

ATTACHMENT TO APPLICATION FOR VARIANCE
2231 HERMOSA AVENUE
September 18, 2006

RECEIVED

SEP 18 2006

COMMUNITY DEV. DEPT.

The attached application proposes a realignment of two adjacent lots from an east-west orientation to a north-south orientation. The property is located at the southwest corner of 23rd Street and Hermosa Avenue and presently contains a non-conforming seven unit apartment building with a combination of one & two bedroom units & a studio unit. There are six enclosed parking spaces derived from Beach Drive at the rear of the site. The lots are quite small (2036 sf & 2107 sf) and actually qualify as *small lots* under the provisions of the R-1 zoning designation. There will be no change to the individual lot sizes resulting from the realignment.

At this location, 23rd Street is a walk street and the owners fronting the walk street area have the opportunity to enjoy usage of a portion of the right-of-way as landscaped yard area. It is the intention of the owner to demolish the existing non-conforming apartment building and construct a new SFD on each of the two lots.

With the realignment, each new home will have direct access from a family room to usable, and very attractive, ground level open space and will benefit from the right-of-way encroachment area that greatly enhances the livability of each residence. In addition, both homes will enjoy westerly views from the upper levels. By creating two walk-street facing homes, the realignment has the added benefit of enhancing the residential character of 23rd Street and increasing the required walk-street setback from a 3' side yard to a 5' front yard for the entire 66' walk-street frontage.

Without the realignment, only one of the homes will have access to ground level open space and because of the small size of the lots, there would be no usable, ground level open space for the interior lot. The corner lot would have access to the walk-street from its side yard which would be delineated by a low blank wall the length of the property.

In fact, a home could be built on each of the two lots in the present east-west configuration and the driveway access could be derived from either Beach Drive or Hermosa Avenue. Planning Commission review would not be required in this situation. The proposed realignment offers a residential context that benefits both the owners of the new homes as well as the immediate neighborhood.

The purpose of the variance is to allow a reduced 9'1" garage setback from Hermosa Ave. for Parcel 2. Each of the two new homes will have a two car garage and one open guest parking space. The garage for the westerly parcel will be on Beach Drive which is a 10' wide alley. Parcel 2 will provide a dedicated guest parking space adjacent to the garage in lieu of the typical guest parking located in the 17' setback in front of the garage. Except for the garage set back, the development complies with all R-2 zoning standards.

FINDINGS

The exceptional circumstances relate to design limitations resulting from the small lot size, narrow width and irregular shape that limit design options for the ground level. A home could be built on each lot, in the realigned configuration, but the proposed parking design is superior to the alternative which requires a very awkward driveway access from Hermosa Avenue for parcel 2.

The variance is necessary for preservation of property rights so as to provide a reasonable use and enjoyment of ground floor living area and open space yard areas.

This situation is not unique as there are other examples of a reduced garage setback on both sides of Hermosa Avenue. In this situation, Beach Drive is an extraordinarily narrow alley that is difficult to navigate because of cars improperly parked adjacent to garages. It is advantageous to locate one of

SUPPLEMENTAL
INFORMATION 10

the garages on Hermosa Ave. which greatly enhances access and visibility to the garage and the guest parking.

In this situation, without the minor code exception, one of the lots is deprived of the opportunity to enjoy a highly desired amenity in the beach area which is to enjoy usable open space accessible from ground level living area. The opportunity presented in this situation is rather rare but the resulting development potential is far superior in that there will be a 5' front yard setback for the entire 23rd St. walk-street frontage (rather than a 3' side yard and blank wall). In addition, walk-street facing entries and front yards will greatly enhance the livability of the new homes and the immediate neighborhood.

The requested exception will not be materially detrimental to adjacent properties or to any other properties in the general area. The proposed site development complies with all other requirements of the Zoning Code and the project scale is consistent with homes being developed throughout the neighborhood.

The proposed garage and driveway for parcel 2 satisfy all the basic requirements for parking and access. Hermosa Ave. is a divided 100' wide street and there is excellent visibility upon entering or exiting the driveway. Based on City Parking Lot Design Standards for Residential Garages (Case IV), the site design meets requirements for a 23' turning radius facing a street.

The requested exception does not compromise the livability of the new home, especially as the guest parking is adjacent to the garage and does not obstruct access to the enclosed garage parking. Because of the exceptional visibility, the proposed site development does not result in any interference with pedestrian access or traffic flow.

In fact, the proposed development greatly enhances the relationship of the property to the street and neighborhood as the density is substantially reduced with the elimination of the seven unit apartment building. Since the existing development does not provide even one parking space per unit, it creates a substantial demand for use of public parking which will be eliminated with the proposed development.

The requested exception is consistent with the General Plan which allows a single family residence on each lot. The intent of the General Plan Goals and Objectives is to provide residential opportunities that are compatible with existing neighborhoods. The proposed use of the site, including the lot realignment, is well within the intent of the zoning standards which seek to promote compatibility and livability. As stated above, the proposed development results in a compatible relationship with the surrounding neighborhood and does not impact circulation patterns.

In conclusion, the proposed development provides for a reasonable use of properties on a walk street taking advantage of the encroachment area. Otherwise a blank wall would be facing the entire walk street frontage. The reduced garage setback allows for usable living area and open space on the ground floor without compromising parking and access, and the proposed development integrates the entire site within the context of a walk street neighborhood which is a reasonable expectation and typical development pattern for other similar properties.