STAFF REPORT

CITY OF BEVERLY HILLS

For the Design Review
Commission Meeting of
October 2, 2008
PL0851709

TO: Design Review Commission

FROM: Georgana Millican, Associate Planner

SUBJECT: A request for an R-1 Design Review Permit to allow a new two-story single-family residence, located in the Central Area of the City, south of Santa Monica Boulevard at **225 South Crescent Drive.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Abe Kamara of AMT ENT. Inc., on behalf of the property owner, has filed an application for Track 2 design review to allow the construction of a new single-family residence at **225 South Crescent Drive.**

Reason for Review by the Commission

The proposed project may not substantially conform to a single, pure architectural style; therefore, the proposal is brought before the Design Review Commission for review as a Track 2 application.

Adherence to Zoning Code

As proposed, the design meets required zoning standards such as height, setbacks, parking, and floor area requirements. As conditioned, the proposed project meets all zoning requirements.

GENERAL INFORMATION	
Applicant	Abe Kamara
Project Owner	Selena Rojhani & Mayer Dallal
Zoning District	Central R-1 Area – South of Santa Monica Boulevard
Parcel Size	6,050 square feet
Listed in City's Historic Survey	No

SITE AND AREA CHARACTERISTICS

The project site is approximately 50-feet wide by 121.4 feet long, located on the west side of the 200 block of South Crescent Drive between Charleville Boulevard and Gregory Way. The lot is currently developed with a single-story residence and detached garage. The existing primary residence and garage would be demolished and replaced by a new two-story residence and porte cochere. Surrounding development consists of one- and two-story single-family homes.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Building Envelope/Modulation

The proposed house and garage would have a total floor area of 3,907 square feet, slightly under the maximum allowable building area (3,920 square feet) for the subject site.

As proposed, the residence has a sloped roof with a total height of approximately 28 feet to the highest point of the roof. The main entrance to the proposed structure is on the northern portion of the façade, set back 1.5 feet, within a tower entry element. Additional access has been provided at the front of the structure with French doors. The façade also includes two arched areas that are inset in the façade with a landscape trellis within each. Above the arched area is a second floor balcony that extends into the front yard setback by 2.5 feet as permitted by BHMC 10-3-2408. The entry door is a single wood arched door. The center of the second floor with the balcony is set back two feet providing some façade modulation along with the curved entry tower feature.

Parking
As required by the BHMC, a total of three parking spaces behind the front yard setback have been proposed in conjunction with the new house. The proposed parking will be provided by a porte cochere and the driveway that runs along the side of the house and an additional one car parking pad accessed off of the alley. No garage is proposed on the subject site at this time.

Design
The project's designer has stated that the style of architecture is Spanish.

Materials
The materials proposed for the new structure are as follows:

- Smooth trowel stucco in white
- Trim in a color called "Epre Rust"
- Windows and doors made of wood painted in "Evening Brass"
- Stone veneer – Sawtooth Rustic Ledge
- Clay roof tiles
- Iron work – "Summerstorm" in color.

Paving:
The total amount of paving permitted within the front yard of the subject site is 400 square feet. The proposed project includes a total of 380 square feet of concrete paving within the front yard for the driveway and a front walkway. A front yard wall is shown on the landscape plan and the rendering, however the Applicant has stated this is to be removed.

Landscape Design:
A variety of landscaping has been proposed throughout the subject site, which will help to create a lush, garden-like atmosphere. Some of the tree species located within the front yard include six Pigmy Date Palms, four Flowering Plum trees and two Sago Palm trees. Although the landscaping has been well thought out, the largest trees proposed would be in a 24" box, which is normally not considered to be the size of a mature tree. Typically, mature landscaping is desirable when installed in conjunction with a new house, and it may be necessary to provide larger, more mature landscaping in conjunction with the proposed project.

PUBLIC NOTICE AND COMMENTS

Notice of the proposed project and public hearing was mailed on September 22, 2008 to all property owners and residential tenants within a 100-foot radius from the exterior boundaries of the property as required by Code. To date staff has not received any comments in regard to the submitted plans.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION

The project has been reviewed in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the City's environmental guidelines, and a Categorical Exemption of Class 3(a) has been issued.

DESIGN ANALYSIS

Pursuant to BHMC Section 10-3.4415, the Design Review Commission may approve, approve with conditions, or disapprove the issuance of a building permit in any matter subject to its jurisdiction after considering whether the proposed development complies with the following criteria. If the proposed project meets the criteria set forth, the Commission shall approve the application. When the proposed development does not comply with the criteria, the Commission may impose such conditions it deems necessary to bring the proposed development into conformity with the provisions of this article.

1. ***The proposed development's design exhibits an internally compatible design scheme.***

The proposed project does not appear to exhibit an internally compatible design. The design is not strictly Spanish in style but rather has elements of various rural European styles along with more contemporary elements. The Commission may wish to discuss the various design elements including the arched inset areas with the trellis and vines, the large second floor balcony extending into the front yard setback and the tower entry element with the stone veneer. The façade design is not evident in the side elevations which appear plain and lack modulation. The proposed project utilizes various building materials including wood doors and windows, smooth stucco and a synthetic stone veneer for the entry tower element. The Commission may wish to discuss whether the proposed stone is appropriate and whether white stucco is harmonious with the color of the proposed stone (samples to be shown at the meeting).

2. ***Appropriately minimizes the appearance of scale and mass, enhances the garden like quality of the city, and appropriately maximizes the use of required open space within the proposed architectural style.***

The proposed project has been designed to incorporate some modulation including the tower entry element and the second floor two-foot setback in the area of the balcony. However the balcony does extend 2.5 feet into the required front yard setback which does add some additional mass to the façade. The Commission may wish to discuss whether setting the balcony back behind the front yard setback would further minimize the appearance of scale and mass. The maximum height of the house is shown as 28.5 feet while a maximum height of 30 feet is permitted. The lower roof height does help to reduce the appearance of scale and mass.

The landscaping plan has been well thought-out and would contribute to the garden quality of the city; however, the trees proposed for use on the subject site have been called out as 24" box trees. A 24" box is typically not considered to be a mature size, and the Commission may wish to require the use of a larger tree size.

3. ***The development will enhance the appearance of the neighborhood.***

Pursuant to the findings under the criteria above, staff has concerns that the proposed design lacks an internally compatible style and could use some additional setbacks so that it will enhance the appearance of the neighborhood. A detailed landscaping plan has been submitted in conjunction with the proposed residence, which will help to screen and enhance the proposed residence. The proposed project is on a block that is primarily one-story, smaller, older homes of traditional styles. A few two-story homes are present on the street, however they are not immediately adjacent or across the street from the subject site. As the block currently exists, the proposed design does not appear that it would be of appropriate scale to the surrounding residences.

4. ***The proposed development is designed to balance the reasonable expectation of development for the owner with the reasonable expectation of privacy of neighbors.***

As proposed, the structure meets the City's current side setback requirements. The southern portion of the building is largely set back from the side property line due to a porte cochere. The proposed setback to the north is 5 feet, which meets the minimum setback requirement. The use of code required and increased setbacks, along with minimal window and door openings along the second floor, helps to create a balance between the reasonable expectation of development and the reasonable expectation of privacy of neighbors.

5. ***The proposed development respects prevailing site design pattern, carefully analyzing the characteristics of the surrounding group of homes, and integrates appropriate features that will ensure harmony between old and new.***

The proposed project respects prevailing site design by using the existing driveway location and configuration to be consistent with the surrounding properties. The proposed project is a new two-story residence built in conformance with the current code requirements whereas the properties along South Crescent Drive are developed with structures that are primarily one-story and smaller in scale than the existing proposal which is close to the maximum allowable floor area for the site. The most common style of architecture found along S. Crescent Drive can be identified as Spanish Mission Revival, but there does not appear to be a consistent design pattern at this point. The proposed design has elements of a Spanish style of architecture so, in terms of design style, it could be a harmonious addition to the neighborhood.

Upon consideration of criteria set forth in BHMC 10-3.4415, The Commission has the following options:

1. Approve the plans as presented;

2. Approve the plans subject to the following and /or other conditions, to bring the plans into conformance with criteria set forth in BHMC 10-3.4415;

3. Disapprove the plans upon detailed findings that certain criteria set forth in BHMC 10-3.4415 are not met; or

4. Return the plans for restudy and resubmittal.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the foregoing analysis and pending the information and conclusions that may result from testimony received at the public hearing, as well as Design Review Commission deliberations, staff recommends the Design Review Commission either provide the applicant with further direction and return the item for restudy, or approve the project with the following conditions and any other conditions the Commission may wish to add:

1. The 24" box trees proposed for use in the landscaping plan shall be increased in size to a 48" box.

2. The front yard wall shown on the plans shall be removed.

3. The front balcony shall be reduced in size.

4. Some additional design details or modulation shall be added to the side elevations to break up the mass and create a more integrated design.

Michele McBrotty for Georgana Millican

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