



City of Santa Barbara California

STAFF HEARING OFFICER STAFF REPORT

REPORT DATE: June 10, 2009
AGENDA DATE: June 17, 2009
PROJECT ADDRESS: 740 Dolores (MST2009-00375)
TO: Susan Reardon, Senior Planner, Staff Hearing Officer
FROM: Planning Division, (805) 564-5470
 Renee Brooke, AICP, Senior Planner *RLB*
 Roxanne Milazzo, Associate Planner *Rmf*

I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The 14.99 acre parcel is currently developed with the Vic Trace Reservoir, City of Santa Barbara radio communications structures, AT&T Wireless cellular tower, and two sheds with associated radio towers operated by the Santa Barbara Amateur Radio Club. The proposed project involves the replacement of the roof on an existing 491 square foot concrete block building, and replacement of two existing 50 square foot accessory structures with one 200 square foot prefabricated structure. The discretionary application required for this project is a Modification to permit the new structure to be located closer than 20' to another main building on the same lot (SBMC §28.15.070).

Date Application Accepted: May 11, 2009

Date Action Required: August 11, 2009

II. RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Staff Hearing Officer approve the project as submitted.

III. SITE INFORMATION AND PROJECT STATISTICS

A. SITE INFORMATION

Applicant:	SB Amateur Radio Club	Property Owner:	City of Santa Barbara
Parcel Number:	035-033-013	Lot Area:	14.99 acres
General Plan:	3 Units Per Acre	Zoning:	E-1
Existing Use:	Communication Systems	Topography:	19% slope

Adjacent Land Uses:

North - Residential
 South - Residential

East - Residential
 West - Residential

IV. DISCUSSION

The subject site is a 14.99 acre parcel belonging to the City of Santa Barbara and currently developed with Vic Trace Reservoir and communications buildings and antenna used by the City of Santa Barbara, AT&T Wireless, and Santa Barbara Amateur Radio Club (SBARC). The proposed project involves replacement of two sheds owned by the SBARC with a prefabricated communications structure. In order to share services, the existing buildings are clustered in one area on the site. The new building will be placed in the general area of the two removed sheds and 3' away from an existing CMU building. Pursuant to SBMC §28.15.070, no main building shall be closer than twenty feet (20') to any other main building on the same lot. Although Staff understands that this language is intended to provide a buffer zone between residential units, the ordinance does not specifically exempt non-residential buildings from the requirement and therefore results in the necessity for the Modification approval. The new building is an improvement to the existing facility and allows the continued use of the SBARC's existence on the site. The project was reviewed by the Architectural Board of Review (ABR) on May 4, 2009 and continued indefinitely to the Staff Hearing Officer with the comment that there were no negative aesthetic impacts related to the distance between buildings.

V. FINDINGS AND CONDITIONS

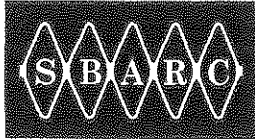
The Staff Hearing Officer finds that the Modification is consistent with the purposes and intent of the Zoning Ordinance and is necessary to secure an appropriate improvement on the lot. The new structure consolidates SBARC's equipment into one building for its continued use without intensification or impact to the residential neighbors.

Exhibits:

- A. Site Plan (under separate cover)
- B. Applicant's letter dated April 16, 2009
- C. ABR Minutes

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

740 Dolores



Santa Barbara Amateur Radio Club, Inc.
P.O.Box 3907 Santa Barbara CA 93130-3907 (805)569-5700 www.sbarc.org



RECEIVED

APR 20 2009

April 16, 2009

Staff Hearing Officer
City of Santa Barbara
PO Box 1990
Santa Barbara, CA 93102-1990

RECEIVED CITY CLERK'S OFFICE
APR 21 2009 SANTA BARBARA, CA

CITY OF SANTA BARBARA
PLANNING DIVISION

Re: a. Modification Request for 740 Dolores Drive, Santa Barbara, CA
b. Parcel 035-033-013 city-owned property
c. Case # MST 2008-00375

1) Statement of the existing situation

This 14.99 acre parcel belongs to the City of Santa Barbara and on the property are the Vic Trace Reservoir, the main City radio communications building and antenna structures, a cellular tower and pre-fab building belonging to AT&T Wireless, as well as the antennas, two sheds and associated radio towers operated by the Santa Barbara Amateur Radio Club, Inc., a non-profit corporation.

The entire property is fenced and access is via a locked gate off of La Coronilla Drive. There is a second fence that encloses the radio communications buildings. Today there are four buildings clustered together to provide sharing of antenna cable conduits, power, emergency generator facilities, and telephone connections.

The antenna structures are within one hundred feet of the communications structures and inside the first fence but outside of the fence that secures the communications buildings.

2) The Specific Modification Requested and the Justification for the request

This 14.99 acre parcel is zoned E-1, even though there are no habitable buildings on the parcel, and it is adjacent to a neighborhood that is zoned E-1. According to the zoning rules, all buildings must be separated by 20 feet.

The four existing communications buildings are separated by 3 to 6 feet. This was done to provide close proximity to all of the shared services, and to keep the communications buildings within the confines of a smaller area on the property. The Santa Barbara Amateur Club is applying for a permit to remove the two sheds we currently occupy and replace them with a single pre-fab, specially designed communications shelter. The result would be a new shelter occupying the same basic area as the two sheds that will be removed. However, this means that the spacing between the City Communications building and the SBARC new shelter will be three feet. By placing the shelter in this location, it lines up with the AT&T building and stays within the secondary fenced area.

Our reasons for requesting this modification are listed below:

- The original building plans were designed to contain all of the radio transmitters and receivers in a central location in order to provide common services including the grounding of the equipment via a ring of buried ground cable that surrounds the communications compound.
- The placement of this shelter is critical because of the antenna feed lines coming from the towers. These feed lines are buried in conduit, running with those that feed the City building, and surface at a point about 4 feet away from the City building. At this point, the antenna feed lines are tied into a large metal grounding plate that is, in turn, attached to the central grounding system.
- The compound was specifically designed with the operation of radio equipment in mind. It is far enough removed from the multiple antenna structures as to minimize potential radio interference between different radio systems but close enough to the tower structures to provide efficient antenna feed line distances from the radio equipment.
- This modification would keep all three of the communications structures, all of which are non-habitable and clustered together, and will provide the neighborhood with the same basic view of the area. In addition, the SBARC has already, as requested, planted hedge plants along one side of the gated communications area and plans to cover the chain link fence in that same direction with a bamboo or other cover in order to further minimize the view of the compound by the few residences whose houses back up to the property.
- Having to move the building in accordance with E-1 zoning rules would put it outside of this contained area, and would degrade the communications systems that are to be installed in the new building.
- SBARC is not planning to add any new radio equipment or antennas to the existing towers, but rather to relocate our equipment from the two sheds into this new shelter that will provide us with reduced maintenance of the equipment and better access to it when maintenance is required. The existing sheds do not include enough ventilation for the equipment today.

3) Statement for our one specific requested modification

We are making only one request for modification as explained above, and as part of this project, the SBARC has agreed to re-roof the existing City communications building at no cost to the city.

4) The Benefits of the Project

The Santa Barbara Amateur Radio Club uses the radio equipment located at this site to provide communications assistance to the City of Santa Barbara. This includes providing additional radio services during times of disaster, such as the two recent fires in the area, providing communications for the many events that are held in or pass through Santa Barbara City and County in order to remove the communications burden from the City's various departments. We train new radio operators in emergency communications and have established the SBARC as a valuable resource to the community, all at no cost to the City or the taxpayers.

The two buildings (sheds) we presently occupy are old and ill-suited for the type of radio equipment that is housed within them, while the new shelter is specifically designed for this type of service and matches the AT&T building (although smaller). Being able to locate our new shelter using the same footprint of the existing two sheds would provide us with the ability to stay within the confines of the radio compound, again, reducing any potential interference between radio services, it would permit us to upgrade our facility while staying within the original location specified for our sheds by the City many years ago, and it would continue to keep the communications compound confined to the one area of the property instead of spread out across the hillside.

We are asking the City to grant our request for modification for the reasons stated above. If you have any additional questions or require any additional information please do not hesitate to contact me at the address and phone number above, via email: w1uuq@cox.net, or via my home phone 805-964-7432.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "WB Talanian".

William B. Talanian
SBARC Telecommunications Services



740 DOLORES – ARCHITECTURAL BOARD OF REVIEW COMMENTS

August 11, 2008

Final Approval with the following conditions: 1) Provide landscape vine screening on existing exposed chain link perimeter fencing at a distance of 6'0" on center. 2) Provide irrigation.

May 4, 2009

An opposition letter from Paula Westbury was acknowledged.

Continued indefinitely to Staff Hearing Officer and continued indefinitely to Consent Calendar with comments:

1. There were no negative aesthetic impacts for the distance between buildings.
2. Applicant to indicate on the plans:
 - a) The fence to be relocated.
 - b) The new plantings, with the types specified.
 - c) The roofing material on the new building which is to be muted and of non-glare roofing material, and NOT of a galvanized or shiny material.
 - d) Roofing membrane material for the existing building is to be of a darker color.

