



STAFF REPORT
CITY OF BEVERLY HILLS

For the Design Review Commission
Meeting of October 1, 2009

TO: Design Review Commission

FROM: Rita Naziri, Senior Planner

SUBJECT: A request for an R-1 Design Review Permit to allow a new one story single-family residence plus an observatory and pond on top of the main residence, located in the Central Area of the City, North of Santa Monica Boulevard at **101 Copley Place**. (PL 091 4877)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

An application has been submitted by Samuel Moon on behalf of Dorothy Kamins, property owner, for a new one-story residence with an observatory and pond on top of the main residence at **101 Copley Place**.

Reason for Review by the Commission

Pursuant to Beverly Hills Municipal Code Section 10-3-4408, no single-family residence located in the Central R-1 zone shall be erected, constructed, altered or remodeled unless the elevations and plans for the exterior portions and areas visible from the street are reviewed and approved by the City. The Design Review Commission shall be the reviewing authority if it has first been determined that the design does not otherwise substantially adhere to a pure architectural style as outlined in a style catalogue adopted by resolution of the City Council.

In addition, the Design Review Commission has directed that corner lots and lots with street frontage in excess of 80 feet require special scrutiny due to the potential for visual impacts on two public streets. The proposed design contains unique design elements including a Romanesque dome surrounded by a pond over a semi-subterranean residence within a garden setting. Given the uniqueness of this design and the fact that it is located on a corner lot, the project is before the Design Review Commission for review under the Track 2 process.

Adherence to Zoning Code

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

GENERAL INFORMATION	
Applicant	Samuel Moon
Project Owner	Dorothy Kamins
Zoning District	Central R-1 Area – North of Santa Monica Boulevard
Parcel Size	25,921 Square Feet
Listed in City's Historic Survey	No

SITE AND AREA CHARACTERISTICS

Copley place is a secluded street located just west of Sunset Boulevard at the western city limits, in the Central area of the City. Copley Place is developed with a small cluster of residences that abut the Los Angeles Country Club. The seven residences on this streets situated are sited on large lots.

The 25,921 square foot project site is located on the corner of Copley Place and Copley Drive and west of Sunset Boulevard. The neighboring property (121 Copley) is under the same ownership. Structures on this property were demolished in 2008 and a new two-story residence with accessory structures and landscaped garden areas is currently under construction. 101 Copley Place was acquired by the owners of the abutting property at 121 Copley Place to construct a garden and a new residence as an extension of 121 Copley Place. Because the zoning code does not allow these two lots to be tied together without going through an extensive review process, the applicant has proposed this alternative design that gives the appearance of one large parcel. Both the subject property and property at 121 Copley propose extensive landscape improvements to create the appearance of a single continuous property.

The subject property slopes down towards the rear of the lot and is proposed to be developed with a garden that includes trees, shrubs, water features, circular maze (labyrinth), stone paths, streams and retaining walls.

The project site and surrounding properties can be characterized as hilly. Walls and hedges surround the front yards of many of the surrounding properties along Copley Place. The project site and the neighboring properties are established with mature landscaping, all of which contribute to the garden quality of the city.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Building Envelope

The proposed project consists of a new one-story, semi subterranean residence with an observatory and pond above the first level. The proposed semi-subterranean residence is 1,600 square feet which is the minimum size permitted by Code. Therefore, the project is well below the maximum allowable building area of 11,868 square feet. As proposed, the total height of the residence and structure above it would be 29 feet, 2 ¾ inches measured from the low grade (which is below the maximum height allowed by Code for a main residence with side yards that are more than 10 feet in width). The proposed observatory will be 23'10" in height measured from the first level grade.

Parking

The proposed residence requires two parking spaces by Code. A total of two parking spaces will be provided on-site. The proposed parking spaces will be located within the side yard accessed from Copley Drive, adjacent to the Los Angeles Country Club.

Design

The main residence is mostly not visible from the street, except as viewed from the Copley Drive. The visible facade of the residence will be clad with limestone, in the traditional European architectural style. The style of the proposed dome is categorized as Classical inspired by the Roman forms of domes and columns used in Italian structures. The column design follows the Tuscan column order in white marble with the dome being a smooth white plaster with white marble ribs reminiscent of cathedrals and other structures of Italy. The dome structure includes a pavilion surrounded by a pond and is accessed through granite steps to the garden area.

Materials

The materials and color proposed for the new structure are as follows:

- Main house- Limestone block walls (partially visible)
- Observatory – White plaster (Dome), white marble (columns and trim)
- Entry Door – Wooden door in Mahogany with white marble columns and trims.
- Patio and set of steps-Floral pattern medium brown granite with honed and sandblasted textures.
- Wrought Iron Fence (3' in height) Black colored simple vertical wrought iron fence, screened with landscaping on both sides of the fence.

Paving

The total front yard paving of the proposed design is approximately 1,891.50 square feet of stone, which is below the maximum allowable front yard paving of 2,250.50 square feet. The driveway area is paved by stones. The other hardscape areas include decomposed granite and a pond encroaching into the front setback.

Landscape Design

The proposed landscape plan provides variety of trees, shrubs, flowers and water features throughout the subject site, which will help to create a lush garden-like ambience. The garden includes separate parts. The first is the observatory that serves as open air room connected to

the garden via granite steps. The garden includes a garden maze, fountain, pond, streams and benches.

PUBLIC NOTICE AND COMMENTS

Notice of the proposed project and public hearing was mailed on September 21, 2009 to all property owners and residential tenants within a 100-foot radius from the exterior boundaries of the property as required by Code. As of the time of preparation of this staff report, staff has not received any comments or inquiries on the project.

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 has been issued.

DESIGN ANALYSIS

Pursuant to BHC 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 residence is a new one-story semi-subterranean residence and an observatory with pond on the top of the building which presents a unique and creative design by introducing wide-ranging and well-designed landscaping. The project includes a large garden following natural terrain and a small residential structure set into landscape with a minimum portion visible from the street in order to create an extension garden for the property at 121 Copley Place which is under construction at this time. Due to the proposed landscaping, the proposal appears to introduce a well planned garden-like design. The project exhibits carefully conceived design elements that are considered internally compatible design scheme. Therefore, it appears the finding can be made that the design is internally compatible.

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 subject property is proposed to be extensively landscaped with mature landscaping along the property lines and other landscaping elements within the entire property. The proposed

residence itself is hardly visible from the adjacent streets. The Classical Roman dome is topping the residence is approximately 24 feet tall and would be visible from the adjacent streets. The dome, if viewed from the street, would present as a garden element that is open underneath and made from quality materials. The applicant is proposing a variety of trees and shrubs to screen the observatory from the view. As proposed, the project site will be heavily landscaped with a variety of trees shrubs and other garden like amenities. Therefore, the project as designed and landscaped will enhance the garden like of the City and maximize the use of open space within the property.

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

The project site is located in a cul-de-sac with approximately seven houses. Most houses in this block are in the Mediterranean Style of architecture with lush landscaping which enhances the neighborhood. The subject site is a corner lot which has more visibility than an interior lot. As proposed, the project presents a unique design with lush landscaping which will screen the structure from street view. The applicant notes that the proposed project design relates to some of the properties along the street that utilize a very similar column design. It should be noted that the applicant is required by the Water Efficient Landscaping Ordinance to provide a landscape plan, irrigation and drainage plan that features hydro-zoning and Smart Controller type designed and signed by a certified Landscape Architect or state certified landscape irrigation auditor prior to issuance of building permit. Given that the entire property will be landscaped with variety of trees and shrubs to screen the property from street view, it appears that this development would bring a fresh look into the area and will enhance the appearance of the neighborhood. Therefore, the proposal appears to fit in with the neighborhood and could be found to enhance the appearance of the neighborhood.

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 proposed project does not impact neighbor's privacy since the proposal is mostly located closer to the street than adjoining properties and includes dense landscaping along the property lines and within the entire lot. Therefore, it appears the proposed design accommodates neighbors' reasonable expectation of privacy.

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 design is proposing a unique structure and pond above the main residence which would be screened by the proposed trees and shrubs. The design style of the proposed structure appears to have characteristics that comply with the neighborhood since there are similar existing architectural styles in the surrounding area. Therefore, the proposed design appears to be compatible with the surrounding homes and will be harmonious with the neighborhood existing structures within the block.

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

Should the Commission determine it could make the findings to approve the project, staff would recommend the following conditions:

1. Any approval by the Commission is for design only; the project is subject to all applicable City zoning regulations.
2. Any future modifications to this approval shall be presented to staff for a determination as to whether the change may be approved by staff (minor) or to the Commission for review. Changes made without City approval may be required to be restored to match the City approved plans.
3. Final plans shall include a color rendering of the front elevation with numbered call-outs and a corresponding legend for all proposed materials and finishes. Spec sheets for windows shall also be provided. This elevation will be used by staff for verification of materials at the project site during construction.
4. A copy of the final conditions of approval per the approved Resolution shall be scanned onto the cover sheet of the final building plans.
5. The proposed landscape plan shall comply with the Water Efficient Landscaping Ordinance.



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