



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

JMDH Real Estate of Albuquerque, LLC (Agent, David Fellenstein-ADA Architects, Inc.) request a variance of 25 ft to the required 25 ft landscape buffer for Lot A-1, Truck Stop Plaza, located at 1901 Menaul BLVD NE, zoned NR-LM [Section 14-16-5-6(E)]

Special Exception No:..... **VA-2022-00077**
Project No: **Project#2019-002751**
Hearing Date: 05-17-22
Closing of Public Record: 05-17-22
Date of Decision: 06-01-22

On the 17th day of May, 2022, David Fellenstein-ADA Architects, Inc., agent for property owner JMDH Real Estate of Albuquerque, LLC (“Applicant”) appeared before the Zoning Hearing Examiner (“ZHE”) requesting a variance of 25 ft to the required 25 ft landscape buffer (“Application”) upon the real property located at 1901 Menaul BLVD NE (“Subject Property”). Below are the ZHE’s finding of fact and decision:

FINDINGS:

1. Applicant is requesting a variance of 25 ft to the required 25 ft landscape buffer.
2. The City of Albuquerque Integrated Development Ordinance, Section 14-16-6-6(O)(3)(a) (Variance-Review and Decision Criteria) reads: “... *an application for a Variance-ZHE shall be approved if it meets all of the following criteria:*
 - (1) *There are special circumstances applicable to the subject property that are not self-imposed and that do not apply generally to other property in the same zone and vicinity such as size, shape, topography, location, surroundings, or physical characteristics created by natural forces or government action for which no compensation was paid. Such special circumstances of the property either create an extraordinary hardship in the form of a substantial and unjustified limitation on the reasonable use or return on the property, or practical difficulties result from strict compliance with the minimum standards.*
 - (2) *The Variance will not be materially contrary to the public safety, health, or welfare.*
 - (3) *The Variance does not cause significant material adverse impacts on surrounding properties or infrastructure improvements in the vicinity.*
 - (4) *The Variance will not materially undermine the intent and purpose of the IDO or the applicable zone district.*
 - (5) *The Variance approved is the minimum necessary to avoid extraordinary hardship or practical difficulties.*”
3. The applicant bears the burden of providing a sound justification for the requested decision, based on substantial evidence, pursuant to IDO Section 14-16-6-4(E)(3).
4. The applicant bears the burden of showing compliance with required standards through analysis, illustrations, or other exhibits as necessary, pursuant to IDO Section 14-16-6-4(E)(4).

5. Agent and Applicant appeared and gave evidence in support of the Application.
6. All property owners within 100 feet of the subject property and the affected neighborhood association were notified.
7. The subject property is currently zoned NR-LM.
8. Based on evidence submitted by or on behalf of Applicant, it appears that there are special circumstances applicable to the Subject Property that are not self-imposed and that do not apply generally to other property in the same zone and vicinity such as size, shape, topography, location, surroundings, or physical characteristics created by natural forces or government action for which no compensation was paid, as required by Section 14-16-6-6(N)(3)(a)(1). Specifically, Applicant testified and provided written evidence that, the Subject Property has special circumstances because of its location in relation to major thoroughfares, accessways and adjacent properties based on historic development, as well as the shape and orientation of the Subject Property, which give rise to the need for this request. These special circumstances create an extraordinary hardship in the form of a substantial and unjustified limitation on the reasonable use or return on the Subject Property, because compliance with the minimum standards would not allow for the reasonably located and articulated proposed use that otherwise would be in compliance with the IDO.
9. Based on evidence submitted by or on behalf of Applicant, the variance will not be contrary to the public safety, health and welfare of the community as required by Section 14-16-6-6(N)(3)(a)(2). Specifically, evidence was submitted supporting that, if granted approval, the Applicant intends to construct the wall in a manner that is consistent with the IDO and the Development Process Manual (DPM).
10. Based on evidence submitted by or on behalf of Applicant, the variance will not cause significant adverse material impacts on surrounding properties or infrastructure improvements in the vicinity as required by Section 14-16-6-6(N)(3)(a)(3). Specifically, the proposal is designed to facilitate a site design that orients access appropriately, thus minimizing traffic conflicts and impacts to the roadway network. The proposed development has been planned in coordination with neighboring sites as a cohesive redevelopment. Sufficient buffers already exist or will be provided in relation to any protected uses.
11. Based on evidence submitted by or on behalf of Applicant, the variance will not materially undermine the intent and purpose of the IDO or applicable zone district as required by Section 14-16-6-6(N)(3)(a)(4). Specifically, Applicant presented evidence that the intent of IDO will still be met in that the subject site will be in harmony with the underlying zone district and the area, and the proposed variance would merely allow for reasonable useability of the site, while maintaining appropriate buffers.
12. Based on evidence submitted by or on behalf of Applicant, the variance approved is the minimum necessary to avoid extraordinary hardship or practical difficulties as required by Section 14-16-6-6(N)(3)(a)(5). Specifically, Applicant submitted evidence that any smaller variance would be ineffective to provide for the useability of the site. Thus, the applicant is not requesting more than what is minimally necessary for a variance.
13. City Transportation submitted a report stating no objection.
14. The proper "Notice of Hearing" signage was posted for the required time period as required by Section 14-16-6-4(K)(3).
15. The Applicant has authority to pursue this Application.

DECISION:

APPROVAL of a variance of 25 ft to the required 25 ft landscape buffer.

APPEAL:

If you wish to appeal this decision, you must do so by June 16, 2022 pursuant to Section 14-16-6-4(V), 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.



Robert Lucero, Esq.
Zoning Hearing Examiner

cc:

ZHE File
Zoning Enforcement
David Fellenstein, Dfellenstein@adaarchitects.cc
Natasha Ruiz, nruiz@ceieng.com
Joel E. Hays, jhays@ceieng.com