



CITY OF ALBUQUERQUE  
OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS  
ZONING HEARING EXAMINER  
NOTIFICATION OF DECISION

Brian & Colleen Knapp requests a variance of 5 ft to the 3 ft maximum wall height for Lot 5, Block D, Cenaroca, located at 416 Monte Alto PL NE, zoned R-1D [Section 14-16-5-7(D)]

Special Exception No:..... **VA-2019-00320**  
Project No: ..... **Project#2019-002898**  
Hearing Date: ..... 11-19-19  
Closing of Public Record: ..... 11-19-19  
Date of Decision:..... 12-04-19

On the 19th day of November, 2019, property owners Brian & Colleen Knapp (“Applicant”) appeared before the Zoning Hearing Examiner (“ZHE”) requesting a variance of 5 ft to the 3 ft maximum wall height (“Application”) upon the real property located at 416 Monte Alto PL NE (“Subject Property”). Below are the ZHE’s findings of fact and decision:

FINDINGS:

1. Applicant is requesting a variance of 5 ft to the 3 ft maximum wall height.
2. The City of Albuquerque Integrated Development Ordinance Section 14-16-6-6(N)(3)(c) Variance for a Taller Front or Side Yard Wall reads: “*A variance application for a taller front or side yard wall shall be approved by the Zoning Hearing Examiner, if and only if, the Zoning Hearing Examiner finds all of the following:*
  - (1) *The proposed wall would strengthen or reinforce the architectural character of the surrounding area;*
  - (2) *The proposed wall would not be injurious to adjacent properties, the surrounding neighborhood, or the larger community;*
  - (3) *The wall is proposed on a lot that meets any of the following criteria:*
    - a. *The lot is at least ½ acre;*
    - b. *The lot fronts a street designated as a collector or above in the LRTS guide;*
    - c. *At least 20 percent of the properties within 330 feet of the lot where the wall or fence is being requested have a wall or fence over 3 feet in the front yard.*
  - (4) *The design of the wall complies with any applicable standard in Section 14-16-5-7 (Walls and Fences), including, but not limited to Subsection 14-16-5-7(E)(2) (Articulation and alignment) and Subsection 14-16-5-7(E)(3) (Wall Design), and all of the following:*
    - a. *The wall or fence shall not block the view of any portion of any window on the front façade of the primary building when viewed from 5 feet above ground level at the centerline of the street in front of the house.*
    - b. *The design and materials proposed for the wall or fence shall reflect the architectural character of the surrounding area.*
3. The Applicant bears the burden of ensuring there is evidence in the record supporting a finding that the above criteria are met under Section 14-16-6-4(N)(1).
4. Brian and Coleen Knapp, property owners appeared and gave evidence in support of the application.
5. The address of the subject property is 416 Monte Alto Pl. NE.

6. The subject property is currently zoned R-1D.
7. The request is for a variance from Section 14-16-5-7(D)(1): ***DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS; Walls and Fences; Table 5-7-1: Maximum Wall Height.***
8. The request is to allow a pre-existing wall constructed without a permit to remain.
9. The wall is built with CMU Blocks, with the exposed face of the CMU block not constituting more than 50% of the portion of the wall facing the street.
10. There are vertical pilasters and columns with a 3 inch projection and the wall is offset so it does not align with the adjacent neighbor's wall.
11. The color of the CMU block matches the color of the primary residence.
12. The wall is the front yard setback and is 8 feet tall.
13. A site plan, with accompanying photographs was submitted in support of the Application.
14. All property owners within 100 feet and affected neighborhood association were notified of the application.
15. Supper Rock Neighborhood Association and East Coalition of Neighborhood Associations are the affected neighborhood associations.
16. The neighborhood associations were notified by e-mail dated August 29, 2019.
17. No response nor request for meeting has been submitted.
18. Transportation issued a report indicating Conditional Approval to the Application.
19. Transportation reported the subject wall is not located within the clear sight triangle and as long as Applicants do not alter or add to the existing wall, there is no objection.
20. Any future proposed wall design shall not violate the clear sight triangle as required by Transportation.
21. Maria Herrera, 412 Monte Alto Pl. NE, appeared and gave testimony in opposition to the Application.
22. She complained that there is a R.V. parked behind the wall, which is illegally using electricity and sewage hookup, and has a person living in it.
23. John T. Vaughn, 421 Monte Alto Pl. NE, appeared and gave testimony in partial support and partially in opposition to the Application.
24. He is supporting the wall, however he also complains of the R.V. being illegally hooked up to water, electricity and sewage.
25. Applicants responded and acknowledged that at one point, the R.V. was illegally hooked up to water, electricity and sewage and Applicant's brother-in-law was temporarily living in the R.V.
26. All connections to the R.V. have been removed and the R.V. will soon be removed from the subject property.
27. The proposed wall would strengthen or reinforce the architectural character of the surrounding area as required by Section 14-16-6-6(N)(3)(c)(1).
28. The wall would not be injurious to adjacent properties, the surrounding neighborhood, or the larger community as required by Section 14-16-6-6(N)(3)(c)(2).
29. A proximity map (showing properties within 330 feet of the subject property), photographs of properties (with addresses) within 330 feet showing walls taller than 3 feet in front yard set-backs, in support of criteria required by Section 14-16-4-3(C)(3)c are submitted by Applicant
30. 17 properties are shown on the map requiring 4 to show at least 20 percent, and Applicant submitted 11 photographs with addresses, showing 65 per cent.
31. At least 20 percent of the properties within 330 feet of the lot where the wall or fence is being requested have a wall or fence over 3 feet in the front yard as required by Section 14-16-6-6(N)(3)(c)(3)c.

32. The ZHE finds that the proper “Notice of Hearing” signage was posted for the required time period as required by Section 14-16-6-4(K)(3).
33. The ZHE finds that the Applicant has authority to pursue this Application.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

The criteria within Section 14-16-6-6(N)(3)(c) of the Albuquerque Zoning Code are satisfied.

DECISION:

APPROVAL of a variance of 5 ft to the 3 ft maximum wall height.

CONDITIONS:

The design of the fence shall comply with any applicable design standards in Sections 14-16-5-7 (Walls and Fences); 7-7(E)(2) (Articulation and Alignment); 5-7(E)(3) (Wall Design) and Section 14-16-6-6(N)(3)(c)4 a and b.

APPEAL:

If you wish to appeal this decision, you must do so by December 19, 2019 pursuant to Section 14-16-6-4(U), of the Integrated Development Ordinance, you must demonstrate that you have legal standing to file an appeal as defined.

Successful applicants are reminded that other regulations of the City must be complied with, even after approval of a special exception is secured. This decision does not constitute approval of plans for a building permit. If your application is approved, bring this decision with you when you apply for any related building permit or occupation tax number. Approval of a conditional use or a variance application is void after one year from date of approval if the rights and privileges are granted, thereby have not been executed, or utilized.



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Stan Harada, Esq.  
Zoning Hearing Examiner

cc:

ZHE File  
Zoning Enforcement  
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Maria Herrera, 412 Monte Alto PL NE, 87123  
JT Vaughn, 421 Monte Alto PL NE, 87123  
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