



CITY OF ALBUQUERQUE
OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS
ZONING HEARING EXAMINER
NOTIFICATION OF DECISION

Cedar Investors request a variance of 3 ft to the 3 ft max wall height, a variance of 6 ft to the 6 ft max wall height and a variance of 4 ft to the 8 ft max wall height for Lot 1, Highlands Subd, located at 200 Mulberry ST NE, zoned R-MH [Section 14-16-5-7(D)]

Special Exception No:**VA-2018-00069**
Project No:**Project# 2018-001422**
Hearing Date:09-18-18
Closing of Public Record:09-18-18
Date of Decision:10-03-18

On the 18th day of September, 2018, Consensus Planning, agent for property owner Cedar Investors (“Applicant”) appeared before the Zoning Hearing Examiner (“ZHE”) requesting a variance of 3 ft to the 3 ft max wall height, a variance of 6 ft to the 6 ft max wall height and a variance of 4 ft to the 8 ft max wall height (“Application”) upon the real property located at 200 Mulberry ST NE (“Subject Property”). Below are the ZHE’s findings of fact and decision:

FINDINGS:

1. Applicant is requesting a variance of 3 ft to the 3 ft max wall height, a variance of 6 ft to the 6 ft max wall height and a variance of 4 ft to the 8 ft max wall height.
2. The City of Albuquerque Integrated Development Ordinance Section 14-16-6-6(N)(3)(c) (Variance for a Taller Front or Side Yard Wall) reads: “A *variance application for a taller front or side yard wall shall be approved by the Zoning Hearing Examiner, if and only if, the Zoning Hearing Examiner finds all of the following:*
 - (1) *The proposed wall would strengthen or reinforce the architectural character of the surrounding area;*
 - (2) *The proposed wall would not be injurious to adjacent properties, the surrounding neighborhood, or the larger community;*
 - (3) *The wall is proposed on a lot that meets any of the following criteria:*
 - a. *The lot is at least ½ acre;*
 - b. *The lot fronts a street designated as a collector or above in the LRTS guide;*
 - c. *At least 20 percent of the properties within 330 feet of the lot where the wall or fence is being requested have a wall or fence over 3 feet in the front yard.*
 - (4) *The design of the wall complies with any applicable standard in Section 14-16-5-7 (Walls and Fences), including, but not limited to Subsection 14-16-5-7(E)(2) (Articulation and alignment) and Subsection 14-16-5-7(E)(3) (Wall Design), and all of the following:*
 - a. *The wall or fence shall not block the view of any portion of any window on the front façade of the primary building when viewed from 5 feet above ground level at the centerline of the street in front of the house.*

b. The design and materials proposed for the wall or fence shall reflect the architectural character of the surrounding area.

3. The Applicant bears the burden of ensuring there is evidence in the record supporting a finding that the above criteria are met under Section 14-16-6-6(N)(3)(c).
4. James Strozier for Consensus Planning, Inc., agent for Cedar Investments, LLC., owners, appeared and gave evidence in support of the application.
5. All property owners within 100 feet and affected neighborhood association were notified of the application.
6. The subject property is currently zoned R-MH.
7. Sycamore NA, Silver Hill NA, Spruce Park NA and University Heights NA are the affected neighborhood associations.
8. No opposition to the application has been submitted.
9. The original site plan for this project was approved by the Design Review Board (“DRB”) in October, 2017.
10. The project encompasses the entire block located between Mulberry Street and Cedar Street, Copper Avenue and Tijeras Avenue NE.
11. Modifications to the plan were made, but the wall height changes came under the jurisdiction of the Integrated Development Ordinance, requiring this request for variance in various wall height limitations imposed by the IDO.
12. The variance is necessary to provide for security and safety.
13. The project will facilitate the provision of housing diversity and market rate rentals within one of the city’s primary employment centers.
14. It will allow for shorter employee commuter driving times.
15. The project will provide another housing choice in the area.
16. The project will provide productive use of a currently vacant property.
17. There are special circumstances associated with the project including differences in finished grades for the interior of the project and from the perimeter.
18. The site interior has a lower finished grade than that of the street.
19. The special circumstances are required to address the existing change of grade and to meet other IDO design and development standards.
20. The special circumstances are unavoidable due to the existing grade and elevation change.
21. The application would allow appropriate screening and buffering from the proposed use from the surrounding and existing uses.
22. Many of the wall heights along the perimeter need to be 42 inches or taller to protect the public from falls into the interior of the project.
23. The application allows for visibility into the project from all sides and provides an attractive view from the public perspective.
24. The application would provide appropriate screening for the proposed development from the existing, surrounding uses.
25. The intent of the IDO wall height requirements are to safeguard single family uses and the intensity of the proposed uses and associated wall height variance requests are appropriate for this property and area.
26. The IDO’s wall height maximum also did not recognize circumstances requiring walls to be 42 inches or taller in order to satisfy minimum safety codes to prevent accidental falls.

27. The proposed plan would strengthen or reinforce the architectural character of the surrounding area as required by Section 14-16-4-2(C)(2)(a).
28. The proposed wall would not be injurious to adjacent properties, the surrounding neighborhood or the larger community as required by Section 14-16-4-2(C)(2)(b).
29. The ZHE finds that the proper “Notice of Hearing” signage was posted for the required time period as required by Section 14-16-6-4(K)(3).
30. The ZHE finds that the Applicant has authority to pursue this Application.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

The criteria within Section 14-16-6-6(N)(3)(c) of the City of Albuquerque Integrated Development Ordinance are satisfied.

DECISION:

APPROVAL of a variance of 3 ft to the 3 ft max wall height, a variance of 6 ft to the 6 ft max wall height and a variance of 4 ft to the 8 ft max wall height.

If you wish to appeal this decision, you must do so by October 18, 2018 in the manner described below. A non-refundable filing fee will be calculated at the Planning Department’s Land Development Coordination counter and is required at the time the Appeal is filed.

Appeal must be filed with the Planning Department within 15 days after the decision. The appeal shall specifically state the section of the Integrated Development Ordinance, City regulation, or condition attached to a decision that has not been interpreted correctly, as required by Section 14-16-6-4(U)(3)(a)(3) of the Integrated Development Ordinance. Appeals are taken at 600 2nd Street, Plaza Del Sol Building, Ground Level, Planning Application Counter located on the west side of the lobby. **Please present this letter of notification when filing an appeal.** When an application is withdrawn, the fee shall not be refunded.

Once an appeal is accepted by the Planning Department, it shall prepare and transmit a record of the appeal together with all appeal material received from the appellant to impacted parties and to the Land Use Hearing Officer (LUHO) through the Clerk of the City Council.

The LUHO shall then schedule a hearing on the matter within 30 consecutive days of receipt and notify the parties, pursuant to Section 14-16-6-4(U)(3)(d). The Planning Department shall give written notice of an appeal, together with a notice of the date, time and place of the hearing to the applicant, a representative of the opponents, if any are known, and the appellant.

Please note that pursuant to Section 14-16-6-4(U), of the Integrated Development Ordinance, you must demonstrate that you have legal standing to file an appeal as defined.

You will receive notice if any other person files an appeal. If there is no appeal, you can receive building permits any time after the appeal deadline quoted above; provided all conditions imposed at the time of approval have been met. However, the Zoning Hearing Examiner may allow issuance of building permits if the public hearing produces no objection of any kind to the approval of an application. To receive this approval, the applicant agrees in writing to return the building permit or occupation tax number.

Successful applicants are reminded that other regulations of the City must be complied with, even after approval of a special exception is secured. This decision does not constitute approval of plans for a building permit. If your application is approved, bring this decision with you when you apply for any related building permit or occupation tax number. Approval of a conditional use or a variance application is **void after one year** from date of approval if the rights and privileges are granted, thereby have not been executed or utilized.



Stan Harada, Esq.
Zoning Hearing Examiner

cc: Zoning Enforcement
ZHE File
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