



City of Santa Barbara California

STAFF HEARING OFFICER STAFF REPORT

REPORT DATE: May 13, 2009
AGENDA DATE: May 20, 2009
PROJECT ADDRESS: 1964 Las Canoas Road (MST2009-00073)
TO: Susan Reardon, Senior Planner, Staff Hearing Officer
FROM: Planning Division, (805) 564-5470
 Renee Brooke, AICP, Senior Planner *RLB*
 Roxanne Milazzo, Associate Planner *RM*

I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The 35.69 acre site is developed with the St. Mary's Seminary. The proposed project involves a request to construct a 186 square foot enclosure for a water pump system. The discretionary applications required for this project are Modifications to permit the accessory building to be located within the front yard and the required 70 foot front setback (SBMC §28.87.160 & 28.15.085 & 28.15.060).

Date Application Accepted: April 7, 2009

Date Action Required: July 7, 2009

II. RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Staff Hearing Officer approve the project with a condition.

III. SITE INFORMATION AND PROJECT STATISTICS

A. SITE INFORMATION

Applicant:	Tom Moore	Property Owner:	St Mary's Seminary
Parcel Number:	021-010-028	Lot Area:	35+ acres
General Plan:	Major Public/Institutional	Zoning:	A-1
Existing Use:	Seminary Property	Topography:	33%

Adjacent Land Uses:

North - Residential	East - Residential
South - Residential	West - Residential

IV. ZONING ORDINANCE CONSISTENCY

The proposed project is a request to construct a new 186 square foot enclosure at St. Mary's Seminary, a hilltop complex of 51,000 square feet of classrooms, dormitories, offices, and auxiliary buildings. Because the seminary is considered a non-residential use in a residential zone, double setbacks are required pursuant to SBMC §28.15.085. Therefore, instead of the 35' front setback required for A-1 properties, the required front setback is doubled to 70'.

V. DISCUSSION

This project was reviewed by the Architectural Board of Review (ABR) on March 2, 2009 and continued indefinitely to the Staff Hearing Officer. If the Modification is approved the project will return to the Consent Calendar for final approval.

Water is supplied to the project site by a pump station which was disabled during the recent Tea Fire due to its wood enclosure. The proposed project is a request to build a larger, fully enclosed masonry pump house in the same location. The new structure will provide fire protected housing for the pumps, control system, and a future emergency generator. Instead of providing the required 70' front setback (for non-residential uses in residential zones), the applicant is requesting to reuse the previous pad for the new installation, which is located approximately 12' off the front lot line. Because the accessory structure sits in front of the main buildings on the site it also requires a Modification to permit the accessory building in the front yard. Although Staff would prefer a less visible location, the applicant's position is that this area will allow the continued use the existing valves associated with the existing water supply system. The new building will be a visual improvement over what previously existed and will be fire safe and secure from vandalism. Staff suggests additional landscaping over the anticipated re-growth to further screen the new structure from public view.

VI. FINDINGS & CONDITIONS

The Staff Hearing Officer finds that the Modification is consistent with the purposes and intent of the Zoning Ordinance and is necessary to secure an appropriate improvement on the lot. The proposed Modification will allow for the construction of a new, fire resistant enclosure of the water supply system in its previous location. Said approval is subject to a landscape plan, approved by the Architectural Board of Review, to screen the installation from the public right-of-way.

Exhibits:

- A. Site Plan (under separate cover)
- B. Applicant's letter dated May 10, 2009
- C. ABR Minutes

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

10 May 2009

St. Mary's Seminary
Los Canoas Road
Santa Barbara, CA

RE: MODIFICATION REQUEST FOR PUMP HOUSE IN FRONT YARD SETBACK

To whom it may concern,

St Mary's Seminary and Retreat (an institutional use) occupies the site. It is a hilltop complex of 51,000 +/- square feet of classrooms, dormitories, offices, and chapel ((6) one and two story buildings, with additional auxiliary buildings). Water is supplied to the site by a pump station at the driveway entrance to Los Canoas Road where City water is tapped and pumped to a large cistern near the top of the hill. This cistern, in turn, supplies all the water needs of the property, including fire hydrants. In the Tea Fire of 2008, the lower pump station, which consisted of a fenced area, was disabled, and water supply to the cistern was temporarily lost.

We are asking for modifications for a fully enclosed pump house at the location of the present pump station just off Los Canoas Road and within the front yard set-back (12' +/- from the street easement). This structure would be fire resistant and would encapsulate and protect the pumps, the control system, and an emergency generator.

We are requesting the following modifications:

1. modification to allow non-residential structure in required standard front yard setback for A-1 zone (35' setback) per

28.15.060.

2. modification to allow non-residential structure in required setback for non-residential uses for A-1 zone (70' setback) per 28.15.085.
3. modification to allow accessory structure in front yard of non-residential uses for A-1 zone per 28.87.160.

Protection of the water supply system to the complex is the primary justification for the proposed structure. These pumps are needed to keep the upper cistern continuously filled. This cistern is strategic in the event of wildfires. When disabled, as in the recent Tea Fire, fire fighting efforts to protect the complex above were endangered. As a critical element in the fire protection infrastructure of the area, a fully protected pumping system and emergency power system is urgently needed.

Additional benefits include getting the control system (which include large circuits to run the pumps) secure from vandalism or accident. Liability and safety concerns require a better installation than existed before. Having the equipment consolidated and enclosed within a structure will allow better access for staff, and will allow for a lot of the present exposed piping and equipment to be removed and the site cleaned-up. Again, protecting and maintaining this water supply is vital.

The proposed pump house is in the same location where the present pumps intercept the city water supply. Formally, a water tank was in this same location before being replaced by the cistern above (the piping to the cistern is located under the driveway to the complex above). The present location is convenient to a turn-out on the driveway and consists of flat pads which formerly supported the water tank as well as the present equipment. Its' adjacency to the source of the water supply, as well as the steep topography beyond as the driveway climbs the hill, precludes other locations on the site for this equipment.

The new 186 square foot structure will back up to an existing cement block retaining wall (4'-6' in height) and will present a low profile against the hillside. The material will be unit masonry to match the existing wall at Los Canoas and be maintenance free. The roof will be metal, a flat neutral grey. The structure is designed to be non-combustible.

It is essential to the area to have water supplies secured in the event of fires. From a visual standpoint, the new structure, small and tucked into the hillside, will replace a lot the unsightly equipment now exposed to view. Natural landscaping, such as the scrub oak that presently are clustered along the east side of the building site, will be restored and extended to provide further screening of the structure from the roadway. For these reason, we hope you will approve this modification request. Thank you.

Respectfully,

Thomas Moore AIA

1964 LAS CANOAS ROAD – ARCHITECTURAL BOARD OF REVIEW MINUTES

March 2, 2009

A letter in opposition from Paula Westbury was acknowledged.

Continued indefinitely to the Staff Hearing Officer and to return to the Consent Calendar with conditions:

- 1) There are no negative aesthetics issues.
- 2) The metal roof is acceptable.
- 3) Extend the gable for balance.
- 4) Provide landscape plan with screening of structure from the road.