

**CITY OF MANHATTAN BEACH
[DRAFT] PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
MAY 9, 2012**

A Regular Meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Manhattan Beach, California, was held on the 9th day of May, 2012, at the hour of 6:30 p.m., in the City Council Chambers of City Hall, at 1400 Highland Avenue, in said City.

1. ROLL CALL

Present: Conaway, Gross, Paralusz, Seville-Jones, Chairperson Andreani
Absent: None
Staff Present: Richard Thompson, Community Development Director
Esteban Danna, Assistant Planner
Recording Secretary, Sarah Boeschen

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – March 14, 2012

Commissioner Conaway requested that the ninth paragraph on page 4 of the March 14 minutes be revised to read: “In response to a question from Commissioner Seville-Jones, Director Arndt stated that staff would be involved but does not have the time to develop a plan for addressing the parks master plan without hiring a contractor.”

Commissioner Conaway requested that the third line of the fourth paragraph on page 5 of the minutes be revised to read: “. . . and many residents need to cut into the street for repair of the sewer lines.”

Commissioner Conaway requested that the fifth line of the sixth paragraph on page 6 of the minutes be revised to read: “. . . and the responsibility of the Cultural Arts Commission is to plan for the art that will be included as part of the project.”

Commissioner Conaway requested that the last sentence on page 6 of the March 14 minutes be changed to read: “He indicated that the structure is planned to be substantially completed in June of 2014; however other items ~~that~~ will need to be completed and systems ~~that~~ will need to be checked before the planned opening in December of 2014.”

A motion was MADE and SECONDED (Paralusz/Seville-Jones) to **APPROVE** the minutes of March 14, 2012, as amended.

AYES: Conaway, Gross, Paralusz, Seville-Jones, Chairperson Andreani
NOES: None
ABSENT: None
ABSTAIN: None

3. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

4. PUBLIC HEARINGS

05/09/12-2 Variance for an Addition and Remodel to an Existing Two Story Single Family Residence to Allow a Three-Story Structure While Staying Below the Maximum Height Limit and Maintaining the Existing Legal Non-Conforming Setbacks

Assistant Planner Danna summarized the staff report.

In response to a question from Commissioner Gross, Assistant Planner Danna indicated that the maximum that would be permitted to be built on the subject lot would be 4,371 square feet. He indicated that a project could qualify for a minor exception up to 75 percent of the maximum allowable square footage. He indicated that the proposed structure is 3,360 square feet, or approximately 77 percent of the maximum allowed for the site.

In response to a question from Commissioner Conaway, Assistant Planner Danna indicated that existing structure complies with the minimum 20 foot front yard setback requirement. He stated that a minimum of 6 percent of the lot area is required to remain open on the second level within the front 1/5 of the buildable envelope.

In response to a question from Commissioner Gross, Assistant Planner Danna indicated that the requirement was intended to provide for articulation in the front of structures.

Chairperson Andreani commented that she appreciates that buildable floor area cannot be added onto a detached garage as indicated in item 3 in Section 2 on page 3 of the draft Resolution. She asked whether Municipal Code Section 10.52.050 would allow for a covered deck to be placed on a detached garage.

Assistant Planner Danna indicated that a covered deck would not be considered buildable floor area and would be permitted above the garage. He said that a deck would be counted toward the amount of gross floor area that is permitted for an accessory structure.

Director Thompson indicated that a covered deck would be permitted above the garage. He commented that an additional restriction could be placed on a deck if the Commission felt it was necessary. He said that staff is not recommending any additional restrictions for a deck.

Chairperson Andreani opened the public hearing.

Jim Fasola, the project architect, described the design of the proposed structure. He pointed out that the project has been designed according to the needs and wishes of the property owners rather than by a developer. He stated that the existing structure is in need of repair but has the potential to be a great home. He indicated that the existing home is 2,000 square feet. He commented that there are houses in the area that are much larger than is proposed for the subject property. He pointed out that they are proposing a total of 3,300 square feet. He indicated that the applicants bought the property with the intention of remodeling. He said that the house could be expanded to the rear on the first and second levels. He indicated, however, that adding to the rear would change the character of the home and would result in a loss of open space. He commented that adding to the rear also would result in encroaching into the side yard because of the triangular shape of the lot. He pointed out that they could have much more square footage if they added to the rear because the lower level could be classified as a basement and would not be counted toward the buildable floor area. He said that the proposal would allow the existing character of the structure to be preserved. He commented that a large portion of the lot consists of the front yard. He indicated that the subject structure is the type that was intended to be preserved under the Mansionization Ordinance.

Scott Dobbins, the applicant, said that they want to retain a smaller home with a larger yard rather than rebuilding a much larger home. He pointed out that the four adjacent neighbors to the subject property support the project.

In response to a question from Commissioner Gross, **Mr. Fasola** said that the construction will need to meet current Building Code requirements.

Commissioner Conaway commented that the preservation of mid-century modern homes is gaining popularity in the architectural community. He said that consideration as a special circumstance as preserving an important piece of architecture within the City.

Mr. Fasola said that the existing home was built by an architecture and engineering firm.

Jan Dennis, a resident of the 900 block of Highview Avenue, said that the subject property is a fine example of the premodern age of building and should be retained. She stated that the home is a fine piece of architecture. She commented that the Heritage Conservancy is involved with displaying and educating the history of architecture in Manhattan Beach, and the subject home will be featured in one of their upcoming newsletters.

Chairperson Andreani closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Gross indicated that he is in support of the proposal. He said that he appreciates the comparison of the subject home to the neighboring properties that was provided as well as the renderings. He indicated that the setbacks that would be provided with the subject proposal would be better than the setbacks for the neighboring properties. He said that the proposal meets the intent of the Mansionization Ordinance to retain existing smaller structures and to maintain the eclectic architecture of the City. He commented that the existing structure could be torn down and a huge building built or the existing building could remain and possibly not be upgraded to current Code safety standards if the subject proposal is not approved. He indicated that he supports the proposal. He commented that he would prefer that the language of item 3 in Section 2 of the draft Resolution be stricken which states that future construction or remodel of the detached garage may not include the addition of an accessory guest quarters or any additional buildable floor area on the second floor.

In response to a comment from Commissioner Gross, Director Thompson pointed out that the applicant would not need to come back before the Commission in the future to add an accessory structure above the garage if the language in item 3 in Section 2 of the draft Resolution is not included.

Commissioner Paralusz indicated that she supports the project. She said that she feels the project meets the intent of the Mansionization Ordinance. She commended the architect and applicant for a very thoughtful design that fits the character of the neighborhood and meets the needs of the applicants. She said that she appreciates that a much larger home could be built on the subject site than is proposed and that there are much larger homes in the area. She indicated that she commends the decision to preserve and maintain the mid-century architecture. She said that she feels the exceptions meet the intent of the Code language.

Commissioner Conaway said that he supports the project. He commended the applicant for proposing a structure that is less than the maximum allowed and that preserves the existing mid-century modern architecture. He said that the proposal does meet the spirit of the Mansionization Ordinance. He indicated that whether the structure is three levels is not as important as maintaining the setbacks. He pointed out that only a narrow corner of the structure would extend into the required setback rather than an entire wall. He said that the proposal meets the criteria for a special circumstance that would allow him to support the exception for the second story setbacks as proposed. He commented that the applicant may wish to come back in the future and redesign the garage. He indicated that he would be in favor of retaining the language restricting any addition of buildable floor area above the garage.

Commissioner Paralusz commented that she would want an opportunity to review any future proposal to add buildable floor area above the garage. She said that she would support retaining the language of item 3 in Section 2 of the draft Resolution.

Commissioner Seville-Jones indicated that she agrees with the comments of the other Commissioners. She said that the proposal would preserve open space and an important architectural structure in the City. She indicated that she appreciates that the applicant could build a much larger structure without being required to come before the Commission. She pointed out that the adjacent neighbors have not objected to the proposal. She indicated that she feels the findings for a special circumstance can be met to approve the proposal because of the size and shape of the subject lot. She said that she does not believe the proposal would result in a substantial detriment to the neighbors; she believes that the project is consistent with the goals of the General Plan; and she believes that it would not be granting a special privilege to the applicants. She commented that she would support retaining the language restricting any buildable floor area above the garage so that any future proposal would be required to come before the Commission.

Chairperson Andreani stated that she agrees with the comments of the other Commissioners. She said that she appreciates that the applicants wish to maintain the style of the existing home. She commented that she also appreciates that the proposal is for a home that is smaller than is permitted. She indicated that the project meets the intent of the Mansionization Ordinance and Minor Exception Ordinance to preserve and promote the eclectic nature of the residential neighborhoods in the City. She stated that she supports the proposal. She commented that she is in favor of keeping the language of item 3 in Section 2 of the draft Resolution so that any enclosed structure above the garage that may be proposed in the future would be reviewed by the Commission. She indicated that she had a concern that a covered deck would appear more as buildable floor area than an open deck.

Chairperson Andreani reopened the public hearing.

Mr. Fasola pointed out that the Code allows 900 square feet of buildable floor area to be built for the detached garage. He commented that the existing garage is 512 square feet. He said that the applicants plan to eventually add a deck above the garage. He asked if the language of item 3 in Section 2 of the draft Resolution would restrict a trellis above the garage.

Director Thompson said that item 3 in Section 2 of the draft Resolution would allow some use of the garage for a deck but would prohibit an enclosed structure on top of the garage.

Assistant Planner Danna said that a covered deck that is open on four sides would be permitted as the language of item 3 is written.

Chairperson Andreani closed the public hearing.

The Commissioners agreed to change the wording of item 3 in Section 2 of the draft Resolution to read: "Future construction or remodel of the detached garage ~~may~~ shall not include the addition of an accessory guest quarters or any additional buildable floor area on the second floor. . ."

A motion was MADE and SECONDED (Conaway/Paralusz) to **APPROVE** a Variance for an addition and remodel to an existing two story single family residence to allow a three-story structure while staying below the maximum height limit and maintaining the existing legal non-conforming setbacks, with a change to the wording of item 3 in Section 2 of the draft

Resolution to read: “Future construction or remodel of the detached garage ~~may~~ shall not include the addition of an accessory guest quarters or any additional buildable floor area on the second floor. . .”

AYES: Conaway, Gross, Paralusz, Seville-Jones, Chairperson Andreani
NOES: None
ABSENT: None
ABSTAIN: None

Director Thompson explained the 15-day appear period and said that the item will be placed on the City Council’s Consent Calendar for their meeting of June 5, 2012.

5. DIRECTORS ITEMS

Director Thompson said that Dr. Caprellian has provided the Commissioners with information regarding approval of alcohol licenses in the City of Manhattan Beach. He indicated that the issue is scheduled to be discussed by the City Council at their meeting of May 15, 2012.

6. PLANNING COMMISSION ITEMS

Chairperson Andreani introduced new Planning Commissioner Steve Ortmann.

The Commissioners all thanked Sandra Seville-Jones for her service on the Commission.

Chairperson Andreani stated that Leadership Manhattan Beach will have a ribbon cutting for the sustainable demonstration garden at the post office chamber of commerce site on Saturday, May 12 at 10:00 a.m. She commented that the police and fire facility will also be hosting an open house on May 12.

Commissioner Paralusz indicated that the City’s Centennial Parade will take place on May 19 at 10:00 a.m.

7. TENTATIVE AGENDA May 23, 2012

8. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:35 p.m. to Wednesday, May 23, 2012, in the City Council Chambers, City Hall, 1400 Highland Avenue

SARAH BOESCHEN
Recording Secretary

ATTEST:

RICHARD THOMPSON
Community Development Director