



CITY OF PALM DESERT

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW COMMISSION MINUTES

July 25, 2017

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 12:35 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

<u>Commissioners</u>	<u>Current Meeting</u>		<u>Year to Date</u>	
	<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>	<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>
Chris Van Vliet, Chair	X		13	
Karel Lambell, Vice Chair	X		8	5(3E)
Doug Brewer (2-14-17)	X		9	2
Allan Levin	X		12	1
Michael McAuliffe	X		12	1
Jim McIntosh		X	10	3
John Vuksic	X		12	1

Also Present

Eric Ceja, Principal Planner
Heather Buck, Assistant Planner
Pedro Rodriguez, Code Compliance Supervisor
Ron Moreno, Sr. Engineer/City Surveyor
Christina Canales, Assistant Engineer
Janine Judy, Recording Secretary
Cancelled meeting: 4/11/17,

III. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

None

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: July 11, 2017

Action:

Chair Van Vliet moved to approve the July 11, 2017 meeting minutes with minor changes. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Levin and carried by a 6-0-1 vote, with Brewer, Lambell, Levin, McAuliffe, Van Vliet, and Vuksic voting YES and McIntosh absent.

V. CASES:

A. Final Drawings:

1. CASE NO: MISC 17-114

APPLICANT AND ADDRESS: JOHN AND VIVIAN STOMEL, 1684
Bellshire Court, Westlake Village, CA 91362

NATURE OF PROJECT/APPROVAL SOUGHT: Consideration to
approve a wall exception.

LOCATION: 44556 San Pascual Avenue

ZONE: R-1 (14,000)

Ms. Heather Buck, Assistant Planner, presented a wall exception for a home on San Pascual Avenue near the corner of De Anza Way. She presented photos of the front slump block wall and the house and the wall and stated that it is only the wood fence on the side property that is in question. Previously the property had a chain-link fence in this area along with landscaping prior to the wood fence being built, which the property owner removed to beautify the property. This item is coming before the Commission because per Code wood fences are not permitted if they are visible from the public right-of-way. The Architectural Review Commission (ARC) can approve a wall exception for architectural merit and compatibility with a home's architectural style. She described the design of the building, the site, and architecture. The proposed redwood fence with redwood horizontal wood slats is 5'-4" in height and is located on the northern property line. The home was originally constructed in 1946 and has had some extensive renovations. She presented a Google image of the property showing the house with blocks of building massing and materials that give this house a modern feel that she believes is what the applicant was going for when they constructed the new fence. While there is some architectural merit to this fence, staff does have some concern with compatibility to the existing site since it is visible from the public right-of-way. The front wall is slump stone and the neighboring yard has a wood fence with a vertical slat orientation. She presented a video from the homeowner to show what the wood fence looks like on the interior of the site, as well as

the exterior of the site. While the architectural design of the fence is nice and somewhat compatible to the building architecture, staff feels there are too many materials moving and connecting with one another and staff does not support this.

MR. JOSH STOMEL, homeowner, said upon acquiring the property, he decided to remove the decrepit chain-link fence on the side yard and replace it with a redwood horizontal fence because the redwood is more visually appealing than chain-link. He placed an outdoor seal treatment on the redwood so that it would endure the high temperatures during the summers. Chair Van Vliet asked why he didn't use masonry block to match the rest of the front wall. MR. STOMEL said he preferred block but it is too costly and he had already put in a lot of money renovating the property and ran out of funds. Commissioner Vuksic asked why he didn't come for approval before he built it. MR. STOMEL said he was unaware that an approval was required for a side facing fence. He said he built the fence to keep trespassers from entering the property through open parts of the fence and stealing his pool equipment.

Commissioner Vuksic agreed with staff that there are too many things going on. The wood fence has some architectural style; however, with all these things going on it is not at all cohesive. He suggested a smooth plaster finish on the block wall to match the house. Then the wood horizontal slat fence becomes an accent to the wall and compliments the property. Commissioner Lambell reminded the applicant that per Code wood fencing is not allowed and if an exception is granted it is for architectural merit. Commissioner McAuliffe agrees that unifying the block wall with the house will give it a higher degree of refinement and by adding a second layer of wood slats to the existing wood fence provides the same finished look on the street side as is present on the interior of the property making it architecturally acceptable.

The Commission and the applicant discussed the height of the wood fence in relation to the slump block wall. Commissioner Vuksic suggested making it the same height so that it would look more modern and clean with a good horizontal line across the whole thing.

ACTION:

Commissioner Vuksic moved to approve an exception for architectural merit due to fencing that compliments the residence and subject to: 1) slump block wall shall be plastered with a smooth finish to match the house; 2) the wood fence on the north side shall be reduced in height so that it is level with the front slump block wall up to the point where the new wood fence abuts the neighbors fence; and 3) wood slats shall be added to the north face of the existing wood fence to provide the same finished look on the street side as is present on the interior of the property. Motion was seconded by Commissioner McAuliffe and carried by a 6-0-1 vote, with Brewer, Lambell, Levin, McAuliffe, Vuksic, and Van Vliet voting YES and McIntosh absent.

2. CASE NO: MISC 17-115

APPLICANT AND ADDRESS: JOHN AND VIVIAN STOMEL, 1684 Bellshire Court, Westlake Village, CA 91362

NATURE OF PROJECT/APPROVAL SOUGHT: Consideration to approve a wall exception.

LOCATION: 73748 De Anza Way

ZONE: R-1 (14,000)

Ms. Heather Buck, Assistant Planner, presented a wall exception for a home on the corner of San Pascual Avenue and De Anza Way. The existing wall is a block wall with varying heights; approximately 2' high up to about 4' high. The new wall is 5'-6" and is adjacent to the existing gate opening. The applicant added a metal horizontal slat fence on top of the 2' and 4' high walls due to the deteriorating condition of the landscaping and for security reasons. In several places the landscape was not sufficient to prohibit people from trespassing on the property and stealing pool equipment. The owner added a new smooth stucco finish to the existing wall that is complimentary with the home; dark trim and smooth stucco finish. The height of the fence does not conform to the municipal code since the setback would have to be 15' to 20' back from the curb face. However, since this is an existing wall it is here only for an exception for the distance from the curb. The City prohibits walls of height from being constructed within a 40' triangle at the corner for traffic site obstruction. Staff is recommending approval based on architectural merit and unusual circumstances that make literal interpretation of the code impractical or contrary.

Commissioner Levin asked why the metal fencing was only in two locations and thinks it would look more cohesive if it ran the entire frontage. MR. JOSH STOMEL, owner, said the reason he placed the metal fencing on the wall was for security reasons due to theft of pool equipment. The areas where the oleanders are dead or dying are the areas where the trespassers were gaining entry. He was not able to build the wall higher due to the lack of rebar and his solution was to place the metal fencing on top of the block wall in the areas that were not secured. He didn't continue along the entire property line because the metal fencing is expensive.

Commissioner Levin said from a security stand point the applicant took care of the problem in only a few areas, but in other areas someone can easily step through the oleanders so the goal of securing the property hasn't been achieved. MR. STOMEL said the theft has stopped and the existing oleander deters people from walking through because it is very thick. He only put the metal fencing in the spots that the oleander was completely dead.

Commissioner Vuksic asked why he didn't come to the City for approval before building the wall. MR. STOMEL said he had to get the pool functioning and didn't want to have more theft occurring so he built the fence and then informed Code Compliance. He realizes it was after the fact, but he made a point to bring it to code's attention. Commissioner Vuksic asked why he didn't put up temporary fencing. MR. STOMEL said the only thing that would be temporary was a chain link fence which he thought would be too ugly. Commissioner Lambell asked about the oleanders and MR. STOMEL said he planted new oleanders in those areas and he is waiting for them to fill out. Commissioner Lambell said a prerequisite for doing changes to a wall is that it has architectural merit and well thought out.

Commissioner Vuksic said the different materials on the left side of the wall are working, but the stair steps in some areas of the wall is not working with the rectangle sections of metal fence. He believes that removing the stair steps may help to solve the issue.

Commissioner Brewer suggested that the applicant come up with a cohesive strategy where the slump wall and the metal have a theme along the entire outside of the property. Commissioner Lambell told the applicant that he needs an architect or a landscape designer well versed in how to take these existing elements and bring them all together. Chair Van Vliet agreed and said the plan needs to be comprehensive and thought through.

Commissioner Levin asked Ms. Buck what their options were and she said the Commission could set time limits on how soon the changes need to be made.

Commissioner McAuliffe informed the applicant that the Commission is not saying the metal fence is not an acceptable option. To be clear, how it is relating to the existing conditions is not acceptable.

ACTION:

Commissioner Lambell moved to continue Case No. MISC 17-115 for 60-days subject to submittal of a comprehensive fencing design for the perimeter of the property that is compatible with the existing conditions. Motion was seconded by Commissioner McAuliffe and carried by a 6-0-1 vote, with Brewer, Lambell, Levin, McAuliffe, Vuksic, and Van Vliet voting YES and McIntosh absent.

B. Preliminary Plans:

CASE NO: PP/CUP/CZ/EA 16-280 & TTM 33195

APPLICANT AND ADDRESS: CHRISTOPHER MCFADDEN, 75145 St. Charles Place, Suite 4, Palm Desert, CA 92211

NATURE OF PROJECT/APPROVAL SOUGHT: Consideration of preliminarily approving architectural and landscaping plans for 69-condominium units and open space amenities; **Palm Desert Country Club (formerly Palm Desert Executive Golf Course)**

LOCATION: 77200 California Drive

ZONE: O.S.

Mr. Eric Ceja, Principal Planner, stated this item for the former Palm Desert Country Club Executive Golf Course has been considered by the Commission at previous meetings. The applicant is now submitting changes requested from the last meeting. He described the project for 69 condominium units on Sites A, B, and C. All have standardized architecture, floor plans, square footage for each of the units, passive and active recreation space and new perimeter landscape throughout the project site. He pointed out that the Commission has generally been supportive of the architecture and landscape design for the project; however, the Commission has asked the applicant to address a few additional items: 1) study the heights of the block walls specific to not only the perimeter block wall but also the heights of walls to screen vehicle headlights

within the project from encroaching into people's backyards; 2) submittal of a different cross-section for the main access drives into each of the study areas; 3) lights from vehicles properly blocked; 4) address the A/C units attached onto the roofs of the condominium units; 5) provide a different perspective to review the double fencing; 6) study the curvature on Utah Circle; and 7) provide different cross-sections for Sites A and B.

Mr. Ceja stated that the applicant has complied with the Commission's requests and the new drawings presented today reflect those changes. He pointed out that there are two different architectural styles that are continued on all four sides of the building. For Site B they provided the requested perspectives for the project entries. These renderings include photos of today's existing condition and the rendering for what it will look like when it is built. It includes everything from the landscape, textures for the pavers, asphalt and wall conditions. The applicant has provided several cross-sections across Site A and B; specifically for Lots 16 and 17. As you enter Site A off Kentucky Avenue, this cross-section shows how you enter and how it starts dropping into the project area. It also includes the new perimeter wall, the retaining wall and 20' of landscape. They have also increased all the wall heights to 36" to block vehicle headlights. The applicant has provided renderings to show that the roof-mounted equipment is properly screened and not visible from the ground level.

Mr. Ceja mentioned that the Commission also requested that the applicant and the architect meet with the community and individual property owners to select tree species and tree placement for the project. At this point, the applicant has pulled back from meeting each individual property owners until this project is approved. The applicant has committed to a 60-day period once they receive approval of the plans to start meeting with property owners. In addition, the applicant has addressed better curvature on Utah Circle. The plans shown previously had it at a 90 degree bend in the street and now that has been softened and moved away a bit from the properties to the south. The applicant has also reviewed the double fencing condition. The applicant will meet with individual property owners to provide block walls, wrought-iron, or a combination of these two materials, five feet off property rear yards. However, there are some properties that encroach across the property line and the applicant will work with the homeowner to figure out the best placement for the walls.

Mr. Ceja said the architecture complies with the development standards for the Planned Residential zoning district. These condos are single-story and under 18' in height. Landscape and new perimeter fencing is provided, as well as, several community amenities; pools, pickle ball courts, and a walking trail throughout the project's site. Staff is recommending approval of these plans.

MR. CHRISTOPHER MCFADDEN, Architect, said they have gone through and re-studied the plans and submitted new renderings. He said the real exercise was the overall concern on the variations along the lot elevations on the south side of the property along Lots 14 through 38 on California Drive. They have completed about 20 site sections and did a tighter study of all the entry points. They provided the Commission with existing conditions to show the grade changes and interfaced all the proposed changes over the top to show the existing conditions with the proposed. He described the changes made to all the entry points, changes to the grade heights and wall design. They want to keep this project open as much as possible and maintain the landscape so everyone can enjoy it. At the entry points, they are carrying a solid wall back to a depth that seems appropriate of a solid wall. Then as this opens up the homeowners have some landscaping to enjoy. They are trying to compliment the long view so landscape-wise everything pulls together nicely. They have raised the interior walls up to 36" to block vehicle headlights; however, in some areas they will add landscaping to mitigate the concerns of headlights from taller vehicles. He believes a combination of walls and landscape is a good idea.

Chair Van Vliet declared the public comment open and invited public comments. He asked the public to focus their comments on the architecture, the height of the buildings, pad elevations, walls, landscape, and to limit their comments to three (3) minutes.

MR. JACK FORNEY, 76831 Kentucky Avenue, discussed the Palm Desert Development Standards, the proposed road 16' from his rear property line, and the non-compatibility of roof designs.

MS. CATHY DE FARIA, 77430 New Mexico Drive, discussed the open recreation area on Site C, types of fencing, and the 5' portion of dedicated land.

Chair Van Vliet declared the public comment closed and asked for Commission comments.

Commissioner Vuksic said he appreciates all the work that has gone into this presentation and understands how much effort it is to provide all the graphics for the Commission's review. He and MR. MCFADDEN discussed fill dirt, mitigation of line-of-sight issues, additional trees for privacy, providing screening for adjacent neighbors, segmented walls, and increasing certain wall heights.

Chair Van Vliet said this is a very complicated and difficult project and overall the architect has done an excellent job working with the site conditions. He is fine with the building architecture, the site layout, and the pad elevations. Landscaping is a developing plan and he didn't focus on that. However, he is concerned with the perimeter wall system and the hardscape and thinks more work needs to be done on that. After reviewing Lots 21 & 25, he found that the grading plan doesn't match the elevations. He requested more details for the walls, size of pilasters, and materials.

Commissioner McAuliffe complimented the applicant on the extent of the effort put forth on the study sections that have been done and feels that everyone in the room agrees how complex this process and project is and that information, although time consuming to prepare, is vital in fully understanding what is going on. Overall, he is completely pleased with the architecture and thinks as a development it works internally within itself and is complimentary of what is going on in the neighborhood. He is still concerned with the perimeter walls and feels this still needs to be studied due to sight line issues. Some modifications could be fairly simple yet have a significant impact for privacy for homeowners. The biggest challenge is the notion of having traffic in close proximity to certain locations within the property and didn't know how to get around the entry challenges. He thinks the applicant has gone to significant efforts to pull the roadways away.

Commissioner Brewer complimented and commended the applicant on the effort put forth into this process. It is a complicated project and the proposed project has good density and a good feel of the community. There has been a good effort to protect the existing homeowners, which is critical to the whole process. He fully agrees there is still more work to be done with the landscaping, as well as the fencing. As far as maintenance of the space between the double-fencing, it is his understanding that there will be a homeowner's association and they will be charged with making sure the area is free of debris and that all fencing will be maintained. He feels that the slow and thorough process of

approval will help the existing homeowners and the project will come to a successful completion.

Commissioner Lambell asked how to address Mr. Forney's and Ms. De Faria's concerns. Mr. Ceja said he is happy to meet with Ms. De Faria after today's meeting to review the wall section particularly through her property. Mr. Forney's letter will be given to the applicant regarding his concerns.

Commissioner Vuksic asked what the next step would be. Mr. Ceja said after the Architectural Review Commission, this project will go to public hearings with the Planning Commission and then City Council.

The Commission continued to discuss designs, heights, materials and composition, as well as final landscape and grading plans.

Commissioner Vuksic made a motion to approve wall designs, heights, materials and composition, as well as final landscape and grading plans coming back to the Commission for final approval. Commissioner Lambell made the second.

Commissioner Levin recommended adding to the motion that this will be reviewed by staff and any questionable items shall return to the Commission in an acceptable time frame for proper review prior to final construction document submittal to the Building Department.

Commissioner Vuksic amended his motion and Commissioner Lambell seconded.

ACTION:

Commissioner Vuksic moved to preliminarily approve subject to wall designs, heights, materials and composition, as well as final landscape and grading plans shall be reviewed by staff and any questionable items shall return to ARC in an acceptable time frame for proper review prior to final construction document submittal to the Building Department. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Lambell and carried by a 6-0-1 vote, with Brewer, Lambell, Levin, McAuliffe, Vuksic, and Van Vliet voting YES and McIntosh absent.

C. Miscellaneous Items:

None

VI. ART IN PUBLIC PLACES UPDATE – Commissioner Vuksic – 7/12/17

Commissioner Vuksic reported that the Art in Public Places Commission (AIPP) discussed the following: painting the traffic signal boxes at Fred Waring Drive and Phyllis Jackson Lane, docent led tours starting up in the Fall, locations and submittals for the 2019 Desert X, and the art for the San Pablo Corridor.

VII. COMMENTS

None

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Brewer moved to adjourn the Architectural Review Commission meeting at 2:35 p.m.



ERIC CEJA
PRINCIPAL PLANNER
SECRETARY



JANINE JUDY
RECORDING SECRETARY