



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

REPORT TO THE HEARING OFFICER

HEARING DATE: February 2, 2005

REPORT NO. HO 05-010

ATTENTION: Hearing Officer

SUBJECT: CARLISLE RESIDENCE – PROJECT NO. 24571

LOCATION: 1725 and 1729 Valdes Drive

APPLICANT: James S. and Carol A. Carlisle

SUMMARY

Requested Action - Should the Hearing Officer approve a Variance for a shotcrete retaining wall within the required front yard setback and side yard setback at 1725 Valdes Drive and rear yard setback at 1729 Valdes Drive?

Staff Recommendation -

1. CERTIFY Negative Declaration No. 24571; and
2. APPROVE Variance No. 65030.

Community Planning Group Recommendation – On October 4, 2004, the La Jolla Community Planning Association voted 6-0-4 to recommend approval of the project as proposed (Attachment 8).

Environmental Review – A Negative Declaration No. 24571 has been prepared for the project in accordance with State of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines (Attachment 11).

BACKGROUND

The properties located at 1725 and 1729 Valdes Drive are steeply sloped and lie approximately 406 feet above mean sea level on the south side of Valdes Drive, in the RS-1-5 zone, Coastal Overlay (Non-Appealable Area 1), and Coastal Height Limitation Overlay zones of the La Jolla Community Plan. The property at 1725 Valdes Drive is a 9,951 square-foot site, bordered on the

north by Valdes Drive, on the south by City of San Diego Park land, and on the east and west by developed residential properties. The site is currently improved with a two-story 5,006 square-foot single family residence with an attached garage. The adjacent parcel addressed 1729 Valdes Drive has an existing 4,071 square-foot three-story single family residence, portions of which have been built into the very steeply sloped 8,042 square-foot site. Entrance to both sites is by an existing long, steeply sloping upward driveway; whereas, there is a 14 foot driveway easement on the 1729 Valdes Drive property for access to 1725 Valdes Drive. There are no existing sidewalks or curbs within the public right-of-way at this site.

DISCUSSION

The applicant is requesting a Variance for a retaining wall up to 18.6 feet in height within the required front yard setback and side yard setback where 3 feet and 6 feet, respectively, is the maximum retaining wall height allowed at 1725 Valdes Drive and up to 11.5 feet in height within the required rear yard setback where 6 feet is the maximum retaining wall height allowed at 1729 Valdes Drive.

The existing driveway to reach the existing residences was cut into the hillside resulting in a steep bluff face. The steep cut slope at the lower end of the driveway has periodically experienced superficial block fall failures along existing joints within the bedrock. The bluff face periodically sheds a few yards of soil from the vertical surface due to root growth of plant material above. Prevention of block failures would require continuation of a slope retention system such as was constructed along upper portions of the driveway. The proposed project would drill holes into the bluff face, insert epoxy-coated rods (soil nails), and apply a shotcrete surface to the existing bluff face, thereby providing structural support to the bluff face.

Although the presently known fact that portions of the subject properties have a substandard factor-of-safety regarding slope stability, in conjunction with the issuance of Variance Permit No. 65030, the Owners/Permittees have provided a recorded copy of the "Notice of Geologic and Geotechnical Conditions" against the property satisfactory to staff (Attachment 12). Staff has also determined that a grading permit would not be required and as a condition of the Variance the owners will provide a recorded "Hold Harmless Agreement" satisfactory to the City Engineer prior to issuance of the building permit for the retaining wall.

CONCLUSION

The proposed retaining wall along the existing steeply sloped driveway would provide structural support to the bluff face, thus reducing a potential hazard to the residents, guests and emergency services. The finished project would take on shape and texture of the existing bluff face thereby, blending into the adjacent hillsides. Planting pockets would be included in the construction and would incorporate planting similar to the existing vegetation, hence eliminating impact to visual quality. By allowing the Variance for the shotcrete retaining wall will allow reasonable use of the land for the continued use of the driveway without hazard.

Granting of the Variance will meet the general purpose and intent of the regulations and would not be detrimental to the public health, safety, and welfare. The Variance complies and would

proceed in accordance with all other applicable regulations of the Land Development Code, as conditioned within Variance No. 65030.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Approve Variance No. 65030, with modifications.
2. Deny Variance No. 65030, if the findings required to approve the project cannot be affirmed.

Respectfully submitted,

Vena Lewis, Development Project Manager

Attachments:

1. Aerial Photograph
2. Community Plan Land Use Map
3. Project Location Map
4. Project Data Sheet
5. Project Plans
6. Draft Permit with Conditions
7. Draft Resolution with Findings
8. Community Planning Group Recommendation
9. Ownership Disclosure Statement
10. Project Chronology
11. Negative Declaration No. 24571
12. Notice of Geologic and Geotechnical Conditions