris Herthel and Jane Sorenson
Architect: Kent Mixon

(Proposal for window and door changes at north elevation. The existing one-story 2,156 square foot single-family residence including attached 393 square foot two-car garage is legal, non-conforming to interior setbacks on the 7,806 square foot parcel. Staff Hearing officer approval of a modification is requested for alterations in the setback. The total square footage of the residence of 2,394 square feet is 76% of the maximum FAR.)

(PUBLIC HEARING. COMMENTS ONLY; PROJECT REQUIRES ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND STAFF HEARING OFFICER APPROVAL OF A MODIFICATION.)

Continued to the Staff Hearing Officer with the following comments: 1) The proposal is an improvement and matches the existing architecture. 2) Project may return for Staff approval.

NEW ITEM**B. 182 LA VISTA GRANDE****E-1 Zone**

Assessor's Parcel Number: 015-130-001
Application Number: MST2008-00037
Owner: David C. Nordahl
Applicant: Larry Clark

(Proposal to replace a 5' 10" retaining wall at the front of the property at a 2,623 square foot single-family residence on a one acre lot in the Hillside Design District. Staff Hearing officer approval of a modification for an over-height wall within 10' of the front property line is requested.)

(PUBLIC HEARING. COMMENTS ONLY; PROJECT REQUIRES ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND STAFF HEARING OFFICER APPROVAL OF A MODIFICATION.)

Continued to the Staff Hearing Officer with the following comments: 1) The landscaping is an improvement; provide more details. 2) Provide more details for fence.