



# City of Santa Barbara California

## STAFF HEARING OFFICER STAFF REPORT

**REPORT DATE:** March 3, 2010  
**AGENDA DATE:** March 10, 2010  
**PROJECT ADDRESS:** 219 Sycamore Lane (MST2009-00482)  
**TO:** Susan Reardon, Senior Planner, Staff Hearing Officer  
**FROM:** Planning Division, (805) 564-5470  
 Renee Brooke, AICP, Senior Planner  
 Roxanne Milazzo, Associate Planner

### I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The 1.69 acre project site is currently developed with ten duplex buildings totaling twenty residential units. The proposed project involves a remodel, architectural upgrade, new entry porches, upper level balconies, and laundry rooms for the units. The discretionary applications required for this project are:

Modifications to permit architectural elements to encroach into the required twenty-foot front and six-foot interior setbacks (SBMC §28.18.060), and;

Modifications to permit architectural elements and laundry room additions to be located within the required fifteen-foot building separation (SBMC 28.18.070).

Date Application Accepted: February 25, 2010      Date Action Required: May 25, 2010

### II. RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Staff Hearing Officer approve the project, subject to a condition.

### III. SITE INFORMATION AND PROJECT STATISTICS

#### A. SITE INFORMATION

Applicant:	DesignARC	Property Owner:	Housing Authority of SB
Parcel Number:	017-073-046	Lot Area:	1.69 Acres
General Plan:	12 Units Per Acre	Zoning:	R-2
Existing Use:	10 Duplex Units	Topography:	9%

#### Adjacent Land Uses:

North – One & Multi-Family Residence	East - Sycamore Creek
South – One & Multi-Family Residence	West – Yanonali Street

Project Statistics]	Existing	Proposed
Living Area	20 Units totaling 18,880	692 sf addition = 19,572 sf
Accessory Space	367sf	367 sf

**B. PROPOSED LOT AREA COVERAGE**

Building: 11,007 sf 15%    Hardscape: 29,802 sf 41%    Landscape: 32,636 sf 44%

**IV. DISCUSSION**

The proposed project involves a renovation and architectural upgrade to the property that is currently developed with ten (10) duplex residential units built in the early seventies. The existing buildings on site are conforming to both density and setback requirements. The proposed design change to Mediterranean requires changes to the existing buildings that include buttresses to soften the building corners, raised entry porches, and 2<sup>nd</sup> floor balconies for each unit. The upgrade also includes individual laundry rooms for each unit, and conversion of the original communal laundry room to a multi-purpose room for the complex. Modifications are being requested to allow architectural projections to be located within the required setbacks, and to permit laundry room additions to reduce the required distance between main buildings.

The minor thickening of walls to accomplish the proposed architectural change results in five (Building #1, 7, 8, 9, & 10) of the buildings requiring Modification approval for encroachment into required setbacks. It is Staff's position that these encroachments which do not add new floor area within the setback are supportable as designed.

The thickening of the walls and addition of buttresses also results in reduction to the required distance between buildings for nine (Building #2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, & 10) of the buildings. Staff understands that the requirement for distance between main buildings is intended to provide quality of life by avoiding noise, odor, and privacy impacts between residential neighbors. It is Staff's position that these architectural enhancements do not add floor area within the required separation and are supportable as designed.

The laundry room additions for Buildings 3, 8, 9, and 10 encroach into the required 15' building separation. Staff can support the reduction for units 3 & 10 in that the 15' is provided between areas occupied by habitable space. Staff cannot support the 4'8" separation proposed between Buildings 8 & 9, which does not even meet the 5' minimum requirement in SBMC §28.87.062.D. The laundry rooms, which produce noise and odor, do not provide adequate separation between living spaces as required by the Ordinance.

V. **FINDINGS AND CONDITIONS**

The Staff Hearing Officer finds that the Modification to permit architectural enhancements to project into the required setbacks is consistent with the purposes and intent of the Zoning Ordinance and is necessary to secure an appropriate improvement on the lot, by upgrading the aesthetics of the building without adding additional floor area within the setback.

The Staff Hearing Officer finds that the Modification of distance between main buildings is necessary to secure an appropriate improvement and that it meets the purpose and intent of the ordinance which is to provide separation between residential habitable spaces for quality of life. The architectural thickening of the walls does not provide additional habitable space within the required separation distance.

Said approval is subject to a condition that all plans submitted for building permits in conjunction with this Modification approval show the laundry rooms reduced in size to the minimum area necessary to secure laundry amenities for the four units.

Exhibits:

- A. Site Plan (under separate cover)
- B. Applicant's letter dated December 8, 2009
- C. ABR Minutes

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

December 8, 2009

Attn: Staff Hearing Officer  
City of Santa Barbara  
P.O. Box 1990  
Santa Barbara, CA 93102-1990

**Re: Modification Request 211-221 Sycamore Lane; APN: 017-073-046;  
R-2 Zone**

Dear Staff Hearing Officer:

**Proposed Scope of Work:**

The project entails the renovation of a 20 unit 100% affordable project owned by the Housing Authority of Santa Barbara. The project consists of 10 duplex apartment structures and a commons building that were originally constructed in the early seventies. All 20 units are and will continue to be "Affordable Housing." The commons structure was originally used as group laundry. In the proposed scheme, it will be converted to a multi-use space for the project residents, with a unisex toilet and storage closet for Housing Authority maintenance personnel. The exteriors of the apartment buildings will be updated to a "Mediterranean" style. Seven of the buildings will incorporate new private laundry rooms; two of the buildings will incorporate attached private laundry closets; and the remaining building will be modified to incorporate ADA required accessibility requirements to the ground floor, including attached private laundry closets. Additional improvements include the construction of 2<sup>nd</sup> floor balconies for every unit, and private raised entry porches.

**Modifications Requested:**

- #1 Architectural projections and improvement into front yard setback at Building #1
- #2 Reduction of required setback between Buildings #2 & 3, due to Laundry Closet addition to Building #3.
- #3 Reduction of required setback between Buildings #8 & 9, due to Laundry Room additions to both buildings.
- #4 Reduction of required setback between Buildings #9 & 10, due to Laundry Closet addition to Building #10.
- #5 Architectural projections and improvements into side yard setback at Buildings #7,8,9, & 10.
- #6 Reduction of required setback between Buildings #3 & 4, due to architectural projections added to corners of each building.

Exhibit B

- #7 Reduction of required setback between Buildings #5 & 6, due to architectural projections added to corners of each building.
- #8 Reduction of required setback between Buildings #6 & 8, due to architectural projections added to corners of each building.
- #9 Reduction of required setback between Buildings #7 & 8, due to the architectural projection added to Building #7 and the new balcony added to Building #8.
- #10 ~~Reduction of required setback between Buildings #5 & the Commons Building, due to architectural projections added to Building #5.~~

*Not required*

**Modification Justifications:**

- #1 The second floor of Building #1 is  $\approx 19'$  from the front property line, therefore improvements to the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor require a modification, which would also include the construction of the proposed buttresses (architectural projections) that will enhance the appearance of the building.
- #2 The addition of a Laundry Closet on the side of Building #3 will reduce the separation between buildings 2 & 3 to  $\approx 13'-2"$  (15'0" min.). Its only a small 1 story element, and the added benefits of the private laundry spaces being added to each of the 20 units will outweigh the impact of the loss of outdoor space, which is primarily common space in this location.
- #3 The addition of Laundry Rooms to Buildings #8 & 9 will reduce the separation between buildings to  $\approx 4'-8"$  (15'0" min.). The laundry rooms are relatively small single story additions that will be mostly concealed behind 6' tall wood fences. The additions will convert portions of the private patio spaces into new private laundry rooms. The added benefits of the private laundry spaces being added to each of the 20 units will outweigh the impact of the loss of outdoor space. Alternatively, we could link Buildings #8 & 9 with a common roof, but this would introduce another variation into the unit mix, and further reduce the private patio areas.
- #4 The addition of a Laundry Closet on the side of Building #10 will reduce the separation between buildings 9 & 10 to  $\approx 13'-1"$  (15'0" min.). Its only a small 1 story element, and the added benefits of the private laundry spaces being added to each of the 20 units will outweigh the impact of the loss of outdoor space.
- #5 Portions of the second floor of Building #7 are less than the required 6' from the side yard property line, therefore improvements to the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor require a modification, which would also include the construction of the proposed buttresses (architectural projections) that will enhance the appearance of the

building. This modification would also apply to any portions of the architectural projections on Buildings 8, & 10 that may also cross the setback line.

- #6 The addition of the buttresses to the corners of Buildings #3 & 4 will reduce the separation of these buildings at the corner location only to  $\approx 11'-9''$  from the original  $13'-0''$  (measured to buttress). These new buttresses enhance the architectural appearance of the proposed design, and have no impact on the private open spaces at either building.
- #7 The addition of the buttresses to the corners of Buildings #5 & 6 will reduce the separation of these buildings at the corner location only to  $\approx 13'-1''$  from the original  $14'-5''$  (measured to buttresses). These new buttresses enhance the architectural appearance of the proposed design, and have no impact on the private open spaces at either building.
- #8 The addition of the buttresses to the corners of Buildings #6 & 8 will reduce the separation of these buildings at the corner location only to  $\approx 13'-0''$  from the original  $15'-4''$  (measured to buttresses). These new buttresses enhance the architectural appearance of the proposed design, and have no impact on the private open spaces at either building.
- #9 The addition of the buttress to Building #7 and the new 2<sup>nd</sup> floor balcony on Building #8 results in a horizontal separation of  $12'-11''$  at the corner of the Building #7. Currently there are no windows in the side of Building #7. In our proposed design there will be a small new window on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor and possibly another on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. Neither the corner buttress, new windows, or the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor balcony will significantly detract from the front yard patios at Building #8.
- #10 ~~The addition of the buttress to Building #5 will reduce the separation with the Commons building to  $10'-2''$  from the current  $10'-10''$ . This new buttress will enhance the architectural appearance of the proposed design, and have no impact on the private or common area open spaces.~~ *Not required*

### Project Benefits:

Sycamore Gardens consists of (20) 3 bedroom units on a beautiful site bordered by Sycamore Creek. The project was constructed in the early 1970's and is desperately in need of maintenance. The project is owned by the Housing Authority of Santa Barbara, who's goal is to improve the lives of the 20 low income families that live there. Its also about trying to better integrate these residences and the residents into the community.

Renovating the exteriors of these buildings will take care of deferred maintenance issues and make this project into something that enhances the surrounding neighborhood. Concurrent site enhancements will significantly reduce the project's environmental impact, particularly with water usage, runoff and creek concerns. Providing private laundry rooms will improve the daily lives of the residents, and reduce the vandalism that occurs in shared laundry rooms.

Modifications #1 & 5 are for minor architectural issues around the perimeter of the project that will greatly enhance the appearance of the buildings. They have no significant impact on either the resident's or the neighbors, and should be approved because they will make for a better project.

Modifications #2,3 & 4 are for issues that will directly enhance the lives of the residents, with only minor inconveniences. What is being lost are portions of the resident's outdoor space, but fortunately the site has an abundance of useful exterior spaces which are being enhanced as part of this project that more than compensate for the changes. In addition, each unit will be gaining private outdoor living space with their own 2<sup>nd</sup> floor balcony, and with a raised front porch.

Modifications #6,7,8,9 & ~~X~~ are for minor architectural issues within the interior of the project that will greatly enhance the appearance of the buildings. They have no significant impact on either the resident's or the neighbors, and should be approved because they will make for a better project.

Sincerely,



Kevin Dumain, AIA  
Project Architect

## 219 SYCAMORE LANE – ARCHITECTURAL BOARD OF REVIEW MINUTES

November 16, 2009

An opposition letter from Paula Westbury was acknowledged.

Continued indefinitely to Staff Hearing Officer with comments:

1. Study adding fenestration on the blank walls.
2. Provide additional details on the balcony.
3. The modification request for the façade remodel is supportable as only minor elements of the existing building encroach into the required front and interior setbacks.
4. The modification request for the distance between buildings is supportable between buildings 9 and 10, and buildings 2 and 3.
5. The modification request for the distance between buildings 8 and 9 is not supportable as this would result in a separation distance of less than 5 feet. The applicant is encouraged to study opportunities, if feasible, to provide an increased distance between buildings 8 and 9.