



# City of Santa Barbara California

## STAFF HEARING OFFICER STAFF REPORT

**REPORT DATE:** February 12, 2015  
**AGENDA DATE:** February 18, 2015  
**PROJECT ADDRESS:** 219 Sycamore Lane (MST2014-00592)  
**TO:** Susan Reardon, Senior Planner, Staff Hearing Officer  
**FROM:** Planning Division, (805) 564-5470  
 Danny Kato, Senior Planner *DJK*  
 Betsy Teeter, Planning Technician II *BT*

### I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The 1.69 acre project site is currently developed with ten duplex buildings totaling twenty residential units and a commons building used as both a laundry facility and maintenance room. The proposed project involves renovations to both the interior and exterior of the buildings, including an architectural upgrade, new entry porches, upper level balconies, private patios and fences. 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;

A Modification to permit architectural projections and improvements to be located within the required fifteen-foot building separation between buildings on site (SBMC 28.18.070).

Date Application Accepted: January 29, 2015 Date Action Required: April 29, 2015

### 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 the City of Santa Barbara
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 – Residential                      East Residential  
 South – Residential                      West – Residential

**B. PROJECT STATISTICS**

	<b>Existing</b>	<b>Proposed</b>
Living Area	18,860 sf	18,860 sf
Accessory Space	367 sf	367 sf

**C. 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 of a 20 unit 100% affordable apartment complex. The property is developed with ten (10) duplex residential buildings and a commons building that were originally constructed in the early seventies. The commons building is currently used as a laundry facility for the residents and for maintenance purposes by the Housing Authority. The existing buildings on site are non-conforming to density and therefore no new floor area is proposed for the site. The proposed design change and renovation of the buildings will allow for an architectural upgrade to the complex. buttresses to soften the building corners, raised entry porches, private patios and 2<sup>nd</sup> floor balconies for each unit. Modifications are being requested to allow architectural projections to be located within the required setbacks, and to permit alterations to the building to reduce the required distance between main buildings.

There are presently 30 parking spaces on site (20 resident spaces and 13 guest spaces). Current City regulations for 100% affordable units require 20 resident spaces and 5 guest spaces. Several of the current parking spaces are nonconforming. The proposed alterations will reduce the number of guest parking spaces by 3; however, the number of proposed parking spaces is compliant with parking requirements for 100% affordable units.

This project was reviewed by the Single Family Design Board (SFDB) on January 20, 2015 (Exhibit C), and the SFDB continued the item to the Staff Hearing Officer with generally positive comments. There are some design issues that will be resolved prior to SFDB approval of the project in response to concerns raised by a neighboring property owner and the Board itself.

#### Front and Interior Setback Modifications

In order to allow the requested alterations to the façade of building #1, a Modification is requested to allow proposed architectural projections and improvements to encroach slightly into the required front setback. A Modification is also requested to allow alterations and improvements to buildings #7, 8 and 10 to encroach into the required interior setback. It is Staff's position that these encroachments, which do not add new floor area within the setbacks, will enhance the appearance of the buildings and are supportable as designed.

#### Distance Between Building Modification

The Zoning Ordinance requires a 15 foot distance between buildings that are greater than one-story. The two-story duplexes are currently non-conforming to the required 15 foot distance between two-story buildings for all of the duplexes except for the setback between buildings 7 and 8. The owner is proposing to reduce the distance between the existing buildings with the exception of the distance between buildings 9 and 10 which will increase from 13 feet to 15 feet, 3 inches. Listed below are the proposed Architectural projections and improvements that will increase the non-conforming distance between buildings on site:

- Reduction of required setback between Buildings #2 & 3, due to the new Architectural projections added to Building #3.
- Reduction of required setback between Buildings #8 & 9, required due to the new exterior improvements on the existing buildings with less than the required setback.
- Reduction of required setback between Buildings #9 & 10, required due to the new exterior improvements on the existing buildings with less than the required setback.
- Reduction of required setback between Buildings #3 & 4, required due to the new exterior improvements on the existing buildings with less than the required setback.
- Reduction of required setback between Buildings #5 & 6, required due to the new exterior improvements on the existing buildings with less than the required setback.
- Reduction of required setback between Buildings #6 & 8, required due to the new exterior improvements on the existing buildings with less than the required setback.
- Reduction of required setback between Buildings #7 & 8 due to the new exterior improvements on the existing buildings with less than the required setback.

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 because the proposed architectural enhancements do not add floor area within the required separation the buildings are supportable as designed.

#### Environmental Review

The project site is located within the Prehistoric Watercourse, American Period (1870-1900), and the Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, (1900-1920) Cultural Resource Sensitivity Zones. In accordance with the requirements of the City's Master Environmental Assessment, an Archaeological Letter Report was prepared by Stone Archaeological Consulting in January of 2010 and accepted by the City's Environmental Analyst. The report concludes that the proposed project is not considered to have the potential to impact intact, potentially significant or important prehistoric or historic cultural remains as defined in the City's MEA Guidelines for Archaeological Resources and Historic Structures and Sites. The report determined that there is minimal potential for encountering archaeological deposits during future ground disturbances and no further archaeological work was necessary or recommended. Therefore, staff recommends that the standard unanticipated archaeological discovery condition shall be reproduced on the plans prior to submittal for building permit.

### **V. FINDINGS AND CONDITIONS**

The Staff Hearing Officer finds that the Modification to permit architectural enhancements and improvements to project into the required front and interior setbacks is consistent with the purpose and intent of the Zoning Ordinance and is necessary to secure an appropriate improvement on the lot. The proposed improvements will upgrade the aesthetics of the building without adding additional floor area within the setbacks.

The Staff Hearing Officer finds that the Modification of required 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. No additional habitable space will be added within the required separation distance and the new balconies and porches will enhance the quality of life within the complex.

Said approval is subject to the following condition:

1. The following language shall be added to the plans submitted for building permit:

“Prior to the start of any vegetation or paving removal, demolition, trenching or grading, contractors and construction personnel shall be alerted to the possibility of uncovering unanticipated subsurface archaeological features or artifacts associated with past human occupation of the parcel. If such archaeological resources are encountered or suspected, work shall be halted immediately, the City Environmental Analyst shall be notified and an archaeologist from the most current City Qualified Archaeologists List shall be retained by the applicant. The latter shall be employed to assess the nature, extent and significance of

any discoveries and to develop appropriate management recommendations for archaeological resource treatment which may include, but are not limited to, redirection of grading and/or excavation activities, consultation and/or monitoring with a Barbareño Chumash representative from the most current City Qualified Barbareño Chumash Site Monitors List, etc.

If a discovery consists of possible human remains, the Santa Barbara County Coroner shall be contacted immediately. If the Coroner determines that the remains are Native American, the Coroner shall contact the California Native American Heritage Commission. A Barbareño Chumash representative from the most current City Qualified Barbareño Chumash Site Monitors List shall be retained to monitor all further subsurface disturbance in the area of the find. Work in the area may only proceed after the Environmental Analyst grants authorization.

If a discovery consists of possible prehistoric or Native American artifacts or materials, a Barbareño Chumash representative from the most current City Qualified Barbareño Chumash Site Monitors List shall be retained to monitor all further subsurface disturbance in the area of the find. Work in the area may only proceed after the Environmental Analyst grants authorization.”

Exhibits:

- A. Site Plan (under separate cover)
- B. Applicant's letter, dated February 2, 2015
- C. ABR Minutes dated January 20, 2015

Contact/Case Planner: Betsy Teeter, Planning Technician II  
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630 Garden Street, Santa Barbara, CA 93101  
Phone: (805) 564-5470 x 4563

February 2, 2015

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 (DRAFT)**

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 will and continue to be "Affordable Housing." The commons structure is used as a laundry facility for the residents, and for maintenance purposes by the Housing Authority.

The proposed renovations will include deferred maintenance and exterior improvements intended to give the buildings a "Santa Barbara" style. The exterior of the 10 duplexes will all be very similar above grade, with minor variations to the new fences and private patio's. Additional improvements include the construction of 2<sup>nd</sup> floor balconies for every unit, and private raised entry porches.

All the residential units will have interior upgrades to the kitchens and bathrooms. Two of the units will be modified to provide ground floor accessibility features.

Site improvements will consist of landscaping, raised entry stoops, private patio's, storm water enhancements, and parking reconfiguration. Note, under the current design there are several nonconforming parking spaces. In the new code compliant configuration there will be 3 less guest parking spaces.

**Modifications Requested:**

- #1 Architectural projections and improvements into front yard setback at Building #1, required due to the new exterior improvements on the existing buildings with less than the required setback.
- #2 Architectural projections and improvements into the side yard setback at Buildings #7,8, & 10, required due to the new exterior improvements on the existing buildings with less than the required setback.

**EXHIBIT B**

#3 Architectural projections and improvements into the required setback between buildings on site.

- Reduction of required setback between Buildings #2 & 3, due to the new Architectural projections added to Building #3.
- Reduction of required setback between Buildings #8 & 9, required due to the new exterior improvements on the existing buildings with less than the required setback.
- Reduction of required setback between Buildings #9 & 10, required due to the new exterior improvements on the existing buildings with less than the required setback.
- Reduction of required setback between Buildings #3 & 4, required due to the new exterior improvements on the existing buildings with less than the required setback.
- Reduction of required setback between Buildings #5 & 6, required due to the new exterior improvements on the existing buildings with less than the required setback.
- Reduction of required setback between Buildings #6 & 8, required due to the new exterior improvements on the existing buildings with less than the required setback.
- Reduction of required setback between Buildings #7 & 8 due to the new exterior improvements on the existing buildings with less than the required setback.

#### **Modification Justifications:**

Note, the proposed buttresses provide a sense of visual mass which is essential for the new Architectural style.

- #1 The second floor of Building #1 is  $\approx 19'$  (20'0" required) 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 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.

- #3 The following conditions are cases where the setbacks from existing buildings are not great enough to meet the required separation between structures.
- The addition of a buttress (architectural projection) on the side of Building #3 will reduce the separation between buildings 2 & 3 to  $\approx 14'-6''$  ( $15'0''$  required). These are relatively small elements and the impact on the loss of common outdoor space will be minimal.
  - Buildings #8 & 9 are separated by  $\approx 14'2''$  therefore any exterior improvements within  $15'0''$  of either structure require a modification. There will be no further encroachments between the buildings with the proposed designs.
  - The addition of a buttress (architectural projection) on the side of Building #10 and the overhanging balcony on Building #9 will reduce the separation between buildings 9 & 10 to  $\approx 15'-3''$  ( $15'0''$  required). These are relatively small elements and the impact on the loss of common outdoor space will be minimal.
  - The addition of the buttresses to the corners of Buildings #3 & 4 will result in the separation of these buildings at the corner location to  $\approx 12'-7''$ . Due to the sloping fin walls, the original buildings are separated by  $\approx 13'-0''$ . These new buttresses enhance the architectural appearance of the proposed design, and have no impact on the private open spaces at either building.
  - 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  $14'-6''$  (measured to fin walls). These new buttresses enhance the architectural appearance of the proposed design, and have no impact on the private open spaces at either building.
  - 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  $\approx 13'-4''$  from the original  $14'-8''$  (measured to fin walls). These new buttresses enhance the architectural appearance of the proposed design, and have no impact on the private open spaces at either building.
  - 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  $14'-7''$  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.

### 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 the City of Santa Barbara, who's goal is to improve the lives of the 20 low income families that live there. It's also about trying to Architecturally 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.

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 in an Architectural style more consistent with Santa Barbara.

Modifications #2,3,4,6,7,8,9 & 10 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 in an Architectural style more consistent with Santa Barbara.

Sincerely,

Kevin Dumain, AIA  
Project Architect

**CONCEPT REVIEW - CONTINUED ITEM****2. 211 - 221 SYCAMORE LANE****R-2 Zone****(3:55)**

Assessor's Parcel Number: 017-073-046  
 Application Number: MST2014-00592  
 Owner: Housing Authority/City of Santa Barbara  
 Architect: DesignArc

(Proposal to renovate an existing 20-unit multi-family development on a 1.69 acre parcel. The proposal includes exterior improvements intended to give the buildings a "Spanish Colonial" architectural style, new patios, trash enclosure, fences, landscaping, raised entry stoops, and parking reconfiguration. There will be no new floor area. Staff Hearing Officer review is requested for zoning modifications for minimum distance between buildings and front and interior setbacks. This application replaces expired master application MST2009-00482.)

**(Second Concept Review. Comments only; Requires Environmental Assessment and Staff Hearing Officer review. Project was last reviewed on December 22, 2014.)**

Actual time: 4:08 p.m.

Due to conflict of interest, Board member Hopkins recused himself from the discussion on the project.

Present: Kevin Dumain, Architect; David Black, Landscape Architect; and Dale Aazam, Project Manager for the Housing Authority.

Public comment opened at 4:28 p.m.

- 1) Chris Dille (neighbor), opposition; expressed concerns regarding noise abatement screening, construction duration, and requested a more appropriate a more simple design architecture rather than the proposed "Spanish Colonial" architecture. She encouraged drive-by site visits by the Board.

Public comment closed at 4:32 p.m.

**Motion: Continued indefinitely to the Staff Hearing Officer to return to Full Board with comments:**

- 1) The Board found the overall project's direction is acceptable based on Board comments in the previous meeting. Further refinements requested are:
  - a. Study simplifying some of the details.
  - b. Restudy the distance of chimney bump-outs and buttresses.
  - c. Provide details for the terracotta vents at the gable ends.
  - d. Provide further architectural enhancements to announce the doorways.
  - e. Show entry doors as plank doors.
  - f. The Board finds the general plant palette acceptable; add fruit trees where possible.
  - g. Further study the existing creek plantings and their relationship with existing creek grass areas.
  - h. Provide lighting cut-sheet details, a color and materials boards, and any additional corbel and fenestration details.
  - i. The Board finds the proposed zoning modifications are aesthetically appropriate and do not pose consistency issues with the ABR Design Guidelines or the Neighborhood Preservation Ordinance. The Board also finds the proposed zoning modifications present no negative impacts to the neighborhood.
  - j. Choose one style of architecture, either Monterey Colonial or Spanish Colonial Revival.

Action: Gradin/Wittausch, 5/0/1. Motion carried. (Hopkins abstained, Cung absent).